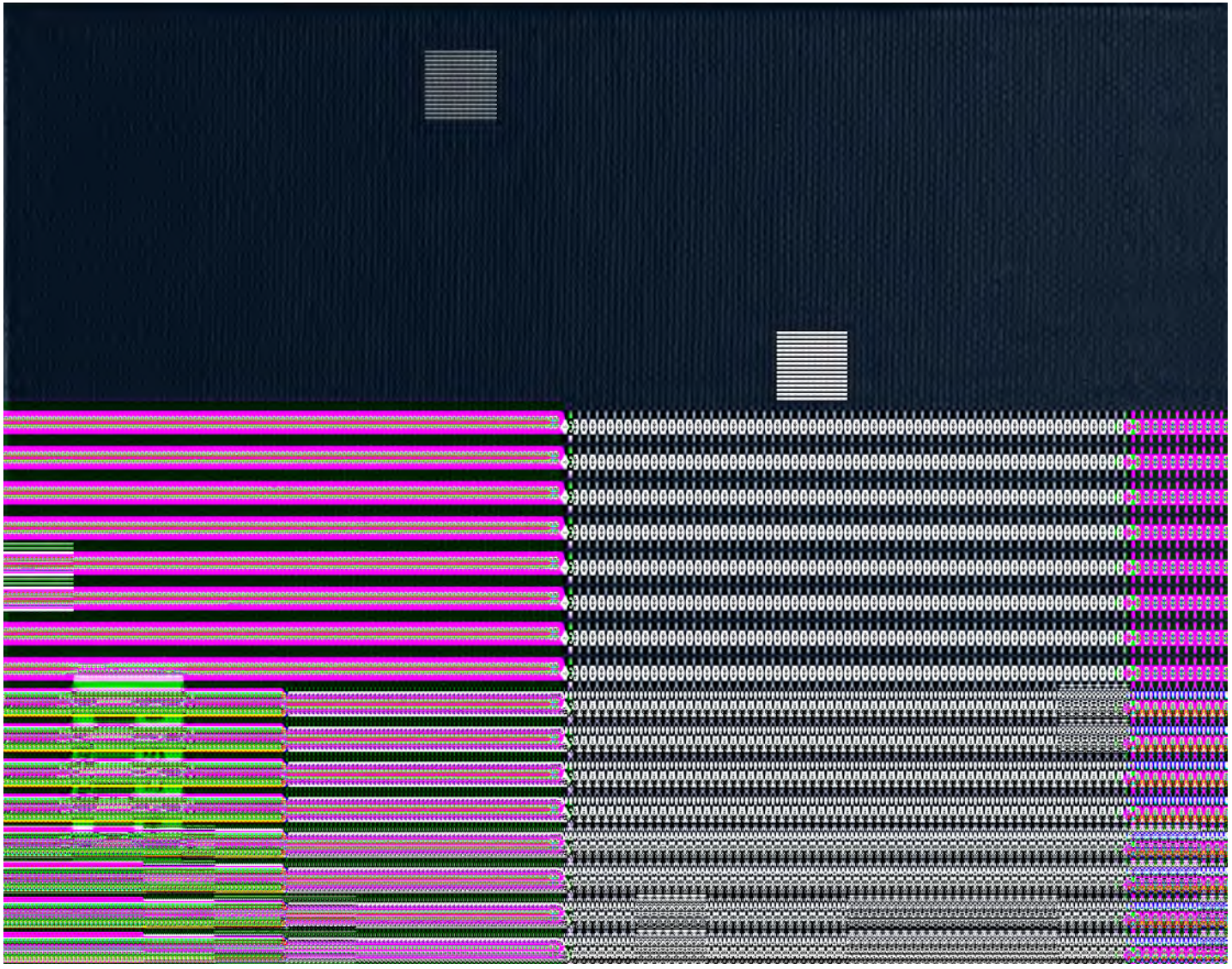

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SELF-FORMATION:

TWELVE CHAPTERS FOR YOUNG THINKERS.

BY

EDWIN PAXTON HOOD,

Author of "Old England," "Genius and Industry," "The Uses of Biography," "Blind Amos," etc.

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MDCCCLVIII.

TO HANDELL COSHAM, ESQ., F.G.S.,

SHORTWOOD LODGE, BRISTOL.

MY DEAR FRIEND—

May I beg you to accept the inscription of this little volume to you as a small token of real affection and most hearty admiration. The present edition of it was prepared for the press in my inactive days at Nibley.

You have not only, through many difficulties, become a remarkable illustration of Self-Formation, but are also constantly engaged in aiding those who, in the most adverse circumstances, are forming their characters in the mould of mental and moral excellence.

May your life long be spared to unite together the life of Conscience, and Commerce, the teaching of Religion and Science. It seems sometimes sad to our human eye to behold, as in the case of our mutually beloved and honoured BENJAMIN PARSONS, the worker removed prematurely from the field of his labour: but it is blessed to feel that the Chief Husbandman knows his servants, and whom to remove, and whom to appoint to their separate tasks. May it be your privilege not only to have those grand characteristics of a perfect manhood—EYESIGHT, HOPE, and ENERGY—but may you be permitted, to a very late day in life, to see your work growing around you into beauty and consistency.

I am, most heartily,

My dear Friend,

EDWIN PAXTON HOOD.

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SELF-FORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS SELF-FORMATION?

BEFORE all things let us clearly understand what we mean by words:—what is Self-Education? While I write in my quiet village, I am almost within sound of the hammer on the anvil of my neighbour, the blacksmith. How rapidly the hammer descends, how swiftly fly the sparks! I feel that my arm would be very powerless there, that it would be very hard work indeed to make a horse-shoe, and that the horse-shoe would be very badly shaped when made: and yonder, from my study window I am looking at my old neighbour Watson, the gardener, and feel quite ashamed to confess the difference between his method of handling the spade and mine: but then I suspect that if my neighbours were set down with me on the road to walk for thirty or thirty-five miles, I should soon distance them, and while I should possibly be fresh at the thirtieth, the probability is that I should leave them exhausted at the twelfth.

What makes this difference between men? this muscular difference? is it not education? the arm is better educated than the leg, or the leg is better educated than the arm; Education is the cultivation of power; upon this hint we may speak out upon the whole of life, the difference between men and men is, for the most part, a difference of education; the mind and the body are the residence of strong faculties, which exist in many uneducated and therefore undeveloped. The strength of the body and the powers of the mind depend as much upon pupilage and training for their success, as the curvetting of the steed or the command of the rider. Education may not be said to create Faculties;—but without education those faculties slumber uselessly and become paralysed; or, if developed, they exist so untrained and uncurbed that they rather complete the confusion of their possessor than add at all to his benefit or to his well-being.

Discipline, Trial, Endeavour, are all parts of Education and man, and the world in which he abides is constructed evidently upon the design of developement by these agents. Man is not created to be passive to the influences around him, he is trained by resistance. Altogether another world would have been needed for a passive character, or if not another world, how different the class of feelings and of powers which have fitted man for the present. How helplessly he lies upon the kind maternal bosom! Who, by the strongest flight of the imagination, could ever identify that poor little weakling with the mighty controller of armies and senates? who could fancy

in him the forest-render, the sea king, and the iron conqueror? how long is the period during which he demands the utmost extension of the parental guardianship? and in childhood, and in manhood, he is destitute of all those tools and instruments and arms for the purpose of supplying the necessities of life, or of depredation and attack or defence with which other animals are endowed. Yet, there is a difference, and in the difference resides the source of his power; but for the difference he would be of course the most helpless creature in the world; he would be the prey to every other; as it is, he is the undisputed monarch and lord of the creation, of this visible world; every kingdom of nature yields up to him its product as his lawful spoil; sea, air, land, the distant desert sand, the wild and all but impenetrable forest wild, the depth of the ocean, all are placed beneath the sceptre of his authority; and the animate and the inanimate are alike made to pay tribute to his lordship. Man, too, the inferior race, the inferior in skill and in education, is made to pay tribute to his superior. The lower type of humanity is the beast of burden to the higher; all the arrangements of society, all the apportionments of our planet prove that not only Mind is the supreme and reigning power, but that Mind skilled, trained, and educated, must ever have dominion over Mind unskilled and rude.

Thus, then, we may say the great object of man's residence here is to be educated;

> "And, if as holiest men have deemed there be
> A land of souls beyond the sable shore,
> To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee,"

who does not see that this life must have a relation to that? Our intellectual position in the next world must be determined greatly by our position in this. Death may—or rather immortality may—intensify our powers, but relatively to other powers they will be left precisely in the same position. Our whole life is an education,—we are "ever learning," every moment of time, everywhere, under all circumstances something is being added to the stock of our previous attainments. Mind is always at work when once its operations commence. All men are learners, whatever their occupation, in the palace, in the cottage, in the park, and the field. These are the laws stamped upon Humanity—Progress, Advancement, Growth, Activity. COLERIDGE has well said there is no standing still with Mind: "if a man is not rising upwards to be an angel he is going downwards to be a devil." Progress is not necessarily progress in or towards goodness; but the conditions of development lie around us. Everything intimates to us that we are at school, and it is not possible to be at school without occasionally having lessons, very severe, very hard to learn. Discipline is by its very nature severe; yet, is there no power in man without its necessity; and there is no power, therefore, which the arrangements of society or the arrangements of Nature, do not tend to call into play and activity. Nothing in Mind should be allowed to run wildly to action; our physical energies, our propensities, our intellectualisations, our sentiments, all should be put into harness, all should be made to bear the yoke.

Thus we begin to see something of the nature of education; but, then again, we may say all education must

be Self-Education;* feeding the body, or feeding the mind, are alike pieces of workmanship that no one can do for us; all the education that has ever been in the world, has been the result of self-determination, self-training, and self-

* Most admirably says THOMAS CARLYLE: "But what, after all, is meant by *uneducated*, in a time when books have come into the world, come to be household furniture in every habitation of the civilized world? In the poorest cottage are books—is one Book, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is deepest in him,—wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the mystery of existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed; if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result. 'In books lie the creative Phœnix ashes of the whole past.' All that men have devised, discovered, done, felt, or imagined, lies recorded in books; wherein whoso has learned the art of spelling printed letters may find it and appropriate it. Nay, what indeed is all this? *As if it were by universities, and libraries, and lecture-rooms, that man's education, what we can call education, were accomplished;* solely or mainly by instilling the dead letter and record of other men's force, that the living force of a new man were to be awakened, enkindled, and purified into victorious clearness! Foolish pedant that sittest there compassionately descanting on the learning of Shakspere! Shakspere had penetrated into innumerable things; far into nature with her divine splendours and infernal terrors, her ariel melodies and mystic mandragora moans; far into man's workings with nature, into man's art and artifice; Shakspere knew innumerable things,—what men are, and what the world is, and how and what men aim at there, from the Dame Quickly of modern Eastcheap to the Cæsar of ancient Rome, over many countries and many centuries; of all this he had the clearest understanding and constructive comprehension; *all this was his learning and insight;* what now is thine? Insight into

reliance. Many persons are accustomed to think if they were only born in circumstances where books were plentiful, and philosophical instruments abounded; where they only had to put on the head a sort of Fortunatus Cap, and, by wishing for any thing, find it in their possession, they would then, they imagine, be highly educated persons; as if knowledge could ever be obtained without labour; as if, by a sort of magic, books could be read, and their contents remembered and generalised; as if all the colleges and universities in the world could ever be of any use to the development of mind, without patient and enduring perseverance, and intelligence. Some time since, the writer was walking through the library of a man who has made himself celebrated in many large circles throughout England, by his power in wielding alike the tongue and the pen, and the accomplishments of whose scholarship are more than equal to his more talked of celebrities. Now there was with us one of the pretending ones, who had a notion that only tools were necessary in order that work might be done; and when he looked round the library, he said "Ah, it's no wonder that you write and speak so well, with all these books," but they both had the same opportunity of acquiring a library, or rather, the wondering spectator had a better opportunity than the other, who sprang from poverty, and from the tailor's board, not only to acquire a library,

none of those things; perhaps strictly considered, into no thing whatever; solely into thy own sheep-skin diplomas, fat academic honours, into vocables, and alphabetic letters, and but a little way into these! *The grand result of schooling is a mind with just vision to discern, with free force to do: the grand schoolmaster is practice.*"

but to pour a light and lustre over the whole of England, and a very considerable portion of America.

TOOLS, AND NO TOOLS, how much may be said upon this topic in the way of education! We again repeat it, that many are foolish enough to suppose that tools alone are necessary to make a workman; that the possession of a good library, and philosophical instruments, alone will make the erudite and the philosophic mind. Ridiculous! Does the possession of the organ make the organist! or the hammer the blacksmith, or the plane and hand-saw the carpenter? There is no royal road to knowledge; time, patience, and energy, these consecrate the tools, and give efficiency and purpose to them. Some workmen labour without tools, they fashion their own; they have no money to buy, the busy brain therefore is taxed to invent. Memory furnishes us with another illustration pertinent to our present purpose. One fine day, the writer was walking through one of the lovely valleys of the North of England; he had promised to call upon three several persons, all strangers to him: the first was a young man, of some twenty-five years of age, of wealth which might be truly said to be immense; his mansion was large, his gardens costly: and after looking over the latter, the writer was taken into some parts of the former. There was a laboratory, but all unused to the purposes of labour; a variety of philosophical tools were placed all around—a magnificent telescope—a microscope of great power—a little model steam-engine—a daguerreotypic machine, a fine electric battery; with all these our friend was wholly un-

acquainted: he knew not how to use them; he never performed the slightest experiments with them: they seemed to have found their way there wholly by chance. We stepped from the laboratory into the study or library, (places are frequently strangely misnomered,) it was truly a magnificent collection of books; two thousand volumes, perhaps; many of them very expensive. Desirous of sounding his host, the writer turned volume after volume, all were uncut, uncut, uncut; at last, one better fated than the rest turned up, "Ranke's History of the Popes," first volume partially cut. "How do you like this?" "Oh, that? Eh! Ah! Yes! Why, my sister's reading it. I've not read it yet, myself." Thus, in the laboratory, there was not an instrument the usage of which the owner fairly comprehended; or in the study, a book which the owner had read. Here were the tools, abundant enough; but the tools came before necessity called for them, and, therefore they were useless. From the mansion on the breast of the hill, every day catching the bright cheery sunshine, another visit was paid to a small cottage in the depths of the valley, a mile or two away from the mansion. The owner, here, could purchase very few of the tools of knowledge, but he was an enthusiastic lover of knowledge, and, therefore, he made his own tools. His earnings were under one pound a week, and the cottage was very small, with only its two or three rooms; but it excited more veneration than the costly and well furnished mansion: every thing was scrupulously neat, and all around the little parlour were arranged beautiful pieces of bird-stuffing,

boxes and drawers too, made by the same hands that stuffed the birds. The hands of the owner of the cottage were filled with all varieties of insect and leaf, rock and shell; the laboratory and the study of our friend in this cottage, had been Nature's wide and ample domain; he had scaled the summit of the highest hill, again and again; he had penetrated to the depths of the lowest ghyll: every dingle, every forest path, every meadow walk, had been the scene of communings of Nature. Twinkling streams, that flashed and rippled along the worn stones; the waving branches of old trees; quiet solitudes seldom trodden by human feet; these were the various chambers of the same great study, the various pages covered with the same hand-writing. Taking down the catalogue of the Botanical Society of London, with a pride which was truly beautiful, because the legitimate child of Self-respect and Industry, he showed his name, given and appended to some rare variety of herb or plant he had discovered. This man had little book knowledge, but he had a kind of knowledge, out of which the most valuable books are made; a knowledge which can never be acquired by books alone, because the result of observation, reflection, and experiment; and all this without tools. What a proof of mental independence! What an illustration of the power of mind to conquer difficulties, and make the difficulties, indeed, tributary to its resources and its energies. Yet, another visit was paid that afternoon, to another labourer for a few shillings a week; and, although he was not an illustrious example, like the last, he also attested to the principle we are

elucidating. He, poor glorious labourer, was a sober bookman. Pleasant little cottage it is, there, down there, quite visible to the eye, so clean, so neat; and its small book-case so well filled with books; so well chosen. After a long and weary walk there, a regaling cup of tea was the reward; and what a talk we had! while the good wife wondered to hear her husband so learned, as the witty things of Butler, and Swift, and Shakspere, and the wise things of Milton, and Foster, and Brown, and the folly of old Sancho, and the mirthfulness of hearty Sir Walter were bandied about between us.

But knowledge and education find one of their most valuable ends in the furnishing of other and better tools to man. This is the meaning of the so often quoted phrase, "Knowledge is power." It is power principally, because it teaches us to economise our strength. Ever since man commenced the travels of his ingenuity, he has bent his energies to the compelling others, or other things to work for him: as the negro laughably but truly said of the Englishman, so we may say of the whole of the race, "Him catche horse, make him work; catche iron, make him work; catche smoke, make him work; catche Negro, make him work." Every advance towards civilization beholds man making water, wind, the metals, and the beasts of the field, all alike obedient to him.—This is the product of knowledge—knowledge of causes and their effects. Not a tool is used in labour, but it results from this, and proclaims loudly that knowledge is power. What are the chisels of the sculptor, the last of the

shoemaker, the instruments of the surgeon, the needles of the tailor, the pencils of the artist? Man, it must be remembered, is a learner, and a learner from Nature.

"Man," says DR. WHEWELL, "can construct exquisite machines; can call in vast powers; can form extensive combinations, in order to bring about results which he has in view. But in all this he is only taking advantage of the laws of Nature which already exist; he is applying to his use qualities which Matter already possesses. Nor can he by any effort do more. He can establish no new law of Nature, which is not a result of the existing ones; he can invest Matter with no new properties which are not modifications of its present attributes. His greatest advances in skill and power are when he calls to his aid forces which before existed unemployed, or when he discovers so much of the habits of some of the elements as to be able to bend them to his purpose. He navigates the ocean by the assistance of the winds, which he cannot raise or still; and even if we suppose him able to control the forces of these, his yet unsubjugated ministers, this could only be done by studying their characters, by learning more thoroughly the laws of air, of heat, of moisture.—He cannot give the minutest portion of the atmosphere new relations, a new course of expansion, new laws of motion."

Thus we find ourselves everywhere bound in; everywhere we are fenced round by laws, beyond which we cannot pass; everywhere an iron necessity exclaims to us—"Thus far—no farther;" but by watching

Nature we obtain dominion over Nature; and thus every accession man makes to his knowledge, enlarges his power; for knowledge is property, and property is power. Ideas, when they come to the mind, enrich it; and far more good is done for a man when you have imparted to him knowledge and ideas, than when you have given to him gold, although few people, perhaps, would be able to reason thus. In fact, whenever we look through the world, we behold some illustrious instances, proving that KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.—Man, knowing by observation the method of Nature, has contrived and designed, and in many instances apparently defeated her orignal intentions from the doings of Knowledge. England, and many parts of the world beside, are covered with magnificent marvels, to which all the widest flights of man's fancy are but the ravings of delirium. At the moment that I write, a considerable portion of the land, very much submerged beneath the waters in the eastern parts of England, is being brought under cultivation; and very soon may another county be added to the Queen's dominions. We walk beneath the beds of rivers; we are borne along with certain and almost inconceivable rapidity upon the waves of the old ocean; the whole kingdom, too, is made to wear the appearance of a garden, or a manufactory; the most worthless things, apparently, have been seized by Industry and Science, and made available to useful purposes. Light and Lightning have both been pounced upon by Mind: and Magnetism, if the last, is yet coming in now to aid the cause of human development still more; the last, but the most wonderful chapter

of human attainment. The most striking characteristic of the knowledge of the present age, is its practical tendency. · Perhaps we are not so much superior to the ancients in skill, but in the application of new agents. It is computed that the cost to Egypt of the great pyramid of Ghiza was the labour of 200,000 men for twenty years. Some twenty years ago a calculation was made in England, that the steam-engine, then in work, would do the same work in twenty-four hours. The broad Atlantic is already shrunk into a streamlet by the pressure of steam. The news of the taking of Beyrout travelled 5,000 miles in twenty-three days, and Time and Space seem at last on the verge of annihilation.

The benefits of knowledge have been classified by Sir JOHN HERSCHELL,* under the following heads :—

I. In showing us how to avoid attempting impossibilities.

II. In securing us from important mistakes; in attempting what is itself possible, by means either inadequate or actually opposed to the end in view.

III. In enabling us to accomplish our ends in the easiest, shortest, most economical, and most effectual manner.

IV. In inducing us to attempt, and enabling us to accomplish objects, which, but for such knowledge we should never have thought of undertaking.

* See his invaluable Introduction to Natural Philosophy, a book which may be read, and read, and read again, and then again.

These four advantages of knowledge may be frequently pondered, and the illustrations which may be cited to give effect and cogency to the classification. The history of mining operations is full of illustrations of attempts to obtain coal from spots, when the most trifling knowledge of geology would have instantly determined that it was an utter impossibility; and how numerous have been the casualties from mistakes made by the ignorant, for instance, from the ignorance of the nature of the gases, especially of carbonic acid gas or fixed air; ignorance of the first principles of Mechanics, and the properties of falling bodies; ignorance of Optics, and of Electricity; all of these are connected with the events of daily life. Circumstances have frequently occurred in which ignorance has been fatal, and such circumstances may frequently occur; it is therefore the duty of all to avail themselves of the lesson by which their own lives may be preserved, or by which they may be enabled to preserve the lives of others.

But from these discursive remarks upon a most self-evident topic, namely, the benefits of knowledge, we return to Self-Education. Self-made Men, it has often been said, are best made men.

"I learned grammar," says WILLIAM COBBETT, "when I was a private soldier, on the pay of sixpence a-day. The edge of my berth, or that of my guard-bed, was my seat to study in; my knapsack was my book-case, and a bit of board lying in my lap, was my writing-table. I had no money to purchase candle or oil; in winter time it was

rarely that I could get any light but that of the fire, and only my turn even of that. To buy a pen or sheet of paper, I was compelled to forego some portion of food, though in a state of half starvation. I had no moment of time that I could call my own; and I had to read and write amid the talking, laughing, singing, whistling, and bawling of at least half a score of the most thoughtless of men; and that, too, in hours of freedom from all control. And I say, if I, under circumstances like these, could encounter and overcome the task, can there be, in the whole world, a youth who can find an excuse for the non-performance?"

It is a needless work to reason with those who have seriously bent their minds to the pursuit of knowledge; and it sometimes appears an equally needless work to reason with those who have reached years of manhood, and have not done so. Self-made men, however, have always had the advantage of difficulties to overcome, and these are great advantages. They have taken for their motto—"Nil desperandum," which has been translated by somebody to mean, "Never mind, at him again." Difficulties vanish before a determined and resolute mind, while they advance upon and overcome a timid and cowering one. "Madam," said one of the Ministers of Louis XVI. to Marie Antoinette, "if the thing is only difficult, it is done; if it is impossible, it shall be done." Boastful language this, but indeed representative of the power of some minds over difficulties, that would crush others to the earth. Tasso represents Tancred in the

enchanted forest, fronted by a lofty wall of solid fire, and the vast brood of warlike enginery, but Tancred was not dismayed.

> "'If boldly I advance the fires I see
> More fierce in aspect, than in fact may be;
> But come the worst.' As thus the hero spoke,
> A desperate leap amid the flames he took.
> Boldness unmatched! Yet did no heat intense,
> As of surrounding fire affect his sense,
> Nor rightly in a space so brief he knew,
> If fancied were the flames he saw or true,
> For hardly touched, the baseless phantom flew."

When difficulties are met in this way, they are gone. Laziness is perpetually saying, "There is a Lion in the way;" and the Lion very well knows in which street Laziness lives, aud he is frequently there. We have already said it is no very desirable thing to find every wish answered, to move through flowery paths of ease in the acquisition of knowledge. Time is not precious, money is not precious, and learning itself is not precious; what motive then can there be to exertion: if my friend, the reader, has been born poor, as the writer was, and, like the writer, has had a stern severe battle in the "bivouac of life?" yet he will by no means repine if he be true-hearted; he will know how much more considerable are his gains than his losses; he will learn to estimate the value of poverty, as a means for teaching, he will prize those instructions which were won with so much difficulty. The main idea of this book is to hold out a hand to those who, by the circumstances around

them, are compelled to be self-helpers: for you, my friend, there is, and has been, no University Hall; the dim religious light of old Colleges has never shed its serenity upon your brows; you have never stood before the Professorial Chair; no chartered endowments have stifled you with their charity; you have had to buy your every book, dearly has every precious fragment of knowledge been obtained; sometimes sitting by the forge, sometimes by the chimney nook; you scarcely need such encouragement as the writer can give, but a hailing and fraternal voice to throw a cheer, and a lantern to throw a stray beam of light over the path; a hearty congratulation for difficulties already conquered, and an assurance that the same rugged fortitude shall conquer a thousand more.

And this is the testimony, too, of some of the wisest spirits of our modern times.

Dr. OLINTHUS GREGORY says: "With a few exceptions, (so few indeed, that they need scarcely be taken into a practical estimate,) any person may learn anything upon which he sets his heart. To insure success, he has simply so to discipline his mind as to check its vagrancies, to cure it of its constant proneness to be doing two or more things at a time, and to compel it to direct its combined energies, simultaneously, to a single object, and thus to do one thing at once. This I consider as one of the most difficult, but one of the most useful lessons that a young man can learn."

DR. CHANNING says:—"It is asked, how can the labouring man find time for self-culture? I answer, that

an earnest purpose finds time or makes time. I seize on spare moments, and turn fragments into golden account. A man who follows his calling with industry and spirit, and uses his earnings economically, will always have some portion of the day at command. And it is astonishing how fruitful of improvement a short season becomes, when eagerly seized and faithfully used. It has often been observed, that those who have the most time at their disposal profit by it the least. A single hour in the day, steadily given to the study of some interesting subject, brings unexpected accumulations of knowledge."

But in Education, as in other matters, Man is impatient. He cannot wait, he despises small beginnings. Now this especially should be a preliminary lesson, "*never despise small beginnings.*" It is related of Chantry, the celebrated sculptor, that when a boy, he was observed by a gentleman, at Sheffield, very attentively engaged in cutting a stick with a penknife. He asked the lad what he was doing, and with great simplicity, but courtesy, he replied, "I'm cutting old Fox's head." Fox was the schoolmaster of the village. On this the gentleman asked to see what he had done, and pronounced the likeness excellent, presenting the youth with a sixpence; and this was most likely the first sum Chantry ever received for the practice of his art. Beginnings mark endings. Nature teaches us through all her works to regard the small; nothing is in vain, everything is cumulative, and this is noticeable in moral, as in material things. Wealth, fame, education, all are things of growth imperceptible, but certain, if only the mind

intently bend itself forward to the work of advancement. The tree which rocks and sways to and fro, and howls back the breath of the tempest was but a little seed: the Franklins, and Fergusons, and Herschells, although they illuminated every path of science through which they walked, were plodding, patient men; and so cheer you up. "By time and patience the acorn became an oak."

And now, if there has been any value in those preliminary hints, let them be applied in the reading of this book, and in the future progress of the Educational career. Education is indeed the real purpose and business of life. It has been already said, we are in this world to be educated. "Uneducated Mind is educated Vice." "That the soul be without knowledge is not good;" man is intended to be instructed: and although powers lie undeveloped and unknown, the beautiful alchemy of knowledge makes them start up like angels of life, clad with wings of gold. How deplorable is the condition of man in this age of the unknowing and the ignorant! Dr. Johnson was once asked, "Who is the most miserable man?" and the sage replied, "The man who cannot read on a rainy day." It is certain that the man who has no resources within himself—resources supplied by reading and reflection—is indeed a miserable man: his life is a blank; for it is our mental life that brings out into full light and relief our daily and hourly life. He grows up like a vegetable: his world is bounded by his parish; he knows nothing of the great Americas and Indies beyond the deep sea; he knows nothing of the gorgeous worlds, hung in beauty and in

grandeur above his head; nothing knows he of any of the secrets of Nature. He is a prey to the wizard and the conjuror.—Nothing knows he of ages long past, with the roll and swell of all their deeds of glory, or of shame; and as little of the present, with all its stirring thoughts, and things, and men: he comprehends nothing of the march of man from age to age.—All improvement is innovation; all new things are bad things.

Now is not this a deplorable mind?*—for such a mind is unable to fulfil the purpose of its being, and must frequently rush into errors fatal to its happiness and its welfare. A person once passing through a park, saw nailed to one of the trees—"All dogs found in this park will be shot." A friend, who was with him, said, "Unless dogs can read, they are pretty badly off here." But a man in the present state of society, without knowledge, is worse off than the dog in the park. He has, indeed a master to read for him; but many of our fellow-men have left the state of nature in which they dwelt near

* "Let us never forget that ignorance is not simply the negation of knowledge. It is something positive. It is not the mere absence of a good, but the presence of an evil. It is not the mere calm of an unoccupied mind, but the misdirection of that mind. The soul of man is irrepressibly active. If it work not for good, it works for evil. If it grasp not golden knowledge, it will clutch at whatever lies nearest. In the untaught soul the passions and brute instincts are like unchained beasts. For, indeed, the mind of man is as an open book, in which, if we do not trace the fair characters of knowledge, there is every danger that it will be crawled over with the hideous, staggering characters of vice."—*The Coming Reformation.*

to the first instincts of life, and they have not attained to the intellectual life which is beyond those provisions. From such persons civilization has taken more than it has given. Alas for man! if he cannot intelligently read and reason upon his duty in the great mysterious web of things around him; and alas for the nation crowded with many such citizens! EDMUND BURKE wisely said, "Education is the cheap defence of nations:" and the man whose mind is enlightened by intelligence, and panoplied by virtue, is, of all men, most likely to feel an interest in the grave affairs of his country, and to pronounce such a verdict, that the interests of his land may not be jeopardised and invaded. And if learning at all, if at all educated, then well educated.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing."

But the remedy for that is easy: make it greater. No learning at all is surely the most dangerous thing in the world; and "it is," says THOMAS CAMPBELL, the poet, "a danger that in this country, at least, cannot possibly exist. A man who can read his Bible has a little learning; a man who can only plough or dig has less; a man who can only break stones upon the road, less still, but he has some. The savages, in one of the islands in the South Seas, stood with great reverence round a sailor, who had lighted a fire to boil some water in a saucepan; but as soon as the water began to boil, they ran away in an agony of terror. Compared with the savages, there is no boy in Europe, of the age of ten years, who may not be called learned. He

has a certain quantity of practical knowledge in physics; and, as this knowledge is more than instinct, it is learning —learning which differs in degree only from that which enables a chemist to separate the simple metals from soda and potash." Again, we say, let it be the object of the young inquirer to grow in knowledge, and to understand the topic, or the book, to which he has given his attention, well. No subject worthy of thought at all is a mean subject; and, however insignificant it may seem to others it it not so insignificant but that it may be learned well. A good story is told of a late eminent merchant of Boston, in America, which we may recommend all young men to remember. When Mr. William Gray was somewhat advanced in years, he was one day superintending a piece of carpenter's work, and he had occasion to reprimand the man who was performing it for not doing his work well. The carpenter turned upon him—he and Billy having known each other in youth—and said, "Billy Gray, what do you presume to scold me for? You are a rich man, it is true; but didn't I know you when you where nothing but a drummer?" "Well," said Mr. Gray, "didn't I drum well, eh? did'nt I drum *well?*" Let every lad, whose eye is upon this page, try to do his drumming well. The nobility or the ignobility is not in the employment, but in our elevation or degradation of it. "This one thing I do." The secret of success is very frequently in this power to concentrate energy and attention upon the "one thing." Strike out your aim, and then follow it with pertinacity, with earnestness, and resolution. The

humblest powers are exalted by perpetual polishing and attention. Difficulties, as we have already said, yield up the combat, and retire from the field; and you have the satisfaction of feeling that your mind has borne the yoke and harness, in order that in the arena it might win the goal.

This book must be a short one, and it must, moreover, be a Book of Hints. The first thought that strikes upon our mind is the value of Youth, when the blood is bounding high, when the feelings are fresh and strong, when habits are easily made—habits which may be for good or evil, rivet round the whole future life. And I will suppose that this youth is now yours, that my reader is thus blessed with the first energies of life, and that he is disposed to bring them, and consecrate them upon the Altars of Knowledge, and Virtue, and Religion. But Youth is flying even while I am writing, and while you are reading:—

"No eye perceives our growth or our decay;
To-day,—we look as we did yesterday,
And we shall look to-morrow as to-day.
Yet,—while the loveliest smiles, her locks grow grey,
And in her glass could she but see the face,
She'll see as soon amidst another race,
How would she start,—returning from afar,
After some years of travel—some of war?
In his own Halls Ulysses stood unknown,
Before a wife, a father, and a son." *

Such a change so slow—sure, although imperceptible,

* SAMUEL ROGERS' "Human Life."

is stealing over us all; it is stealing, my young friend, over you. Does it not say, as its shadow creeps over you, "What thou doest do quickly!"

But Religion—Religion should be made the foundation of Duty and of Action. Religion had better not be studied so much as it has been, through the medium of books. "The Kingdom of God is within you." Sit lonely with the one book—the New Testament—"the Powers of the world to come" will, beyond all question, speak to your soul. One of the most illustrious and princely English thinkers of our age, SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, has said, "An hour of solitude in sincere and earnest prayer, or the conflict with, and conquest over a sinful passion, or subtle bosom sin, will teach us more of thought, will more effectually awaken the faculty, and form the habit of reflection, than a year's study in the Schools without them." Religion—that is God united to and the fountain of action in the Human Soul—it should be remembered, if it has any truth at all this is *the* truth, and all other instructions, and instructors, and studies, wave round it as so many subsidiary lights. If you are thirsting for some exalted religious sympathy, then read Pascal's "Thoughts on Religion," the production of a truly wonderful man—profound, eloquent, philosophical, and simple beyond most books, Surely God, Immortality, Destiny, should be the first *thoughts you attempt* to weigh in their relation to yourself.

Finally, the young man stands, like Hercules of old, between two powerful Enchantresses—INDOLENCE upon

the one hand, and ENTERPRISE, or INDUSTRY, on the other. Each come to the youthful mind with spells of power. Indolence offers her tempting Lethean draught; she invites to a life of ease and quiet; to that genteel respectability tat never allows its votary

"To say a foolish thing,
And never do a wise one."

Indolence, the guardian angel of the Oriental throne; the spirit that weighs down the powers of the brave or the intellectual: who spreads the soft carpet and the gentle sward; who invites to meandering streams and all the tame enjoyments of life; the everlasting grumbler, who never wrote a book, or sung a glorious hymn, or perfected an existence, or enlarged the boundaries of Science, or ascended a mountain, or performed a noble feat. Indolence! the enslaver of the popular mind, at once the tyrant's master and his sceptre, the inertia of the soul; she tells the listening votary that Books, and Problems, and Poems, and Discussions, and world betterings, are all full of trouble and anxiety; she implores her friends to take things coolly; she puts on a most amiable physiognomy, and speaks of the pleasures of the fireside, the enjoyments of home; she bids you nod over the fender, and recline at ease upon the sofa; and while she offers her garland of flowers, she bears away her lovers to the dance: and there they go who follow her, and who love her—

"A parson much bemused by beer,
A maudlin poet and a rhyming peer,
A clerk foredoomed his father's soul to cross,
To pen a stanza when he should engross."

Or may we impersonate the Genius of Intellectual and Moral INDUSTRY, the companion and assistant of Virtue and of Civilization? She offers to the generous youth her book, and her pen. What tales has she to recite of

> "——— the marvellous boy,
> The sleepless soul that perished in his pride;
> Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
> Following his plough along the mountain's side."

She evades no difficulty; she invokes her followers by the prophecy of difficulties to be conquered. "He who wrestles with you," she says, "strengthens your nerves, and sharpens your skill; your Antagonist is your Helper; your conflict with difficulty will not suffer you to be superficial." Industry comes to the task of the youthful student, and hallows it; she makes the page to shine out with the impression of great names; she points to the temples where the illustrious dead of every age and nation are gathered. Her deeds have often been called madness; but even as when Sophocles was charged with insanity, he read his Œdipus Coloneus to his judges, and was at once acquitted, so can all good men point to their works. Industry preaches of the greatness, of the dignity of Difficulty, the renown of Danger, and the heroism and advantage of Suffering: and shows you how, when the cold, chill, wet earth, wraps round your remains, by a patient continuance in well doing, the reward of all your seeking, training, education, is "Glory, Honour, Immortality, Eternal Life."

IT is told of a religious recluse, who, in the early ages

of Christianity, betook himself to a cave in Upper Egypt, which, in the times of the Pharaohs, had been a depository for mummies, that he prayed there, morning, noon, and night, eating only of the dates which some neighbouring trees afforded, and drinking of the water of the Nile. At length, the hermit became weary of life, and then he prayed still more earnestly.

After this duty, one day he fell asleep, and the vision of an angel appeared to him in a dream, commanding him to arise, and cut down a neighbouring palm-tree, and make a rope of its fibres, and after it was done, the angel would appear to him again. The hermit awoke, and instantly applied himself to obey the vision.

He travelled about, from place to place, many days before he could procure an axe; and during this journey, he felt happier than he had been for many years. His prayers were now short and few; but what they wanted in length and number, they out-measured in fervency.

Having returned with the axe, he cut down the tree; and, with much labour and assiduity during several days, prepared the fibres to make the rope; and, after a continuance of daily occupation for some weeks, completed the command.

The vision that night appeared to the hermit, as promised, and thus addressed him: "You are now no longer weary of life, but happy. Know then, that man was made for labour; and prayer also is his duty: the one as well as the other is essential to his well-being. Arise in the morning take the cord, and with it gird up thy loins, and go forth

into the world; and let it be a memorial to thee, of what God expects from man, if he would be blessed with happiness on earth.

Before we close our introductory chapter, however, lest it should be thought that we have closed the door of Hope for the aged students, we will just say, "You are never too old to learn." SOCRATES, at an extreme old age, learned to play upon musical instruments; CATO, at eighty years of age, learned the Greek language; PLUTARCH was between seventy and eighty when he commenced the study of Latin; BOCCACIO neglected the polite Sciences until he was thirty years of age, yet he became one of the three great masters of the Tuscan Dialect; SIR HENRY SPELMAN was a most learned Antiquarian and Lawyer, yet he did not commence his studies until he was nearly sixty years of age; DR. JOHNSON commenced, we are told, the study of the Dutch language a few years before his death. Who then is too old to be a student? Let this be a motto with all—"Never too old to learn." The above instances are only selections from thousands of similar cases. The great DR. HUNTER had been quite neglected in his youth, and only went to London to assist his brother in his surgery; he instantly demonstrated his powers, and became the first Anatomist of his age. Only this is certain: however old you may be, or however young, it is time to begin if you have not already begun.

WON'T, CAN'T, AND TRY.

An Episode for a Leading Place.

It is strange to notice the difference there is in disposition, character, and success, between persons descended from the same family stock. Nobody could suppose that all the three fellows whose names stand up there at the head of this page could be descended from the same great-grandfather. Different as their surnames are, they all had the same family christian name "*I.*" Of the three, Won't was the eldest; a misanthropic, glumpy old man, too: he was as rich as Pluto, as suspicious as sin could make him; he had large parks, and many a family mansion, in which he and his family had entrenched themselves for centuries; the whole world was in movement around him. Old Won't would never budge an inch. But Old Won't had no notion of the heavenly economy of getting rich by giving; many of his possessions were useless to him, and quite unproductive, that might well have turned in every year fifty per cent. He hugged everything tightly, and gratified and contented himself with the mere beggarly gratification of having. Obstinacy, ignorance, and selfishness,—these were the old man's chief virtues—for virtues he called them. Scornfully he always passed by the door of the poor sick widow; savagely he grinned and thundered "No!" when a piece of ground was requested of him for a mechanics' institute; in fact, the life of this

surly old curmudgeon might be numbered rather by negatives than by years—it was one protracted fit of opposition, one answer silenced all inquiries. "Sir, I'm a blunt man; say a thing and do a thing is my motto; my name is Won't, and I won't." And the consequence was, that there was "nothing stirring but stagnation" in the neighbourhood of the testy old gentleman. The cottages of his tenantry would have made respectable pigstyes in the time of Thomas a Becket; and the intelligence and the temperance of the cottagers belonged to the same very bright and glorious age. To all schemes of improvement in which he was requested to lead the way, the answer was, "I won't." "My dear sir, may I beg you to read these documents?" said a neighbour to him once. "I never read, I don't want to read, read I won't." There was only one grim character to whom he said "I won't," who snapped his withered fingers in the leathern face of the old human milestone, and said "but I will." It was old DEATH, who insisted upon it, that the old gentleman should step into his boat, and visit the other country. How he fared there, after all his idleness here, who shall say?

A collateral branch of the family of OLD WON'T was YOUNG CAN'T, and a weak, waxen-faced mortal he was, sure enough. When at school, while other boys were, with intrepidity enough, hard at their slates, Euclids, globes, and grammars, this soulless little abortion looked piteously in the face of master, tutor, and fellow-pupil, and murmured, "I can't." It was plain enough that for such a character as this, or rather for one so characterless, a mere automaton existence must be selected, but that was difficult; for every profession, even that of poor Flunkey,

the footman, required energy, action, soul of some kind or other; and, in fact, many exertions were made to procure for poor Can't some decent situation where he could do without any labour. It was of no use; he shifted to all points of the social compass, but there he stood on the old spot at last. The times the poor fellow failed in business it is no use trying to mention; he was like WON'T in one particular—all the world seemed to leave him behind. "My dear sir," he would say, "you see this thing is altogether impossible, it is really no use trying: who can compete with these times?" He could never do without his proper allowance off sleep. He feared both morning and evening air; they were both consumptive. Then, again, whatever he did he had the happy knack of doing at the wrong time, and putting in the wrong place; and then came the everlasting soliloquy, "I cant." A nice way he had, too, of confusing everything he did. He never knew where he was, and yet in such circumstances he always appeared most at home. I have seen him sitting with a pile of unrevised endeavourings before him, and as I went into the room, he cast upon me a doleful glance, heaved a deep-drawn sigh, and murmured—"Ah! you see I can't!"

He was a very sickly young man too; everything was too much for him: "I can't bear any exertion;" "I can't attend to it now, but as soon as I have had my afternoon's nap, then"—there is no doubt about it,—I have had it from the best authority,—he might have married one of the sweetest creatures in all the old country town; it was said she did cast some kindly looks at the stupid fellow; but, luckily for her, when he attempted to put the delicate question, he said—"I can't," and gave it up, in a fit of

despair. At last all persons despised the poor wretch, who never had courage for himself or for others; and he was lost sight of, until the other day, in walking through one of the wards of a workhouse, who should I see, stretched on a bed, but this very poor fellow. It was evident his last hour was approaching, idleness and poverty had done their work. The nurse stood by his side with a mixture from the doctor, invoking him to take it; he made many a wry contortion of face—"I can't, I can't," he said; his head fell back, and he died.

Altogether of a different stamp, was another branch of the same family, the most modest, yet the most bold of all my acquaintance—TRY. It was remarkable that, without any of the prophecies of the boaster, of what he meant to do, he always performed more than any one else. You calculated upon his success as a matter of course: there was a rough dignity about his manner that bespoke self-respect, self-confidence, and courage. "Never despair," was his constant motto. Difficulties beset him; he laughed at them, strangled them, set his foot upon them. He had no possession left to him, like Old Won't, yet he has been getting, I should say, well to do in the world; and he both gives more occupation to others, than the old fellow, in the course of the year, and his servants love him more. He had nothing like the money expended on his education that was expended on Young Can't: but he knows more, and makes what he knows yield him a better interest; for he thinks that knowledge, like money, should be put out to interest. I don't know that we so often hear him say, "I'll do it;" but not a week passes, but he says, "I'll try." And he is such a cheerful soul:—I have often noticed, that those people who have the most to do are

the most cheerful. While the life of Old Won't was a real burden to him, and was passed in an everlasting grunt —while the life of Young Can't was like a lounge, with the hands in the pocket, face as long as a fiddle and as white as a candle, and the breath only a fluid to sigh with —Try is always merry and cheerful; his very laugh is like the exultancy of conquest. A school was wanted in the town where he conducted his business, but all the people said one could not be erected; said he, "I'll try," and the school was built. Can't was his neighbour for some time; but while Can't was tumbling over mole-hills, Try was climbing mountains; it was observable that he got through ten times the business of other men, and made far less noise about it. There was no setting bounds to the labours of Try; I declare we have not got a good or excellent thing in our village which he did not get for us: he built our school and our chapel—they had never been erected but for his exertions; our news room and our Total Abstinence Society we owe them to him. Some stood by and sneered, some dared him to success—he only said, "I'll try." He has lived a good while here now, and we all know him. The magistrate sits on the bench and administers the law; our parson, dressed up in black, makes fine sermons from the pulpit; but although good friend Try is neither parson nor lawyer, neither one nor the other win so much respect as they pass down the street; people never look at him, but they see a walking, moving sermon; and I am sure our village will never be any better than it is, until all our young men follow more closely the footsteps of I'LL TRY.

CHAPTER II.

HOW TO OBSERVE.

In observation all knowledge begins. There is such a thing as seeing without sight. An interesting and useful writer* says:—"Let a man have all the world can give him, he is still miserable, if he has a grovelling, unlettered, undevout mind. Let him have his gardens, his fields, his woods, his lawns for grandeur, plenty, ornament, and gratification; while at the same time God is not in all his thoughts. And let another man have neither field nor garden; let him look only at nature with an enlightened mind—a mind which can see and adore the Creator in his works, can consider them as demonstrations of his power, his wisdom, his goodness, and his truth; this man is greater, as well as happier, in his poverty, than the other in his riches. The one is but little higher than a beast, the other but a little lower than an angel."

The vulgar idea is that the great method of obtaining knowledge is from books; but the method of the wise man is to value books, but to rate them at no more than their proper worth. The eyes see; but there

* Jones of Nayland.

is an inward eye which makes the optic lens subservient to its purpose; and the outward and visible eye is useless—it is without speculation and power, if it is not directed by the ever-vigilant inner eye. Observation —the power of reading Nature—is the great entrance of the Temple of Knowledge: this is the cause of the interest attaching to men; this gives supreme value to their writings. Books by themselves can never make a man worthy of our attention. Books, when they have been read alone, and never compared with men and things, how valueless —how tame, "stale, flat, and unprofitable" they are. Books should never be regarded as more than indexes of reference—as guide-books to Nature's walks and curiosities; and even in this particular, it is far better if we can traverse the walk, and discover the hidden path, and the curious thing, without them. Without the power to observe, it is certain that nothing originally worthy can be given to the world. The power to observe character, and to present it in its various lights and shades, as it passes before the eye —the power to observe Nature—to understand her moods, her tempers, her arrangements. All Nature is but one vast museum, to which Museums, Louvres, *Jardins de Plant*, and Zoological Gardens, are poor, and mean, and tame. Man is perpetually on the stretch, on the gape, to behold the wonderful: he will travel miles, perhaps hundreds of miles, to see the extraordinary, when the truly extraordinary and wonderful—the noteworthy and the strange —are by his foot, and quite within his reach.

Curiosities, I say, are all around; let us look after them,

and you will not fail to find them. Think, for instance, if the common house-Spider has, in every thread which it spins, above four thousand other threads; that four millions of the threadlets of a young spider would not be thicker than a hair of a man's beard. In the wonders of insect architecture, you will find that one species of spider lives in the water, and has a house like a diving-bell; that others build houses on the ground, and close the entrance with a door, having an elastic hinge, which spontaneously keeps it shut.

How many mistakes have been made from the absence of observation—that is, from trusting the eyes without the aid of the reflective powers: thus many of our readers will remember Buffon's description of a Bat:—An animal which is half quadruped and half bird, and which, upon the whole, is neither the one or the other, must be a *monstrous* being; because, by uniting the attributes of two opposite genera, it resembles some of those models presented to us in the great classes of Nature. It is an imperfect quadruped, and still more imperfect bird. A quadruped should have four feet, and a bird should have feathers and wings. And what is all this but a libel upon Nature's method, which is easily detected by the close observation of Nature? So also the wing of the bat has been called a wing of leather, and the idea attached to this undoubtedly is, that it is composed of a very callous membrane—that it is an insensible piece of stuff, like a glove, or a lady's shoe. Can anything be farther from the truth? Modern naturalists tell us, that of all things in creation, the bat's wing is the

most exquisitively sensitive; its delicacy is so great, that it flies principally by the direction of its wing; this is a sort of helm by which it steers safely through all objects that might impede its flight, with as much precision if its eyes be bandaged, and in the night, as if they were uncovered, and in the middle of the day. Few of all the millions that have been stung by the Nettle have condescended to inquire into the cause; yet we might suppose that the pain of the sting would suggest some inquiry. Who has fastened the nettle-leaf upon the pin of the microscope, and inquired into the heart of the mystery? Who has learned that the nettle-leaf is covered with millions of barbed darts, each dart filled with poison; and that the reason why the pain was felt, was, that the dart had not only made a wound, but had deposited the poison to rankle beneath the skin. The simple dandelion is discovered to be the early flower spread everywhere to furnish nutriment to the bee: bees lurk amidst its flowerets, and find new life there; and the wild bees in spring, find their principal support and sustenance from it.—These are instances which we may meet in the fields. And whence, we may ask, whence came all our inventions, as we call them, though the more modest terms would be applications and discoveries? Whence, but from the observation of Nature. Was it not the Nautilus that gave to man the idea of Navigation? Whence the whirl of the water-mill, or the cotton-mill, or all the marvellous instruments of optical science? Observation taught man to calculate eclipses—to measure the earth—to tell the size and distance of the sun—to dis-

cover the moons of Jupiter, and the ring of Saturn; the diving-bell—the composition of the atmosphere —that the diamond is but charcoal: all these pieces of knowledge have resulted from the attentive looking at Nature, and experiments deduced from the observation.

We recently met with a very vivid and interesting picture of the Queen Bee at Home exhibiting this nice power of observation:—"The community of bees, says a writer in the 'British Quarterly Review' is an example of a pure monarchy, unrestrained by any checks on power, yet never deviating into despotism on the one hand, or anarchy on the other. Some years ago, while our gracious Queen was making a royal progress through her northern dominions, we witnessed the no less interesting sight of the progress of a queen-bee, in the glass-hive of an ingenious friend, and lover of nature, at his country retreat. The hive was of that construction which opened from behind, and showed the whole economy within. In a few minutes the queen made her appearance from the lower part of the hive. Her elongated body and tapering abdomen at once distinguished her. She moved along slowly, now and then pausing to deposit an egg in one of the empty combs; and it was most interesting to perceive how she was constantly accompanied by nearly a dozen of bees that formed a circle around her, with their heads invariably turned towards her. This guard was relieved at frequent intervals, so that as she walked forward, a new group immediately took the place of the old, and these having returned again, resumed the

labours in which they had been previously engaged. Her appearance always seemed to give pleasure, which was indicated by a quivering movement of the wings. The labourers, in whatever way occupied, immediately forsook their work, and came to pay homage to their Queen, by forming a guard around her person. Every other part of the hive, meanwhile, presented a busy scene, many bees were seen moving their bodies with a tremulous motion, by which thin and minute films of wax were shaken from their scaly sides. Others were ready to take up this wax and knead it into matter proper for constructing cells. Frequent arrivals of bees from the field brought pollen on their thighs for the young grubs, and honey, which they deposited in the cells. All was activity, order, and peaceful industry. None were idle but the drones, who seemed to stroll about like gentlemen."

But it must be remarked that the principal benefit, perhaps, of observing, is to the mind of the observer. It does not follow that every observation made should be for the benefit of society. Many of the observations may have been made before; but although this may prevent the necessity of their being published to the world, it does not detract from the merit of the discovery, or interfere with the value of the observation to his own mind.—One of the surest methods of obtaining knowledge is to become a close observer of little things. Our observations are inaccurate and indefinite, because we too frequently attempt to seize upon the whole before we have the parts, rather than mount gradually

from the parts to the whole; and every attentive servant, every careful, thoughtful person, must have observed, in some degree; and these observations will help to simplify his employment, and economise his labour and his strength. "The farm servant or day labourer," says LORD BROUGHAM, "whether in his master's employ, or tending the concerns of his own cottage, must derive great practical benefit, must be both a better servant and a more thrifty, and therefore, more comfortable cottager, for knowing something of the nature of soils and manures, which chemistry teaches, and something of the habits of animals, and the qualities and growth of plants, which he learns from Natural History and Chemistry together." In truth, though a man is neither a mechanic nor a peasant, but one having a pot to boil, he is sure to learn from Science lessons which will enable him to cook his morsel better, save his fuel, and both vary his dish and improve it. The art of good and cheap cookery is intimately connected with the principles of chemical philosophy, and has received much, and will yet receive more improvement from their application. Observation teaches us that there is method even in the stirring of a kitchen or parlour fire; this is quite a point of domestic dispute, and it is a well-known fact in the domestic usages and manners of our country, that bachelors alone, of all the men among us, have sole command of the poker. But how is this? Why, the stirring of a fire is a philosophical experiment; and the young father with one child upon his knee, and the other little ones about him, may deliver a lecture upon Pneumatics

and Chemistry. Why do we stir the fire? Because a hollow being made, the heat rarifies the surrounding atmosphere, and then into the partial vacuum rushes the air, and imparting its oxygen, gives life to the fire. Upon this principle, which is plain enough, the following code of laws has been laid down for the management of the fire-place:—

Never stir a fire when fresh coals are put on, particularly when they are very small, because they immediately fall into the vacuum, and prevent the access of the oxygen of the atmosphere.

Always keep the bottom bar clear, because it is there chiefly that the air rushes in to supply the fuel.

Never begin to stir at the top, unless when the bottom is quite clear, and the top only wants breaking; otherwise, the unkindled fuel may be passed down in a body to the bottom, and the access of atmospheric air prevented.

How many are the lessons of wisdom which may be won from a glance at the domestic uses of life! That boiling kettle—how few have taught their children the reason of that bubbling that has expanded the water, and that therefore it is the boiling water is much lighter than the cold, and, like a cork, is floating on the surface, —and that if a pint of cold water were poured into the kettle, from its specific gravity it would fall to the bottom;

yes, and in this kettle we have a familiar illustration of the process of evaporation, which, when carried on by Nature in her vast laboratory, is the cause of rain and sunshine, fair weather and storm. "A mind," says SIR JOHN HERSCHELL, "which has once imbibed a taste for scientific inquiry, and has learnt the habit of applying its principles readily to the cases which occur, has within itself an inexhaustible source of pure and exciting contemplations: one would think that Shakspeare had such a mind in view, when he describes a contemplative man as finding

> 'Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.'

Accustomed to trace the operation of general causes, and exemplification of general laws, in circumstances where the uninformed and uninquiring eye perceives neither novelty nor beauty, he walks in the midst of wonders; every object which falls in his way elucidates some principle, affords some instruction, and impresses him with a sence of harmony and order. Nor is it a mere passive pleasure which is thus communicated. A thousand subjects of inquiry are continually arising in his mind, which keep his faculties in constant exercise, and his thoughts perpetually on the wing, so that lassitude is excluded from his life, and that craving after artificial excitement and dissipation of mind, which leads so many into frivolous, unworthy, and destructive pursuits, is altogether eradicated from his bosom."

But it is not in scientific pursuits alone that the observing faculty may be trained. How utterly unable are we to describe, unless objects have passed through the eye into the mental sensorium; nay, how utterly unable are we to perceive the true meaning of objects. Nature deceives the unpractised eye, and the unnoting ear. There are fine shades of tone and expression, which can only be caught by one who has listened—who has waited upon Nature as a lover, and wooed her at all hours. Hence the gift of the Poet to utter, and the Painter to transfer to his canvas, the fleeting and evanescent beauty. From observation, from personal observation, all the truth and the beauty have resulted; all is the work of the brain, reflecting behind the eye. The eyes of some men, alas! are but little more than optical lenses: the spectacles upon their nose, the glasses of their telescope or microscope, have beheld as much, and have revealed far more. Let such persons go forth into the grand and vivid scenery of Nature, and attempt to recal their impressions, could they ever bring back with them the lights and colours which make up the following fine picture, which we quote from Mr. MACGILLIVRAY'S account of the outer Hebrides, and is a fine illustration of the power of correct colouring from close observation?—

The picture is a thunder storm in the Hebrides.

"Let any one who wishes to have some conception of the sublime, station himself upon a headland of the West Coast of Harris, during the violence of a winter tempest,

and he will obtain it. The blast howls among the grim and desolate rocks around him! black clouds are seen advancing from the west in fearful masses, pouring forth torrents of rain and hail. A sudden flash illuminates the ground, and is followed by the deafening roar of the thunder, which gradually becomes fainter, until the roar of the waves upon the shore prevails over it. Meantime, far as the eye can reach, the ocean boils and heaves, presenting one wide extending field of foam; the spray, from the summits of the billows, sweeping along its surface like drifted snow. No sign of life is to be seen, save when a gull, labouring hard to bear itself up against the blast, hovers over head, or shoots athwart the gloom like a meteor. Long ranges of giant waves rush in succession along the shores; the thunder of the shock echoes among the crevices and caves; the spray mounts along the face of the cliffs to an astonishing height; the rocks shake to their summit, and the baffled waves roll back to meet their advancing successors. If one ventures at this season by some slippery path to peep into the haunts of the cormorant and the rock pigeon, he finds them huddled together in melancholy silence. For whole days and nights they are sometimes doomed to feel the gnawing of hunger, unable to make way against the storm; and often during the winter, they can only make a short daily excursion in quest of a precarious morsel of food. In the meantime the natives are snugly seated around their blazing peat fires, amusing themselves with the tales and songs of other years, and enjoying the domestic harmony,

which no people can enjoy with less interruption than the Hebridean Celts."

But *although your observations are minute, take care that they are not empirical and partial.* You remember the French student in London, who lodged with a poor man ill with a fever; he was continually teased by his nurse to drink, although quite nauseated by the liquids she offered him; at last, when she was more importunate than usual, he whispered, "For heavens' sake, bring me a salt herring, and I will drink as much as you please." The woman indulged his request; the man perspired profusely and recovered. The French student inserted in his book this aphorism:—"A salt herring cures an Englishman in his fever." On his return to France, he prescribed the same remedy to the first patient in fever he was called to attend. The patient died: the student inserted in his note book, "N.B., Though a salt herring cures an Englishman, it kills a Frenchman." And whether this be a true story, or only a joke, it certainly illustrates the method of much of what is called observation. Our French neighbour, and indeed the Celtic character everywhere, is remarkable for the rapidity of generalisation; few persons are qualified to describe a circumstance; simply to note and record an event exactly, requires a philosophic acumen, which few persons possess; but to draw the *correct* inference from what is seen, requires not only acuteness, but breadth of observation, and calmness of judgment, which are generally possessed only by the

higher order of minds. Much of what is called observing, should be called surmising; men do not draw a distinction between what they saw and what they inferred. You will notice a tendency in the human mind, too, to form an opinion from isolated facts; but this should not be done: facts should be weighed with the great mass and body of facts. The advice of Lord Bacon, in the second part of the "Novum Organum," is sometimes fastidious, but his directions for making observations upon Nature, are specially worthy the attention, and will guard the mind frequently from false conclusions in matters of experience. If Niveo, the youth mentioned to us by Dr. Watts, had studied the principles of Bacon, he would not have writ it down in his Almanac that we were always to look for snow at Christmas, because he had noticed snow on three successive Chrismas days; that observation warranted no such inference. And as little that Euron, who had noticed ten times, that there was a sharp frost when the wind was in the north-east, and therefore in the middle of July expected it to freeze, because the weather-cocks showed him a north-east wind. This is the sort of hasty observation that determines at once upon the character of a people. The English believe of the French that they are all cooks and dancing masters, and the French tell their children, that in England, in the month of November, the weather is so doleful that half the people hang or drown themselves. With the majority of people, a fact is taken for a principle; an exception is quoted for a rule. "A raw English traveller in China,

was entertained," Miss Martineau tells us, "by a host who was intoxicated, and a hostess who was red-haired; he immediately made a note of the fact, that all the men in China were drunkards, and all the women red-haired;" and his generalisation was as correct as that of the Chinese traveller in England, who was landed by a Thames waterman with a wooden leg. The stranger saw that the wooden leg was used to stand in the water with, while the other was high and dry. The apparent economy of the fact struck the Chinese; he saw in it strong evidence of design, and wrote home that in England one-legged men are kept for watermen, to the saving of all injury to health, shoe, and stocking, from standing in the water.

I am far from implying that the perception should not be accompanied by reflection, but let the reflection really, naturally, grow out of the perception; *let the inference, when drawn, be really in harmony with the facts observed.* There can be no doubt that the temperature of the British climate has been materially modified, within even the last century. This is a fact which we have noted. We remember the severity of our winters, and the bronzing heat of our summers; many have noticed the change without suspecting the cause; many have never reflected that man possesses the power to modify, and does modify the conditions of climate. When France and Germany were covered with wood, Europe was much colder than at present; the Seine was frozen every year, and the vine could not be cultivated on this side of

Grenoble. Forests, it is plain, lower the temperature of a country; they detain and condense the clouds as they pass, they pour into the atmosphere volumes of water dissolved as vapour; winds do not penetrate into their recesses; the sun never warms the earth they shade: and then look at the soil, formed for the most part of decayed leaves, and the stems of trees, coated over with thick moss and brushwood, porous, as it is, it is constantly in a state of moisture; and the cold and stagnant waters give rise to innumerable brooklets, and pools, and lakes. But Man, the civilizer, comes and fells the trees, and drains the morasses and the fields, strips the soils of their ancient forests, and the wind and the sun disperse the superabundant moisture: the lakes dry up, and the inundations cease; the volumes of moisture are poured into the rivers, and thus borne away, and the atmosphere becomes warmer and drier; the refraction of heat is not so severe in summer; the atmosphere is not so charged with frequent furious electric fires: it is not so cold in winter: the snow does not lie so thick upon the fields and the moors. Here is a simple and easy explication of what seems, to many, a strange and mysterious circumstance; it is the result of observation, but simple perception, without reflection and inference, could never arrive at the solution.

The Hindoos have a curious illustration of the partial and comprehension in reasoning in the form of a parable.

"In a certain country there existed a village of bondmen, who had heard of an amazing animal called the

elephant, of the shape of which, however, they could procure no idea. One day an elephant passed through the place: the villagers crowded to the spot where the animal was standing, and one of them seized his trunk, another his ear, another his tail, another one of his legs. After thus endeavouring to gratify their curiosity, they returned into the village, and, sitting down together, began to communicate their ideas on the shape of the elephant to the villagers: the man who had seized his trunk said he thought this animal must be like the body of the plantain-tree; he who had touched his ear was of opinion that it was like the winnowing-fan; the man who had laid hold of his tail said he thought he must resemble a snake; and he who had caught his leg declared he must be like a pillar. An old blind man of some judgment was present, who, though greatly perplexed in attempting to reconcile these jarring notions, at length said—"You have all been examining the animal, and what you report, therefore, cannot be false: I suppose, then, that the part resembling the plantain-tree must be his trunk; what you thought similar to a fan must he his ear; the part like a snake must be the tail; and that like a pillar must be his leg." In this way the old man, uniting all their conjectures, made out something of the form of the elephant.* Such is the power of generalization.

And, therefore, *accustom yourself to a habit of noting your observations, and subsequent reflection will assure*

* Rev. W. Ward's Literature, History, &c., of the Hindoos.

you whether it be wise or not to throw such observations into aphorisms, or general conclusions. Do you doubt whether you have a wide sphere on which to observe? Why, I know not how far you may have travelled upon the road of inspection, but if you know the meaning of the frost upon your bedroom window pane, if you are acquainted with the mystery of the gas-light in your shop, or are familiar with the principle of that steam engine which whisked you along so swiftly the other day; if you are fully aware of the hidden meaning of these things, then you have learned also, that mystery and beauty lie all around you, waiting your vivid reading eye to unlock them. Why, Mr. White found in the village of Selborne a universe for observation and instruction; and Parson Crabbe read human life better in a quiet hamlet than most of the great poets have done in the wide circles of their large towns. Observe! of course, you can; so out with your note book, and jot it down. Mr. Gower, in his "Scientific Phenomena of Domestic Life," upon the remark that no effect is produced without a cause, and that similar causes will always produce similar effects, says, "Whilst upon the subject of Chance, it may be worthy of remark, that even games of hazard can hardly, strictly speaking, be called so. Let us take, for instance, the act of tossing up a shilling to see on which side it will fall. In this case, if we were aware of the exact weight of the coin, and the force employed to project it into the air, with the rotary motion communicated to it, we should be able to calculate the height it would attain, and how

many revolutions it would take before reaching the ground; consequently which side would be upwards; but as we have no means of arriving at this knowledge, it is uncertain to us which side will fall upwards. But the laws of Matter had decided the question the moment the shilling was projected into the air; therefore it was not Chance, but our undertaking to decide a question without any data from which to draw our couclusion. If a spring could be so placed as to throw the shilling with exactly the same force and direction, it would always fall alike."

Many observers have, in their own particular walk of scenery, succeeded in accurately calculating upon the certain cause which must be in operation from their beholding the event to which it has given birth; but here we have especially to guard against the illusions of the senses, by which we all are so frequently imposed on. We are frequently at the mercy of circumstances, which either modify the impressions made, or combine them with adjuncts, which have become habitually associated with different judgments- It is truly wonderful that we should receive the sensible impression of an object at all.

The telegraphic communication from the object to the mind baffles all power of solution, but the signal is given, and the impression is received; and as it is thus in circumstances of daily occurrence, so also in the more extraordinary events of life. We are compelled to link a certain cause and a certain effect together, but are altogether unable to supply the intermediate links of

such cause and such effect. In Captain Head's vivid description of his journey across the Pampas of South America, he tells us, that one day, his guide suddenly stopped him, and pointing high into the air, cried out, "A Lion!" Surprised at such an exclamation, accompanied by such an act, he turned up his eyes, and with difficulty perceived, at an immeasurable height, a flight of condors, soaring in circles in a particular spot. Beneath that spot, far out of sight of himself or guide, lay the carcass of a horse, and over that carcass stood (as the guide well knew) the lion whom the condors were eying with envy, from their airy height. The signal of the birds was to him, what the sight of the lion alone could have been to the traveller, a full assurance of its existence. One great and certain good will result from the habit of observation; the world will be taken from the clutches and fangs of a cruel caprice; the mind will read everywhere the great and immutable principles of order; the movements of Nature will not seem to be ordained by the zigzag passion of a Grecian deity, a Pan, or a Jupiter, a Saturn, or a Nox; but will bear most evidently the engraving of a God, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Such observations will increase our wonder, and heighten our veneration. We shall, alike in the finest details, and in the most profound and infinite rangings of the plummet of science, find the mighty arrangements of power and goodness, deeper than the plummet, and far more infinite than the struggling fancy of the spectator. If in this spirit man of old had read nature, how different had been

his notions of God! meantime how different had been his notions of himself and his race. The perception which would have unveiled to him the proper view of the Infinite and Most High, would have revealed to him his own character as the wonderfully low.

AN HOUR'S CHAT WITH THE SEA ANEMONE.

An Episode.

The other day, in rambling about among the rocks of one of the most beautiful parts of our coast, among sea-weed and sea-shells of varied shapes, I came upon a part of the rock, every little broken crag of which contained an Anemone; and, as I was in one of those moods in which we delight to please our idleness with the contemplation of the curious actions of the children of nature, I sat down to watch them. I do not think, though perhaps it is hazarding much to say, that nature has a more wonderful child than this little creature: its beauty is very marvellous, and the grace of its action astonishing. It belongs to a wonderful race of creatures, the tribe of the polypus, or many-footed: and as I sat there watching it, shrinking in as a cloud or shadow or momentary darkness seemed to sweep a periodical cold around the place, and then again when the sun shone high and warm, stretching forth its innumerable floral fingers or tentacule, I found it to be quite one of those subjects which keep the mind half dreaming and half thinking. The creature too, looked such a riddle fastened to the rock, it was only

with the extremest difficulty that I could succeed in getting one away. And while there, the creature seemed in its strange existence to be a sort of bridge over which the flower passed into the animal or the animal returned again into the flower.

This little creature, and the numerous tribe to which it belongs, the vast race of coroline and gelatinous polypie have often been the subjects of speculation, and inquisitive observation to naturalists. The sea-anemone is to be found on most parts of our coast; its very name implies that it is an animal flower, like a flower remarkable for its susceptibility to light and to the warmth of the sun, and like an animal with digestive functions, and beautiful and simple as it seems, and lovely, maintaining its life by the exercise of a rather remorseless maw upon creatures, animalcule and shells within the range of its power or its appetite. As I sat upon the rocks, I saw strewn round about me in a number of places which the sun could not touch, a number of these creatures like so many small ripe figs done up in a compact parcel, without any trace of all that immense feelage and foliage which my little friend at my feet exhibited. I could not but think how perfectly it resembled, perhaps, the seed of every tree, the acorn itself, which in its cell has to be unfolded by the powers of electricity and magnetism, heat and light, contains stem and branch, leaf and fruit. And as I saw about me too, a number of these creatures that had been left by the retiring waves, and at the same time deserted by the necessary beam, but spreading out on all hands into a kind

of sea-weed—I could not but fancy some connection between them and all the vast masses of algic forests amidst which I almost stumbled in exploring the coast. I could not but think it possible that the sea-weeds very likely owed their origin to some such creature as the anemone. I suppose, however, that on our coasts we do not see at all to advantage these little beauties; our climate is never sufficiently warm to develope them in the fulness of their glory and beauty. We only see the embryo of the thing, though still having revealed to us much of its loveliness. Our readers have no doubt seen it, or if not, have seen pictures of it. As I sat and watched, it seemed to me like a beautiful little basket of living flowers, tendril twisting round tendril, all nodding and curtseying to the wave, the sun, and the breeze. I am not a naturalist, I am only a lover of nature, and therefore did not feel myself disposed to cut it in pieces to attempt to get at the meaning of the mystery. I think that naturalists are very much like the ungrateful old farmer with the goose that laid golden eggs, who cut the goose open to get all the eggs at once, and found that he had not only a dead goose for his pains, but that his income of eggs was gone besides. We would not do so wicked a thing as speak evil of naturalists, but I often think the thirst of their curiosity deadens their perception of beauty. At any rate I usually prefer to take what nature gives, disposed indeed to ask questions, but questions which may be answered without stretching nature upon a rack, and torturing every nerve for a reply; it is my way, but I am

neither going to say it is a right nor a wrong way. I know that such old philosophers, who fancy that nature is a wild beast, to be caught and stuffed and put in a glass case, will laugh at me; I know that these same old sages have done very good things in their day and have revealed to us many interesting particulars, still I prefer the study of a living physiology to a dead anatomy. And so there I sat moralizing and recollecting. I could not but remember that a certain Abbé Dicqumarre had made sundry very curious observations on this same creature, with his penknife—pretty little innocent; and he assured us it would take periwinkles, shrimps, and shells, even much larger than these, and picking the creature out of them, would throw the shell aside just like any experienced old gentleman or lady at their tea-table. I could not but recollect that he had told me how when he had cut off all these branches they would sprout forth into life again; and how, although the creature had no eyes, yet it has exquisite sensibility to light, in which curious observation we have the assurance that a sense may operate even without a peculiar observation. I could not but recollect also what the same Abbé tells us too in reference to its tenacity of life, independent of the atmosphere, that when placed under an exhausting receiver it felt no inconvenience. And all these things came very pleasantly to my mind while I sat there in the sunlight on the hard rock, looking at this wonderful animal riddle. But even while I looked the sun retired, and the water in the little hollow, sustaining the life and action of the animal flower trickled

away, and it began to contract, gathered up all its tubes or fingers, and bound itself as if into a bag or purse, and there seemed to fix itself, perhaps for death (though it is rather mysterious to us when such creatures die)—perhaps until another beam of sun or the rising tide should call forth its flowery life to nod and curtsey again.

But I had not done with my little friend, although it ceased to play its interesting movements before me, and I to be the observer—or shall I dignify myself with the term philosopher? I became a moralist, and I recollected a number of my friends who seemed to me exceedingly like sea anemones. There is a kind of people who are said to vegetate rather than to live. We have known some who are in the moral world, what this little creature is in the creation. They seem to be a bridge over which matter passes into spirit to give to it automatic action, or spirit passes back again into matter. Many men seem to us rather the embryos of moral being, than the being itself; they contain the seeds of infinite enjoyment, but they live like the anemone, and after death leave only behind them as it were the memory of an incomparable weed. And I could not but think, while I saw the creature fastened to the rock, of innumerable multitudes in all parts of the world, who, born in a certain sphere, continue riveted there, and cannot allow an affection, a memory, a hope, or an imagination to pass beyond the confines of their little rock, their village, their little home, their pool of drink; when the sun visits it they are happy, when the sun retires they are moody;

they know no more, they care for no more ; they live on and die like the anemone. So I lay there dreaming and musing, for it is always my case when I find in nature what interests me, to find in the human heart something akin to it. Thus, however, the thought came to me—how possible it is to have the character of the anemone without its beauty. The anemone charms and fascinates ; animal or flower, it is where its maker placed it ; it fulfils the intention of its existence, and in unconscious carelessness, it tosses to and fro, thoughtless, and only sensitive to its appetites. You do not expect it to move beyond, that which is natural is always beautiful. But, as man's nature is not so low as that nor was ever intended to find its sustenance or life in a sphere so low as the mere region of animal appetites, he can only be beautiful when he seeks to make all his senses means for the transfusion of a higher life ; when he recoils from the dark shadow of evil, or lives happily in the sunlight of good, and so has in his nature a moral barometer as true to him as are light and heart to the sea anemone.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT TO READ, AND HOW TO READ IT.

SURELY it is not necessary to use any arguments to excite to reading; this is a taste very early formed. The young boy who has not yet reached his seventh summer. frequently hastens away to the little garret with some precious volume, which will be perused until the darkest shades have fallen over the house-tops; or eagerly enough, perhaps, while the mother is ironing, or sewing, or knitting, will he take the volume, borrowed from the school library, and sit down by the bright fireside and read, and pause to suggest the question: oh, that he may find his delights when manhood shall have ripened his life, with the book by the fire-side of the dear ones too! The taste for reading, we say, needs no defence, no apology. All who have ever had access to the portals, the first pillars of learning, will easily estimate the power of the fascination, and the charm of books; a charm which accompanies us, in some way or other, our whole life through, arresting our boyhood, even in the midst of our sports, by the spell of novelty, by the attractions of fable and history, of legend and heroism, of strength and

poetry. In youth and manhood, unveiling the aerial romances of science, the magnificent strides and speculations of Geometry or Astronomy; or, if these be far above the reach, by the fairy lights which play round the room, from the mere rudimental lessons of knowledge. Sick, and world-weary, we invoke some kindly voice of wife or daughter, to break the monotony of the sick chamber, and read to us; and when age films over the orbs of vision, and our glasses are a weariness to us, and the eye-balls soon ache and roll over a misty page, how pleasant then is the presence of one who will come to us with the cheerful book, and illuminate the passing hour with the hints and intimations from the suggestive page. Thus, then, we have to use little persuasion, we suppose, to prosecute the mere pursuit of reading; indeed, where persuasion has to be used in this particular, we may, perhaps, be sure of the incapacity of the individual, for the pleasure or the labour that may be connected with books; but over most of those who have begun to tread the walks and ways of Knowledge, they have shed a witchery and an influence, which in every age of life it is delightful to feel. The engagements of life make the book a comparative luxury, but it is a luxury ever acknowledged, and frequently sought.

Again, therefore, we say it is not necessary to invoke to reading, but to *systematic reading*, reading to purpose and to profit. There never was so large an amount of profitless reading in the world as now; books, by millions, find their way through all the channels of our population, but of those

books, printed and sold, few, very few, are read: and of the books read, how few either have an useful aim, or are perused to any useful purpose. There is a possibility of reading without any very distinct mental action; the mind of the reader is passive to the book, the individuality of the reader is surrendered to the book: this is always bad, no book has any right so to captivate, but thus it must always be, when we read, as thousands read, merely to stretch the mind upon a luxurious lounging-couch. A great deal of the reading of our times is merely *intellectual ennui*, it is an attempt to fly from self; we dare not be alone, even in a railway carriage; we shun solitude, we abhor thought, the mind cannot walk, or leap, or dive, or run, and therefore the shilling novel is in so much request, and many other books beside shilling novels. Now, it may be asserted as a general principle in reading, that all reading is useless which does not conduce to mental activity, which does not tax the imagination or the judgment, the comparison or the inquisitiveness. Much reading is done merely by the eye; even the tale read cannot be recounted, the process of reasoning cannot be repeated, or the main proposition stated. No! no! my young friend, as the lines glide before the eye, tax the powers of your mind; if a volume of travels, then transport yourself to the scenery and the localities described, paint vividly, let Imagination use her colours, let human sympathy go forth and note the condition of the inhabitants, and let Memory awaken her daughter Comparison, and bring the ancient story of the English country to bear the illustration from the foreign but modern

picture. Of what use is any volume of travels in the library? "Eothen," "The Crescent and the Cross," or Layard's "Nineveh," if it is not made to be a lamp, to shed its lustre over the conditions of moral and physical Geography, and thus lighten up the pages of all history? Read in this spirit: read, indeed, with a spirit. It is possible to make any *worthy* novel like Scott's, or some of James's, assistants to mental education; but when have they been read in this fashion? when has the volume been laid down in order that the picture, the historic picture might be recalled? How often have we heard of "skipping the descriptive parts," precisely because *there* was a little mental work? We will repeat it again, that all reading is worse than useless, (for it lulls the mind to sleep with most benumbing opiates,) which does not create the necessity of some kind of action. Burn the books which will not do this for you; what is their use? Do they profess to bring you information? You cannot receive it without mental action. Do they profess to bring to you the panoply of linked, mailed, severe thought? But you cannot put it on without action, And all the stern deductions of the metaphysician, or the moralist, are useless, unless you beat them out yourself, and make them, as he shall show you the way, into a mental harness; and this cannot be done without action. And if you surrender yourself to the spell of the poet, do you suppose that all is to be done by him, and nothing by yourself? You must use your own eyes, mount by your own wings; and this cannot be but by action. In the first place, therefore, in reading, let the young man have done

with all the passive and powerless perusals, which, indeed affect the eye, but never reach the intellect, and never call into play the moral approval or disapproval. This remark is certainly very general, but the reason why it is so, is because there is so vast an amount of crude, ill-digested reading, reading which in no sense is worthy of the name, which is scarcely worthy to rank as mental employment at all.

A second remark which may be made is in reference, not so much to the worthless method of reading, but rather the worthless matter read. It is with minds as with bodies, we in our growth greatly resemble the food upon which we grow. Coarse food will naturally produce a coarse body. We do not look for grace and beauty, for Attic symmetry and proportion from those who feed upon offal, and whale blubber, and the flesh of seals and bears; and how can we expect minds seizing with hungry avidity the most wretched mental garbage to be gifted with health or stature, with athletic vigour, or noble proportion? Impossible! and therefore in the intellectual regions we are frequently meeting with those, whose false and sickly sentimentality, whose deformed and dwarfed mental proportions, betray the cradles in which they were nurtured, the food upon which they were sustained, and the kingdoms upon which their days of wan and stunted intelligence have been passed. And we are compelled to feel for such persons a pity, rising to contempt, which the Laplander and the Kamschatkese never awaken within our breasts.

At the risk of appearing to address some of our remarks

to very young beginners, the juveniles in the ranks of knowledge, we may say then, that it is most important in reading to remember three things:—

First. It is not by the amount of reading you go through, but the value of the impressions made upon the mind that you are to estimate its importance. Perhaps, as a general statement, we may say, that where there has been the most prodigious and varied amount of reading, there it has been to the least and most inconsiderable purpose. The heads of such persons have been described as Encyclopœdias turned upside down; a vast body of information, if one could only get at it, or if the memory could only have retained it; but as it is, a mere heterogeneous heap without order or array: systematic reading disciplines in the exercise of thought and tends to make the mind strong. The reading therefore, should be definite, condensed, and methodic.

Second. That which is worth reading once is generally worth reading many times, especially if its tendency is to train the mind or the imagination. Gibbon somewhere makes the remark, that he usually read a book three times; he first read it, glancing through it to take in the general design of the book, and the structure of the argument; he read it again to observe how the work was conducted, to fix its general principles on the memory; and he read it a third time to notice the blemishes, or the beauties, and to criticise and discuss its bearing and character. This is reading indeed, and many books cannot be said to have been perused until they have been carefully traversed, not only three times, but still more frequently. The mastery

of one book on any particular subject will be found frequently, if the book is a really worthy one, and it is of such books we are speaking, to be a mastery of the whole subject of which it treats. Sir John Herschell says, in his "Natural Philosophy,"—"I am now commencing the perusal of 'Lyell's Geology,' the third (or fourth) time, and find my interest increased with every perusal." Yes! the resolute reading of a book like that, the determination to comprehend each theory, each term, each induction and observation, places the reader beyond the need of a large Library, upon the topic he has been studying; as far as books *can* instruct him he is instructed. The facts and the principles are engraven firmly upon his understanding, and this is one of the most important methods for reaching the memory. Clearly understand, and the probability is, that you will vividly remember.

Third. It follows from all this that the value of reading depends quite as much upon yourself as the book; nay, far more upon yourself than the book; frequently, therefore put it down and recal; *re*-collect that which you have read that you may niche it in your understanding; and following these hints you will find that although you may not travel rapidly apparently, yet, like the tortoise of old, you will win the race. Your memory, be it ever so indifferent, will accumulate facts from the books you read—Histories, or Biographies, or Philosophies; you will certainly acquire principles, and some of the lines and the pictures of your favourite poets must impress your fancy and your memory.

COLERIDGE tells us of four kinds of readers. "The

first, like the hour-glass; their reading, like the sand, running in, and then out, and leaving not a vestige behind. The second, like the sponge, which imbibes everything, only to return it in the same state, or perhaps dirtier. The third, like the jelly-bag, allows the pure to pass away, and keeping only the refuse and dregs: and the fourth, like the slaves in the mines of Golconda, casting aside all that is worthless, and retaining only the diamonds and gems. See to it that you are of the latter class, gathering riches from all your reading. To this end do not read at random, indiscriminately. The world is full of books, and a lifetime would not suffice to read all, even if they were good, which vast numbers of them are not. Make, then, a selection of your books, and be careful in making it. Touch not, if possible, a single volume that is unworthy, trifling, or useless. Seek first for the most important subjects, and then for the best works respecting them. Be as careful of the books you read as of the company you keep; for your habits and character will be as much influenced by the former as the latter. See to it, then, that both are good. And even in perusing good books—for the best are imperfect—imitate the fishermen spoken of in the Gospel, who, in drawing their nets full of all kinds of fishes, 'gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.'"

Ever have, also, some high and useful aim in reading. Whatever you read, have an object in reading it. Know not only what, but why you read. Read for the discipline of your intellect, the elevation of your taste, the extension

of your knowledge, the improvement of your heart, the regulation of your conductand life. Read, that you may store up lessons of wisdom, to apply them to yourself; that you may follow every good, and avoid every evil example, and thus daily become wiser, happier, better, and more useful.

In the course of reading it will be well to bear in mind the following purposes:—

Read, FIRST, *to form the mind, to awaken its powers, its consciousness:* you need, perhaps, to be attracted to the walks of Study, and what is presented to you at first must be presented in a fascinating style to provoke the appetite for knowledge. Then, read "The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties." The three volumes are very cheap, and full of interesting Anecdote and Philosophy, as simple, lucid, and interesting. TODD'S "Student's Manual" contains good hints in a very interesting manner; and Drummond's "Letters to a Young Naturalist" is a most entertaining and highly instructive book upon the preliminaries of knowledge; then Watts's "Improvement of the Mind," and Sir John Herschell's "Natural Philosophy" should be read and re-read. I speak of forming the mind, and to this end no plan is so valuable as the making an analysis of a good book. When a boy, the writer did this with Blair's "Lectures on Rhetoric," with Locke "On the Mind," with Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and with Robertson's "Charles V.," and "State of Europe," and several other eminent books; and the value of these performances is with him till this day. This plan is, perhaps, the most excellent that can be recommended

for disciplining the mind, and giving method and consistency to its powers.

Read, SECOND, *to obtain a stock of ideas—a rich mental furniture;* and they will not be obtained by travelling over a very large ground, but by well measuring every step, and noting the ideas and the impressions to which it gave birth in the memory. Some books are vast storehouses of ideas; but it is a mistake to go to collections of Aphorisms Anas, and Laconisms; they may present here and there smart and startling expressions; but those ideas are the most suggestive which occur naturally in the ordinary course of reading, and come to the mind attended by all the weight of surrounding argument and illustration.

Read, THIRD, *to fortify your convictions.* I do not conceal from you that I think the education of your religious nature a most important part of your mental and moral training. You must give reasons for your faith; this topic may be discussed in another part of the volume; but all reading of this nature should revolve round the New Testament, and this you should surely labour to read in the original Greek; and if you only resolve to do so, it will be an easier conquest than perhaps you apprehend. Too high a value cannot be set upon Butler's "Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion;" this is a book well deserving your closest analysis and attentive re-perusal. If you read your New Testament aright, you will not expect much benefit in the way of evidence from Natural Theologies and Evidences of Christianity; but all of the above works abound in ideas.

Read, FOURTH, that you may understand yourself.

Read, FIFTH, History, as a Branch of Mental and Moral Philosophy.

Read, SIXTH to concentrate your knowledge previously acquired of humanity, to your country's progress and condition. Do not determine to read a History of England so called, unless a mere synopsis. Read the writings of those great men who have bent themselves to one range of observation and inquiry.

Read, SEVENTH, to train the imagination and the taste.

Only be careful to form your mind, before you allow yourself to attempt its adornment.

When good great books are read, they case the spirit in fine armour, and fit it to grapple with the subterfuges, and falsehoods, and sophisms, either of argument or style. Many books may be appropriately analysed and condensed, and put into the language of the student. A more scholastic method might perhaps, have been marked out, especially a more dialectic course; but the course recommended will discipline the understanding better than Logical Formularies. This course will aid in the selection of the most truthful ideas, and in the presentation of them in the most logical and connected manner. Should you desire to commence a mathematical course, Potts's "Euclid" may, both for size and simplicity, be carried in the pocket; and Bonnycastle's "Algebra" is just as accessible. And thus having prepared the mind to read, what stores of knowledge, and long hours of enjoyment are before you! You are now free to enter the most distinguished company that ever came on earth. You have to qualify yourself for high, noble, and unfettered

communion with the greatest spirits—by no possession of wealth, by no rich mansion, or widely extensive park: they will come to the very humblest cottage, where the ground has been prepared by a fitting and a reverent taste; there is much company into which the lowly sons and daughters can never enter. You and I, my friend, can never expect to be very well acquainted with the dwellings of princes, with the halls of barons and of lords; these men will pass by us, and think our homes too poor for their condescension: but PLUTARCH will not pass by us. He will come and chat familiarly to us, and tell us the quaint and pleasant story, and give to us the humorous or the profound reflection; he will make the awful men of Grecian or Roman days to move vigorous and life-like before us. Old MONTAIGNE will not pass us by: no, hale as ever, the hearty, loquacious, and wise old man will come and sit by our side, and penetrate our hearts with all the deep loveableness of wisdom: and old THOMAS FULLER and SIR THOMAS BROWN will not pass us by; the one deep, condensed, and quaint,—the other rapt, inspired, and wrought to the majesty of strange eloquence and curious learning; but both of them will come and cheerily bear us company. For us CHAUCER will make his Canterbury Pilgrims recite their famous tales: for us SPENSER will brighten or darken the forest—will make the chamber to give back the lights of beauty or glamoury, and lead before us,

"The gentle Una, with the milk-white lamb."

And so with the moderns, too, men to whom we never

spoke, and whom we can never hope to see; whose portraits and whose books we have looked upon, and whom we have learned to venerate from those books. Books break down the walls between the present and the past. Grote's "History of Greece," and Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome," bring before us vividly the old times, and antique ways and manners: they are a light, before which the dark hollow ground becomes illuminated with reality, and all the buried men and buried buildings are brought distinct before the eye. Books enhance our estimation of character; the good Biography transfuses the life of the departed into us; Arnold makes Hannibal present to our minds when we read the "History of Rome;" and the biographer of Arnold in turn, makes us feel that we are near to him while reading his life. Good books, good histories, are really dramatic; Carlyle's "French Revolution," what a storm of a book is that? how immeasurably more important to us than the "Iliad" are its vivid narratives of events, and men, and things? Books translate us as they will; they carry us as in a magic car; hither and thither we roam, deep down in the clefts of the Himalayas, where sunbeams never penetrated, far out of the sound of human voice or footfall; we tread amidst the charmed marble courts of Old Granada, our ears and our hearts are lulled by the sounds of waters from musical fountains. Give us a good book, and it touches us, thither we move, over continents, seas, mountains, and volcanoes; we can look into the homes and social assemblies of the men of all lands. If a magician is left in or on the world yet, that magician is a good book. Sir John Herschel, in a lecture to the

Eton Mechanics' Institute, once said, "If I were to pray for a taste which should stand by me under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. I speak of it, of course, only as a worldly advantage, and not in the slightest degree derogating from the higher office and sure and stronger panoply of religious principles, but as a taste, an instrument, and a mode of pleasurable gratification. Give a man this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making him a happy man, unless, indeed, you put into his hand a most perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history; with the wisest, the wittiest, and the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters who have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations, a contemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but the characters should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of associating in thought with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of humanity. It is morally impossible but that the manners should take a tinge of good breeding and civilization, from having constantly before our eyes the way in which the best-bred and best informed men have talked and conducted themselves in their intercourse with each other. There is a gentle, but perfectly irresistible coercion, in a habit of reading well-directed, over the whole tenor of a man's character and conduct,

which is not the less effectual because it works insensibly, and because it is really the last thing he dreams of. It cannot be better summed up than in the words of the Latin poet—'*Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*' It civilizes the conduct of men, and suffers them not to remain barbarous." Nor can we resist the pleasure of transcribing the following beautiful sentences from the "Indicator" of LEIGH HUNT:—

"How pleasant it is to reflect, that all these lovers of books have themselves become books! What better metamorphosis could Pythagoras have desired! How Ovid and Horace exulted in anticipating theirs! And how the world have justified their exultation! They had a right to triumph over brass and marble. It is the only visible change which changes no farther; which generates, and yet is not destroyed. Consider: mines themselves are exhausted; cities perish; kingdoms are swept away, and man weeps with indignation to think that his own body is not immortal.

"Yet this little body of thought, that lies before me in the shape of a book, has existed thousands of years; nor, since the invention of the press, can anything short of an universal convulsion of nature abolish it. To a shape like this, so small, yet so comprehensive, so light, yet so lasting, so significant, yet so venerable, turns the mighty activity of Homer, and so turning, is enabled to live and warm us for ever. To a shape like this, turns the placid sage of Academus: to a shape like this, the grandeur of Milton, the exuberance of Spenser, the pungent elegance of Pope,

and volatility of Prior. In one small room, like the compressed spirits of Milton, can be gathered together.

'The assembled souls of all that men held wise.'

"May I hope to become the meanest of these existences? This is a question which every author, who is a lover of books, asks himself some time in his life; and which must be pardoned, because it cannot be helped. I know that, I cannot exclaim with the poet,

'Oh that my name were numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days;'

for my mortal days, few and feeble as the rest of them may be, are of consequence to others. But I should like to remain visible in this shape. The little of myself that pleases myself, I could wish to be accounted worth pleasing others. I should like to survive so, were it only for the sake of those who love me in private, knowing as I do, what a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind, when he is no more. At all events, nothing, while I live and think, can deprive me of my value for such treasures. I can help the appreciation of them while I last, and love them till I die; and perhaps, if Fortune turns her face once more in kindness upon me before I go, I may chance, some quiet day, to lay my over-beating temples on a book, and so have the death I most envy."

But the Novelist. Here occurs a grave question: should we read fiction? And to this we must reply in the first

place, we all do read fiction. Our literature teems with it. Perhaps now too abundantly. You have fiction in the shape of Mrs. Sherwood's and Mrs. Cameron's stories for sabbath schools; the Religious Tract Society, and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, industriously avail themselves of the instrumentality of fiction for pointing the sacred moral. You observe that fiction has interfused itself into all our literature. Social teachers produce their precepts and examples now in fiction. Philosophers unfold their theory and their fact in fiction; if a spirit oppressed with the weight of its own experience seeks rest, it pours out its experience in fiction; if a reformer wishes to utter the cry of inspiration and prophecy, he does it in fiction; so has it been in all ages—you can only meet the mighty masses of mind so. The Paradise Lost of Milton or the Inferno of Dante, what are they but fiction? The Iliad of Homer, or the Æneid of Virgil; the Prometheus of Eschylus, or the Œdipus of Sophocles; the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer; the Fairy Queen of Spencer; or the Hamlet of Shakspere; the Pilgrim's Progress of Bunyan; or the Robinson Crusoe of De Foe. Nay, further, and to speak reverently and to draw a distinction too between other writings and these now mentioned, what are the Parables of our Lord; and what are the Proverbs of Solomon—Proverb is only another name for Parable; a short story, a word of analogical history. Determine to read no fiction, and you may as well determine to read nothing. It is by fiction you make truth legible to the understanding; it is by fiction you make the abstract

concrete; and focalise the light and colour of humanity. The parable utterer, the orientals write was the wisest man. We do not want fiction removed from literature; we want it sanctified and ennobled, for fiction idealises truth, and fact, fiction; it makes life Æsthetic; it shows us what life ought to be; it shows us what life must be. As there are some men who live as much in one year as other men in a whole life or in more, so such men,—men of keen observation and mighty sympathy in a book, in a few pages, collect the results of life; we see life slowly developing itself to us, but such men run their eye over a large range of facts, and characters, and experiences; and put those passions and vices, those wisdoms and virtues, at once vividly—like life itself before the eye. In the high art of fiction nothing is set down that is not true and natural; although perhaps the circumstances forming it never actually cohered together as they do on those pages.

I will give you an illustration of this from the Caxtons, the fourth chapter, where the author is unfolding the principle of moral education—the mode by which a child's mind should be taught to think, to reason, and to guide itself.

"My father was seated on the lawn before the house, his straw hat over his eyes (it was summer), and his book on his lap. Suddenly a beautiful delf blue-and-white flower-pot which had been set on the window-sill of an upper story, fell to the ground with a crash, and the fragments spluttered up round my father's legs. Sublime in his studies as Archimedes in the siege, he continued to read; *Impavidum ferient ruinæ!*

"'Dear, dear!' cried my mother, who was at work in the porch, 'my poor flower-pot that I prized so much! Who could have done this? Primmins, Primmins!'

"Mrs. Primmins popped her head out of the fatal window, nodded to the summons, and came down in a trice, pale and breathless.

"'Oh!' said my mother, mournfully, 'I would rather have lost all the plants in the greenhouse in the great blight last May,—I would rather the best tea-set were broken! The poor geranium I reared myself, and the dear, dear flower-pot which Mr. Caxton bought for me my last birthday! That naughty child must have done this!'

"Mrs. Primmins was dreadfully afraid of my father—why, I know not, except that very talkative social persons are usually afraid of very silent shy ones. She cast a hasty glance at her master, who was beginning to evince signs of attention, and cried promptly, 'No, ma'am, it was not the dear boy, bless his flesh, it was I!'

"'You? how could you be so careless? and you knew how I prized them both. O Primmins!'

"Primmins began to sob.

"'Don't tell fibs, nursey,' said a small shrill voice; and Master Sisty (coming out of the house as bold as brass) continued rapidly—'don't scold Primmins, mamma: it was I who pushed out the flower-pot.'

"'Hush!' said nurse, more frightened than ever, and looking aghast towards my father, who had very deliberately taken off his hat, and was regarding the scene with serious eyes wide awake.

"'Hush! And if he did break it, ma'am, it was quite an accident; he was standing so, and he never meant it. Did you, master Sisty? Speak! (this in a whisper) or Pa will be so angry.'

"'Well,' said my mother, 'I suppose it was an accident; take care in future, my child. You are sorry, I see, to have grieved me. There's a kiss; don't fret.'

"'No, mamma, you must not kiss me; I don't deserve it. I pushed out the flower-pot on purpose.'

"'Ha! and why?' said my father, walking up.

"Mrs Primmins trembled like a leaf.

"'For fun!' said I, hanging my head—'just to see how you'd look, papa; and that's the truth of it. Now beat me, do beat me!'

"My father threw his book fifty yards off, stooped down, and caught me to his breast. 'Boy,' he said, 'you have done wrong: you shall repair it by remembering all your life that your father blessed God for giving him a son who spoke truth in spite of fear! Oh! Mrs. Primmins the next fable of this kind you try to teach him, and we part for ever!'

"From that time I first date the hour when I felt that I loved my father, and knew that he loved me; from that time too, he began to *converse* with me. He would no longer, if he met me in the garden, pass by with a smile and nod; he would stop, put his book in his pocket, and though his talk was often above my comprehension, still somehow I felt happier and better and less of an infant, when I thought over it, and tried to puzzle out the meaning;

for he had a way of suggesting, not teaching—*putting things into my head, and then leaving them to work out their own problems.* I remember a special instance with respect to that same flower-pot and geranium. Mr. Squills, who was a bachelor, and well to do in the world, often made me little presents. Not long after the event I have narrated, he gave me one far exceeding in value those usually bestowed on children,—it was a beautiful large domino-box in cut ivory, painted and gilt. This domino-box was my delight. I was never weary of playing at dominoes with Mrs. Primmins, and I slept with my box under my pillow.

"'Ah!' said my father one day when he found me ranging the ivory parallelograms in the parlour, 'ah! you like that better than all your playthings, eh?'

"'O yes, papa.'

"'You would be very sorry if your mamma were to throw that box out of the window, and break it for fun.' I looked beseechingly at my father, and made no answer.

"'But prehaps you would be very glad,' he resumed, 'if suddenly one of those good fairies you read of could change the domino-box into a beautiful geranium in a beautiful blue-and-white flower-pot, and you could have the pleasure of putting it on your mamma's window-sill.'

"'Indeed I would!' said I, half crying.

"'My dear boy, I believe you; *but good wishes don't mend bad actions—good actions mend bad actions.*

"So saying, he shut the door and went out. I cannot tell you how puzzled I was to make out what my father

meant by his aphorism. But I know that I played at dominoes no more that day. The next morning my father found me seated by myself under a tree in the garden; he paused, and looked at me with his grave bright eyes very steadily.

"'My boy,' said he, 'I am going to walk to —— (a town about two miles off), will you come? and by the by, fetch your domino-box: I should like to show it to a person, there.' I ran in for the box, and, not a little proud of walking with my father upon the high-road, we set out.

"'Papa,' said I by the way, '*there are no fairies now.*'

"'What then, my child?'

"'Why—how then can my domino-box be changed into a geranium and a blue-and-white flower-pot?'

"'My dear,' said my father, leaning his hand on my shoulder, '*everybody who is in earnest to be good carries two fairies about with him*—one here,' and he touched my heart; 'and one here,' and he touched my forehead.

"'I don't understand, papa.'

"'I can wait till you do, Pisistratus! What a name!'

"My father stopped at a nursery gardener's, and after looking over the flowers, paused before a large double geranium. 'Ah, this is finer than that which your mamma was so fond of. What is the cost, sir?'

"'Only 7s. 6d.,' said the gardener.

"My father buttoned up his pocket. 'I can't afford it to-day,' said he, gently, and we walked out.

"On entering the town, we stopped again at a china-warehouse. 'Have you a flower-pot like that I bought some months ago? Ah, here is one, marked 3s. 6d. Yes, that is the price. Well, when your mamma's birthday comes again, we must buy her another. That is some months to wait. And we can wait, Master Sisty. For truth, that blooms all the year round, is better than a poor geranium; and a word that is never broken, is better than a piece of delf.'

"My head, which had drooped before, rose again; but the rush of joy at my heart almost stifled me.

"'I have called to pay your little bill,' said my father, entering the shop of one of those fancy stationers common in country towns, and who sell all kinds of pretty toys and nic-nacks. 'And by the way,' he added, as the smiling shopman looked over his books for the entry, 'I think my little boy here can show you a much handsomer specimen of French workmanship than that work-box, which you enticed Mrs. Caxton into raffling for last winter. Show your domino-box, my dear.'

"I produced my treasure, and the shopman was liberal in his commendations. 'It is always well, my boy, to know what a thing is worth, in case one wishes to part with it. If my young gentleman gets tired of his plaything, what will you give him for it?'

"'Why, sir,' said the shopman, 'I fear we could not afford to give more than eighteen shillings for it unless the young gentleman took some of these pretty things in exchange.'

"'Eighteen shillings!' said my father; 'you would give *that* sum. Well, my boy, whenever you do grow tired of your box, you have my leave to sell it.'

"My father paid his bill and went out. I lingered behind a few moments, and joined him at the end of the street.

"'Papa, papa!' I cried, clapping my hands, 'we can buy the geranium—we can buy the flower-pot.' And I pulled a handful of silver from my pockets.

"'Did I not say right?' said my father, passing his handkerchief over his eyes—'*You have found the two fairies!*'

"Oh! how proud, how overjoyed I was, when, after placing vase and flower on the window-sill, I plucked my mother by the gown, and made her follow me to the spot.

"'It is his doing, and his money!' said my father; '*good actions have mended the bad.*'

"'What!' cried my mother, when she had learned all; 'and your poor domino-box that you were so fond of! We will go back to-morrow, and buy it back, if it costs us double.'

"'Shall we buy it back, Pisistratus?' asked my father.

"'Oh no—no—no! It would spoil all,' I cried, burying my face on my father's breast.

"'My wife,' said my father, solemnly, 'this is my first lesson to our child—the sanctity and the happiness of self-sacrifice—undo not what it should teach him to his dying day?'"

And in the following passage, the results of a healthy mental training, and its relation to the unfolding the purpose of life, is well shown in the peculiar form of life parable.

" ' Yes; I think the boy is now as great a block-head as most boys of his age are,' observed my father with great complacency.

" ' Dear me, Austin—a great Block-head !'

" ' What else did he go to school for ?' asked my father. And observing a certain dismay in the face of his female audience, and a certain surprise in that of his male, he rose and stood on the hearth, with one hand in his waistcoat, as was his wont when about to philosophise in more detail than was usual to him.

" ' Mr Squills,' said he, ' you have had great experience in families.'

" ' As good a practice as any in the county,' said Mr. Squills proudly: ' more than I can manage. I shall advertise for a partner.'

" ' And,' resumed my father, ' you must have observed almost invariably that, in every family, there is what father, mother, uncle, and aunt, pronounce to be one wonderful child.'

" ' One at least,' said Mr. Squills, smiling.

" ' It is easy,' continued my father, ' to say this is parental partiality,—but it is not so. Examine that child as a stranger, and it will startle yourself. You stand amazed at its eager curiosity—its quick comprehension—

its ready wit—its delicate perception. Often, too, you will find some faculty strikingly developed; the child will have a turn for mechanics, perhaps, and make you a model of a steam-boat—or it will have an ear tuned to verse, and will write you a poem like that it has got by heart from "The Speaker"—or it will take to botany (like Pisistratus), with the old maid its aunt—or it will play a march on its sister's pianoforte.' In short, even you, Squills, will declare that it is really a wonderful child.'

"'Upon my word,' said Mr. Squills thoughtfully, 'there's a great deal of truth in what you say. Little Tom Dobbs *is* a wonderful child—so is Frank Stepington—and as for Johnny Styles, I must bring him here for you to hear him prattle on Natural History, and see how well he handles his pretty little microscope.'

"'Heaven forbid!' said my father. 'And now let me proceed. These *thaumata* or wonders last till when, Mr. Squills?—last till the boy goes to school, and then, somehow or other, the *thaumata* vanish into thin air, like ghosts at the cockcrow. A year after the prodigy has been at the academy, father and mother, uncle and aunt, plague you no more with his doings and sayings; the extraordinary infant has become a very ordinary little boy. Is it not so, Mr. Squills?'

"'Indeed you are right, sir. How did you come to be so observant? you never seem to——'

"'Hush!' interrupted my father; and then looking fondly at my mother's anxious face, he said, soothingly,—'Be comforted: this is wisely ordained—and it is for the best.'

"'It must be the fault of the school,' said my mother shaking her head.

"'It is the necessity of the school, and its virtue, my Kate. Let any one of these wonderful children—wonderful as you thought Sisty himself—stay at home, and you will see its head grow bigger and bigger, and its body thinner and thinner—eh, Mr. Squills?—till the mind take all nourishment from the frame, and the frame, in turn, stint or make sickly the mind. You see that noble oak from the window. If the Chinese brought it up, it would have been a tree in miniature at five years old, and at a hundred, you would have set it in a flower-pot on your table, no bigger than it was at five—a curiosity for its maturity at one age—a show for its diminutiveness at the other. No! the ordeal for talent is school; restore the stunted mannikin to the growing child, and then let the child, if it can, healthily, hardily, naturally, work its slow way up into greatness. If greatness be denied it, it will at least be a man, and that is better than to be a little Johnny Styles all its life—an oak in a pill-box.'

"At that moment I rushed into the room, glowing and panting, health on my cheek—vigour in my limbs—all childhood at my heart. 'Oh, mamma, I have got up the kite—so high!—come and see. Do come, papa.'

"'Certainly,' said my father; 'only don't cry so loud —*kites make no noise in rising; yet, you see how they soar above the world.* Come, Kate. Where is my hat? Ah—thank you, my boy.'

"'Kitty,' said my father, looking at the kite, which, attached by its string to the peg I had stuck into the

ground, rested calm in the sky, 'never fear but what *our* kite shall fly as high; only, the human soul has stronger instincts to mount upward than a few sheets of paper on a framework of lath. *But, observe, that to prevent its being lost in the freedom of space, we must attach it lightly to earth; and, observe again, my dear, that the higher it soars, the more string we must give it.*"

This is Æsthetic—this is the true ideal—and this is only a slight illustration of what all fiction does when it works on high principles and for high purposes—and thus the quarrel with what is called Fiction, if there be any, is rather with poetry; and to be consistent, the quarrel must be maintained with art altogether—all ideal forms. Raphael and Flaxman, Murillo and Thorwaldsen, Wilkie and Roubilliac, all are guilty—guilty of grouping the variations of nature into idealizations—guilty of vindicating man's power to find in the realm of the ideal the realm also of the true real; for it is only that which *ought* to be, which can be said in the highest and best sense really to be. The great poet can see, in his ideal, sins, and virtues;—what humanity is capable of any way—what he may sink to—what he may rise to. To him it is especially given to unfold the capabilities of the soul. Iago, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Lear. He leads the spirit through the circumstances which unchain its passions, which unfold its powers. And as he throws the plumb and line down, deep calls unto deep.

A single word about the getting a library together. How much do you spend in cigars? How much in beer, ale, or wine? How much in fruit, oranges, nuts? Whatsoever may be its aggregate at the end of the year, and I think it very likely to amount even to pounds, this you know is extracted from the furniture of the mind. Is it not solemn to hear young men declare their inability to purchase the means of mental illumination, while odious cigars and pipes are everywhere in use among them! In the name of all common sense let these be removed, and then—then—

CHAPTER VI.

THE ART OF THINKING.

If the Self-Educator reads in the fashion and manner we have recommended, the art of reading will also train him in the art of thinking; this is the real difficulty of the Intellectual Life. It is, however, this culture of the thought which is the main purpose of all education. The three leading characteristics of healthy thought are Clearness, Comprehension, and Adroitness; and although it may tax the powers for a considerable time, it should be the object of the Educator to train an intellectual energy by which the most vivid impression of a subject should be presented to the mind, not merely by itself, but with all its attendant relations and bearings, and this distinct and compendious view reached by the most rapid and immediate perception. On many subjects, this rapid insight into the core and the circumference of subjects is impossible, even with profound and accomplished thinkers; but the well-trained mind will be so fitted for intellectual gladiatorship, that most of the sophistries which cross the path of ordinary life, will be cloven through at once by

the two-edged sword. There is a twofold method of regarding a subject, which greatly aids the thinking power: the first is the collection of details, and throwing them into generalisations—the perpetually looking at parts in relation to wholes. Thus the mind finds its views enlarged; thus it is emancipated from the village-life view of things, to the lofty and universal framework of being; but if the mind is too much accustomed to look at things in their larger relations, then let it be educated by reflecting on the infinitely small and minute parts which make up the whole: instead of tracing from the inner to the outer, it becomes then the duty to trace from the outer to the inner.

Thought is the faculty of the mind; it is thought which needs especially to be educated; it is by thought we know the excellence of the soul; the quality of thought reveals the character of the soul. A philosopher once asked a little girl if she had a soul. She looked up into his face with an air of astonishment and offended dignity and replied, "To be sure I have." "What makes you think you have?" "Because I have," she promptly replied. "But how do you know you have a soul?" "Because I do know," she answered again. It was a child's reason; but the philosopher could hardly have given a better. "Well, then," said he after a moment's consideration, "if you know you have a soul, can you tell me what your soul is?" "Why," said she, "I am six years old, and don't you suppose that I know what my soul is?" "Perhaps you do. If you will tell me I shall

find out whether you do or not." "Then you think I don't know," she replied, "but I do; it is MY THINK." "Your think!" said the philosopher astonished in his turn; "who told you so?" "Nobody. I should be ashamed if I did not know that, without being told." The philosopher had puzzled his brain a great deal about the soul, but he could not have given a better definition of it in so few words.

I. The great and indispensable preliminary to correct thinking is METHOD. We have called it the preliminary, but it is the very soul and body of the Art of Thinking. All that logic can do is to methodise our thoughts—it does not profess to give us thoughts; as Rhetoric professes to teach us the arrangement of our diction, so as to make words in their application effective, so Logic professes to teach us how to arrange our reasons and our ideas, so that they may wear the most complete appearance. Method, therefore, we say, should be studied. First arrange your own ideas, and you will be the better able to detect the discordancy of those which may be presented to you, even in some of your great men. Upon being admitted into the chambers of their intellect, we behold the wardrobe and vestments of their minds scattered about in ridiculous disarray; and whenever this is perceived, although you admire the genius, it is certain that you loose a large amount of your previous confidence in the teacher. Methodic minds move in a solar pathway, and they leave a track of light after them in the path along which they travel.

There is a story told by Mr. Smith, in his "Irish Diamonds," which will not be without its value here, as containing a hint and an illustration of the value of method in the art of thinking. "A lady was complimenting a clergyman on the fact that she could hear and recite more of the matter of his sermons than those of any other minister she was in the habit of hearing. She could not account for this, but she thought that the fact was worthy of observation. The reverend gentleman remarked that he could explain the cause. 'I happen,' he said, 'to make a particular point of classifying my topics—it is a hobby of mine to do so; and therefore I never compose a sermon without first settling the relationship and order of my arguments and illustrations. Suppose, madam, that your servant was starting for town, and you were obliged hastily to instruct her about a few domestic purchases, not having time to write down the items, and suppose you said, "Be sure to bring some tea, and also some soap, and coffee too, by-the-bye; and some powder-blue—and don't forget some light cakes and a little sugar; and now I think of it—soda." You will not be surprised if her memory failed with regard to one or two of the articles. But if your commission ran thus—"Now, Mary, to-morrow, we are going to have some friends to tea; therefore, bring a supply of tea, coffee, and sugar, and light cakes; and the next day you know is washing day, so that we shall want soap, and starch, and powder-blue," it is most likely she would retain your order as easily as you retain my sermons.'"

Indeed this Art of Thinking is what is meant by Logic, or the Science of Inference; but Logic has usually been studied merely as an intellectual amusement—a pastime for the closet: as it has been usually studied, it is wholly unfitted for "the pugilistic gauntlet of the man of the world." The art of sound thinking and right reasoning will be obtained more readily by an earnest perusal of Locke on the Understanding, Butler's Analogy, Paley's Natural Theology, Lyell's Geology, Sir John Herschell's Natural Philosophy, or even from the following out the higher order of legal evidence, than from all the volumes of mere Logic ever written or read. The Sophisms and Syllogisms of the Logician have very frequently been only the trap-doors of speech, and have been used by adroit and acute men simply to endanger unwary adversaries honestly followed: they may give some aid in the prosecution of mental method, but in the art of thinking it is most important first to clearly understand terms,—then to arrange ideas. Archbishop Whateley's work on Logic is valuable, because by it the mind is emancipated from the slavery of absolute forms, and guided to the foundations of thought and of things. In the art of thinking there are several things against which the young student will need to guard. For instance, accidental coincidence is often assumed as sufficient to establish real connection. In this defect in reasoning, all the errors of superstition have their foundation. By a dishonest confusion of the ordinary experience of men with universal experience, David Hume has contrived to obtain

for his Essay on Miracles a surreptitious credence. Rightly understood, Logic is the art of marshalling and arranging the thoughts, and detecting those either in our own reasoning, or in the reasoning of others, which are only fallacies.

II. A most important section of study is the USE OF ANALOGY—investigation of the nature of Analogic Evidence or Probability: Comparison we shall find to be the great clue-line of thought. In countless instances of our lives, Probability throws the determining weight into the scale. With what admirable, and, indeed, overwhelming force, is this circumstance used by Bishop Butler. How few things are believed by Demonstration; or rather, how few things are *known* by us to be. Demonstration is plain and simple, while Probable Evidence, as the Bishop has remarked in the very first sentence of his immortal work, admits of degrees, and of all varieties of them, from the highest moral certainty to the very lowest presumption. The Ratiocinative Faculty lies especially in the power to detect relations,—or likelihood. Fanciful minds trifle with the ideas presented to them; but well formed, well grounded understandings, build from step to step the platform of irrepressible argument.

III. The two preceding requisites in the art of Thinking will suggest a Third which, perhaps, should be first—THE COMMAND OF THE THOUGHTS—*the power to marshal them.* Now the character of the thought gives the character to the mind, to the whole mind, yet thought is obedient; a particular kind of thought stays with us no longer than we

will it to do so. If you "hate vain thoughts," say so to them, and they will speedily depart from you. It is a pitiable thing when a man lies entirely at the mercy of his cogitation; when he has so long indulged the impure, or the improper thought, that it dares him to reject it! What a man thinks, that he is. The real life of a man is his mind life; his daily outer life will be shaped after it, and in accordance with it. Yes, and when the thought has fairly entered the mind, and identified itself with it, it will demand food: there must be a process of mental assimilation! Thus we come to another question, what does the mind eat and drink? It becomes, therefore, a hard, stern duty for the understanding to determine what shall, and what shall not enter the mind; to say to this thought, depart, or to that one, come; to say to the Mind, you shall not read this book, or you may read that. And not only so, not only is the regulation and the control of thought most important, but the succession of them, to put thoughts in their right places, right, not only in themselves, but in the right order too. Thus this command of thoughts has two bearings; it has, first, to do with the quality of the idea admitted into the mind at all, and then, with the relation of this especial idea to the development of an argument, or the illustration of a subject.

IV. Again, in the scale of thinking, LET US BE CAREFUL TO PRESERVE OUR MENTAL INDIVIDUALITY. Our minds do not belong to the great beings from whom we have derived our mental excellence and strength. If I am to be benefited by the perusal of the master mind, I must absorb

him, he must not absorb me. There are many who, in reading, abandon themselves; the book turns them about like puppets; they surrender themselves to the author; they take him for better or worse; "they swear to their hurt," they never notice the frailty, or the failing, the casual inelegance, or the occasional inaccuracy; all is conclusion, all is perfect. How many readers do we know of this description; not satisfied with admiration, they pass on to worship; not satisfied with worship they pass on to imitation; they lose their own identity; they become servile; the teacher who would have inspired them, degrades them; the book which would have emancipated, enslaves.

V. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT? *Is it the topic which will be useful to you?* Æropus, King of Macedonia, spent his time in making lanterns. Harcatius, King of Parthia, spent his time in catching moles, and was one of the best mole-catchers in his kingdom; and Briantes, King of Lydia, is represented to us as excellent at filing needles.* George III. was a lame sort of monarch, and indeed gave but little attention to the lessons of government, but he spent every spare moment in turning; in the gardens of his Palace at Kew, he had a workshop, and thither the queen would frequently repair, to inform him that a cabinet council was waiting for him. Louis XVI., the unfortunate King of France, spent all the surplus portions of his time in making locks; while Leopold II., like

* Todd's Student's Manual. section v.

Charles the V., was eminent in watch and clock making. Thus did these men spend their time—thus did they occupy their thoughts. The eminence of their position places the meanness of their mental occupancy in a strong contrast: that all the great affairs of State should be waiting the decisions of these men, and they all engaged upon employments which, although not worthless in the world, were wholly beneath the attention of kings and senators. Let your thinking be definite; let it have a practical tone and aim; let it have a bearing on something that shall be done; beware of desultory thinking, and of that desultory reading, which is the result of desultory thinking. Let your thinkings all have a subjective character; let them be moulded and controlled by aim and purpose. If the wires separately seem to others insignificant, show that to you they were parts of a great mental telegraphic system.

Perhaps all that has already been said supposes *great caution* as indispensable in the art of thinking—imagination results from the exercise of thought, and judgment results from the exercise of thought; without caution neither the one nor the other can be correct, for imagination, that most ærial power, has its weights and balances, is healthy and unhealthy, even as any other faculty of the being. We prize the imagination that submits to the curb-rein; we prize the judgment that weighs so steadily and carefully all the associations, and possible conditions of the case, before the opinion is pronounced. Thus attended, guarded, balanced, let Thought spread her wing, the

ample fields lie all around her, innumerable subjects invite her. How dignified to be able to think! to quit the earth and thread the avenues of pure being! to anticipate the Angel State! to surround the soul with the conditions and the enjoyments of the spiritual life!

"The beings of the mind are not of clay,"

and the exercises, however intense, of the well balanced soul, crumble not away, but leave behind them, to the remotest time, traces of their moulding, subduing, and creating power.

THE SOUL OF A WATCH.

An Epistle.

How often in the minds of sceptics, and even of those who are not sceptics, yet are in the habit of thinking loosely, Life is confounded with Organization. How difficult it is to separate the idea of life from the visible moving body. Some minds appear to delight in excluding from the range of their observation the knowledge of an independent, vitalizing energy. "All," say they, "that we know of animated bodies is that they are an organization, and that in their organization they live, and when the organization dissolves, they die." They refuse to see anything more than a complicated and mysterious arrangement. The human body is a wonderful machine. The brain, the heart, the lungs, it is admitted, are all held together by life; but these reasoners argue as if *that* life were in the organization, and not a mysterious principle compelling the organization to its purposes. And it is true that the principle of life eludes us. We know something of the physiology of its organization, or of the channels through which it acts, but the principle itself

escapes our vision. We are not so fortunate with the life of the body, as we are with the life of the eye; we can not only dissect the eye, but we can dissect light too, which is the life or soul of the eye. When we dissect the human frame, like the eye which is a part of it, it lies cold before us; but that life which gave to it, its motion and its force, its grandeur and its beauty,—*that* we cannot dissect. Now it is from this reasoning, or rather we ought to say from reasoning within a limited circle like this, that many have, as we have said above, arrived at the conclusion that organization is life. Are we wrong when we say that this is the stronghold of many infidels?

The other evening we were walking along with one of this very school. He was a young man who had read something, and like many persons of our acquaintance similarly principled, supposed himself to be learned because he had read many books on one side of the question. He had made up his mind too. He had arrived at the conclusion that life is merely the combination of parts, and that there remains after what we call death no independent existence which can look down on all the parts as they lie broken and decaying. And he was very dogmatical; for you never knew a person who saw only one side of a question, who was not dogmatical. Indeed, between you and me, my reader, you may usually define a dogmatist to be a man exceedingly positive, because exceedingly well acquainted with one side of a question, and resolutely determined not to examine the other; my young friend was quite of this order. As we walked along our con-

versation passed into the vein I have just mentioned: he became very eloquent upon life as the manifestation of something seen. "Life!" said he triumphantly; "what do we know of life, excepting as we see it exhibiting itself in form and motion? When the man dies, the principle of life is destroyed, the organization falls to pieces, and he ceases to be." "How is it then with this?" said I, and I took my watch out of my pocket; "did you ever see the Soul of a Watch?" "Oh," said he, "you are answering a fact with a joke." "Not at all," said I, "a watch has a soul as well as an animal or a man. Souls exist in degrees; there is the soul of the animal which goeth downward, and the soul of the man which goeth upward, and the watch has a soul which goes somewhere when it is taken to pieces." My friend was startled with this, and still maintained that I was only joking with him. But I very soon set him at rest on that matter. If my reasoning was false, I assured him at any rate that I did not intend to convey it as a joke. "Look," I said, "the watchmaker is the father of the watch—from him it derives its life—he is the author of its complicated being. He gives to it its faculties of motion and utterance He arranges all those wonderful parts, and in doing so, exhibits to us one of the most extraordinary instances of human contrivance. You see, as long as the watch holds together it has life; there is motion in it—you hear the beating of its heart in every tick. When its heart ceases to beat, it is as fatal to it as when the vital motion of your heart stops. You talk about expression on the

human face divine—the face lit up with animation;—well, even so with the watch; its face responds to its tongue, and apparantly, without any human intervention, excepting that as it is necessary for you to put the food into your mouth to support nature, so it is necessary for you to put the key into the watch. There was a sage old fellow whom I once knew, who used always to call his meals winding up times; and thus you see, in a way altogether inexplicable to some persons, the watchmaker's little creature you carry in your pocket is made to be the spokesman of the sun. And now you take it to pieces, or let it fall into decay through age, and of course you have lost your pocket-companion. As I said before, the heart ceases to beat, and the face ceases to reflect the truth. What then? What was the soul of the watch? It must have had a soul in its way and degree. It was an organization, and it must have had some principle that kept its parts together, and gave to it action, and vitality, and expression. Now tell me what was that soul, and whether, because the organization has fallen to pieces, the soul has ceased to exist, and whether the soul of the watch and the workmanship were, or are, one?" My friend was silent. He was looking for an answer, but it did not come. We walked on quietly together for a little way. "Come," said I, "tell me, what was the soul of the watch?" "I should say," said he, "that the main-spring was the soul of the watch." "Oh! there," said I, "you run up against some of your pantheistic notions. That is the way you confuse the organization itself with

the spirit of the organism. Well! now," said I, "when you go home, perhaps you may get at the soul of the watch more readily if you look at the clock. A clock, I think, could not go without weights, just as a watch could not go without a mainspring; but the mainspring of the watch, or more properly the balance wheel, and the weights of the clock and the pendulum, what are they both but the regulators of weight? Gravity, gravity is the soul of the watch and clock. And now tell me if all the watches and clocks were destroyed, would there be no gravity in the universe? And what are watches and clocks with their contrivances of weight and pendulum? What are they but means of measuring time by weight, and giving to us, for the regulation of our human existence, the ideas of principles which existed ages before us, and will exist ages after us. And thus you see, I have a very clear idea of a soul—an absolute principle, existing quite apart from any organization." "That is very striking," said my friend, "but if you mean that to serve your purpose in proving the independent existence of a human soul, and its consciousness and vitality after dissolution, I think your instance will sadly tell against you. I grant you, that for the sake of illustration you may, if you like, speak of the soul of the watch and clock, but your very illustration tells in my favour. Your watch and clock tumble to pieces, and although there was a soul animating them, what becomes of the soul? Why it floats off into the infinite; you have destroyed the attractive forces and principles which gave a character to the soul—you have

taken away its local habitation, you have almost taken away its name. It has no longer any distinct character as belonging to watch or clock; it has floated off, and become a part of the great all. And this I very much fear and think is our destiny. The forces of nature hold the element of life, as you call it, for a little while in this poor timepiece of a body. Like your watch, it is constantly getting out of repair; like your watch, it cannot last long; and then, like the soul of your watch, your spirit loses its local habitation and its name. It is human no longer—it has lost its identity." "Have you done, my friend?" I said, "because I quite see that all the while you walk along, you are only making the case clearer against yourself. Do you not see that up to a certain point, the analogy between the soul of a watch and the soul of a man holds good, but only up to a certain point? I like my figure very well—I think that it is expressive enough; but I will tell you where you have been guilty of an oversight. Look, the soul of the watch has no sentiment of personal identity. It does not know that *it is* the soul of a watch. It cannot wind itself up. The soul of the watch cannot prescribe for a watch, or for itself. The soul of the watch cannot go to the watchmaker. The soul of the watch cannot in any way regulate its movements. I hold the watch in my hand; it is a thousandfold more helpless a creature than anything Nature ever made, for it has neither an instinct nor a reason; it is made, and it is held in mere subserviency to mechanical law. Now do you not see here the great

distinction between the two souls? I know that when your mechanism has fallen to pieces, your watch, or your clock, that principle of weight and attraction of which we spoke, loses its individuality, and is absorbed back again into the universe. It has no longer a dwelling place in that rounded sphere which I carry in my pocket. But have you any right to think it is the same with the soul of man? You see that the soul of man has not only power over the mechanism in which it dwells, to feed it, to command it, to control it, to arrange it; the soul of man has power over itself—its nature, after the dissolution of its surrounding materials and clothing, remains the same. I argue that while the soul of the watch, which passes off to mingle in the universe, is lost like a dew-drop in the air, the soul of a man starts forth like a butterfly from the chrysalis, to enter into the loftier realms and regions of being." My friend was silenced, if not convinced. We walked along,—he said nothing; it was clear that he was arrested with the idea that possibly the organization through which the soul acts, and the soul, are not one and the same. It was but a suggestion, it was not evidence, it was only an analogy, but it sufficed to arrest. Happy are they who have the "more sure word of testimony—the light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day star arise on the heart."

CHAPTER V.

THE EDUCATION OF THE MEMORY.

WHAT a fortune would that man make who could sell to people, Memories! This is the universal desideratum. Wherever we go we hear complaints of *bad* memories, and how is this? and where are we to find a remedy for this? for if the memory does not retain, how vain are all the achievements of the Mind. Memory is the storehouse, and if Time, like a thief, takes out of the storehouse whatever he places there, how useless is the effort to accumulate. With the Ancients, Memory was the mother of the Muses. All the presiding spirits of Science, History, Music, and Poetry, were born of Memory; thus the great framers of the Grecian Mythology indicated their conception of the importance of this faculty of the Mind. But what is Memory? For, perhaps we shall obtain some assistance in giving vitality to it, if we remember the nature of it. Memory, then, it should be remembered, depends upon Attention and Suggestion. Attention places the jewel in the casket, seizes upon and preserves the thing desirable to be remembered; and Suggestion is the Secret Spring touching the lock and presenting the jewel

when it is needed by the possessor. Dr. Thomas Brown cleared up much of the mystery attaching to the powers of Memory, when he declared that, much of the confusion in which Memory has always been involved, resulted from the usual method of speaking. Each faculty of the mind seems to possess the power of recollection; but then there must be something to recollect. A bad memory means very generally an empty cupboard. Is is very frequently the case, that years pass along, and no attempt is made to store the mind; suddenly the person bethinks himself, "I have a bad memory!" He does not condemn his own carelessness, but throws the blame on Nature.

But learn to prize this power, this wonderful power, Memory, which teaches us our individuality and Identity; memory, by which we know ourselves the same beings we were twenty years since, although time has changed our body; thus preaching to us the indivisibility of our mind. Memory, so ready when practised in all emergencies; wielding a wand of power in all professions; pouring upon us like a flood the tears of past emotions, or bowing our spirits with the recollection of old joys; Memory, unseen recorder, the traces of whose invisible ink, when shone upon by the fires of Likeness and Association, come forth to the mental eye vivid and legible, although written a generation ago. The Egyptians had their sarcophagus, with its wondrous and secret hieroglyphics; the Mexicans had their knotted cords; and Babylon of old, and China, in all ages, have alike employed letters of strange and mystic significance; but what are these letters compared

with that wonderful power within every one of us—that bridge between the present and the past, for ever thronged with weird and beautiful shapes and sounds, and surrounded with the scenery of terror and of beauty?

I. In order to the Education of Memory it is very necessary in the first place to FIX THE ATTENTION. Students devote themselves for long years to intellectual habits, and sometimes never do this: unless the Attention is fixed, it will not be engaged; that is not attention which is arrested by every passing object and sound; that is not attention which skims like a butterfly over a subject and never penetrates, nor seeks to penetrate beneath the surface. The real evidence of things is frequently never perceived by the person who supposes that he is talking very learnedly and profoundly upon a matter: and the reason is obvious; his attention has never been enlisted. Mental Dissipation is a cause of impoverished memories; a course of study chains the mind and prevents its vagrancy. There will be a sharpening of all the powers, an absorption of the energies in the pursuit of the one subject, which will give system, consistency, and stability to the mental character. In order to this fixing of the attention, too, it may be recommended to learn to love the study in which you have engaged; attempt to realise it in its most friendly aspects, and in its most familiar relations; if it deals in narrative, acquaint yourself with it; if with diagrams, acquaint yourself with them. Sensible images and corporeal things illustrate frequently notions in themselves; very abstract concatenation, too, fixes the atten-

tion. Writers who speak in fragments, in suggestions, hints, and intuitions, are not easily remembered. How different in this respect the æsthetics of Schiller and Coleridge, from those of Emerson,—in the first, we have the long drawn and clearly linked chain; in the other we have a diamond necklace broken into shivers. So also the place has much to do with fixing the attention. Fine scenery, or fluctuating life, the busy city, or the bright and shining vestments of Nature, these are unfavourable to the repose of the thought. Be content, too, to be ignorant for a time, until Knowledge shall have ripened and brought forth fruit; be not too hasty to come to a conclusion, and watch the dominion of the senses; be not enslaved by them; passions, and appetite, interfere with the sceptred attention of thought. These directions are worthy of being remembered, and acted upon; for in order to insure a good memory, let there be before all things a fixed and steady attention.

II. We remember most vividly what we have seen; PAINT YOUR IDEAS *therefore, or at any rate* ACQUIRE *distinct and* CLEAR PERCEPTIONS *of them;* one great cause of our confused recollection, is our very confused perception. If the eye beholds objects through a mist, how can we be expected to give any clear account of them; on the contrary, objects distinctly beheld are longest retained in the mind, and most vividly recalled; thus also it is with mental perception, and the reflection of the objects upon the understanding.

III. Argument, or METHOD, *greatly assists the under-*

standing and the memory. Sir James Mackintosh is said by Mr. Hall to have had so wonderful a memory, that it appeared as if everything in his mind was arranged upon pegs;—an Historical peg, a Natural History peg, a peg for Natural Philosophy, another for Poetry, another for Theology; and he had only to lift his hand, and take done the illustration he most needed: this seems very convenient, and there must have been, in the man capable of this, originally great power of retention; but it resulted also from habit—vigorous habit of arrangement. How can there be in that mind selection, and compact, and various orderliness over which no supervision has been exercised?

IV. Again—*Review your attainments—recall your ideas from time to time.* The miser counts his wealth—the landlord walks over his fields—should not you review the progress you have made, from week to week, and from year to year; and review with the pen if you would remember: set down upon paper the topics; writing calls forth the attention, and elicits thought. Dr. Watts has said, "There is more gained by writing once than by reading five times."

These methods are simple, but they will be effectual; whoever rigidly employs them will not employ them in vain. Thus memory will grow, not by any trickery of art; memory cannot be conferred, although the powers which constitute it may be rendered more acute—not by drenching the memory, by pouring upon it promiscuous and indiscriminate streams—by wheeling barrowful after

barrowful into that great lumber-room, the mind, and expecting that the mind will, in its simultaneousness, by some primitive quality, separate, and reject, and preserve. Carefully, carefully, let every fact be noted and added: but at the same time, let it be remembered, too, that memory is the most valuable which retains facts, and incorporates them into principles. The FACTOLOGIST is by no means a great mental character. Events and dates, and anecdotes, should all be remembered as subsidiary to some general and controlling principle. All facts are valuable for the moral interpretation that may be put upon them; what is any memory worth without this? The writer once knew a man who had learned the whole of Josephus' "Antiquities and Wars of the Jews," and of what use was this? Of what use is much of the mere recollection of dates and statistics, upon which so much stress is frequently laid? A variety of disconnected facts resemble the different limbs of a corpse—dead, scattered, useless; but, when animated by some great controlling purpose, then every fact finds its appropriate place: it has its true relation when it is subsidiary. Philosophic system reunites the scattered limbs, and gives them life.

Thus it is, that in every relation of life, memory is necessary: it gives to the Poet a great variety of images and words. The fancy and imagination depend upon memory for the variety of their selection, and the fulness of their power: so judgment depends upon the readiness with which the memory can seize the most fitting opinions, and bring them to bear upon the case before the court.

The Orator could wield no thunders or lightnings but for this power. The problems of the Mathematician, and the experiments of the Chemist, would, indeed, dissolve into thin air. Memory is the golden thread linking all the mental gifts and excellencies together. Memory, when treated well, is like an angel ever within the soul; but treated ill, is like a black weird shadow, casting a baneful and remorseful eye on all within its reach.

For there is a mysterious but certain connection between the powers of memory and conscience. "*Son remember*" is the awful Peal of the funeral bell in the belfry of the lost soul—who can describe, who can anticipate its powers?

"I knew a man," says Dr. Lyman Beecher, "who said that, in falling twenty feet, when he expected to die, the thoughts of a lifetime seemed to pass through his mind. He thought of his business—of his wife—of his children —and of that eternity to which he was going. A life seemed to pass through his mind and nothing was lost. So it will be when memory summons the acts of a life, at the last tribunal. Nothing is lost. Thoughts once impressed, but apparantly lost, will come again. A life is written on our memory, as with an invisible ink. It is apparently lost to our frail sight while here. But in the judgment light it will be seen enveloped around us, and, will be unrolled till every line and letter is made visible. I knew a sailor once, who said that when once in a storm on the giddy mast, while trying to furl sail, and could not, he cursed God. It passed out of his mind for twenty years, but now, in a season of excitement, he said, 'Now I remember it. I am lost!'"

We may add, that the period of youth is the day when memory sows the seed for some future golden harvest. The attempt to write upon the memory of childhood and of age, is like writing on water—the impression is immediately effaced: * not so the memory of youth and middle life; it is like writing on rock, or granite, or marble. Perhaps there is not a more beautiful sight in the whole world than the old man, with a memory well stored, sitting by the fireplace, and giving forth the result of his experience to his descendants around him. The racy anecdote, the kindly sentence, the clever and the wise advice, the method of a sound and wise mind; the counsel of a sage warrior about to lay aside the harness, and to retire to the silence of the last deep home;—it is a sublime sight; to some degree we may all realise it; for although the castles in the air fade away, and "the days do come and the years draw nigh, when we say we have no pleasure in them," the piles of oriental splendour we had

* There is an affecting characteristic of this loss of memory in extreme age related of the beloved and honoured Samuel Rogers; the author of the "Pleasures of Memory." "Although his impressions of long-past events were as fresh as ever, he forgot the names of his relations and oldest friends whilst they were sitting with him, and told the same stories to the same people two or three times over in the same interview. But there were frequent glimpses of intellect in all its original brightness—of tenderness, refinement, and of grace. 'Once driving out with him,' says a female correspondent, 'I asked him after a lady whom he could not recollect. He pulled the check-string, and appealed to his servant. 'Do I know Lady M——?' The reply was, 'Yes, sir.' This was a painful moment to us both. Taking my hand, he said, 'Never mind, my dear, I am not yet reduced to stop the carriage, and ask if I know *you*.'"—*Hayward's Biographical and Critical Essays.*

figured in the clouds—the Aladdin lamps and the Armida Palaces do melt into thin air—yet there are some visions that never perish; they deepen into reality and beauty ever as time rolls on; the memory of some great and venerable book: of the first inspiration caught from the magic of genius guiding to the steps by which we prosecuted our studies, until all the blaze and magnificence from the altars of knowledge enchanted and astounded us; the curious fact, the profound intimation, the revelry, the dance, and choral hymn within the soul, when some peculiarly glorious thought shone like a newly-discovered planet overhead;—all these are things never forgotten; they perhaps become more intense as we grow old, and, like the Rosicrucian lamps of the ancients, blaze out in full lustre when the body is consigned to the sepulchre.

CHAPTER VI.

MORAL HABITS.

It is here, in the training of the moral being, however, that the great work of education at once begins and ends; the other parts of education are objective, and outside, and apart from the mind, but this is subjective, and lies immediately within itself.

I. The writer will have been much misunderstood, if, all along, his readers have not perceived that his estimation of this section of education was supreme and most important; and, indeed, the preceding chapters have contained much that has especial reference to the moral discipline of the life. In reference to the matters of moral education, there are some things which ought to be attended to at the very outset; and, first and foremost, practise a rigid temperance. Intemperance is, indeed, low, mean, disgraceful, degrading. Save yourself from it by the practice of a rigid abstinence from all intoxicants; they sorely interrupt the harmony and balance of the mental action,—and the still more disastrous fact is, that the beginning of the mischief is like the letting out of water—who can tell what havoc and ruin may result from its streams?

It is altogether trite and commonplace to remind my readers of the thousands, nay millions of men, whose minds, in the accomplishments, attainments, and powers of genius approached to the sublime, and who yet lost all, and became melancholy moral wrecks through their intemperance. Many teachers would pass this lesson by, but it would by no means comport with the writer's conceptions of duty that he should do so. The games of chance at which so many young men spend hours, what do you think of them? The shuffling of pieces of card, with black and red marks upon them—is this, think you, a very rational employment? And billiards, and bagatelle, and even chess—I confess that I am ignorant of all of them; but, I may ask whether, while so much remains to be known, while the world is so full of topics of abiding interest, it is worth while to spend time thus? This is the view in which these laborious frivolities have always presented themselves to my mind. But Dancing! —an immortal being hopping about like madness broke loose from an asylum, making grimaces for a long night in the pestiferous atmosphere of a ball-room—can we figure to ourselves any of the illustrious men and women —Platos, Socrates, Miltons, and Washingtons, Rolands, Agrippinas, and beings of such glorious mould, thus frivolously trifling away moments which fashioned their immortality? Impossible, my young friends, that you can figure this;—and where such beings refuse to go, it must be right for you and I also absolutely to refuse.

In these preliminary conditions of healthy moral habits,

I will only mention further an entire abstinence from snuff and tobacco, those unhealthy abominations, and "leprous distillments," which poison the body, corrupt the brain, and injure the healthy action of all sensation.

II. But these are, indeed, only the preliminaries of higher moral habits—moral habits which should be the foundation of the whole life: and first, I was about to say, cultivate a habit of DECISION; but decision is not a simple quality of the mind—it is complex, and a combination of several of the most exalted powers of the soul. Physical character and temperament have much to do with the formation of this habit—earnestness, courage, will: but this only proves the necessity of an education in all these aids to moral power; for who would be a characterless man, a poor being of straw, the sport of every wave, the creature of every thoughtless being's scorn? Who would be a poor wretch without an aim or a purpose in life—tossed hither and thither by the breath of the strong-minded man, or crushing weight of circumstances—a being who is not a being—for he who is not his own property—who never can tell one hour what he will be the next, can scarcely be called so. What characteristic of the moral nature is there upon which man's happiness so much depends as decision? Without it a man must be trampled down; and as he lies embarrassed, feeble, powerless, he wonders at his own misfortunes. All the evils and afflictions of the world poured their streams there; there so many confluences met, and therefore he was overwhelmed. Nobody else ever had to encounter

such disasters. If he attempts to bestir himself he calls for crutches and for stick, for aid from the nearest neighbour, or from a dozen of the nearest neighbours; for he is willing to accept the advice of so many, but not at all willing to follow any advice, or even the promptings of his own common sense. But behold the decided man: he may be a most evil man; he may be grasping, avaricious, covetous, unprincipled; still, look—look how the difficulties of life know the strong man, and give up the contest with him. An universal homage is paid to a decided man, as soon as he appears among men: he walks by the light of his own judgment: he has made up his mind, and having done so, henceforth, action—action is before him; he cannot bear to sit amidst unrealised speculations: to him speculation is only valuable that it may be resolved into living and doing.—There is no indifference—no delay The spirit is in arms; all is in earnest. Thus Pompey, when hazarding his life on a tempestuous sea, in order to be at Rome on an important occasion, said, "It is necessary for me to go; it is not necessary for me to live." Thus Cæsar, when he crossed the Rubicon, burned the ships upon the shore which brought his soldiers to land, that there might be no return. It was this same spirit which enabled our own glorious Milton to embrace darkness and blindness in order that he might perform what seemed to him a sacred duty to his country; and this enabled Ledyard, when asked by some official person when he would be ready to start off upon the expedition to Africa, to reply promptly and firmly, "To-morrow."

Decision, the foundation of character; the robe and vestment of character; for character may be good or bad, but it may be questioned whether any person has attained either one or the other, without decision; it is that bright and vivid insight into things; and that determined and resolute activity of mind, resulting from the insight. Decision is never lazy, does not lie down to sleep on highways; does not despair of success; does not accept every interpretation of a matter, and renounce its own indi. viduality. Individuality! why, what makes the Individual? How is it that some men impress you as possessing a character as soon as they are introduced to you; while others never seem to belong to the company at all. Some men, like seals, stamp themselves wherever they go, and leave their mark; and others receive impressions whereever they go, and each impression is in its turn obliterated by the succeeding one. In all this we trace the lack of character; for character absorbs all impressions, and makes them a part of itself and of its individuality, and the force by which it does so is spontaneous and immediate. Decision is the moral vertebræ of the character: it gives to the whole being a bearing, stamina, and consistency; he who has it not, cannot walk erect,—you may know it by the shuffling gait, by the timid and fearful appearance; by the craven and downcast look; by the hesitating and snail-like motion. We write beneath the persuasion that while much of this is of course constitutional, and belongs to the temperament, much of it also is the result of Education, and may be removed in early life by

training to rapid and vigorous habits, to determined and conclusive modes of thought, and to Self-Respect and Self-Reliance; these two have not claimed and received the respect they deserved; and the consequence has been—as always such consequences must follow—there has been a sort of moral pauperism of character, a self-abandonment; who shall say how much evil, and folly, and sin, have resulted from simple weakness; from vacillancy, from the inhabituation to look at things fairly and fully, and in the same manner to calculate their consequences. The man of decision will not always be a good man, but he will never be a weak one; and who does not know that

> "To be weak is miserable,
> Doing or suffering."

There is a striking passage illustrative of the character we are desirous should be developed in "The Autobiography of a Working Man," by Alexander Somerville; a book which we know not whether to recommend most for the graphic character of its pictures of life, or for the vividness of its moral interest and instruction. He says, "It may to some appear like vanity in me to write what I now do, but I should not give my life truly if I omitted it. When filling a cart of manure at the farm dunghill, I never stopped work because my side of the cart might be heaped up before the other side, at which was another man; I pushed over what I had heaped up to help him, as doubtless he did to help me, when I was last and he was first. When I have filled my column or columns of a

newspaper, or a sheet of a magazine with the literature for which I was to be paid, I have never stopped if the subject required more elucidation, or the paper or magazine more matter, because there was no contract for more payment, or no likelihood of there being more. When I have lived in a barrack-room, I have stopped my own work, and have taken a baby from a soldier's wife, when she had to work, and nursed it, or have gone for water for her, or have cleaned another man's accoutrements, though it was no part of my duty to do so. When I have been engaged in political literature, and travelling for a newspaper, I have not hesitated to travel many miles out of my road to ascertain a local fact, or to pursue a subject into its minutest particulars, if it appeared that the public were unacquainted with the facts of the subject; and this at times when I had work to do which was much more pleasant and profitable. When I have needed employment I have accepted it, at whatever wages I could obtain—at plough, in farm drain, in stone quarry, in breaking stones for roads, at wood-cutting, in a saw-pit, as a civilian, or a soldier. I have in London cleaned out a stable and groomed a cabman's horse for sixpence, and been thankful to the cabman for the sixpence. I have subsequently tried literature, and have done as much writing for ten shillings as I have readily obtained—been sought after and offered—ten guineas for. But had I not been content to begin at the beginning, and accepted shillings, I would not have risen to guineas. I have lost nothing by working. Whether at labouring

or literary work, with a spade or with a pen, I have been my own helper."

III. *Amongst moral habits nothing is more important than the gathering up the fragments of Time.* How many minutes have you to spare? Five, ten, fifteen? Much may be done with them; we have heard of a young man who perused a history of England while waiting for his meals in a boarding house; we have heard of a mathematician, who is said to have composed an elaborate work when visiting with his wife, during the interval between the moment when she first started to take leave of their friends, and the moment she had finished her last words. "The small stones which fill up the crevices have almost as much to do with making the fair and firm wall, as the great rocks; so the right and wise use of spare moments contributes not a little to the building up, in good proportions, and with strength, a man's mind." Merchants and clerks may find fifteen minutes, during a few intervals of the day, to learn what goes on, beyond the day-book and the ledger. Mechanics and artisans may find fifteen minutes occasionally to gather a hint, a thought, a fact, an anecdote, which they may ponder over while at work. Good housewives need not be so ignorant as, alas! they too often are; supposing the world of books is not for them. One and all of you, one and all of us, let us take care of the minutes, and the hours will take care of themselves.

The famous de Witt, one of the greatest statesmen of the age in which he lived, when asked by a friend how

he was able to despatch the multitude of affairs with which he was engaged, replied, that his whole art consisted in doing one thing at once. "If," says he, "I have any necessary dispatches to make, I think of nothing else till they are finished; if any domestic affairs require my attention, I give myself up wholly to them, till they are set in order."

All our energies should be put forward so as to produce a healthy individuality, so as to form a character. In the third volume of Mr. Coleridge's "Friend," there is a paper, the introductory one, written by the venerated Wordsworth, abounding with the most lofty maxims; yet at the same time inculcating those lessons which do not find a remote application, but one which meets us in the every-day life of the plain man: for, let it be remembered that our eye is fixed upon no virtue which lies apart from, or transcends human nature; there is no such virtue. Such is the inherent dignity of human nature, that all its sublimest and most heroic, and noble performances, may be attained and performed by all men. There is no virtue, young man, which may not be yours. The great step to this is, primarily:—

IV. *To Learn the Sanctity of Duty.* It is to be feared that thousands even of intelligent persons, and persons who are supposed to be religious beings, have no conception of the greatness of the idea of duty—of moral accountableness, of the meaning of the word *Ought;* but it is certain that nothing is done well until it is done from the sense of a controlling principle of inherent and essen-

tial rightness. Duty is the child of Love, and, therefore, there is power in all its teachings and commands. What can go on well without this? Will our intellectual progress be considerable? Shall we feel fresh incentives in every page and every study? The obtaining of knowledge is not always enchantment, does not always seem the reading of a Fairy Tale, or the bewitchment of the Arabian Nights' Entertainment; and when the road is rugged, and the way long and weary, when the head aches, and the pulse is languid, what then will sustain the spirit? what then will animate in the pursuit? DUTY and LOVE, love to knowledge, and the sense of high principle; of the imperative importance of seizing upon every method and agency by which the faculties of the spirit may so expand, as to make it more worthy of its origin and its destiny; and actions and books, and all the routine of daily life, should be examined beneath the light of a conception of Duty. The universality of a moral sense has been questioned by many; yet everywhere the idea of duty is formed in the mind of man, and although the scale of duties differs in various nations and portions of the globe, everywhere Man has a scale of duty. There is nothing,—there can be nothing lofty about the objective life of the man, to whom the world, and the affairs of the world, present no lessons of commanding duty. Conscience is in the breast—listen to its commanding and authoritative voice. Let Conscience itself be educated; for Conscience, which may be called our "moral skin," is like our bodily skin; it may be made comparatively

insensible, and sometimes quite so; and, therefore, some persons have argued against the existence of a conscience, an inner vision, a moral sense; and hence, again, have attempted to subvert the idea of duty, a thing of prime moral moment, and have resolved it into expediency and conveniency. As well might we nail the Magnet to the south, and deny its tendency to the north. You have heard the anecdote of the lady who was desirous of rising at six in the morning, and for this purpose purchased an alarum; the alarum was true, but the will of the lady was weak. She heard the warning the first morning, she heard it the second, the third, she heard it several mornings; but at last, although it continued to speak, she never heard, and thus it will be in the Education of the Mind to Duty. The action will be pleasant as it is prompt; the frequent neglect of the warning to exertion, to attain the standard of excellence, will leave the powers more enfeebled and benumbed than before. The Poet of our age has apostrophised Duty in words which we all should make our own:—

"To humble functions, awful Power,
I call thee. I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour.
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give,
And in the light of Truth thy bondsman let me live."

It is a beautiful arrangement in the mental and moral economy of our nature, that that which is performed as a

duty may, by frequent repetition, become a habit; and the habit of stern virtue, so repulsive to others, may hang around our neck like a wreath of flowers. "Habit is the magistrate of our lives; and, therefore, we should see that we have good habits." Well says Dr. Chalmers, "The law of habit, when enlisted on the side of righteousness, not only strengthens and makes sure our resistence to vice, but facilitates the most arduous performances of virtue. The man whose thoughts, with the purposes and designs to which they lead, are at the bidding of conscience, will, by frequent repetition, at length describe the same track almost spontaneously,—even as in physical education, things laboriously learned at the first, come to be done at last without the feeling of an effort. And so in moral education, every new achievement of principle smoothes the way to future achievements of the same kind; and the precious fruit or purchase of each moral virtue is to set us on higher and firmer vantage-ground for the conquests of principle in all time coming. He who resolutely bids away suggestions will at length obtain, not a respite only, but a final deliverance from their intrusion. Conscience, the longer it has made way over the obstacles of selfishness and passion, the less will it give way to these adverse forces, themselves weakened by the repeated defeats which they have sustained in the warfare of moral discipline; or, in other words, the oftener that conscience makes good the supremacy which she claims, the greater would be the work of violence, and less the strength for

its accomplishment, to cast her down from that station of practical guidance and command, which of right belongs to her. It is just, because in virtue of the law of suggestions, those trains of thought and feeling which connect her first biddings with their final execution, are the less exposed at every new instance to be disturbed, and the more likely to be repeated over again, that every good principle is more strengthened by its indulgence than before. The acts of virtue ripen into habits; and the goodly and permanent result is, the formation or establishment of a virtuous character." All the actions of our life become easy by repetition; let us then make Habit the friend of Virtue—too frequently she has been the foe—most of our habits interfere with our progress in excellence; we encumber ourselves with them; we wrap ourselves round with artificials, and then labour to prove to ourselves and to the world that they are natural.

"Use doth breed a habit in a man."

The more completely we surrender ourselves to the Truth of Nature, the more perfect is at once our ease, our independence, and our happiness; and why should we love the grotesque? why should we seek it? why should we wear it? Alas! has any man of thought reached the period of thirty years, without feeling how morally inconsistent he is? There is a path to happiness. Find out what is thy duty—weigh it well, and do it.

There is a solemn tone in these verses, whence

obtained we know not, entitled "THE SLEEPER;"—are they not a warning?—

My master travelled far away,
  And left me much to do;
Alas! I trifled all the day,
  Although my days were few.

Wand'ring and playing like a child,
  And moved by every wind,
The fleeting moments I beguiled,
  Forgetting that I sinned.

I went to sleep, like all the rest,
  Whilst Time seemed still and dumb,
But soon he struck upon my breast,
  And cried "*Thy Master's Come!*"

'Twas grass cut down by sudden mower,
  Or tree by lightning's stroke:—
"Oh! time, time, time, is this the hour?"
  And, trembling, I awoke.

The Education of Duty will greatly depend upon two moral attitudes,—Avoidance of Temptation, when we pray, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;"—and Resistance to Temptation, when we are compelled to betake ourselves to the warlike demeanour, and to notice the inscription on the banner, "Quit ye like men; be strong." There are some temptations to which we need not expose ourselves: our safety demands departure. Intemperance is of this order; we need not parley, or debate, or struggle; we must cut ourselves off from the first invita-

tions of temptation. With Sleep, on the contrary, which sits like a vampire upon the spirits of most of the men and women in England, and destroys their health, strength, and life, with this habit of self-indulgence we have to grapple and to fight; and our success in these two methods of dealing with our mental adversaries will, under Heaven, depend upon the degree of moral character to which we gird ourselves. The young clerk who takes his place at the desk of the counting-house, does not go there without preparation. Could we expect that difficult questions of trade were to be solved without a previous preparation and discipline in arithmetic; and the captain, who is called to the helm of the vessel when the winds are out upon the great sea, has he not prepared himself by study, by the chart, and by the compass? But the young man entering society, called to the various social tables, to various companies, called to perform actions which demand an immediate, an unhesitating yes or no,—has he prepared himself? has he studied the chart of duty? has he determined that his life shall be regulated and shaped after certain principles and authoritative and inevitable laws, or like a vessel without compass, rudder, or captain, is he at the mercy of the social waves and usages? Alas, for him, if so!

Beware of every kind of passion—beware of all violence —beware of all those moods which are hostile to the tranquillity of the soul—of anger—of malice—of desire—of the passions, which rule either by their vehemence or their inexorability. Almost all passionate people sooner or

later realise the story and the proverb of "the bear with the tea-kettle."

Fish, which forms the chief nourishment of the Kamschatka bears, and which they procure for themselves in the rivers, was last year excessively scarce in Kamschatka. A great famine consequently existed among them, and, instead of retiring to their dens, they wandered about the whole winter through, even in the streets of the town of St. Peter and St. Paul. One of them finding the outer gate of a house open, entered, and the gate accidentally closed after him. The woman of the house had just placed a large tea-machine, full of boiling water, in the court; the bear smelt to it and burned his nose: provoked at the pain, he vented all his fury upon the kettle, folded his fore-paws round it, pressed it with his whole strength against his breast to crush it, and burned himself, of course, still more and more. The horrible growls which rage and pain forced from him brought all the inhabitants of the house and neighbourhood to the spot, and poor bruin was soon dispatched by shots from the window. He has, however, immortalized his memory, and become a proverb amongst the town's-people, for when any one injures himself by his own violence, they call him "the bear with the tea-kettle."

If asked what, then, are the moral habits upon which especial attention should be fixed? I should say, charter them all. For the disciplining of the life Franklin's plan was unquestionably a good one; he formed a scale for the Virtues, including in the scale Temperance, Silence,

Order, Respect, Frugality, Independence, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquillity, Chastity, and Humility; he devoted attention especially to one virtue for a week; taking each virtue in succession, and headed every virtue with a motto by way of definition. Thus, by definite reflection upon the Nature of virtue, and frequently recalling to his mind some direct impersonation of it, his life was kept perpetually on the guard.

The following were the rules he laid down for guidance and action:—

Temperance . Eat not to fulness; drink not to elevation.
Silence . . . . Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
Order . . . . Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
Resolution . . Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
Frugality . . . Make no expense, but do good to others or yourself; that is, waste nothing.
Industry . . . Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.
Sincerity . . . Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.
Justice . . . . Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
Moderation . . Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries.

Cleanliness . . Suffer no uncleanliness in body, clothes, or habitation.

Tranquillity . Be not disturbed about trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

Humility . . . Imitate Jesus Christ.

The same great man likewise drew up the following plan for the regular employment of his time; examining himself each morning and evening as to what he had done, or left undone; by which practice he was better able to improve his future conduct:—

MORNING.	HOURS.	
The question, What good shall I do to-day?	6 7 8 "	Rise, wash, and address Almighty God; contrive the day's business and take the resolution of the day; prosecute the present study; and breakfast.
	9 10 11 12	Work.
	1 2	Read, or look over my accounts and dine.
	3 4 5 6 7	Work.

EVENING.	HOURS.	
The question, What good have I done to-day? what have I left undone which I ought to have done?	8 9 10	Put things in their places; amusement; supper; examination of the day; address the Almighty.
	11 12 1 2 3 4 5	Sleep.

Perhaps in our complex age something yet more definite is needed to give consistency to our moral habits. Temperance, indeed, but temperance not restricting its teachings to the table or the bottle, but exercising imperial influence over all the senses, the subjection of the appetites to the spirit. The state to which John Foster had ascended when he said, "My soul shall either rule in my body or quit it." Truth, let us have as the basis of all character. Truth, that shall live for its own sake and not for the pay it may receive for being true; Truth, that shall banish for ever the idea of a reward for well-doing, extraneous from, and unrelated to itself. This chapter cannot be more appropriately closed, than by the following letter, from the late venerable WILLIAM ALLEN.

"Dear E——, I feel anxious for thy welfare in every

respect, and especially in thy going among perfect strangers; but if thou art careful to attend to the Divine monitor in thy own mind, the Spirit of Christ, thou wilt be under the notice and protection of the greatest of beings, and wilt be favoured with that sweet peace in thy own soul which is far beyond all other enjoyments. Accept, dear E——, the following hints from thy friend and well-wisher. Preserve this letter, and peruse it occasionally.

"1. Devote some portion of the day to the reading of the Holy Scriptures alone in thy chamber; and pray constantly to the Almighty that he would enlighten thy mind to understand them.

"2. Endeavour to keep thy mind in such a state that thou mayest turn it to think upon God many times in the course of the day; and pour out thy petitions to him in secret for preservation.

"3. Never do anything privately which thou wouldst be ashamed of if made public; and if evil thoughts come into thy mind, endeavour to turn from them, and not follow up the train of them, or indulge them for a moment; always endeavour that thy very thoughts may be acceptable in the sight of God, to whom they are always open.

"4. Be careful not to read books of an immoral tendency, as novels, romances, &c., and endeavour to discourage it in others—they are poison to the mind.

"5. Be punctual in attending a place of worship.

"6. Be very careful what company thou keepest; have few intimates, and let them be persons of the

most virtuous character: for if a young man associate with those of bad character, he will infallibly lose his own.

"7. Be very circumspect in all thy conduct, and particularly towards females.

"8. Study the interest of thy employer, and endeavour to promote it by all fair and honourable means in thy power. Study the duties expected from thee, and fulfil them faithfully, as in the sight of God.

"9. Endeavour to improve thyself in thy studies in the intervals of leisure.

"Never do anything against thy conscience.

"I have not time to add more than that my prayers are put up for thy preservation, and that as long as thou continuest to conduct thyself in a virtuous and honourable manner, thou wilt find a steady friend in WILLIAM ALLEN."

BACKBONE PEOPLE.

An Episode.

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It is with men as with animals, you may divide them into two classes, vertebrated and invertebrated. Animals remarkable for dignity and elevation in the scale of existence are vertebrated or backboned. Their backbones give them eminence and place; all animals to which we apply the term inferior want this backbone, and they can only crawl or creep because they are invertebrated. We have often thought when looking among men that this is the great distinction we notice between them, the successful and the unsuccessful, the principled and the unprincipled, the true and the false. The schoolmaster, as he bids farewell to his pupil about to enter the great world of action and business, says, I know they will never make anything of that boy, there is no backbone in him. Jenkins, the grocer, looks doubtfully at his apprentice, and says, as he shakes his head, ah! I wish I had never had anything to do with that lad, I doubt there is no backbone in him. And Thompson, the architect, refuses to have anything to do with building the row of houses, for says he, there is no knowing where to find Williams who

wants me to build them; he has no backbone. These are customary modes of speech, and they represent the simple truth of life. We recoil instinctively from the touch of the spider and the wasp, the leech and the slug, and we recoil as instinctively from that large class of persons of whom these little creatures are a sort of moral analogy, because they have no backbone. They can sting sometimes, they can weave a brittle web sometimes, they leave here and there a slimy trail, they can draw blood, but the instincts of society and humanity recoil from them. They have no backbone. There is nothing in this world of so much importance to man in his dealings with his fellow-man as faith, mutual faith, and trust. Where this is wanting no shining exterior can compensate, nor any amount of fleeting elegance. It is the bone by which the various parts of society are held together. It is the vertebral column which gives majesty and consistency to all relations. I never see a man whom I suspect of double-facedness, and some such we are all compelled to see, but I think of him as a man afflicted with a moral spinal complaint. It gives to his whole appearance and demeanour a creeping and cringing aspect, and spite of the indignation which such characters awaken, perhaps the more prominent and general feeling in every mind is pity. We pity those who are afflicted with so severe a calamity, as the prostration of the spinal column and nerve, and who are compelled therefore instead of bounding about and abroad in the elasticity and strength of healthy enjoyment to lie wasting and feeble,—who have not

strength to walk upright without a crutch, who never appear without a melancholy stoop, and whose voice partakes of the weakness of the frame. Such tender beings command our pity, and how cheerfully we give to them our help. And should not they command our pity too who morally are all this—from whom is taken that bold and open-faced uprightness which with transparent features looks upon you, and dares you to doubt it, and who in place of this, present to your eye a bowed and stooping moral character, ready to cringe to any servility—to prostrate itself to any extreme of humbleness, not merely it may be to obtain wealth, but even to be tickled with a passing smile or cajoled with a flattering breath. Once upon a time a worm moved by indignation at its own littleness, and yet more indignant to find the giant man standing by its side, ventured to attempt to erect itself upon its rings and to address him, but it fell again down to the earth, and mourned thus, "And why should not I walk erect? why should I be compelled to creep while this great being by my side strides and walks? Very clever is the contrivance of my rings, very expertly can I wind in and out of the mud and the sand. I can even digest with satisfaction a great quantity of dirt. Clever creature that I am, why should I be compelled to live thus instead of occupying a more exalted sphere and dignified place in creation?" And the spirit of the man who heard the little creature bemoaning itself thus, said to it, "Content thyself awhile, thou art fulfilling, admirably fulfilling the purpose and the law of thy being in

thy little day. But alas for us in our upper world, we have creatures yet called men, who were not made to creep, and who have limbs for motion as exquisitely made and balanced as the loftiest of their kind, and who delight to prostrate themselves all fours, to wind in and out of all muddy places, to live frequently not only *among*, but *in* the dirt; and with all the capacity to move upright, as far as possible to imitate the actions and the life of the backboneless worm."

There are some invertebrated people to whom we should not like to apply all the harshness of this condemnation, but who yet lack the nobleness of the higher classes. These are persons who are all sensation. Their whole being quivers at every breath. They cannot bear the faintest breeze of the world's misfortune. You stretch them on a rack whenever you tell them a story of the world's cruelty. The spectacle of suffering is so painful to them that they can never attempt to alleviate it. They move perpetually through an enchanted realm where they are exposed to nipping winds and cruel sleet storms. Every word irritates them one way or the other. They can neither bear praise nor blame. They are a pretty little delicate creature, living like a transparent lizard in the southern climes of life. Yet they are at the mercy of all the elements and all the seasons. All efforts are too great for them. A storm in a teacup sends them into hysterics; a breath through a keyhole shipwrecks their craft. You can never rely upon them. They can never rely upon themselves. They do not un-

derstand an unyielding principle, an inflexible determination; every last tale is the right tale. The last speaker always has the best of it. They can never turn from present impressions to inward principles. Should you talk to them about reading a sophism, you would see them go off in a fit of the spasms. All people are nice people; all things are nice things. They have some dim idea that there is something like justice somewhere or other in the world, but they have no resolution, no power to stand by it, as by an abiding principle. These have ever seemed to me invertebrated animals, backboneless people.

There is yet another class you must have met with. There is a man who is always beginning and never going on, always taking up and always giving up. A little above we said, that faith was the vertebral column of life, and faith developes itself as much by perseverance as by any other trait of character. The length of our walk and the strength we can put forth in it depend upon our spinal structure, and the man unyielding, and invincible, who has so much faith in his principles, with so much perseverance that his pathway is always plain before him, always ready *for* action, and resolute *in* action, I have ever thought to be a man with a good backbone. Unpersevering people perplex you. A moment or two, they are erect in earnest sympathy. A moment or two afterwards, they are utterly feeble. Call upon them to-morrow with a bright idea, and they are quite fascinated by it; but if you dare to calculate upon their aid for giving practical efficiency to it, woe betide you. As long as you are

with them, your consistency may support them, even as health, strong and ruddy-faced, takes weak and pale-faced sickness by the hand, and leads it out for a walk, but as soon as you quit the hand, your weak one relapses into the state of weakness and despair. Perseverance, especially for the man of business, is the backbone of life, without it nothing can be done efficiently or well. The blow is not only to be given, but to be repeated often, the iron must melt before the horseshoe can be made, and then it is not enough to have strength for one blow: the strokes must be rapid, swift, measured, and determined, to be successful.

And what we said of the last character will apply very much to that well-known person whom the Scotch call Ne'er-do-weel, whom all our readers know to be an everlasting failure, who is always coming back to his father's house, but never better than when he set out, to whom life never presents a probability of success, who like Uncle John in "The Caxton's" has always some new scheme, or like Mr. Mac Cowber, in "David Copperfield" is always waiting for something to turn up. There are people in this world who suppose that they have a right to go shares in other people's backbones. You cannot get them to believe that they have one of their own. They would have you dissected and turn your vertebral column into a walkingstick rather than attempt to learn the truth unpalatable to them, that they must rely upon themselves, that is, that the principles of life are self-reliance and self-trust. A great-deal has been written and said latterly about

heroes. The principle of heroism operates with more or less power in proportion to organism and circumstances. But in your definition of a hero you cannot go much beyond that, a man with a good backbone, integrity, faith, —these are the elements out of which the noblest characters that ever blessed our world have been built up, and while the reader admires that which looks so great in history, let him remember that these are elements also which are found, or which may be found in every cottage.

But come, for a desultory chat we have held our readers long enough. To hit the happy medium between a mammoth and a maggot is almost the art of life. Decided men, strong backbone creatures, men who have dashed through the world with the imperial mace or the warrior's sword, would not have done this without the inflexibility of character to which we have paid some homage. Most of them do not look particularly attractive to our eye. There is no reason, therefore, why we should sink into the opposite inglorious extreme, yet even great men, men remarkable for their pertinacity and inflexibility, have sometimes wonderfully illustrated this moral meanness. Dean Swift was in everything a man of strange extremes, no man so dogmatic, invincible, harsh, and resolute when it suited his purpose; but it suited his purpose sometimes to truckle, crawl, cringe, curvet. Our readers will remember the anecdote mentioned of him, whom no power could bend, who awed statesmen, exasperated people, terrified kings, but who was once frightened out of a street by an old woman. The Dean had often called at an upholsterer's on

the quay in Dublin, to order some rubbish to be removed, but without being obeyed for several days. At last he called in considerable wrath, and said to the upholsterer's wife "Woman, do you know who I am?" "Yes. Please your reverence" said she, "you are Dr. Higgins." The Dean hated Dr. Higgins. He was a prosy, noisy, crazy old jacobite, a favourite of Lord Harley's. The Dean was so chagrined that he never went into that street any more. Here was a lion subdued by the yelping of a lap-dog. And how many men have their moments, when overcome by trivial circumstances, they have yielded and become the victims of a slight and foolish impression, marching as we have said, in might, and energy, one moment before the eye, and the next succumbing to the most insignificant event.

After all that we have said, we must say further there is nothing like religion for sustaining character, and giving dignity as well as beauty, firmness as well as gentleness to it. A man, whose principles, both of perception and action, are based on the love and fear of God, will have an ability imparted to his whole walk and life which will save him from ever becoming the subject of the sarcastic allegation of being a backboneless man.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH.

THE Art of Thinking is intellectual—the Pursuit of Truth is moral; the one has to do with the method of arriving at convictions—the other with faithfulness to them. By truth we mean rectitude, and principally moral rectitude —rectitude of opinion as well as rectitude in fact; rightness, and the love of rightness. It cannot be too often maintained and illustrated that error, and ignorance, which is the parent of error, are the chief foes of man, and that truth, and knowledge, which is the parent of truth, are the chief friends of man. But in the pursuit of truth, success must always depend upon the moral disposition—upon the unbiassed state of the mind—upon its determination to preserve its moral independence and freedom. The absence of these important qualities has caused ever in the minds of men an inveterate disregard to truth, and a predetermination to follow the course of thought to which they had committed themselves.

A number of anecdotes are on record, illustrating the slavery of man to his prejudices. Many men, in every age, have obstinately turned away from light when it has been offered to them, if such light seemed at all likely to

subvert the established opinions they held. Thus we have, in the course of the world's history, beheld the strange spectacle of men attempting to *write down* the truths and clear inductions of science. When Galileo discovered the satellites of Jupiter by the telescope, the followers of Aristotle refused to look through it, lest they should find their master's dogmas, or rather their own overthrown by it; and the story is a similar one, in our day, of a Brahmin in India, and a microscope. A friend had sent out to India, to a missionary, a very powerful and beautiful microscope; he exhibited it to a Brahmin, and among other things, showed to him a drop of stagnant water through it. When the Brahmin beheld the myriads of creeping things in it, a world swarming with life, and was told that he had both drunken such water, and was in the habit of drinking it, he became most uneasy in his mind; after a short time he came to the missionary, and offered him an immense sum for the microscope, and, by-and-by, the missionary was induced to sell it. As soon as the Brahmin had fairly obtained possession of it, he cast it vehemently on the pavement of the city, and dashed it to pieces. Amazed and grieved, the missionary asked for a reason for so singular an action, and the only reason he could give was, the water with those unsightly objects; he could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, for thinking upon them; and never, apparently, recollecting that the water remained the same, he wreaked his vengeance on the illuminating glass, and destroyed that. So it is with thousands; so has it always been. There seems to be

in the human mind an antipathy to truth; and the first thing indispensable to the pursuit of it, is to remove the antipathy to it. When Lord Bacon, the father of modern philosophy, published his "Novum Organum," which may be said to have changed all the habits of scientific thinking, he divided his book into two parts, and he devoted nearly one half to breaking up the prejudices, and laying the foundations of those moral dispositions for the attainment of truth, which are before all intellectual energies and powers; and this book, the "Novum Organum," is the one which all young thinkers should sedulously and earnestly peruse; its aphorisms and sententious sayings may be conned day by day, as texts for the intellectual and moral life. We will cite a few; the reader will know how to beat wisdom out of every one by hearty reflection.

"1. Man, as the minister and interpreter of Nature, does, and understands as much, as his observations on the order of Nature, either with regard to things or the mind, permit him, and is incapable of more.

"2. There are, and can be but two ways of investigating and discovering truth. The one hurries on rapidly from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms; and from them as principles, and their supposed indisputable truth, derives and discovers the intermediate axiom.—This is the way now in use. The other constructs its axioms from the senses and particulars, by ascending continually and gradually, till it finally arrives at the most general axioms, which is the true but unattempted way.

"3. There is no small difference between the idols of the human mind, and the ideas of the divine mind—that is to say, between certain dogmas and the real stamp and impression of created objects, as they are found in Nature.

"4. When the human mind has once begun to despair of discovering truth, everything begins to languish.

"5. Experience is by far the best demonstration, provided it adheres to the experiment actually made; for that experiment may be transferred to other subjects apparently similar; unless with proper and methodical caution it becomes fallacious.

"6. No one has yet been found possessed of sufficient firmness and severity to resolve upon entirely abolishing common theories and notions, and applying the mind afresh, when thus cleansed and levelled, to particular researches. Hence our human reasoning is a mere farrago and crude mass, made up of a great deal of credulity and accident, and the puerile notions it originally contracted.

"7. We must, then, not add wings, but lead and ballast to the understanding, to prevent its jumping and flying, which has not yet been done; but whenever this takes place, we may hope more for the sciences.

"8. We (should) look for experiments that afford light rather than profit, imitating the divine creation, which, as we have often observed, only produced light on the first day, and assigned that whole day to its creation, without adding any material work.

"9. Truth and utility are perfectly identical.

"10. Let none be alarmed at the objection of the arts and sciences becoming depraved to malevolent and luxurious purposes, and the like; for the same can be said of every worldly good—talent, courage, strength, beauty, riches, light itself, and the rest. Only let mankind regain their rights over Nature assigned to them by the gift of God, and obtain that power whose exercise will be governed by right, reason, and true religion.

"11. He who is acquainted with the paths of Nature will more readily observe her deviations, and *vice versâ*, he who has learned her deviations will be able more accurately to describe her paths.

"12. It will, perhaps, be as well to distinguish three species and degrees of ambition. *First*, that of men who are anxious to enlarge their own power in the country, which is a vulgar and degenerate kind; next, that of men who strive to enlarge the power and empire of their country over mankind, which is more dignified, but not less covetous; but if one were to endeavour to renew and enlarge the power and empire of man over the universe, such ambition, if it may be so termed, is both more sound and more noble than the other two. Now the empire of man over things is founded on the arts and sciences alone, for Nature is only to be commanded by obeying her."

Paragraphs like these (and the book from whence we have cited, abounds with them) stir within us the thinking powers. They are not to be hastily and lightly read, but

deeply pondered and meditated. But we have not done with this book; yet it is before us, and it is the very volume to aid us, in the work we are now engaged in, namely, in tracing the way for an ardent cultivation of truth. To Lord Bacon we are indebted for a very considerable portion of the truth now in the world; he set men upon the right pathway,—and this, as our readers very well know, is everything in the pursuit; for when the mind has once arrived at a true method of philosophic investigation—when, in fact, it has attained that without which it will never attain to philosophy, namely, a philosophic spirit, the rest is comparatively easy. The mind may then turn itself to material science, to moral science, to religious investigation, or to the actions of life, in which there will be but little opportunity of philosophic investigation; but into all it will carry the same character of mind, the same thirst for exactness and rectitude, and the determined faithfulness in the publication of its convictions.—The age of Bacon was a great age in the pursuit of truth; it was a new age of inquiry, commencing with Galileo; we may call him the Huss, if it be not better to call him the Columbus, of science.—That age, the close of the sixteenth, and the beginning of the seventeenth century, was the time of the kindling of the lamps in the great Temple of Knowledge. How affectionately our minds turn to Galileo, the prophetic and archangelic man! His great maxim embodies in some degree the philosophy of Bacon, that "we cannot teach truth to another—we can only help him to find it." How

one's breast throbs with deep human emotion, when we read the history of this mighty spirit—this serene and heavenly intelligence, whose eyes were darkened by looking at the stars and the sun; bereaved of his daughter; at seventy years of age dragged to the tribunal of the Inquisition; bound to the rack; defenceless—on his bare knees before the cruel judges of that infernal court. From all this our Bacon was safe: from all this, my young friend, you are safe, although we have not yet quite learned the lesson of homage to an independent mind and hearty truth-seeker. We cannot, in the pursuit of truth, then profit our young reader more than by pointing out to him some of those characteristics which made Bacon pre-eminently the apostle of science.

The first circumstance about Bacon we notice, is his attitude of OBSERVATION; in this he was original. Previous to this day men had written, parleyed, imagined, raved—had done, in fact, anything, everything, but observe: Lord Bacon's mission to us was to build a new science on observation, and he gives to us, in his own instance, an illustrious example. There is not a field of knowledge where his ever-active eye has not travelled; he came into a temple filled with phantoms, and the blaze of light he let in banished the motley group, the collection of so many ages and nations. Up to this time there had been no genuine observation: men had *seen* things, but they had not really looked at them; they had not explored their meaning, and investigated their origin. Lord Bacon taught the doctrine that we know nothing independent of

facts; facts and phenomena he described as the language of Nature. Thus he may be described as the father of science, the father of experimental philosophy.

No science can exist without method; this our great Author gave to the world. There had been, up to this time, no division of labour among the observers; there was an heterogeneousness about their pursuits, which precluded high attainment; and this resulted to a great degree from the pointless mode of study pursued, and the exceedingly vague objects of speculation to which they gave themselves. There had been in the world profound men, too, but their minds had been unused to draw inferences from Nature. Inferences they had drawn from the Logic of the Schools, but they had failed to perceive that *Nature had an order and a plan in her working.* Their philosophy was founded rather on exceptions than system; and searching after the ridiculously wonderful, they failed to perceive the highest wonder, Nature's order of exquisite beauty and Divine arrangement; and amongst this strange medley of teachers came Bacon, and he put them all to flight. Science was no longer a mere speculation upon the distant, the intangible, the impossible, and the unknown; it was a sober inquiry into the method of knowledge; it was an investigation of the causes of shallowness and ignorance; it was an exhibition of the only legitimate principles of science: an inquiry into the known and the unknown, and an attempt further to reduce all knowledge to method.

To Bacon, then, belongs the honour of propounding

the object into which man should inquire and *the method by* which he should inquire;—you have learned much when you have learned these two important divisions of duty;—in other words, we may say that Bacon has developed to us the theory of Mental Conduct. What are we to seek to know? how are we to attain to the highest knowledge? I have before said that, up to the time of Bacon, there was an attempt to enter into the occult, the supernatural, the cloudy regions of mere abstraction, the origin of being, the nature of form. Bacon broke through all this. There had been, before his time, bold and independent thinking, but *he gave a practical tone* to Thought. The labour of his whole philosophy was to give to *physical* enquiry that attention which it had never until his day received. Fontenelle has said that "All philosophy is founded on these two things; that we have a great deal of curiosity and very bad eyes." Until the time of Bacon, the Philosopher may be regarded as a short-sighted man, rejecting the aid of glasses, yet insisting in indulging in speculations upon the form, size, and orbits of the most distant stars. Nothing is more certain than the restlessness and curiosity of the old philosophers, and nothing is more laughable than the pertinacity with which they rejected all aid in their researches. The very first paragraph of Lord Bacon's "Novum," already cited, is an era in the History of Science.

"Man, as the minister and interpreter of Nature does, and understands as much, as his own observations on the order of Nature, either with regard to things, or the mind

permit him, and neither knows, nor is capable of more." It was in fact to tell Man that he could only observe the observable, and only see with or by his eyes.

It has been said, that this is a saying so trite, that it cannot be supposed to be of much value.—Dr. Brown has given to us some of the subjects which engaged the attention of the great masters of Divinity as follows :—

"Whether angels could pass from one point of space to another without passing through the intermediate points?

"Whether they could see in the dark?

"Whether they could exist in the same physical point at the same moment?

"Whether they could exist in a perfect vacuum? and whether existing in a perfect vacuum, the vacuum in which they existed could be said to be perfect?"

And all these discussions took place beneath the sanction of the very highest authority.

It needed some very bold soul to trample upon absurd authorities, and to draw in the attention of Man to the intelligent and the known.—That which seems of most importance in the works of Bacon is the sphere of his method. Indeed, as we have already said, his praise is that he is the father of Philosophic Method, and this, be it remembered, is the most valuable of all attainments, that you possess the disposition to truth, that your mode of inquiry is correct. The man whose *method* is false and erroneous in Astronomical inquiries, will be also wrong in his method of Chemical inquiry, in his Mental and

Theological speculations too. Bacon showed a perfect knowledge of this, and hence, in his first book, his labour to destroy the various prejudices interfering with a knowledge and love of truth. He speaks of prejudices under four heads, called by translators, erroneously, *Idols*—the Idols of the mind—the term is derived from the "Phædo" of Plato, and signifies, not Idols, but Phantoms. The PHANTOMS OF THE MIND. Against these our Bacon fought—the huge train of wild fancies to which undisciplined natures had lent their full credence, and the men who called themselves the instructors of the people, had sanctioned and smiled upon; and still, he who would be a healthy man must give himself to this work, the destruction of the phantoms of the mind—pictures, which Fancy paints, must be blotted out—orreries, constructed to please the eye, must be dashed to pieces—weeds, bearing beautiful flowers, must be torn up by the roots—huge overshadowing awnings of doubts must be removed. As one who goes into a darkened chamber, where through the bars the chequered light streams in, painting strange spectres on the walls, as he throws the full radiance of a torch there, and opens the windows to let in the full glory of the sun, so with the Mind wedded to the partial, the circumscribed, the pretty, the timid. Knowledge must dismiss the phantasy; the Mind must gird itself up for awful contest, and yet not awful, for can there be awfulness in contest with shadows? Bacon has classified the prejudices of mankind beneath four divisions; and the great probability is, my young

friend, that all your prejudices will find a place beneath the one or the other of these divisions. He calls them Idols or Phantoms; they are in fact Biases—all prejudice is bias; prejudice is pre-judgment, the preference of the mind. The mind should have no preference, no bias, but for truth; it should be indifferent that it may be honest; men, however, always believe most readily what they prefer.

We have the PHANTOMS OF THE TRIBE—idols to which we all bow down—prejudices which have their root in our general nature; Interest, for instance. Baron Humboldt tells us of some spot in the Andes, some city high up among the mountains, quite cut off from all human association, and the access to it was very difficult; the nearest market-town, and the only way of access from the city, was up the difficult rocks, over a portion of table-land, and thence down and along a tedious road. Now, the only method of transit up and down the rocks was by a basket, and there were men basket-carriers, whose special trade it was to convey the passengers; at last, a proposal was started for cutting a road; instantly —instantly, the basket-men were in arms and there was wafted over the hills a sort of battle cry; "Stick to the Basket!" that was the meaning of it. However, common-sense triumphed, the basket-carrier's occupation was gone. But it has been so in every age: chartered Guilds, and ancient Corporate Bodies have ever had some ancient error, some beloved and profitable basket to defend, and this has materially tended to retard the progress of truth.

The first turnpikes erected in England, were destroyed by the mob; Interest is the idol of the tribe. There is a narrow interpretation of what is likely to conduce to the individual interest, and a forgetfulness that the interest of one should be the interest of all, in the highest and widest sense. The human mind is dull, incompetent, and prone to error, and tied to the senses. The human mind is prone to abstract, and to look at things by themselves, rather than in the concrete. The human mind is fond on the whole, of chains, and prefers moving in mechanism, to freedom and self-dependence; if these are not the characteristics of mind in its more free and natural state, they certainly mark it in its state of emasculation and artificiality; and thus do we find how the whole tribe of Social Life adore and do homage to the one phantom. A still more serious phantom is the haste, the precipitancy with which men judge of matters. On the most difficult question, it is really a most difficult thing for a man to suspend his judgment until he has inquired; all men's faculties are limited, their means of judging are few, yet with what precipitancy do they very generally rush to conclusions; the surest evidence of a man's being in advance of this law is, when he curbs his own natural temperament, and dares to halt, to pause, to give his judgment when the whole array of facts are before him. Where do you find the man who does this? hence how frequently are we compelled to retrace, or to move along further into folly; our senses are feeble, imperfect, and it is only when men

begin to know, that they begin to suspect our ignorance. This is the Phantom of the Tribe, the pride, the belief, in personal importance—that unhealthy pride which is the surest test and proof of a weak and impoverished nature. How many men seem to act as if the universe in all its immensity were made for them; they are the centres of gravity for the whole creation; all things wait upon them and do their bidding, they are the "men, and wisdom dies with them." Appalling conceit this! appalling Phantom! The seed, the root of all bigotry is in it, in the undue estimation of self, the undue elevation of your own opinions. It is only when a man begins to look abroad in the wide immense, that he becomes liberal and humane, that he surrenders himself to the truth of the universe, and learns that, to retain his own individualism, is to allow to others the freest scope for theirs. Bigotry is an Idol, is a Phantom, a Phantom of the Tribe; all your denunciations of men as heretics, all your chains upon particular forms of belief, all your punishments for opinion, your subscriptions to articles, your formulas, your forms, your creeds—they are all idols, *or* they become so as soon as I dare to attempt the imposition of that, which to me may be a truth, upon any other person whatsoever.

"When MICROMEGAS, an inhabitant of one of the planets of the Dog Star, was talking to the secretary of the Academy of Sciences, in the planet Saturn, 'tell me, said he, 'how many senses have the men on your globe?'

" 'We have seventy-two senses,' said the Academician, 'but we are every day complaining of the smallness of the number; what are seventy-two senses! How limited are our perceptions? cooped up in our ring, with our five moons, our time hangs very, very heavily on our hands.'

" 'I can believe that,' said Micromegas, 'for in our globe we have one thousand senses, but we feel continually a vague desire to possess more. I have travelled much in the universe, and have seen many orders of beings inferior to us, and many much superior, but have never yet fallen in with the inhabitants of any planet who had not more desires than real necessities to occupy their life. And how long may you live in your planet?'

" 'Alas! we live only five hundred great revolutions of the sun, (about fifteen thousand years); this you see is to die the moment we are born: soon as we begin to pick up any knowledge we die: before we can gather any experience death rushes in upon us.'

" 'If I did not know that you are a philosopher,' said Micromegas, 'I should fear to distress you by telling you that our life is seven hundred times longer than yours; but what is that? when we come to die, our life is a speck. I have been in worlds where they live a thousand times longer than we do, but always find them murmuring just as we do ourselves.' "

The fiction represents the two philosophers as communicating to each other a little that they knew, and much

they knew not, and then setting forth upon a journey together. I only introduce the fable from Voltaire, to say of it, that surely, if our senses, and our knowledge, and our life, were far beyond what they are, yet should we only have further occasion to confess our ignorance, and more resolutely should we determine to escape from the worship of the Idols of the Tribe—Vanity, Pride, Hastiness of Judgment, and Bigotry.

The second classification is the IDOLS OF THE DEN. There are some prejudices peculiar to a man's self, from his education, his temperament, his habits of life; all persons have different minds, and different bodies; every man has within him his own cavern.

Mr. Cecil says, with his usual happiness of illustration, "A perfectly just and sound mind is a rare and invaluable gift: but it is still much more unusual to see such a mind unbiassed in all its actings.

"God has given this soundness of mind to but few; and a very small number of those few escape the bias of some predilection, perhaps habitually operating: and none at all times are perfectly free. I once saw this subject forcibly illustrated. A watchmaker told me that a gentleman had put an exquisite watch into his hands, which went irregularly. It was as perfect a piece of work as was ever made. He took it to pieces, and put it together again twenty times. No manner of defect was to be discovered; and yet the watch went intolerably. At last it struck him, that possibly the balance-wheel might have been near a magnet; on applying a needle to it he found his sus-

picions true: here was all the mischief. The steel works in the other parts of the watch had a perpetual influence on its motions; and the watch went as well as possible with a new wheel. If the soundest mind be *magnetised* by any predilection, it must act irregularly."

The house of a man is sometimes the very portrait of himself. Go into one man's room, and what a medley you have there; the tooth of an old monk; an old rusty nail; an old horse shoe; the finger of an old glove. I have such a friend, who can see no beauty in the "Paradise Lost," but prides himself on the possession of a fine old, very old copy of that same book; he would go miles to obtain a bit of old Roman pottery, or the broken shaft of an old spear, or arrow. Go into another man's room, guns, fishing-rods, nets, hunting horns, sporting caps and jackets, wires, portraits of horses and dogs, foils, and fencing-swords. Go into another it is a laboratory; phials, glasses, retorts, alembics, crucibles, elixirs, the furnace, the hermetically sealed jar, the Book of Arabian Hierogliphy. Now, I need but say, that each of these rooms is a cavern, and the heart of the owner or his mind, is like it: unless his mind is a most healthy mind, you will get no entrance to him but through the mysteries of his cave; it is so to some degree with all of us, the Phantoms of the Den beset us all.

A third order of phantoms is of the MARKET-PLACE; the customs of society; the conventionalisms of an age; words of common conversation; these are the causes of error in many instances. How many of our prejudices are

based upon misconceptions? upon imperfect inquiry? How often are we compelled to withdraw our previous opinion; or, holding our opinion still, how frequently do we hold it in spite of our better feelings and convictions? How frequently is it the case that men carry the "leather" principle into mental matters? "Nothing like leather;" no book like that; no study so useful as that; no sect like this; no honest men but those who live in our street; these are the idols of the market-place. And those of the THEATRE are like upon them, only more costly, more showy. Of all phantoms those which are founded in the fancies of men are of course the most imposing. Antiquity imposes upon us theories, imposes upon us the dress, the masquerade; the tinsel of things weighs with us as authority: we lose ourselves in the presence of great names. These prejudices, either separately or combined, link themselves, like shackles, around the soul.

"The best mental change that can happen to mankind, is an enhancement of their mental discrimination."* But this is by no means the spirit of modern Education. "There is," says Locke, "I know, a great fault among all sorts of people of principling their children and scholars; which at last when looked into, amounts to no more but making them imbibe their teachers' notions and tenets, by an implicit faith; and firmly to adhere to them whether true or false." Does an Education like this appear to be in harmony with the constitution of our nature? why is the mind fitted and furnished with these prehensile powers?

* Samuel Bailey.

are we not endowed, so to speak, with mental faculty, to lay hold on truth? One of the great purposes of Education, is to awaken or to sharpen these powers within us; the happiness of the world is in various ways concerned and interested in the discovery of the truth, and establishment of it; and in the rectification of the errors which have imposed on mankind; look at the power of apprehension possessed by man! As the absorbent vessels of our bodily system are perpetually engaged in drinking—in food, to sustain the material life; as the eye is fitted to sympathise with light; as the ear is fitted to sympathise with sound; as the skin is fitted to sympathise with touch; so the soul has its sympathies. "That the soul be without knowledge is not good;" that the soul be without truth is not good; the soul possesses a power of distinguishing between right and wrong; the moral sense indeed depends for its healthy condition materially on the understanding; it will not be doubted, however, that there is a voice within the soul which exclaims loudly, "Be Right! be Right!"* The understanding arrives at its conclusions, much as a jury arrive at their verdict; what difficulties have to be cleared away before the decision is given; what webs of sophistry removed in the pursuit of truth; how often is the truth obscured by the veiling mists of our own local atmosphere! Resolutely the mind must dare to advance to the Truth. Let this Motto be, "LET ME BE RIGHT." We know very well that this word has itself become a sort of clap-trap; and it may be pronounced until its meaning and its

* See Sylvester Graham's "Science of Life."

importance in the life are forgotten; but let this be the perpetual idea, not lovers of a creed; not adherents to a dogma; let the Intellect and the Affections sympathise together in the prayer to the Father of Lights, "*Let me be Right.*" Let this wish inspire earnest, hearty endeavour; if the torch of truth is held out to us, yet let us recollect that we must lift our hand to grasp the torch; let us accept the sacred injunction to prove all things; and, fearless of personal risk or sacrifice, let us urge on our way, with humble fervour, the prayer translated into our life, "LET ME BE RIGHT."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EDUCATION OF THE TASTE.

EVERY education is imperfect which does not only refine the mind, and give to it an immortal thirst for knowledge, but which does not give the power of a refined sensibility to the mind, so that it instantly becomes penetrated with beauty, and roused by sublimity, and also acknowledges the repelling influence of deformity. It is not proposed to write an essay on taste, but simply to scatter over the next two or three pages, some hints by which the faculties of taste may be quickened and improved. What, then, is taste? A question, in answer to which, volumes have been written; a question which, it is desirable to answer now, in the most Catholic and universal manner. Simply, then, it is the capacity to admire the admirable, to love the lovely, —and, therefore, by necessity, to shudder at the terrible, and to thrill, with profound emotion at the vast and the awful. It does not matter for our present purpose whether this emotion results from some inherent sense of beauty in the mind, some perception of fitness or propriety, or whether from some inherent indwelling property in the objects themselves which excite the emotion,—or whether

from the principle of suggestion or association, and from the perception of moral resemblances to material forms. Man greatly enlarges the domain of his happiness by eliciting these emotions, and without them we do not understand the meaning of any of the great works of Poetry, Painting, Statuary, or Architecture—the Fine Arts, as they have been called, but which are, in fact, only the attempt of Man to imitate Nature, from his exceeding sympathy with her works.

In fact the great lesson, "follow Nature," is especially to be borne in mind here. ART, of whatever department, is only a painful toiling after Nature; where she works with freedom and ease, Art labours hampered with difficulty. A love of Nature is the great refiner of the soul; to know her intimately, and to be well acquainted with all her methods of working, is the surest way to be saved from the falsities and the impositions of man.

The contracted space now lying before us quite precludes the possibility of more than remote allusions.

I. In the first place, however, *it should be remembered that a refined taste gives a liberality to the mind, a generosity to the conceptions.* The narrowness of soul which characterises the masses of mankind results, indeed, from ignorance, we may say generally; but we should, perhaps, be more correct if we were to say it results from those sensuous impulses which it is the very office of taste to curb and restrain. A sensuous impulse is always a selfish one—is ever contracted in its impressions. Taste removes the legislative and judicial court from the local

to the universal. That a mind should have been touched and impressed with the great principles of divine beauty, and should continue to pronounce its sanctions, and deliver its dicta after the low and common fashion of the unintelligent crowd, is impossible. True taste takes the soul out of its leading strings, and gives to it wings and capacities to ascend to the heights of imagination and wisdom.

II. *It will be seen from this that taste exercises a considerable influence upon the moral conduct and disposition.* All that is intended by this, indeed, is, that taste can favour moral conduct, not that taste is ever the foundation of morality. Taste demands moderation and decency; it abhors the violent, the rugged, and the harsh; and it may be said, perhaps, that it produces a state of mind favourable and friendly to virtuous action. Morality, indeed, produced by taste, is ever of a suspicious character,—but taste aids morality by checking those sensuous impulses which are the direct contraveners of her laws.

III. *Taste, it will be perceived, sits in judgment on human performance.* A refined taste saves its possessor from indulging the follies of style, while it aids him to detect them;* and correct taste is as possible to the person

* MAGNIFICENT WRITING.—The *Leader*, a journal which commits weekly onslaughts on literary short-comings, and is particularly severe in cases of Minerva-press rhapsody and rhodomontade, has this week supplied another illustration of human fallibility, by indulging in those very "sins it has no mind to;" and contrives to make a fire which occurred at a flour-mill in the matter of-fact locality of the Blackfriars-road the occasion for taking a high walk in literature on stilts. After dignifying the conflagration in question as "a magnificent scenic spectacle of unsurpassed beauty," and speaking of "broad masses of snow-clad ice

in humble life as to the most exalted and fashionable; and it is in the formation of a correct taste in the mind of the people generally, that we find the hope of the world. Let such a taste be formed and the demagogue's trade will be at an end. Much of the success of falsehood results from the feigning an enthusiasm which cannot stand for a moment of time in the light of a correct and refined sensibility. In reference to Oratory, especially, how woefully diseased is the popular opinion in this! The charlatan and the mountebank are most successful. The calm, quiet dignity, the flowing classical precision of speech, are frequently unappreciated and unfelt,—while the trickster who plays off his spasms and his hysterics for "thunders of applause" *in* the building, and guineas *out* of it, is the popular idol. Now this cannot continue when the sensibilities are really awakened and educated, for Taste everywhere tramples upon the meretricious: she does not despise art—she honours art, and loves the artist; but the shallow and pretending thing, *travestying* Nature, she indeed despises. Our modern style of pulpit and platform oratory is simply ridiculous; in England,

rushing under the arches with a crunching (!) sound," it goes on to:—"On the left, the range of windows in Somerset-house were brilliant with gleams like the reflected rays of the setting sun; while the grand contour of St. Paul's, shadowy with snow, but yet distinct, stood out like tranquil power contemplating the wreck below. Every arch of Blackfriars-bridge was painfully defined, while beyond a lurid pathway of light ran right across the river. Directly between the spectator and the flames the shot-tower raised its dark cylindrical form like an illumined lighthouse. And over all hung a canopy of lurid tawny smoke, into which leaped every moment fierce tongues of flame, fanned by a keen, and swift and unintermitting east wind."—*Diogenes.*

at this time, we have little worthy of the name of oratory. Perhaps, when the lustre of strong convictions shall brighten through the bosom of the people, and the fire of a strong criticism shall scare the present race of orators from the field, a nobler may take their place.

IV. For the formation of a correct taste, let there be a twofold mental process going on. Diligently study the "Lectures on Rhetoric," by Blair, or the "Elements of Criticism," by Lord Kaims. These are not to be simply read, but every principle is to be applied. The books differ from each other in several matters of theory; but diligently analyse them both, and let them both be reproduced in one emanation from your own mind. But while you are doing this, remember that an acquaintance with the words and thoughts of the world's greatest men, is by far the best means of refining the mind; it is like conversing in the best society; and necessary as grammar and criticism unquestionably are, the mind and its sentiments could not possibly be exalted without this latter method; the probability is that the reader is not pursuing, and cannot pursue a course of classical scholarship; if he were able to pursue that, he would not seek instruction. Be not dismayed; I am desirious that you should form an English taste, not a Greek nor a Latin one; and if the words and images of Milton and Shakspeare, of Wordsworth and Rogers, of Goldsmith, of Jeremy Taylor, and John Howe, of Lord Bacon and Hooker, of Chatham and Burke, do not give sublimity and pathos to your mode, thought, and turn of expression, it is certain that Homer

and Eschylus, Virgil and Theocritus, Demosthenes and Cicero, could not do it. Take MILTON'S "Paradise Lost," and diligently weigh every expression and every image that poem contains. Every style of writing, from the mightiest allegory to the tenderest metaphor — every magnitude of language finds its proportion there: the most gorgeous overlaying of description—satire, imagination, fancy, portraiture—every style of poetic power is tried and exhausted. It is no easy task, then, to read this book,—and its learning, too, taxes an encyclopædia; but all these are reasons which make it admirable as a volume for disciplining the powers of the mind, and giving correctness to all its ideas and words.

V. And thus from a study close and concentrated as this, soon the student will not only form for himself a style, but he will be able to perceive the beauties and the deformities, not merely of ordinary, but even of the most eminent writers: he will gather round him a cluster of great names, which will be to him almost synonymous for friends, from the gratification they will afford him by their writings: the peculiarity of his temperament will lead to the selection of especial friends; perhaps they may be redundant and glowing with a magnificent and swelling phraseology; perhaps cold and chaste, dignified as the Phidian marble, with words sufficient, but not overflowing. In our day we have writers of the most varied powers, the names of many of them not unknown to the reader. The great Prose writers are Carlyle, Macaulay, Landor, Foster, and Helps: if others have been omitted, it is from no invidious

feelings, but from contracted space. It is a useful employment to note the differences of writers—to compare their various individual traits and characteristics. From Alison we have not cited an extract; his fame is great, but his style is grossly inflated and tautological. Sometimes he rises to a kind of verbal eloquence, but never enriches you by the novelty of his ideas, or the muscular strength of his expression. Landor has written largely, and his power is great; he commands all styles of writing, and will unquestionably enjoy a very great posthumous fame. His genius is essentially dramatic, and his scholarship is equal to his genius. Over his volumes thoughts lie plentifully as cowslips upon the bosom of May. He identifies himself with character, and so loses himself in the person he paints, that it is hard to detect his peculiar manner. The following extract, certainly too long, is in his very best style. Nearly all his writings are Imaginary Conversations between real persons, delineative, too, of real events, as in the instance before us. The reader will not fail to notice the long-locked-up emotions of Spenser, the poet—how he abstains from all mention of the cause for his sorrow, through the greater portion of the conversation,—and how at last it breaks forth, and sweeps down, with the terrible gusts of grief, every attempt at consolation.

"Essex.—Instantly on hearing of thy arrival from Ireland, I sent a message to thee, good Edmund, that I might learn from one so judicious and dispassionate as thou art, the real state of things in that distracted country;

it having pleased the queen's majesty to think of appointing me her deputy, in order to bring the rebellious to submission. * * *

"SPENSER.—Interrogate me, my Lord, that I may answer each question distinctly, my mind being in sad confusion at what I have seen and undergone.

"ESSEX.—Give me thy account and opinion of these very affairs as thou leftest them, for I would rather know one part well than all imperfectly; and the violences of which I have heard within the day surpass belief.—Why weepest thou, my gentle Spenser? Have the rebels sacked thy house?

"SPENSER.—They have plundered and utterly destroyed it.

"ESSEX.—I grieve for thee, and will see thee righted.

"SPENSER.—In this they have little harmed me.

"ESSEX.—How I have heard it reported that thy grounds are fertile, and thy mansion large and pleasant.

"SPENSER.—If river, and lake, and meadow-ground, and mountain, could render any place the abode of pleasantness, pleasant was mine, indeed! On the lovely banks of Mulla I found deep contentment. Under the dark alders did I muse and meditate. Innocent hopes were my gravest cares, and my playfullest fancy was with kindly wishes. Ah! surely of all cruelties, the worst is to extinguish our kindness. Mine is gone; I love the people and the land no longer. My lord, ask me not about them; I may speak injuriously.

"ESSEX.— Think rather, then, of thy happier hours and busier occupations, these likewise may instruct me.

"SPENSER.— The first seeds I sowed in the garden, ere the old castle was made habitable for my lovely bride, were acorns from Penshurst. I planted a little oak before my mansion, at the birth of each child. My sons, I said to myself, shall often play in the shade of them when I am gone, and every year shall they take the measure of their growth, as fondly as I take of theirs.

"ESSEX.—Well, well; but let not this thought make thee weep so bitterly.

"SPENSER.—Poison may ooze from beautiful plants; deadly griefs from dearest reminiscences.—I *must* grieve, I *must* weep: it seems the law of God, and the only one that men are not disposed to contravene. In the performance of this alone do they effectually aid one another.

"ESSEX.—Spenser! I wish I had at hand any arguments or persuasions of force sufficient to remove thy sorrow; but really I am not in the habit of seeing men grieve at anything, except the loss of favour at court, or of a hawk, or of a buckhound. And were I to swear out my condolence to a man of thy discernment, in the same roll-call phrases we employ with one another upon these occasions, I should be guilty not of insincerity, but of insolence. True grief hath ever something sacred in it; and when it visiteth a wise man and a brave one, is most holy.—Nay, kiss my hand: he whom God smiteth, hath God with him. In his presence, what am I?

"SPENSER.—Never so great, my lord, as at this moment,

when you see aright who is greater. May he guide your counsels, and preserve your life and glory.

"ESSEX.—Where are thy friends? Are they with thee?

"SPENSER.—Ah! where indeed! Generous, true-hearted Philip, where art thou? whose presence was unto me peace and safety; whose smile was contentment, and whose praise renown. My lord! I cannot but think of him among still heavier losses: he was my earliest friend, and would have taught me wisdom.

"ESSEX.—Pastoral poetry, my dear Spenser, does not require tears and lamentations. Dry thine eyes—rebuild thy house; the Queen and Council, I venture to promise thee, will make ample amends for every evil thou hast sustained. What! does that enforce thee to wail yet louder!

"SPENSER.—Pardon me, bear with me, most noble heart! I have lost what no council, no queen, no Essex can restore.

"ESSEX.—We will see that. There are other swords, and other arms to wield them, beside a Leicester's and a Raleigh's. Others can crush their enemies, and serve their friends.

"SPENSER.—O my sweet child! And of many so powerful, many so wise and so beneficent, was there none to save thee? None! none!

"ESSEX.—I now perceive that thou lamentest what almost every father is destined to lament. Happiness must be bought, although the payment may be delayed.

Consider, the same calamity might have befallen thee in London. Neither the houses of ambassadors, nor the palaces of kings, nor the altars of God himself, are asylums against death. How do I know but under this very roof there may sleep some latent calamity, that in an instant, shall cover with gloom every inmate in the house, and every far dependent?

"SPENSER.—God avert it!

"ESSEX.—Every day, every hour of the year do hundreds mourn what thou mournest.

"SPENSER.—Oh! no, no, no! Calamities there are around us; calamities there are all over the earth; calamities there are in all seasons; but none in any season, none in any place, like mine.

"ESSEX.—So say all fathers—so say all husbands. Look at any old mansion, and let the sun shine as it may on the golden vanes, or the arms recently quartered over the gateway, or the embayed window, and on the happy pair that haply is toying at it, nevertheless thou mayest say, that of a certainty, the same fabric hath seen much sorrow within its chambers, and heard many wailings: and each time this was the heaviest stroke of all. Funerals have passed along through the stout-hearted knights upon the wainscot, and amid the laughing nymphs upon the arras. Old servants have shaken their heads, as if somebody had deceived them, when they found that beauty and nobility could perish—Edmund! The things that are too true, pass by us as if they were not true at all; and when they have singled

us out, then only do they strike us. Thou and I must go too. Perhaps the next year may blow us away with its fallen leaves.

"SPENSER.—For you, my lord, many years, I trust, are waiting; I never shall see those fallen leaves. No leaf, no bud, will spring upon the earth, before I sink into her breast for ever.

"ESSEX.—Thou, who art wiser than most men, shouldest bear with patience, equanimity, and courage, what is common to all.

"SPENSER.—Enough! enough! enough! Have all men seen their infant burnt to ashes before their eyes?

"ESSEX.—Gracious God! merciful Father! what is this?

"SPENSER.—Burned alive! burned to ashes! burned to ashes! The flames dart their serpent tongues through the nursery window. I cannot quit thee, my Elizabeth! I cannot lay down our Edmund. Oh! these flames! they persecute, they enthral me—they curl round my temples —they hiss upon my brain—they taunt me with their fierce, foul voices—they carp at me—they wither me—they consume me—throwing back to me a little of life, to roll and suffer in, with their fangs upon me. Ask me, my lord, the things you wish to know from me; I may answer them; I am now composed again. Command me, my gracious lord, I would yet serve you; soon I shall be unable. You have stooped to raise me up—you have borne with me—you have pitied me, even like one not powerful. You have brought comfort, and will leave it

with me; for gratitude is comfort—Oh! my memory stands all a-tiptoe on one burning point: when it drops from it, then it perishes. Spare me; ask me nothing; let me weep before thee in peace; the kindest act of greatness.

"ESSEX.—I should rather have dared to mount into the midst of the conflagration, than I now dare entreat thee not to weep. The tears that overflow thy heart, my Spenser, will staunch and heal it in their sacred stream, but not without hope in God.

"SPENSER.—My hope in God is, that I may soon see again what he has taken from me. Amid the myriads of angels, there is not one so beautiful; and even he (if there be any) who is appointed my guardian, could never love me so. Ah! these are idle thoughts, vain wanderings, distempered dreams. If there ever were guardian angels, he who so wanted one, my helpless boy, would not have left these arms upon my knees.

"ESSEX.—God help and sustain thee, too gentle Spenser! I will never desert thee. But what am I? Great they have called me? Alas! how powerless, then, and infantile is greatness in the presence of calamity."—Vol. ii. pp. 239-242.

This is great writing; and great, because in harmony with the best utterances of Nature.

But there are two writers to whom we will especially direct the attention—Foster and Macaulay. The fame of Foster has ever been with a select few; the fame of

Macaulay has ever been world-wide. Yet, perhaps, of all the English Essayists, Foster is the greatest: his thoughts are great, indeed; and the expression is bowed to the thought. Macaulay's words glitter like polished lances through sunny forests. Foster's roll heavily, like a vast fleet-covered sea. Foster is a master in the empire of Thought; Macaulay in the empire of Style. Taste approves both, but more the exuberant conceptions of the one than the graphic language of the other. We read, easily enough, that one was a hermit, bound to books, and to the still life of the study; the other a man of the world, a man of books, but a man of study too. The one slothful, mechanical in his method of writing, losing himself in dreams; the other quick, lively, losing himself, if at all, in dreams, yet not those above the world, but of the world, in the real old day. Macaulay indulges in no psychological speculations, Foster abounds in them; Macaulay notes the outer life of things and men, Foster their inner life. Note the following passage from Foster, on a man's writing memoirs of himself: —

"Each mind has an interior apartment of its own, which none but itself and the Divinity can enter. In this secluded place the passions mingle and fluctuate in unknown agitations. Here all the fantastic and all the magic shapes of the imagination have a haunt, where they can neither be invaded nor descried. Here the surrounding human beings, while quite insensible of it, are made the subjects of deliberate thought, and many of the designs respecting

them revolved in silence. Here projects, convictions, vows, are confusedly scattered, and the records of past life are laid. Here in solitary state sits Conscience, surrounded by her own thunders, which sometimes sleep and sometimes roar, while the world does not know. The secrets of this apartment, could they have been but very partially brought forth, might have been fatal to that eulogy and splendour with which many a piece of biography has been exhibited by a partial and ignorant friend.

Or to cite another celebrated passage from the same Essay :—

"The wonder then turns upon the great process by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence which can know that there is no God.—What age and what lights are requisite for this attainment? This intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every point of the universe, he cannot know but that there may be, in some place, manifestations of a Deity, by which even he would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign a cause for

all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be God. If he does not know everything that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is, precludes all other Divine existences by being Divine himself, he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects does not exist."

These are specimens of the weighty magnificence of Foster's style, and the mind has attained to some considerable degree of vigour and taste, which prefers this solemn richness to the more garish glare of more popular writers. Foster lived so completely amidst his own volitions, that it is not wonderful that he did not emulate the pictorial style of writing; but he has left us some specimens of his power: the "Reflections in a Library," and "Meditations in a Cathedral," which show to us how graphic that pen might have been, had not its motion been impeded by the heavy masses of thought which sought utterance through it. Let the reader note the difference in point of style between the two following extracts. "The character of the Puritans," by Macaulay, stands, perhaps, altogether unrivalled in its way amongst the brightest things in English composition. Notice the sharpness and sententiousness of its sentences, compared with Foster's in the following citation. Clever, brilliant, easy; thought has never been here a painful or profound exertion. The artistic style shines with epigram and point. Foster is the reverse of all this. His sentences, it must be admitted, are heavy,

and sometimes they seem to ache with the pain of utterance. His style, although evidently so laboured, is utterly devoid of art, humour, wit; and all the light things flowing from these are entirely unknown to him. The following extract is—

MEDITATIONS IN A CATHEDRAL.

"One of the most striking situations for a religious and reflective Protestant is, that of passing some solitary hour in the lofty vault among the superb arches and columns of any one of the most splendid of these edifices remaining at this day in our own country. If he has sensibility and taste, the magnificence, the graceful union of so many diverse inventions of art, the whole mighty creation of genius that quitted the world without leaving even a name, will come with magical impression on his mind, while it is contemplatively darkening into the awe of antiquity. But he will be recalled,—the sculptures, the inscriptions, the sanctuaries enclosed off for the especial benefit after death, of persons who had very different concerns, during life, from that of the care of their salvation, and various other insignia of the original character of the place, will help to recal him to the thought, that these proud piles were in fact raised to celebrate the conquest, and prolong the dominion, of the power of darkness over the souls of the people—they were as triumphal arches erected in memorial of the extermination of that truth which was given to be the life of men.

"As he looks round, and looks upward, on the prodigy

of design, and skill, and perseverance, and tributary wealth, he may imagine to himself the multitudes that, during successive ages, frequented this fane in the assured belief, that the idle ceremonies and impious superstitions which they there performed and witnessed were a service acceptable to Heaven, and to be repaid in blessings to the offerers. He may say to himself, 'Here, on this very floor, under that elevated and decorated vault, in a "dim religious light" like this, but with the darkness of the shadow of death in their souls, they prostrated themselves to their saints, or their 'queen of heaven;' nay, to painted images and toys of wood or wax, to some ounce or two of bread and wine, to fragments of old bones and rags of cast-off vestments. Hither they came, when conscience, in looking back or pointing forward, dismayed them, to purchase remission with money or atoning penances, or to acquire the privilege of sinning with impunity in a certain manner or for a certain time; and they went out at yonder door in the perfect confidence that the priest had secured, in the one case the suspension, in the other the satisfaction of the divine law. Here they solemnly believed, as they were taught, that by donatives to the church they delivered the souls of their departed sinful relations from their state of punishment; and they went out of that door resolved, such as had possessions, to bequeath some portion of them, to operate in the same manner for themselves another day, in the highly probable case of similar need. Here they were convinced to listen in reverence to some representative emissary from

the Man of Sin, with new dictates of blasphemy or iniquity promulgated in the name of the Almighty; or to witness the trickery of some farce, devised to cheat or fright them out of whatever remainder the former impositions might have left them of sense, conscience, or property. Here, in fine, there was never presented to their understanding, from their childhood to their death, a comprehensive, honest, declaration of the laws of duty, and the pure doctrines of salvation. To think, that they should have mistaken for the house of God, and the very gate of heaven, a place where the Regent of the nether world had so short a way to come from his dominions, and his agents and purchased slaves so short a way to go thither! If we could imagine a momentary visit from Him who once entered a fabric of sacred denomination with a scourge, because it was made the resort of a common traffic, with what aspect and voice, with what infliction but the "rebuke with flames of fire," would he have entered this mart of iniquity assuming the name of his sanctuary, where the traffic was in delusion, crimes, and the souls of men? It was even as if, to use the prophet's language, the very 'stone cried out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answered it,' in denunciation; for a portion of the means of building, in some of those edifices, was obtained as the price of dispensations and pardons." *

Utterly different to this, which is like the rich carving

* Popular Ignorance—Section II.

and elaborate tracery of the screen of some old minster, is the following description of

THE PURITANS.

"The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests.—Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an over-ruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on the intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from Him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognised no title to superiority but His favour: and, confident of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they felt assured that they were re-

corded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away! On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand.

"The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged—on whose slightest action the Spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest—who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events, which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen and flourished, and decayed. For his sake, the Almighty had proclaimed His will by the pen of the Evangelist and the harp of the Prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had arisen, that all Nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.

"Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men;

the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion—the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears.—He was half maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels, or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke, screaming, from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself entrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood, he cried, in the bitterness of his soul, that God had hid his face from him. But, when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them ; but those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate, or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment, and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were, in fact, the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors, and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the

things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world like Sir Artegale's iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities; insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain; not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier."*

We had purposed saying something on the formation of a judgment upon our elder writers, but the space upon this topic is fairly exhausted, and we can only say, study Milton's prose as well as his poetry, and relieve the long and swelling pomp of organ-like sentences, with the medallion words and pictures of Lord Bacon, and Sir Thomas Brown; writers whose style reminds us of the exquisite chapel in the nave of the mighty minster, with carving, statuary, painting, all antique and learned, all perfect, and all crowding on the view together.

VI. But yet another remark may be made, this, *that the cultured taste lays open on all hands a theatre of wonders;* it finds in every object in Nature, in every sound, and in every scene, some suggestions to emotion, hence it is that the man of taste is never alone; if he enters the gallery of paintings, indeed, or of sculpture, all his powers of appreciation are excited: so if he takes some immortal

* "Critical and Historical Essays," Vol. I.

author from his pocket, his mind is stimulated and roused; but whenever he travels he finds some such excitement—the world is not so poor that all its riches can be gathered into museums, or placed in libraries, or imitated on canvas, or in stone. A celebrated American writer has said, that "if the stars only came out once in a thousand years, all would go forth to gaze, and to admire, almost to worship, perhaps; but as they appear every night they do not excite our wonder." But this cannot be said of the man of taste; no, for by day and by night, heaven and earth are covered with a profusion of beauties; beauties which, although others pass by, he looks upon, and looking learns to love. It is only a fine taste that looks with tenderness upon the soft and delicate veins of the flower; it is only a fine taste that learns to look with wonder upon the beauty of the sea shell, or the clever contrivances of the bird's nest; thus do the sympathies of the man go forth, thus are they awakened and excited; on every hand the novel combinations of Nature appear, and fascinate the eye, and the heart, and the understanding; through the eye every spot is haunted ground, spiritual shapes lie shadowed by every object. Thus there is called into play a beautiful symbolism; thus all things at last are seen in their poetical relation, that is, with their moral meaning appended to them. Facts in Nature are found to have significances, never read by the thoughtless eye, but read and understood by the thoughtful, thus—

> "How oft high service is performed within,
> When all the external man is rude in show!

Not like a temple, rich with pomp and gold;
But a mere mountain chapel, that protects
Its simple worshippers from sun and shower."*

VII. LASTLY, then, it shall follow, from a rightly organised taste, that it is not the Parent of Pride, but of Humility; that it teaches man his place in the great universe of things about him; that it sheds a consecrating light, a charm, over all human habitations, and over all human beings; all who are capable of affection are made beautiful in its eye; there is no misanthropy in it. Taste is not one-sided; if the reader would see, in perfection, the difference between a corrupt and diseased taste, and a pure and healthy one, let him compare the writings of Byron or Rousseau with Wordsworth; the stormy invective, the tempest of wild passion—the long-drawn, yet sharp, malevolent satire; here are spirits, we may say, to whom Nature only supplies materials for remorse; her images of repose and beauty, or fierceness and horror, only alike arouse to hatred and despair; passion burns along every page, without a lenitive or an emollient, and so taste is made of no service to man; it is impure—the impulsive and sensuous emotions predominate yet; and instead of charity we have scorn; instead of Nature we have selfishness; instead of love we have lust; instead of God we have Satan. How different, if reading Nature with Wordsworth! We have learned the high philosophy and sound taste of that great apostrophe with which he closes one of his most remarkable poems.

* Wordsworth—"Prelude."

"If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure.
Stranger, henceforth be warned; and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he hath never used; that thought, with him,
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one
The least of Nature's works; one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever. Oh, be wiser Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone,
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself
In lowliness of heart."

THE MORAL SATISFACTION OF PULLING UP A WEED.

An Epistle.

BEYOND all doubt this paper will get into the hands of some of my friends, who are gardeners. I am fond of gardening myself; but circumstances prevented me for a long time from looking among my beds, and trees, and vegetables, and flowers; and the other day, when I went there, I found that, in the few brief weeks of my absence from home, a weed had overrun the whole of my realm. It was everywhere. It had spread like a domestic treason, and twined over every spot, tangling itself among all the gooseberry bushes, twisting round the raspberries, overshadowing the potatoes, coiling up the apple and pear-trees, and imitating the involutions of the vine, as it insidiously clasped and embraced them. It was such a graceful weed too—the leaf was beautiful, the stem twined gracefully and lovingly—Sin never looked more graceful. And it bore beautiful flowers too. There never was a greater hypocrite of a weed. The leaf was lovely, the flower beautiful; and where I now and then laid hold of what seemed to be root, I found it was so candid and white, so innocent-looking, that altogether it seemed to

defy you to call it a weed. But it a was a weed sure enough, and the whole garden knew it. All things were in a revolt on account of it. The growth of fruits and vegetables was intercepted, and some of my pretty modest little flowers were quite cast into the shade, beneath the bold demeanour and the unblushing arrogance of this deceitful courtezan. I went on lopping, cutting, and tearing down in all directions, and not always altogether escaping from doing mischief to some of the legitimate offspring of the garden. But I always felt that the criminal root was eluding me, I had only lopped off the branches of the evil. The root, the root, *that* remained; I wanted to reach the central spring of the weed, and I believe at last I did; and I have taken my pen in hand to communicate to you the pleasure I felt as I found a stout substantial growth lying at my feet. I did not feel certain; even yet I shall have to watch, for I know that it has cast a prolific quantity of seeds in the garden. But, unless you are a gardener too, you cannot very well tell the pleasure I felt in knowing that the hand had conquered the weed. I have felt this before many times. Often when I have stooped to pull up some weedy tuft and cast it upon the heap for burning, a moral satisfaction has diffused itself over my mind. I have had a feeling that there was so much the less evil in the world—that good had now so much better a chance than it had before; that although they might perhaps grow none too rapidly, yet there was a greater probability of their growing to some purpose now that the enemy was removed.

How beautiful it is to look at natural things in the light of moral analogies. I never weary of it. There is no object, I think, in the world of nature, which does not furnish a pleasant and instructive reflection. Some call this pedantic, prudish; they rebuke us when we read the history of man, or man's heart, in the heart of nature; but I cannot help it. We must walk through the world in our own way, and see the world with our own eyes; and my eyes insist upon reading the double meaning which comes to us especially, I think, in the garden. Now, the pulling up of that weed carried me off into many fields—so indeed the gardener has often suggested a variety of reflections. Working in my own garden, I have often thought of that scene in Shakspeare in Richard III., in which the gardener is introduced moralizing upon affairs of state, and especially the downfall of the king:—

Gardener.—

Go thou, and, like an executioner,
Cut off the heads of too-fast growing sprays,
That look too lofty in our common wealth!
All must be even in our government.
You thus employed, I will go and root away
The noisome weeds that, without profit, suck
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.

First Servant.—

Why should we in the compass of a pale
Keep law and form and due proportion,
Showing, as in a model, our firm estate?
When our sea-walled garden—the whole land
Is full of weeds; her fairest flowers choked up,

Her fruit-trees all unpruned—her hedges ruined,
Her knots disordered, and her wholesome herbs
Swarming with caterpillars?

Gardener.—

Hold thy peace:
He that hath suffered this disordered spring
Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf:
The weeds that his broad-spreading leaves did shelter—
That seemed in eating him to hold him up,
Are plucked up root and all.
Oh, what pity is it,
That he had not so trimmed and dress'd his land
As we this garden! We at time of year
Do wound the bark—the skin of our fruit-trees;
Lest—being over-proud with sap and blood,
With too much riches—it confound itself;
Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have lived to bear, and he to taste
Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live;
Had he done so, himself had borne the crown
Which waste and idle hours hath quite thrown down.

Shakspeare has, in the foregoing quotation, exquisitely painted the gardener's duty; and, as we have said, When we lay our hand upon a weed, instinctively we seem to feel that some good has been done in rooting away a foe to the gardener's commonwealth. But what is the satisfaction of rooting up an evil weed in the garden compared with the rooting up an evil influence from a neighbourhood. A friend of mine happening to be called to reside in a neighbourhood not far from mine, found that two or three fairs—show fairs—were held during the year, and that, like pestilential influences, they disturbed for weeks and months

after, the moral equilibrium of the place; drunkenness abounded, debts were contracted, other evil weeds were brought from other places to thrive and flourish there in unblushing features, to disport meretricious blossoms, and to exhibit with insolence their sinful colours. He was grieved with this appearance, and he determined to lose no time in attempting to root them up; and he did so, and I suppose that his satisfaction in conquering the fair was something like, although of a higher order, to the emotion of pulling up a weed.

Ah! and I have had to feel this in my own neighbourhood. Every public-house seems to me an evil weed beneath which the whole village suffers. What passions, what dissipation, what spendthrift habits are fostered there! What imperfect educations result from its existence. What domestic confusion, hateful animosities, what rebellion against God, what work for the magistrate and the policeman, what destruction to the purest and the highest interests of society! As I pass the public-houses in my village, and sometimes hear a wild song, or see a drunken man coming from them, I say to myself, oh, if I could only pull up that weed.

And in character, again, the mind is frequently like a neglected garden. Many a young man has a sensation like that which I experienced when I returned home the other day and encountered my garden foe. He neglects the garden of his mind. It never occurs to him, that he has a mind to tutor and cultivate. At last something induces him to step into it; and, behold, the whole garden

is overrun with weeds, and there are flowers and fruits there too, but they can scarcely be perceived—they are hidden beneath the rank foliage of the weeds. Thus, before the ground can be turned to any account all these enemies have to be removed, torn up by the roots—idleness, evil passions, dissipations, and fondness for loose company. Come, young man, whose eye is perusing this page—it may be, very casually surveying the garden, and wondering what gardener can reduce it to order and to beauty, come begin; see here at thy foot an unwholesome poison-root. Look over the whole garden of the mind; its false flowers are spreading—it is the poppy of idleness. Up with it, up with it! There! have not you now experienced the moral satisfaction of pulling up a weed?

There are a great many emotions which man is privileged to feel; the highest of these is the planting of good. Only a little lower, and partaking of the nature of it, is the rooting up evil; for, indeed, good would grow in the world if it were not for the evil weeds which thrive apace. The man who, in his garden, without having his mind awakened at all to the higher principles of goodness and benevolence and truth, tears up the dock-leaf or the nettle, and exults at the conquest he has obtained, is in that sentiment unconsciously related to the great and clear-sighted lover of God and goodness and truth, who seeks to tear up some wide over-shadowing heresy, some fruitful seed of wrong doing and wrong thinking. Evil books are like evil weeds. How their arguments spread and coil snake-like over the mind of an age! How their black leaves drink up and

pervert all healthful moisture! What poison-fountains they become to young thinkers! It is a great thing to kill a bad book—not by rooting up its author or injuring him, but by blighting, by the strong hand of truth, his teachings, and holding them up withering to the world, or carrying them out and casting them into the limbo of vanity. As with books, so with institutions; there are evil ones that spread out from the great central evil and creep parasitically around the columns of power, and trail and coil and shoot out over the rooms of state. Beneath such institutions there are many cottages that look like caves embowered in night-shade. God, from time to time in the ages of the world, raises up the gardeners, who tear up these institutions, paganisms, despotisms, Romanisms; and when man, looking back upon the past, threads his way through the mazy forest of old opinions, where errors shoot up like tall hemlock-trees, moorish marshy plants spread over the whole soil, and wild beds of poppy-flowers and opium plants spread over the whole times and kingdoms. When he feels, in spiteof much that remains to be done, all these have been cleared away—that that rank soil has become verdant with beauty—if here and there interlaced with the unsightly, he feels a moral exultation as he contemplates—something like that moral satisfaction which cheers us when we pull up a weed.

There, we have opened up a train of thought which the reader may pursue with pleasure; but before we close, we may say this, that perhaps, even weeds have their value;

and if we can reach it, there is a moral satisfaction even in their remaining as well as in their rooting up. How much they concentrate and condense the carbon necessary for the sustenance of the globe, we do not know. To what degree they are at once the reservoirs, for what, if diffused, might poison the springs of animal life, we cannot say. Perhaps they are the common sewers of the gases inimical to animal nature. But we do know, that He whose words were always truth said, that to the end of the world tares and wheat would grow together. The earth cannot be an Arcadia—a platform of perfectibility. The tares which entwine around human institutions are a subject for our sorrow; but we may, while labouring to our utmost to eradicate them, and feeling joy in eradicating them, rejoice that evil in the world is overruled by the Author of Good, to be a means for the exercise of the highest faculties of benevolence, truth and goodness, and the education of a moral nature in the discrimination of weeds from flowers.

CHAPTER IX.

MENTAL AND MORAL FREEDOM.

THE inevitable consequence of the enlargement of the circle of our knowledge, and the progress of our mind in the great lessons of sound education, must be the increase of mental independence and freedom; and this is certainly the most valuable of all freedoms man can enjoy. He may be a freed-man from the chain of the oppressor, and the whip and scourge of the overseer; he may be free of his country, and may lift up his voice in the framing of her institutions, or he may roam at will through all her gay and beautiful forests and fields; he may be free of the city, and be entitled to sit in old chartered Guilds and Corporations; and all these freedoms have, or are supposed to have, their value; and the freedom to move to and fro amidst the glorious scenery of Nature, beneath her skies and stars, and over her heaths and moors, is indeed a noble and exhilarating freedom. Free of the mountain, the moor, the forest, and the heath; free to enter the ancient corporation of birds, and fluttering insects, and leaping squirrels, and bounding hares; it is a freedom, to our thinking, as far in value beyond the musty old parch-

ment corporations of fat aldermen and drunken common-council men, as a mountain is beyond the cell of a molde-wart. But, excellent as this freedom is, there is a nobler; the freedom of opinion, the freedom of conscience, freedom to investigate and to enquire, freedom to set antique error at defiance, freedom to hold what consciousness has determined to be right. This is the freedom, and those are the noblest natures where such freedom exists in its largest and fullest degree; and, therefore, tyrants have desired especially to obtain possession of the minds of their subjects; the power over the body was disregarded so long as there was a recess in the soul where the utmost freedom might reign; and, therefore, the dread which has been felt of religious liberty, for it is the parent and herald, and, in the battle for freedom, the warmest comrade of civil liberty. A part of the education of a young man, in these days, is to ascend to a lofty idea of freedom; a well-balanced and consistent freedom; a freedom having its foundations in the holiest feelings of humanity; a freedom jealous of the rights of others, because most duly weighing and understanding its own. How shall such a conception of freedom and slavery exist in the mind that the independence of the individual shall be secured? for, let my reader remember, that this freedom is at once utterly out of the power of King or Kaiser, law or lawyers, to give or take away; it grows from the profoundest depths of the moral being, the roots strike there, and thence they shoot forth their branches over the whole private and public life.

Of mental and moral freedom, the world has produced

no finer illustration than our own John Milton; he, alike in the days of light and darkness, lived for freedom, but a freedom far beyond the conception of most of those by whom he was surrounded. How like a Sampson he broke the withes, the superstitions, and prejudices of his time; how, independently of any party, he spoke out what seemed to him to be truth; there was in his life no thought of pleasing man, or party of men; in his intellect he reverenced truth, the truth had made him free. Kingcraft and Priestcraft were alike his abhorrence, and the words, the immortal words he wrote in behalf of liberty, although burnt by the common hangman, possess vitality, not only to enable them to echo to our own times, but to times far beyond ours, the truths of emancipated man. If any character might be especially cited to set before youth, surely that character is JOHN MILTON, who refused to subscribe to the college articles, and was thence expelled because he would not subscribe "slave;" although belonging to the Puritan party, by whom poetry was denounced, he did not forsake it in obedience to the requisitions of his sect. And when, after opposing King and Council, his own parliamentary rulers betook themselves to the prohibition and mutilation of books, he stepped forth and lifted up his voice like a trumpet, in one loud, shrill, glorious, chivalric peal, for the freedom of the press. How magnificent was that life! Reading the records of it, we say with Pompey of old, "This it is to be a King!" He could say, if any man could ever say, "My mind to me a kingdom is." Exercising a strong controlling severity

over all passions, and all prejudices, subjecting all to his will, so passed his life along. His life and his prose writings are glorious monuments of moral and mental liberty, which all should read and sedulously study, who are in any way prosecuting the work of self-education. Thus he says to us, in his apology for his early life and writings, "My morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring; in winter often ere the sound of any bell awakes men to labour, or to devotion; in summer, as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught: then, with useful and generous labours preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion, and my country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies, to stand and cover their stations, rather than see the ruin of our protestation, and the enforcement of a slavish life."

Here we have the full-length portrait of a Free Life, of Mental and Moral Freedom in its highest development. Now let us look for an instance of Mental and Moral Slavery; and although there are few names in the circle of English literature more commanding our affection, and, for many qualities, our veneration, than that of Dr. Johnson —yet, simply because his is so eminent a name, it may be cited as an illustration of mental slavery. All his life long he was the creature of strong passions and prejudices;

and although he had principles of action, and high principles too, yet in many of the gravest sayings and circumstances of his life, Principle was altogether out of sight. He made it his boast, that in reporting the debates of the House of Commons, "he always gave those Whig dogs the worst on't." With him "a Whig," and "a rascal," were synonymous terms. Greek and Latin were to him of principal advantage, because "they gave an advantage over others." The line of passing poetry which really contained a great truth,

"Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free,"

he turned into ridicule, and chuckled while he parodied it thus—

"Who slays fat oxen should himself be fat."

His life of Milton was full of meanness, and, if not of falsehood, of that sort of misrepresentation which is sometimes worse than absolute falsehood. He was, all his life long, a believer in ghosts, and declared that he "heard his mother once, after her death, exclaim, 'Sam, Sam, Sam!' three times, although nothing came of it:" and his prejudices in conversation veiled and obscured all the excellencies of his character behind a rough and most discourteous demeanour. He summarily wound up a discussion with a lady, who had the better of him in argument, and, as a sort of closing mollifier, said, "I hope, doctor, we may meet in heaven," with, "Madam, I don't want to meet a fool anywhere."

Altogether, Biography, we believe, does not record

another instance of prejudices, in so great a man, so inveterate, intolerant, and unreasoning, and yet in the neighbourhood of some of the noblest traits that ever shone over a human soul. Contemptible as they appear, much as they deform the character, there can be no question that the strength of his will was allowed to give stability to his follies—follies at many of which we now heartily laugh, although given forth with all the classic verbiage of the most pompous profundity.

Society, at present, is far more conventional than in the time of Dr. Johnson. Artificialities spread their gaudy but steel gauze-work around us every where, and we lapse into the mere defenders and stereotypists of ceremony and form. We live not for ourselves, but for others. We bow at other biddings: we consult not our own convenience, but the convenience of our neighbours; and this not from any godlike, but from the most vulgar motives. We spend wealth upon carpets, and glass, and pictures, and large houses, and costly plate,—not that we care about such things, but because the custom of society demands such expenditure of us. We purchase the Beautiful, not that it may be ever before us, hanging like a crystalised aspiration or invocation—not that we care for the Beautiful, but because the Beautiful is the priestess at the altars of the Useful; and in this age of wine worship, priest worship, gold worship, free spirits are needed to consecrate themselves, by a lofty education, to separate between the precious and the vile, and, by their own great example, to plead for the spiritual freedom and

independence of man in education, for this lofty liberty. The dangers are not to be looked for so much from the stern and forbidding frown, from the repulsive and persecuting spirit; the associates of slavery in our times, use the seductions and allurements of vanity, the incense steaming and reeking round the altars of that cruel goddess, Respectability, or Fashion, or by what other name she may be called; and to him who simply casts away from him conscience, opinion, inquiry, and quietly yields himself to the stream; she says, as her great prototype said, "All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Credit at the bank, plate in the escrutoire, silks, carpets, broadcloth, mansions, parks—nothing is too vast; your pay shall be proportioned to your prostration— your chains to your slavery. Young friend, determine on the Life of Freedom, and say with brave Sir Henry Wotton—

"How happy is he born and taught,
Who serveth not another's will,
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his only skill!
This man is saved from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall,—
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all."

CHAPTER X.

INTELLECTUAL DANDYISM.

At the outset of the Intellectual Life, perhaps it may be as well to guard the young aspirant to the portals of Knowledge against a very common deformity beheld there —the Intellectual Dandy; the spirit of the Fop is not confined to clothes and fashions; there are the Beau Brummels of the Literary Institute, as well as of the tailor's shop. The Literary Fop is, indeed, but a very small affair; as innocent and tame an animal, my friend, as you could well meet. The danger, therefore, is not in anything he can do to you, but in the contamination, and in the possibility that you may become one like him; for this Fop is "a very attractive and agreeable young man,' or, rather, to adopt the patois which such persons use, "a vewy atwactive, agweeable yonng man." It is one of the characteristics of this class of characters that they mutilate the English language most barbarously. Very few words are pronounced with any degree of correctness; their information is supposed to be most extensive, since, travelling from street to street, they have picked up a vast hodge-podge, a kind of "Omnium gatherum," without any reference to quality, but with great reference to quantity,

and there is no book, no science, no paper, no person, upon which or whom they are not prepared to pronounce dogmatic strictures. They are a kind of gad-fly dancing about in all the pools, and over all the fields of life; their shirt-fronts presenting a perfect white table-land, and ties of most startling projection; vests after the most approved stair-carpet fashion, and trowsers to match,—being rather more gaudy.—Everything of body and mind is arranged to strike with surprise; those books, therefore, are read, which all people are talking about. Their heads are vacant, usually, of any information, though ready enough to follow in the wake of the clap-trap orator of Mechanics' Institutes or Literary Societies. It may safely be questioned whether any of the Motley group ever read a really serious book, or a book that had a serious purpose. The life of these young men is an everlasting offering upon the altar of Sensuality and Selfishness; everything in the world is made to reflect the character of self; they truly deserve the character of the Poet: they are, wherever found,

> "A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
> An intellectual all-in-all."

These characters are not rare. They are the Commons of the Senate of which Chesterfield was a Peer. In some instances, they possess a larger average of intelligence than in the above lines we give them credit for; but the real substratum of the character is vanity. In this age the propensity of the village clown to decorate his person, and to appear occasionally to the best advantage, is not sufficient for those who occupy the same position in their sphere

which the clown occupies in his; they are desirous of ranging above him. Read, therefore, they must; but their reading is confined to the pages of Dickens, or Thackeray, or the Shilling Novel Library; and, as books like these are very generally read, and they have read them with the same avidity as other persons, their criticisms are very cheaply won, and very well received. They belong in this age, precisely to the class of persons to which, in the days of the Vicar of Wakefield, "Georgiana Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs" belonged; they have learned the name of Shakspeare, whom they always call "the gifted, the universal, and the immortal;" and they are qualified to talk upon the merits and the meaning of Shakspeare with Miss Skeggs. Their scorn of mediocrity is a good joke; they have confidence in their own powers; they have picked up the slang of charlatans and mountebanks, and of course can talk about "the spirit of the age;" about "the mighty thoughts heaving in the breast of the future;' about "the scintillations, hallucinations, &c., &c., brightening in the eye of Humanity." Nothing is more sickly than the Euphonistic verbiage of this disgusting and meaningless common-place in their minds and on their tongues. Poor things! it means nothing! it is innocent! For it is lifeless, words are used which, to their minds, never had a meaning; and thus their characters present an everlasting lie. For here lies, indeed, the sadness of all this hollowness. Who that has thought at all does not know the danger of moral sentiment, unaccompanied by active virtue? The remarks of the Rev. Archibald Alison are

worthy of some pondering, when he insists that the faithful parent, or the wise instructor, will ever endeavour assiduously to accommodate the ideas of excellence to the actual circumstances, and the probable scenes, in which their future years are to be engaged. If the life is not thus prepared, what a melancholy failure does it usually exhibit. "It is the fine drawn scenes of visionary distress to which they have been accustomed, not the plain circumstances of common wretchedness; it is the momentary exertions of generosity or greatness which have elevated their fancy, not the long and patient struggle of pious duty; it is before an admiring world that they have hitherto conceived themselves to act—not in solitude and obscurity, amid the wants of poverty, the exigencies of disease, or the deep silence of domestic sorrow. Is it wonderful that characters of this enfeebled kind should recoil from the duties to which they are called, and which appear to them in colours so unexpected?—that they should consider the world as a gross and a vulgar scene, unworthy of their interest, and its common obligations as something beneath them to perform; and that with an affectation of proud superiority, they should wish to retire from a field in which they have the presumption to think it is only fit for vulgar minds to combat?

"From hence come many classes of character with which the world presents us, in what we call its higher scenes, and which it is impossible to behold without a sentiment of pity as well as of indignation. In some, the perpetual affectation of sentiment, and the per-

petual absence of its reality; in others, the warm admiration of goodness, and the cold and indignant performance of their own most sacred duties; in some, that childish belief of their own superior refinement, which leads them to withdraw from the common scenes of life and of business, and to distinguish themselves only by capricious opinions and fantastic manners; and in others of a bolder spirit, the proud rejection of all the duties and decencies which belong only to common men, the love of that distinction in vice which they feel themselves unable to attain in virtue, and the gradual but too certain advance to the last stages of guilt, impiety and wretchedness. Amid these delusions of fancy, life, meanwhile, with all its plain and serious business is, passing; their contemporaries in every line are starting before them in the road of honour, of fortune, or of usefulness; and nothing is now left them but to concentrate all the vigour of their minds to recover the ground which they have lost. But if this last energy be wanting, if what they "would" they yet fail to "do," what, alas, can be the termination of the once ardent and aspiring mind, but ignominy and disgrace? A heart dissatisfied with mankind and with itself; a conscience sickening at the review of what is passed; a failing fortune, a degraded character, and what I fear is ever the last and the most frantic refuge of selfish and disappointed ambition—infidelity and despair."

Seneca, the moralist, is an eminent illustration, unless his character is grossly traduced, of the possession of fine theoretical views of virtue, the power to utter glittering

sentences, words, scintillations, without any love for virtue or truth in the heart, or at any rate, without any fulfilment of them in the life. How easy it was to pen those fine and fanciful sentiments on contentment and happiness, and the pleasure of virtuous emotion, while avariciously accumulating his hoards of wealth, banqueting at ease in his magnificent gardens and palaces, pandering to the wild and licentious enjoyments of a corrupt and cruel prince, conniving at the parricidal murder of the mother of the Emperor by the son she had raised to empire and to dignity. All this appears to be true of Seneca, and therefore, he may be appropriately held up, rather to the execration than the admiration of mankind; and it should be a warning to the people of every age, never to divorce magnanimity of sentiment from magnanimity of action; life is only real when they are combined.

THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF CRUTCHES.

An Epistle.

CALLING the other day upon an old friend, who had some time before met with an accident which had disabled him, and compelled him to betake himself to crutches for support, I was surprised to find that his sticks had never been thrown aside; the poor fellow was afraid to take a single step without his crutches. He could not go across the room without them; the old fellow did not know how healthy he was; but there, obstinately, pertinaciously, he must shamble along on his crutches; a stick, in the street, would have served every purpose, and, in the house, even that faint support was not in the slightest degree needed. But so he moved through life; and as he went, he grumbled out, "I'm weak, sir, very weak, you see—I can't do without this." "Ah! sir, 'twould be a great blessing if I had the use of my limbs, as you have." "Oh, ma'am"—a long gasp—"well, well, God's will be done." And so, from that day, the poor creature used his crutches, and talked of his crutches, till the idea had made a hypochondriac, and martyred him to its power. To hobble had become an essential part of

his life; he would have felt dissatisfied with himself could he have gone alone; to talk against his crutches was to enter into a conspiracy against him. I ventured to throw out an expostulatory hint:—

"Now, don't you think that those things could be given up? Why, you're only weak because you don't struggle to be strong; now, take my arm—there, there. Now you see you can go without crutches."

Well, I got him to budge a step or two; but I believe ever since he has had a suspicion of me: he looks at me and shakes his head; he always seems demure when I approach him. If he tries to rise before me, he firmly compresses his lips and teeth together, saying, as plainly as silence can say, "You see what a state I'm in, and yet, you wicked dog, you want me to give up my crutches."

An able-bodied man stumbling through the world on crutches! Once for all, let us admit that it is the most solemn sight the eye can rest on; yet it is not an unfrequent and uncustomary one. Get a man into the habit of hobbling on crutches at all, and the habit will gradually become necessary to him, and he be loth to give them up. And how can strength grow, and how can the body become pliant, and muscular, and powerful, on crutches? Thus the weak become more weak, and the incapable yet more incapable. It is a glorious moment when a man breaks a crutch, even although it be on the head of the one who persuaded him to use it—when he determines to walk along the level road in his own strong

purpose and power—when he betakes himself to the work of mountain-climbing, and leaves his crutches behind him at the inn where he slept the last night—when he determines to be imposed upon, and to impose upon himself, by wooden helps, no longer. Some men have been in health all their days, and have never known that they are strong; but to the weak man who has feared to take a step by himself, to the man whose religion it had been to believe that he could not walk alone, it is a moment of high exultation, when the winds of heaven pipe round him, and the distant figures before him beckon him onwards, and each turn of the road reveals something new, and each piece of scenery invites to rapidity and energy at such a moment. It is, indeed, a source of high exultation to the man who had deemed himself weak, to be able to say, "But I am strong."

You see the drift of it, my friends; it is a problem rather difficult to be solved; but the probability is, that every one of you, with this book in your hand, is also leaning upon crutches. The lesson of self-reliance, of independence, is both holy and noble; and yet, alas! almost every soul you meet has its own appropriate crutches; and, still further, it is not an unfrequent occurrence that the weak attempt to persuade, and sometimes do persuade, the strong that they are too weak: and, for very company's sake, try to convert them to crutches. So we have seen a lop-sided man, as we should say—a man with a "moral squint,"—and this man has really contrived to get an idea, to fetch up from the unfathomable

depths of somewhere, a prejudice, a notion, a whim—let us suppose it a truth; very soon he has exaggerated it—distorted it till it grows into a huge, knotty, gnarled branch of an error: then he cuts it into shape and primness, lends his whole weight to it, makes himself a crutch of it, sets up a crutch shop, and offers—good, benevolent citizen that he is—to make you crutches, too, for a price: but if you will not buy, the mischief of the matter is, that he stands at his shop door, and lays about him, with strong, hearty blows, upon all who go to other shops. He must not only have a crutch himself, and have full liberty to lean upon it, but you, and everybody else, must lean upon that particular crutch too, or you shall have woeful blows. Go into my library, and fetch me down that truly direful history of the battles of the schoolmen, or the history of the middle ages, and read me the battles of the Guelph and Ghibbeline; or run your eyes over the contending philosophical and religious sectarian squabbles of the day; then what does it all come to? Sum them up, and call them "the battles of the crutches." It seems very probable that each of these disputants, instead of squabbling about a whim, had exercised freely his own intellectual and moral capacity, the histories of these chivalrous, intellectual, and other battles, had been for ever lost to mankind.

The fact is, men are unwisely economical in the use of their legs—hence the reason why they like and use crutches. Mental crutches are an apology for laziness. A great many books are bought and read—resolve me the

reason why. Would you not think that there was an intellectual research—an earnestness in the acquisition of knowledge! Nonsense! At least half the books bought are never either read or cut; and two thirds of the other half are crutches for lame souls. Men cannot endure that their spirits should be alone; there must be company, although it should be the most frivolous chit-chat of a fashionable novel. Men cannot endure the labour of digging out their own opinions; they must obtain them ready-made, from "orthodox" crutch-makers; for it is very curious, perfectly wonderful, to know that there are, among other "patents," "Patent Intellectual Crutch Manufacturers."

What, did you never hear that old story of the Battle of the Crutches: it is English, too, and at a famous watering place—one of those comfortable and solacing spots whither lackadaisical ladies and indolent gentlemen go to be persuaded that they are all invalids,—and that they may have the pleasure of leaning on crutches in company. Now there were in the town two great crutch depôts. The old established shop was Spivy's—the more modern one, Spokey's—Now, when it is remembered that some hundred or two hundred pairs of crutches were used by the patients of Shamwell Down, it is not wonderful that, often reclining on the couch, or in the bath-room, in all the elegance of indolence, when talk did not flow, and subjects seemed few, and at last the patients came to talk about the fabrication and properties of their crutches. Nothing could seem more

innocent, no topic less calculated to excite feelings of animosity, than the relative claims to popular estimation of Messrs. Spivy and Spokey.

> "Alas! how light a cause may move
> Dissension between hearts that love!"

The more frequently the topic was reverted to, the more bitter became the controversy. The crutches were every day brought to the test of experience. There was that choleric old Colonel M'Grumphy, who complained of a traditional gout; he affirmed the ease and the comfort, the superior character of the wood, and therefore the magnetic virtues of the article made by Spokey;—while a testy old gentleman, a retired lawyer, named Crimp, passed his verdict for Spivy. Very soon the crutches absorbed every other topic: in the bath-room, the news-room, in the hotels, the relative merits of M'Grumphy and Crimp formed the staple of conversation. Every party had its own little coterie; and it is wonderful what a display of argument and eloquence was expended upon the rival crutches. The rival manufactories, too, joined in the warfare; they became the captains of the combat. Papers flew about; M'Grumphy printed a pamphlet, which Crimp replied to, in a manner so grossly personal, that the colonel called him out to a duel, and the lawyer sought shelter from the civil authorities, and the colonel horse-whipped him in the bath-room. The lawyer entered an action against the colonel, while each of the partisans felt his own honour or

heroism (for the ladies of Shamwell Down were also in the strife) implicated in this most important controversy. Long was it before the fever subsided, and, to the present day, whoever visits Shamwell Down will be regaled with the immortal history of the celebrated combat of M'Grumphy and Crimp, touching the crutches of Messrs. Spivy and Spokey.

Yes, I declare to you, I have very often thought that books have degenerated into crutches. Men surrender themselves up altogether to the dominion of a book; they do not take the book, the book takes them. What is the use of a book to you, upon which you lean, to which you become a slave and a vassal? Neither healthy minds nor healthy bodies need crutches. The diseased turn all things into mere crutches. Preachers, lecturers, books, ordinances, they are none of them aids to development—they are crutches to limp upon. And thus the whole moral part of manhood suffers.

Perhaps if we were to stand behind a bookseller's counter, and to interrogate the souls of the purchasers, the dialogue might run somewhat thus,—

"Madam, in what can I serve you?"

"Sir, I feel rather weak in my religious legs; in fact, faith will not walk at all. I sometimes have fancied if I were to get direct to heaven for strength and faith, and commune somewhat with myself, I might be strong; but all my neighbours move on crutches, and I want you to furnish me with a neat, respectable-looking pair." And in a day or two you see the lady hobbling along on her

crutches, defending them, proud of them, as if she had used them all her life.

"Sir, what can I do for you?" continues the bookseller to another customer.

"Well, sir, I want a good stout political crutch; something that I can lean on pretty safely, and use occasionally on my neighbour's back, without any fear of its breaking."

"Sir, allow me to show you several; here is a fine assortment, sir; this is the Cobden crutch; this is Colonel Thompson's making, and this, sir, is Edward Miall's; and give me leave to say, that if you purchase and use them for a little time, very soon you will be able to give up the use of the crutch altogether, and walk quite naturally."

"Oh, pooh, pooh, nonsense; I don't want to walk naturally; none of my neighbours do,—why should I? I don't want to appear singular. Sir, a nice, easy, fashionable crutch; an old English crutch,—you understand me, sir,—with a crimson cushion for the arm; something of the Gladstone and Sewell cut." And away goes the gentleman, on his political crutch.

"Now, sir," says the bookseller, "let me attend to you. What kind of crutch can I accommodate you with?"

"Well, sir, the fact is I have nothing to do, and I don't know how to set about it," and, before our friend has left the shop, he has filled his pockets with books. They will serve a double purpose; they will effectually weigh down all the powers of his brain, and he will go

limping on them, in a kind of industrious idleness, all his days.

Blessings on good books, and on the dear departed spirits who gave them to us!—they are our companions, counsellors, guides, friends; but even on the best of them we will not lean to the surrendering up of our own proper mental and moral dignity; we will walk arm-in-arm with books, and chat with them friendlily by the way; but we will not honour them as crutches.

It will be a rare holiday for the world when all men determine to throw away their crutches; when the dignity —and, as one has called it, the "elegance" of self-help is really seen; take our word for it, we have been shambling and shuffling along now for a good many ages, making the most ungainly grimaces and limpings conceivable. And this has been, to a great degree, because we have not held our heads erect, and had faith in ourselves and our mental muscles; we will lay it down that, as a general principle, where there are many servants, many helpers, there must be some quarrelling, and to one person, at least, much weakness. In the holding as a most sacred doctrine the individuality of man, and in invoking the man to work out, in true heroism of soul, his opinions and faith, is our only hope from the intolerance of priestcraft, and the bigotry of personal whim. And let no one dread the moment when men shall dare to exercise their mental natures thus; that moment will not only release the man himself, but reverence for his own freedom will teach him rightly to reverence the freedom of all. In a society

composed entirely of men moving on crutches, want of self-respect would also lead to want of respect for all. Believe me, my friend, you may do much good to man; you may feed him, give him good laws, give him good books, train him to good manners,—but if you would give him that good which sums up all others, here it is,—*publish a crusade against voluntary lameness, and persuade all men to throw away their crutches.*

CHAPTER XI.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

We educate our minds, and neglect our bodies. In our present social state, it is a rare thing to meet with persons who have submitted their bodies to the discipline of General Laws, and have laboured to expand their power, and to improve their sensibilities. "A sound mind in a sound body" has, however, been now for many years the rallying cry of a very large class of individuals, especially in our own country, and in America; and it has been clearly seen, that one of the means for procuring a healthy mental state, is to procure a healthy bodily state. By health we do not mean merely the absence of disease, of pain, of chronic affections, or acute disorders, but we mean that state in which all the faculties are fulfilling, with ease and delight, their various degrees of strength and growth.

It will be readily seen that for all his happiness in this life, Man must depend on his obedience to the natural and moral law of God. At present we have only to do with the natural laws—those which affect man in his corporeal conditions, or in reference to his association with the exterior world. At the same time it will be easily perceived how

attention to the moral law secures frequently a healthy bodily condition; and, on the contrary, how possible it is for Man apparently to live in harmony with Nature's exterior laws, but by transgressing some moral law, to entail upon himself punishment and misery.

Language is poor, and very inexpressive. But we may lay it down as a principle of moral duty, to guard and preserve the health of the body. True, it is but a tent, a house to dwell in, a tabernacle pitched in the wilderness; true, it is but a temple reared to solemnise worship in; but, because it is all this, there should be a rigid carefulness and vigilance over it.

Let us take care that we do not make this guardianship of the body a half duty. We do not mean to deify the body, and to worship dietetics. "Man obeys the highest order of his being, when he takes his life in his hand, and boldly ventures it for something he values more than self."*

We would not found a moral code upon a physical law. There are no duties which are not resolvable into moral duties. To guard the health, then, is a moral duty: health is not the supreme consideration—"the life is more than meat;" but health is the means to supreme duties. What conditions are annexed to health? Failing here, all around us becomes dizzy. Father, husband, citizen, Christian —the vital action of each is connected with the sound state of the body. What mental conditions are annexed to it!

* Edwin P. Whipple.

Independence, power, prosecution of study—all of them depend upon the healthy action of our organization.

Will my reader revolve and re-revolve the following passage from Bishop Butler's "Analogy" in his mind?

"Now," says he, "in the present state, all things that we enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, is placed in our own power. For pleasure and pain are the consequences of our actions; and we are endowed by the Author of our nature with capacities of seeing these consequences.

"I know not that we have any one kind or degree of enjoyment, but by the means of our own actions. And, by prudence and care, we may, for the most part, pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet; or, on the contrary, we may, by passion and ungoverned rashness, wilfulness, or even negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please; and many do please to make themselves extremely miserable; *i. e.* they do what they know beforehand will render them so. They follow those ways, the fruit of which they know, by instruction, example, and experience, will be disgrace and poverty, and sickness, and untimely death. This every one observes to be the general course of things: though it is to be allowed we cannot find, by experience, that all our sufferings are owing to our own follies."

Every chapter in this volume is only designed to embody a few hints which may be expanded by the reader.

The question of physical education may readily be condensed into a few rules, very simple very obvious, easily

practised, and yet, by all classes of society, strangely neglected: and when it is remembered to what an extent these rules are neglected, is it not amazing that life is preserved to us so long as it is? The truth and beauty of the lines of Dr. Watts are never preceived until we have obtained some acquaintance with the human frame.

> "Our life contains a thousand springs,
> And dies if one be gone;
> Strange that a harp of thousand strings
> Should keep in tune so long."

Strange, indeed! Is it chance, or is it Providence, think you, when the gay young voyagers in their boat pass within a hair's breadth of fifty unseen rocks, or dangerous sand-banks, every one of which would, if touched, have been fatal to the boat, and to their own lives? Thus rashly, ignorantly, thoughtlessly, every day do we jeopardize our lives; sometimes overtaxing our powers, and then allowing them to lie idle and unemployed; and yet, so reckless as we are, how long the stream of life bears us on—it is as if some invsible spirit turned the rudder, and led the boat securely to avoid the lurking dangers which everywhere lay spread around it and before it.

Colton says "the excesses of our youth are drafts upon our old age, payable with interest about thirty years after date." Oh, let the young man remember, that Nature, indeed, is our creditor. "Nature," says George Combe, "may be said to allow us to run an account current, in which many small transgressions seem at the time to be

followed by no penalty, when in fact they are all charged to the debit side of the account; and after the lapse of years, are summed up, and closed by a fearful balance against the transgressor." If you mortgage yourself to Nature, be sure the account has to be paid some day, and the more protracted the period of payment, the more fearful, generally, will be the interest exacted. The mortgage has to be paid. I should not wonder if the reader is in debt to Nature, for, in our artificial state of life, all our manners and customs are fearful exactions from Nature; fearful, because we are levying a tax upon our own powers, which must, by-and-bye, be paid, like "The Man Made of Money," so truly and tragically drawn by Douglas Jerrold. We may be the possessors of wealth and convenience, and we may give forth wealth and entertainment to our friends; or we may pile our warehouses and our palaces; but in many instances we are doing all this from our own life's blood—we are levying a tax upon our strength, upon our health; and while our neighbours look with wander upon our doings, they note our emaciated appearance, too; yes, the rounds of intemperance and guilt, the whirl of licentious passion and frivolity, the incessant attention to business so early in the morning, so late in the evening—all these are so many items in the mortgage-deed. And then the day of reckoning comes, long-delayed, yet at last it comes; the jailer pounces upon the body, and hales it away to prison. The jailer! aye, the jailer, the physician, the surgeon, the apothecary, what are these but Nature's

jailers? The sick bed, is it not Nature's prison? and the discipline of disease, is it not generally a repayment of what was owing? and death, is it not the consignment of the body to perpetual imprisonment, because the powers of the body had been racked to the utmost, and still were unable to pay?

You know the fable of the Sphinx of the ancients? Well, Nature is that Sphinx; answer her well, solve her riddle, and she cannot hurt thee; but dare to attempt an imposition upon her, and she will rend thee in pieces. Then this might be taken as a fundamental principle in physical training; do not you run into debt with Nature? Let every day pay its own way; strength shall be given thee proportioned to thy day; thy bread shall be given thee, thy water shall be sure. Let it suffice; wines and rich meats, and injudicious sleep and injudicious exercise, drain the health from the blood, and by-and-bye will present a terrible balance-sheet for instant settlement.

EDUCATE YOUR SKIN! Does that seem strange?

The state of the skin exercises no inconsiderable influence over the whole state of the body; many persons impair their nervous state by never thoroughly cleansing their body. Their body is never in a healthy temperament: for the sensibility of the skin gives a tone to the temperament, and this is perpetually the residence of secretions, from the sensible or insensible perspiration going on in the system. The skin, in its healthy state, is capable of exquisite enjoyments, which many have never experienced; the wind and the fanning breath of

the air, the cold but bracing atmosphere—these are an inspiration and an enjoyment to those whose frames have been rendered sufficiently healthy and hardy to enjoy them. The beings who spend their lives in closed saloons, who can only wash in warm water, and very little of that, who tremble at a breath of wind that could scarcely move a feather; such persons richly deserve our pity and the fulness of our compassion.

EDUCATE YOUR MUSCLES! Thank God, my reader, if he has placed you in a situation of life in which you are compelled to walk; carriage exercise is a mere joke, and does the horses far more good than the riders; it is one of the penalties entailed upon our present state of civilization, that we have but little exercise; our mechanics, artizans, manufacturers, scarcely ever exercise their limbs. A good smart walk of ten, twenty, thirty miles; this is a blessing, the writer knows it, for there are few counties in England or Wales, where he has not measured some hundreds of miles by foot. The muscles, unexercised, acquire lassitude, weariness, and soon give up all exertion; instead of exulting in a walk of thirty miles, they tremble at the bare idea of walking one; but, walking! walking! what ecstatic pleasure there is in the mere act of walking upon some long pleasant level! if relieved by alternating hill and dale so much the better: my poor, lackadaisical brethren; I must e'en pity them, and perhaps laugh at them; and have I not earned the right to do so? for, as a pedestrian, some of the fairest scenes in all the broad borders of England have unveiled themselves to me. Exercise, my

friend, exercise! walk, leap, run! exert arm, leg, body, but, in some way or other, exercise!

EDUCATE THE BRAIN! The brain, you know, is not a simple organism, but a series of organs and compartments. See, then, that you do not unduly exercise *one* power, let all have their share of employment; this may at present be difficult, but it is becoming every day more easy of attainment. All the powers of the brain were given for employment and exercise, of this we may be assured; let there be a variation of employment; thus, the power of each compartment may be increased; and, let it be remembered, too, that variation of mental employment is relaxation; a page of Milton and a mathematical problem seem very opposite to each other, but this is the very reason why one may perhaps follow closely upon the other; it is in the principle of reaction that we find the method of the physical development of the brain; there is a rush of blood to that organ which is called into play, and the flow and reflow resulting from the intensity of mental operation expands the organ, and increases its energy and power. We cannot explain how this is, nor can we explain why an increase of strength should be the property of the arm from the increase of exercise. We cannot explain it; the fact is there, let us use it.

EDUCATE YOUR SLEEP! We do not plead for a very limited quantity of sleep; many persons have habituated themselves to a very sparing allowance of four or five hours, on the average; and, perhaps, abstaining from all animal food, and from all improper, and very much proper

excitement, this is enough. But there are few for whom it is sufficient; from seven to eight hours should be the average of your sleep. As the mind becomes powerful, and the body loosens its hold upon the mind, sleep flies away; intense mental occupation forbids long slumber; the mind says—

"Sleep no more."

Yet we find, to be "a long and sound sleeper," is included by the oldest writers among the signs of longevity. What hours of time, however, are murdered through the turning again to slumber; What hours, my friends have you and I murdered? Alas! alas! Have we lost one hour a day? Three hundred and sixty-five days in the year; ten years, and we lose almost twelve months. What Histories might we have read! What languages have acquired! what studies might we have conquered! Twelve months of clear entire labour thrown away. But, perhaps, instead of one hour a day—two, three, four; and what a squandering is here! Yes! if you would create and make time, Educate your Sleep!

EDUCATE YOUR DRESS. What a capricious animal is Man in this particular! The Horse, and the Sheep, and the Dog wear continually garments of one fashion, varied only by the warmth or coolness of the season; but the dress of Man shifts as the gales and winds of fashion blow around it, and every successive year beholds only some fresh enhancement of the ridiculous. The days of buckskin breeches have gone—the days, we hope, of stays and

corsets are going; but the days of hats, those heavy weights, those cylindrical boxes, at which, if we saw them on the head of a savage, we should laugh so heartily—these remain, and tight cravats remain, preventing the flow of blood through the arteries, and compressing the muscles of the neck, and diminishing their size, and interfering with the vitalization of the brain. It would be much better for our mental and bodily health if we wore loose ties, and allowed the neck to be quite, or mostly exposed.

These are some of the chief habits that we designed to put before the reader; but yet, before we close this section, two or three more may, nay must, be given. There are certain moral characteristics which are very closely connected with a good physical state, and, therefore, with especial emphasis, we say,—

EDUCATE YOUR CHASTITY! This is a subject so delicate to touch upon at all, yet so imperatively necessary to be insisted on, that there is great difficulty in treating of it. But fearfully true is it, that violated chastity is the brand, the burning brand upon character, self-respect, and manly energy and strength of will. How few withstand temptation! And oh! the loathsome horrors of the consequences of a revelry in the contaminated abodes of shame and lust! The consequences of licentiousness upon the mind are fearful; their ruin to its purity, to its firmness, its dignity, and frequently its sanity, succeeds the brief hours of shameful self-indulgence; or the long, long years of remorse sting, deeply sting, venomously sting beyond the hope of entire recovery. Fatal criminality, if indulged in,

how surely is it followed by the state of mind pathetically described by Burns :—

> " I waive the quantum of the sin,
> The hazard of concealing ;
> But, och ! it hardens all the heart
> And petrifies the feeling ; "

Or if conquered, and the indulgence thrown off, then through the long life to expiate the guilt with the penalties of self-laceration, in the language of Scripture, God " writing bitter things against us, and causing us to remember the sins of our youth."

These are some of the things included in the idea of self-education. These practices will produce a life not according to whim, but according to law—a life balanced—a life of repose ; and so far as Humanity can be satisfied with its poor performances, a life of self-satisfaction ; and the probability is, that it will lead to serenity and cheerfulness during life, and a happy and serene old age. The men who have followed such practices have usually lived to be old. True Philosophers we should expect would be old. Franklin lived to be eighty-four years of age, and when eighty-two, he says, " By living twelve years beyond David's (? Moses') period, I seem to have intruded myself into the company of posterity, when I ought to have been a-bed and asleep. Yet had I gone at seventy, it would have cut off twelve of the most active years of my life, employed, too, in matters of the greatest importance." So Copernicus, so Watt, so Goethe, so Wordsworth, and innumerable men like these, lived to be very old ; and

it is right without coveting long life, it is right that we should so economise our strength, so plan our being, that while living we may live to a useful purpose, and that life may be shortened by no frivolity or imprudence of our own.

THE VALUE OF A WORM.

An Episode.

AMONG the works of God, there is nothing contemptible, —nothing even insignificant. That which seems so, only seems so in consequence of our limited faculties. The more inquisitively we look at nature, the more occasion shall we have to exclaim with Wordsworth,—

> "Pride,
> Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
> Is littleness; and he who feels contempt
> For any living thing, hath faculties
> Which he has never used. Thought with that man
> Is in its infancy."

We have no better illustration of the importance of apparently insignificant things than in the worm. Whoever beholds this creature delving and winding through the mould, probably has thought how useless a place it occupies in the scale of creation; and yet, what will our readers, who are unacquainted with the fact, think, when we assure them that the common earth-worm is at once shovel, plough, and harrow, and manure. Of all that soil which is the richest and most adapted for the gardener's purpose, there is scarcely any which has not passed

through the intestines of the worm; and the earthy casts which are seen lying about, after its burrowings, are little patches of rich mould, which have derived an extraordinary nutrition from the cause we have mentioned. Mrs. Somerville mentions it as probable, in her "Physical Geography," that, of the finer vegetable mould there is not a particle which has not been prepared by this wonderful little labourer. It is only recently that science has devoted much attention to this interesting subject; but the fact to which we have alluded, was placed beyond dispute some years ago, by Charles Darwin, Esq., in a paper on the formation of mould, read before the Geological Society of London. The work performed by an individual worm, may seem so insignificant as to place almost in doubt the possibility of an achievement so considerable; but this idea is refuted by the immense number of earth-worms constantly ploughing their way; and especially when driven by dry weather to a considerable depth below the surface. It is satisfactorily ascertained that no plough could reach so deep as the worm in many instances; and Mr. Darwin remarks, that it would sometimes be much more consistent to speak of animal mould, rather than vegetable mould. It is both amusing and beautiful to contemplate how, by the agency of this little creature, nature buries stones, pebbles, and the rough earth which were too near the surface. Many of these, covered by the castings of worms, lie waiting for the disintegration and separation into finer particles, which, in the course of some few seasons, they may undergo, these, in their turn, pass through the

bowels of the worm, and return to the surface as useful soil. Thus, nature constantly operates around us, without our being aware of it. How many persons have ungratefully supposed that these graceful creatures were barricaded as a pest and a nuisance. The farmer, the grazier, and the gardener, have beheld them without suspecting that they were important fellow-workmen—the farmer and grazier especially deriving benefit from them, since they work in fields, where the spade cannot penetrate. The Rev. Wm. Kirby slightly alludes to them in his Bridgewater Treatise on the "Wisdom of God in the Creation of Animals." But. since those volumes were written, the earth-worm, as well as the whole class of worms to which it belongs; namely, the Annalidæ, has undergone a very lengthy and popular examination by Dr. Williams, who has published the results of his observations in a paper of some hundred and twenty pages, in the report of the British Association for 1851. That paper unfolds, in a remarkable degree, the exquisite contrivances of nature, in her most unobserved works; or rather, let us say, the wonderful wisdom of God in the most unobserved of his creatures. The very name by which this class is distinguished by naturalists, the Annalidæ, is given to it from an early perception of the wonderful contrivance of its rings; for, if the reader observes it, which he may very easily do, either by watching its movements in the mould, or placing it before his eye on a table, he will see that its coil of blood-red rings are marked very plainly; and he will further notice, too, how all these

assist it in the act of moving. The grace of the snake and the serpent has often been referred to—the proud beauty of that creature, so shunned by man, has been repeatedly made a subject of comment; but the beauty of the worm, to an eye capable of perceiving it, is no less remarkable; and, although we would not place the serpent or the snake beyond the circle of the useful purposes of creation, yet the impression made upon the mind by the worm in this particular, is much more interesting. We have watched it—industrious little peasant; hard-working little ploughman—as it has moved on swiftly, shooting its way through the soil; and we have wondered that it has not been a theme for poets. Its movements surely illustrate the poetry of motion. And, indeed, one of our later poets has made the worm the subject of his song, Walter Savage Landor. The following lines are as just as they are beautiful, in homage of the subject of our paper:—

"First-born of all creation, yet unsung,
I call thee not to listen to my lay;
For well I know thou turnest a deaf ear,
Indifferent to the sweetest of complaints,
Sweetest and most importunate! The voice
Which would awaken, and which almost can,
The sleeping dead—thou rearest up against,
And no more heedest than the wreck below;
Yet art thou gentle, and for due reward,
Because thou art so humble in thy ways.
Thou hast survived the giants of waste worlds;
Giants whom chaos left unborn behind.
And earth, with fierce abhorrence, at first sight,
Shook from her bosom, some on burning sands,
Others on icy mountains far apart.

Mammoth and mammoth's architype, and coil
Of serpent cable long, and ponderous mail
Of lizard, to whom crocodile was dwarf.
Wrong, too, hath oft been done, though I have watched
The nightingale, that most inquisitive
Of plumed powers, send forth a sidelong glance
From the low hazel on the smooth footpath,
Attracted by a glimmering, tortuous thread
Of silver left them when the dew had dried,
And dart on one of thine, that one of her's
Might play with it. Alas! the young will play,
Reckless of leaving pain and death behind.
I, too, (but early from such sin for lore)
Have fastened on my hook, beside the stream
Of shady Arrowe, or the broad mill-pond,
Thy writhing race. Thou wilt more patiently
Await my hour; more quietly pursue
Thy destined prey legitimate.
First-born
I call'd thee, at the opening of my song;
Last of creation I will call thee now.
What fiery meteors have we seen transcend
Our firmament, and mighty was their power,
To leave a solitude and stench behind
The vulture may have revelled upon men—
Upon the vulture's self thou revellest.
Princes may hold high festivals; for thee
Chiefly they hold it. Every dish removed,
Thou comest in the silence of the night,
Takest thy place—thy train insinuates
Into the breast, lappest that wrinkled heart
Stone cold within, and with fresh appetite,
Again art ready for a like carouse.
Behold, before thee, the first minstrel known
To turn from sea and land unbidden guests.
He who hath never bent his brow to king,
Perforce must bend it, mightier lord, to thee!"

There is another remarkable feature in the worm. No organs of sense have been discovered; and yet, it is all sensation. It sees without eyes, hears without ears, as truly as it walks without feet. It is a constant marvel, like the human hand. It unites in itself the most opposite and various faculties. By the sense of touch it seems to supersede the necessity for other faculties. In all the contrivances connected with its formation, it seems evident enough that nothing has been omitted conducive to its happiness. It bounds to and fro, with a merriment of motion which assures us that it is capable of enjoyment in its little circle of sensation, and small world of action. Those who have anatomised it speak of the exquisiteness of its mechanism. With rapture they laud the muscular feats of the Annalidæ, as wonderfully distinguished by their complexity and harmony; and yet it is allowed to pass so long without a chronicler and historian—though no single creature in the whole compass of creation more illustrates the marvellous excellency of divine arrangement, or the dependency of man for his happiness upon the meanest of God's creatures.

Such were some of our reflections the other day, while spade in hand in our garden; and then we very naturally turned from the worm, to other characters in the scale of moral creation, slighted like the worm, fulfilling a round of lowly duties unnoticed and unperceived. How many there are in society, the delvers and diggers and ploughmen—nay, even in the unseen philosophers, who work silently and obscurely in the dark, beneath the

mould, but who have the same value attaching to them which, as we have seen, attaches to the worm—preparing the soil in which others are to place the seed; exploring the dark and unsightly, and bringing it out into the light, that others may cause beauty and bloom to hang their brightness over it. Let us, in moral conditions, recur to the often-uttered, but never sufficiently felt, truth, that nothing useful is mean or contemptible. How much soever the employment seems to stamp with contempt, let us constantly remember that, not employment, but motive and object, are the foundations of real dignity; nay, that sometimes, workers may be engaged in really, dignified employment—employment important in itself, and its results—although they may be as entirely ignorant of the magnificence of the foundation they are preparing—as the wonder-working worm.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EDUCATION OF THE CITIZEN.

POLITICS is a branch of Popular Education—that is, the education of the individual for the part he is to take in public affairs. Now, everybody not possessed of political power is desirous of obtaining it; but very few who are so desirous, have been at the trouble to qualify themselves to act decidedly upon any of the great questions which may present themselves to the eye of the citizen. It is the duty of every man to make this topic a subject of distinct study. The man living in society should know something of the principles of domestic policy, of the duties and limits of government, of the nature and equity of Taxation, of his own Rights, of his own Duties. Louis XIV., when spoken to upon some affairs of the State, replied, "The State—the State—What State? I am the State?" It is long since a king in England could with impunity say this; but every individual citizen may feel that he is a part of the State; he supports it; and whether or not he possesses the suffrage, he shares in a degree in the dignities and responsibilities of his country. Unfortunately, the people, as a body, receive no political

education. — The subject is a sadly tangled one: there is no necessary obscurity in it; but it is bemeshed with the follies and sophisms of many generations.— Lecturers have been the hired advocates of a class of opinions; and they have travelled to and fro through the country, not to impart information, but to inflame the passions, and to invoke to the banners of political partizans. Newspaper editors are, as a body, far inferior in talent and conscience to the lecturers: they have never desired to aid in the spread of truth over the mind: and there have been but few treatises written of so condensed a character, and so popular a tone, that the people would be likely to derive much benefit from their systematic study. Now, as we have recommended in previous instances, and for other purposes, in the work of self-education, the careful study of fundamental principles, so in this let there be a classification of the ideas connected with the being of a State. Let there be an inquiry into its office, and the nature of its functions. The foolish idea that government was a matter in which the people had no concern, is now quite exploded. Upon this subject the remarks of Lord Brougham are most pertinent and noteworthy. He says, "These considerations may serve to show, not merely that the Political Education of the people is attended with none of the danger to the peace of society which the objectors apprehend, but that a positive security is afforded by it against the very worst dangers to which the cause of good order in any degree is exposed. But we must go

yet a step further, and observe, that the right of the people to be instructed in public interests, and the duty of their superiors to educate them in political science, rests upon higher ground than has yet been taken. The force of public opinion must be acknowledged in every government, save that of the most purely despotic form. How important, therefore, is it, with a view to the people's only safeguard, and the ruler's only curb, that they should be well informed upon their political interests! * * * * This superintendence (of the people) is most wholesome, if exercised by an enlightened people, and affords the only effectual security for constant good government—the only real safeguard for popular rights. How many fatal errors would rulers of all kinds, and in all ages—whether consuls and senates, or archons or assemblies of the people, or monarchs and their councils, or kings and their parliaments, or presidents of chambers, have been prevented from falling into—and how many foul crimes, both against the peace and happiness of the world, and against the interest of their subjects, would they have been deterred from committing, had the nations submitted to their care been well instructed in the science of public policy, acquainted with their true interests, aware of the things most dangerous to their liberties, and impressed with the sense of duty to their species which an enlarged knowledge of political philosophy can alone bestow * * * Nothing, then, can effectually and permanently instil the sound doctrines of peace and of justice into any people, but an extensive political education, to instruct them in

their interests and their duties. It is the same with the frauds as with the oppressions of statesmen. The sacrifice of the many to the few would be impossible in a well-informed country. That game of party in which the interests of people are the counters, and the power and the pelf of the gamesters themselves the only things they play for, though not the only stake they risk, never could be played to the destruction of public virtue, and the daily peril of the general good, were the people well acquainted with the principles which should govern the administrations of their concerns; and possibly it is an instinctive apprehension of this truth that has made all parties so averse to the general diffusion of political knowledge."

Here, then, we have clearly stated, the right of the people to Political Education, nay, the absolute necessity that they should so be educated. But, how, upon what system shall they be educated? And let it at once be said, let all those systems and teachers be disregarded, who make the science of politics to differ from private and personal morality; the Economy of the State to differ from the machinery and management of domestic economy. It is in a proposition like this that all our political difficulties have taken their origin. There is *not* a public and a private morality; the public morality rather grows out of the private; the morality of the State is but an expanded version of the morality of the individual: it follows from this, that the morality of the State and the morality of the greater number of individuals in the State will be identical; the one will represent the other; there can, therefore, be

no amendment of the political condition of a nation, until there shall be a change and a regeneration in the greatest number of individual minds composing the State. These are the principles which lie on the threshold of all political truth; there is nothing remote or ambiguous about them; all can understand them; let every citizen labour, in his degree, to apply them. Now, the education may be said to be made up of Three Parts, and woeful consequences may follow, if the subject is not acquainted with them all.

FIRST,—There is ECONOMY. What are the principles of trade? What regulates value? What regulates wages? What is capital? What are the rights of labour? What is money, and what regulates the price of money? What are the rights of capital? How may the labourer best secure his interests without interfering with the rights and interests of others? Questions like these, universally answered, would tell on society generally in the increased wisdom of those who replied to the interrogatories. The questions of political economy will, perhaps, be best answered by calm and quiet, and consecutive discussions in the class-rooms of Mechanics' Institutes; with the exercises of Colonel Thompson, and Whateley's Lectures, and Mill's Principles; and especially as a class-book, a condensed compendium, too little known, called "Questions on Social Science," on the table. It is eminently the duty of every thinking man, to study closely the questions and dissertations on Political Economy.

Mr. Denison, the member of parliament for the West Riding of Yorkshire, declared on the hustings, on the day

of his election, that he knew nothing of political economy and advised from the hustings the working classes not to attend at all to its teachings and teachers; perhaps to some eyes it seems too utilitarian a science, but it is an effort to bring back the reign of justice, and to establish equity between man and man; the careful study of its abstract principles becomes more and more necessary every day. Man is now, in these days, introduced into relations and states of society so new, that it behoves him attentively to study the principles of internal and external trade, upon which society may be said to rest. Perhaps the duties of senators in reference to political economy, are better summed in negatives, than in any other way; yet the citizen should define clearly to himself the principles of society. But a government has duties which are Positive; the people need to be enlightened in reference to what those duties are, for we have already intimated, that government is an affair of all men in the state. The State is a ship, and all hands on board are called upon to labour to their utmost, to enable her to ride with safety, and ease and dignity through the waters; *the quarter-deck is not to be regarded as the place to which a certain class of men by hereditary rank and privilege are entitled; but a place to be occupied by the most able hands on board.* Government is not a sinecure to be monopolised by a few, but an office to be conferred upon the clearest head, and the bravest heart, and most alert arm on board. It is a question which you ought to settle in your own mind, what is your worth to the country? have you any share of power

in the country? and what do you regard as the source of your power? is it your property, your intelligence, your ancestry, or yourself, that you recognise as the fountain of influence and of worth? You should inquire into the most rational form of government; the form most agreeable to our conceptions of advancing intelligence, Republics, Aristocracies, Autocracies, Monarchies—clearly understand the meaning of these; where they have been tried on the world's platform; have they failed? why have they succeeded? what were the elements of their success?

But Government is Positive, it professes to hold the scales of justice sacredly between man and man; now what should be the true end of punishment? how far can man punish at all? all pains and penalties, what proportions should they bear to offences? death, imprisonment, transportation? how should they be awarded, and what is ths right by which government awards?

II. CONSCIENCE! what are its rights from government? Religion, how should government treat it? And what are the limits of government? What may we entrust into its hands? How far should government provide for the national taste? for the conservation of Literature and Art, or should it touch these things at all?

All these questions you should be prepared to answer to yourself, on behalf of society. We may hope that these questions will become daily more and more important. And as you are a citizen, study them, ground yourself in a deliberate and authentic yea or nay upon these questions.

But the more important section of the citizen's education remains to be glanced at now; although but in a word, the noblest life is the PRIVATE LIFE. There is a fireside; there is a Sabbath, or Ragged School; there is the wretched and forsaken Home. The good citizen diffuses himself over his neighbourhood and his village. He magnetises the atmosphere with a sense of benevolence or good will; a sense of truth. Round the good Christian Citizens the magnanimities of a life, worthier than those of Plutarch's worthies, group themselves; they "*act the neighbour or the politician as becometh the Gospel of Christ.*"

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