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ENGLISH PROSE

A SERIES OF RELATED ESSAYS FOR THE DISCUSSION AND PRACTICE OF THE ART OF WRITING

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

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1913

PREFACE

The selections in the present volume, designed primarily for the discussion and practice in college classes of the art of composition, have been arranged under a scheme which the editors believe to be new. There are nine related groups. Each successive group represents a different phase of life, beginning with character and personality, and concluding with art and literature. The whole together, as the table of contents will show, thus presents a body of ideas that includes practically all the great

departments of human thought and interest.

It is evident that certain ideals of teaching composition underlie the scheme. The editors believe heartily with Pater that "the chief stimulus of good style is to possess a full, rich, complex matter to grapple with". Instruction in writing, it is to be feared, too often neglects this sound doctrine and places an emphasis upon formal matters that seems disproportionate, especially when form is made to appear as a thing apart. Form and content go together and one must not suffer at the expense of the other. But a sustained interest in the ways and means of correct expression is aroused only when the student feels that he has something to express. Instructors often contend indeed that the ideas of undergraduates are far to seek, and that most of the time in the class-room is therefore best spent upon formal exercises and drill. The editors do not share this view. They believe that there is no class of people more responsive to new ideas and impressions than college students, and none more eager, when normally stimulated, to express themselves in writing. They have therefore aimed to present a series of related selections that would arouse thought and provoke oral discussion in the class-room, as well as furnish suitable models of style. In most cases the pieces are too long to be adequately handled in one class hour. A live topic may well be discussed for several hours, until its various sides have been examined and students are awakened to the many questions at issue. The editors have aimed, also, to supply selections so rich and vital in content that instructors themselves will feel challenged to add to the class discussion from their own knowledge and experience, and so turn a stream of fresh ideas upon "stock notions". Thus English composition, which in many courses in our larger institutions is now almost the only non-special study, can be made a direct means of liberalization in the meaning and art of life, as well as an instrument for correct and effective writing.

The present volume therefore differs from others in the same field. Many recent collections contain pieces too short and unrelated to satisfy the ideals suggested above—ideals which, the editors feel sure, are held by an increasing number of teachers. And older and newer collections alike have been constructed primarily with the purpose of illustrating the conventional categories,—description, narration, exposition. Teachers of composition everywhere are becoming distrustful of an arrangement which is frankly at variance with the actual practice of writing, and are of the opinion that it is better to set the student to the task of composition without confining him too narrowly to one form of discourse. The editors have deliberately avoided, however, the other extreme, which is reflected in one or two recent volumes, of choosing pieces of one type to the exclusion of all others. In collections of this kind variety in form and subject-matter is fully as important as richness of content. Instructors who believe in the use of the types of discourse as the most practicable means of instruction, will find all the types liberally represented in the present volume. And in order to meet their requirements even more adequately, the editors have included two short stories at the end, as examples of narration with a plot.

Much attention has been given to the suggestions at the end of the volume with the aim of making them practically serviceable and, at the same time, as free as possible from duplication of class work. This aim, the editors came to believe, could best be attained by providing for each group of selections definite suggestions of theme-subjects to be derived by the student from supplementary readings closely related to that group.

F.W.R. G.R.E.

MADISON, WISCONSIN,
May, 1913.

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ENGLISH PROSE

SELF-RELIANCE[1]**RALPH WALDO EMERSON**

I read the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. Always the soul hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for always the inmost becomes the outmost—and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what they thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the luster of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. It is not without preestablished harmony, this sculpture in the memory. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. Bravely let him speak the utmost syllable of his confession. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. It needs a divine man to exhibit anything divine. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay under the Almighty effort let us advance on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes. That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces, we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth

has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room who spoke so clear and emphatic? Good Heaven! it is he! it is that very lump of bashfulness and phlegm which for weeks has done nothing but eat when you were by, and now rolls out these words like bell-strokes. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. How is a boy the master of society!—independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumpers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat* he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutral, godlike independence! Who can thus lose all pledge and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence, must always be formidable, must always engage the poet's and the man's regards. Of such an immortal youth the force would be felt. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of our own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the deaf old doctrines of the church. On my saying, What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within? my friend suggested,—“But these impulses may be from below, not from above.” I replied, “They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the devil's child, I will live then from the devil.” No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if every thing were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him, “Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home.” Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it, —else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim*. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then, again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousandfold Relief Societies;—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by-and-by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world,—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is not an apology, but a life. It is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it

should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. My life should be unique; it should be an alms, a battle, a conquest, a medicine. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible Society, vote with a great party either for the Government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers,—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are. And of course so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do your thing, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blindman's-bluff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four: so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, and make the most disagreeable sensation; a sensation of rebuke and warning which no brave young man will suffer twice.

For non-conformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The bystanders look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversation had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause,—disguise no god, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this monstrous corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. Trust your emotion. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with

his shadow on the wall. Out upon your guarded lips! Sew them up with packthread, do. Else if you would be a man speak what you think to-day in words as hard as cannon balls, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day. Ah, then, exclaim the aged ladies, you shall be sure to be misunderstood! Misunderstood! It is a right fool's word. Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

Fear never but you shall be consistent in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of when seen at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. This is only microscopic criticism. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness always appeals to the future. If I can be great enough now to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. There they all stand and shed an united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels to every man's eye. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemeris. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us bow and apologize never more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor moving wherever moves a man; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the center of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. You are constrained to accept his standard. Ordinarily, every body in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent—put all means into the shade. This: all great men are and do. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his thought;—and posterity seem to follow his steps as a procession. A man Caesar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called "the height of Rome;" and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book has an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seems to say like that, "Who are you, sir?" Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claim

to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane—owes its popularity to the fact that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history our imagination makes fools of us, plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work: but the things of life are the same to both: the sum total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred and Scanderbeg and Gustavus? Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the luster will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has indeed been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them, by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the Law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, the essence of virtue, and the essence of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceedeth obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceedeth. We first share the life by which things exist and afterward see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and the fountain of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom, of that inspiration of man which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes—all metaphysics, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discerns between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions. And to his involuntary perceptions: he knows a perfect respect is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. All my wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving;—the most trivial reverie, the faintest native emotion, are domestic and divine. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind,—although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the center of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, then old things pass away,—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one thing as much as another. All things are dissolved to their center by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. This is and must be. If therefore a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old moldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and majesty of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye maketh, but the soul is light; where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be any thing more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say "I think," "I am," but quotes

some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. There is no time to it. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see,—painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterward, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. So was it with us, so will it be, if we proceed. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid; probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far off remembering of the intuition: That thought, by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this: When good is near you, when you have life in yourself,—it is not by any known or appointed way; you shall not discern the foot-prints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude all other being. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its fugitive ministers. There shall be no fear in it. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. It asks nothing. There is somewhat low even in hope. We are then in vision. There is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul is raised over passion. It seeth identity and eternal causation. It is a perceiving that Truth and Right are. Hence it becomes a Tranquillity out of the knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature; the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; vast intervals of time, years, centuries, are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay that former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present and will always all circumstances, and what is called life and what is called death.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: From Essays, First Series, 1841; the second half of the essay has here been omitted.]

EARLY EDUCATION AT HERNE HILL[2]

JOHN RUSKIN

When I was about four years old my father found himself able to buy the lease of a house on Herne Hill, a rustic eminence four miles south of the "Standard in Cornhill"; of which the leafy seclusion remains, in all essential points of character, unchanged to this day: certain Gothic splendours, lately indulged in by our wealthier neighbours, being the only serious innovations; and these are so graciously concealed by the fine trees of their grounds, that the passing viator remains unappalled by them; and I can still walk up and down the piece of road between the Fox tavern and the Herne Hill station, imagining myself four years old.

Our house was the northernmost of a group which stand accurately on the top or dome of the hill, where the ground is for a small space level, as the snows are, (I understand), on the dome of Mont Blanc; presently falling, however, in what may be, in the London clay formation, considered a precipitous slope, to our valley of Chamouni (or of Dulwich) on the east; and with a softer descent into Cold Harbor lane on the west: on the south, no less beautifully declining to the dale of the Effra, (doubtless shortened from Effrena, signifying the "Unbridled" river; recently, I regret to say, bricked over for the convenience of Mr. Biffin, chemist, and others); while on the north, prolonged indeed with slight depression some half mile or so, and receiving, in the parish of Lambeth, the chivalric title of "Champion Hill," it plunges down at last to efface itself in the plains of Peckham, and the rural

barbarism of Goose Green.

The group, of which our house was the quarter, consisted of two precisely similar partner-couples of houses, gardens and all to match; still the two highest blocks of buildings seen from Norwood on the crest of the ridge; so that the house itself, three-storied, with garrets above, commanded, in those comparatively smokeless days, a very notable view from its garret windows, of the Norwood hills on one side, and the winter sunrise over them; and of the valley of the Thames on the other, with Windsor telescopically clear in the distance, and Harrow, conspicuous always in fine weather to open vision against the summer sunset. It had front and back garden in sufficient proportion to its size; the front, richly set with old evergreens, and well-grown lilac and laburnum; the back, seventy yards long by twenty wide, renowned over all the hill for its pears and apples, which had been chosen with extreme care by our predecessor, (shame on me to forget the name of a man to whom I owe so much!)—and possessing also a strong old mulberry tree, a tall white-heart cherry tree, a black Kentish one, and an almost unbroken hedge, all round, of alternate gooseberry and currant bush; decked, in due season, (for the ground was wholly beneficent), with magical splendour of abundant fruit: fresh green, soft amber, and rough-bristled crimson bending the spinous branches; clustered pearl and pendent ruby joyfully discoverable under the large leaves that looked like vine.

The differences of primal importance which I observed between the nature of this garden, and that of Eden, as I had imagined it, were, that, in this one, *all* the fruit was forbidden; and there were no companionable beasts: in other respects the little domain answered every purpose of paradise to me; and the climate, in that cycle of our years, allowed me to pass most of my life in it. My mother never gave me more to learn than she knew I could easily get learnt, if I set myself honestly to work, by twelve o'clock. She never allowed anything to disturb me when my task was set; if it was not said rightly by twelve o'clock, I was kept in till I knew it, and in general, even when Latin Grammar came to supplement the Psalms, I was my own master for at least an hour before half-past one dinner, and for the rest of the afternoon.

My mother, herself finding her chief personal pleasure in her flowers, was often planting, or pruning beside me, at least if I chose to stay beside *her*. I never thought of doing anything behind her back which I would not have done before her face; and her presence was therefore no restraint to me; but, also, no particular pleasure, for, from having always been left so much alone, I had generally my own little affairs to see after; and, on the whole, by the time I was seven years old, was already getting too independent, mentally, even of my father and mother; and, having nobody else to be dependent upon, began to lead a very small, perky, contented, conceited, Cock-Robinson-Crusoe sort of life, in the central point which it appeared to me, (as it must naturally appear to geometrical animals), that I occupied in the universe.

This was partly the fault of my father's modesty; and partly of his pride. He had so much more confidence in my mother's judgment as to such matters than in his own, that he never ventured even to help, much less to cross her, in the conduct of my education; on the other hand, in the fixed purpose of making an ecclesiastical gentleman of me, with the superfinest of manners, and access to the highest circles of fleshly and spiritual society, the visits to Croydon, where I entirely loved my aunt, and young baker-cousins, became rarer and more rare: the society of our neighbours on the hill could not be had without breaking up our regular and sweetly selfish manner of living; and on the whole, I had nothing animate to care for, in a childish way, but myself, some nests of ants, which the gardener would never leave undisturbed for me, and a sociable bird or two; though I never had the sense or perseverance to make one really tame. But that was partly because, if ever I managed to bring one to be the least trustful of me, the cats got it.

Under these circumstances, what powers of imagination I possessed, either fastened themselves on inanimate things,—the sky, the leaves, and pebbles, observable within the walls of Eden,—or caught at any opportunity of flight into regions of romance, compatible with the objective realities of existence in the nineteenth century, within a mile and a quarter of Camberwell Green.

Herein my father, happily, though with no definite intention other than of pleasing me, when he found he could do so without infringing any of my mother's rules, became my guide. I was particularly fond of watching him shave; and was always allowed to come into his room in the morning (under the one in which I am now writing), to be the motionless witness of that operation. Over his dressing-table hung one of his own water-colour drawings, made under the teaching of the elder Nasmyth; I believe, at the High School of Edinburgh. It was done in the early manner of tinting, which, just about the time when my father was at the High School, Dr. Munro was teaching Turner; namely, in gray under-tints of Prussian blue and British ink, washed with warm colour afterwards on the lights. It represented Conway Castle, with its Frith, and, in the foreground, a cottage, a fisherman, and a boat at the water's edge.

When my father had finished shaving, he always told me a story about this picture. The custom began without any initial purpose of his, in consequence of my troublesome curiosity whether the fisherman lived in the cottage, and where he was going to in the boat. It being settled, for peace' sake, that he *did* live in the cottage, and was going in the boat to fish near the castle, the plot of the drama afterwards gradually thickened; and became, I believe, involved with that of the tragedy of Douglas, and of the Castle Specter, in both of which pieces my father had performed in private theatricals, before my mother, and a select Edinburgh audience, when he was a boy of sixteen, and she, at grave twenty, a model housekeeper, and very scornful and religiously suspicious of theatricals. But she was never weary of telling me, in later years, how beautiful my father looked in his Highland dress, with the high black feathers.

In the afternoons, when my father returned (always punctually) from his business, he dined, at half-past four, in the front parlour, my mother sitting beside him to hear the events of the day, and give counsel and encouragement with respect to the same;—chiefly the last, for my father was apt to be vexed if orders for sherry fell the least short of their due standard, even for a day or two. I was never present at this time, however, and only avouch what I relate by hearsay and probable conjecture; for between four and six it would have been a grave misdemeanour in me if I so much as approached the parlour door. After that, in summer time, we were all in the garden as long as the day lasted; tea under the white-heart cherry tree; or in winter and rough weather, at six o'clock in the drawing-room,—I having my cup of milk, and slice of bread-and-butter, in a little recess, with a table in front of it, wholly sacred to me; and in which I remained in the evenings as an Idol in a niche, while my mother knitted, and my father read to her,—and to me, so far as I chose to listen.

The series of the Waverley novels, then drawing towards its close, was still the chief source of delight in all households caring for literature; and I can no more recollect the time when I did not know them than when I did not know the Bible; but I have still a vivid remembrance of my father's intense expression of sorrow mixed with scorn, as he threw down Count Robert of Paris, after reading three or four pages; and knew that the life of Scott was ended: the scorn being a very complex and bitter feeling in him,—partly, indeed, of the book itself, but chiefly of the wretches who were tormenting and selling the wrecked intellect, and not a little, deep down, of the subtle dishonesty which had essentially caused the ruin. My father never could forgive Scott his concealment of the Ballantyne partnership.

Such being the salutary pleasures of Herne Hill, I have next with deeper gratitude to chronicle what I owe to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scriptures as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music,—yet in that familiarity revered, as transcending all thought, and ordaining all conduct.

This she effected, not by her own sayings or personal authority; but simply by compelling me to read the book thoroughly, for myself. As soon as I was able to read with fluency, she began a course of Bible work with me, which never ceased till I went to Oxford. She read alternate verses with me, watching, at first, every intonation of my voice, and correcting the false ones, till she made me understand the verse, if within my reach, rightly, and energetically. It might be beyond me altogether; that she did not care about; but she made sure that as soon as I got hold of it at all, I should get hold of it by the right end.

In this way she began with the first verse of Genesis, and went straight through, to the last verse of the Apocalypse; hard names, numbers, Levitical law, and all; and began again at Genesis the next day. If a name was hard, the better the exercise in pronunciation,—if the chapter was tiresome, the better lesson in patience,—if loathsome, the better lesson in faith that there was some use in its being so outspoken. After our chapters, (from two to three a day, according to their length, the first thing after breakfast, and no interruption from servants allowed,—none from visitors, who either joined in the reading or had to stay upstairs,—and none from any visitings or excursions, except real travelling), I had to learn a few verses by heart, or repeat, to make sure I had not lost, something of what was already known; and, with the chapters thus gradually possessed from the first word to the last, I had to learn the whole body of the fine old Scottish paraphrases, which are good, melodious, and forceful verse; and to which, together with the Bible itself, I owe the first cultivation of my ear in sound.

It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was, to my child's mind, chiefly repulsive—the 119th Psalm—has now become of all the most precious to me, in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the Law of God, in opposition to the abuse of it by modern preachers of what they imagine to be His gospel.

But it is only by deliberate effort that I recall the long morning hours of toil, as regular as sunrise,—toil on both sides equal,—by which, year after year, my mother forced me to learn these paraphrases, and chapters, (the eighth of 1st Kings being one—try it, good reader, in a leisure hour!) allowing not so much as a syllable to be missed or misplaced; while every sentence was required to be said over and over again till she was satisfied with the accent of it. I recollect a struggle between us of about three

weeks, concerning the accent of the "of" in the lines

"Shall any following spring revive
The ashes of the urn?"—

I insisting, partly in childish obstinacy, and partly in true instinct for rhythm, (being wholly careless on the subject both of urns and their contents), on reciting it with an accented *of*. It was not, I say, till after three weeks' labor, that my mother got the accent lightened on the "of" and laid on the "ashes," to her mind. But had it taken three years she would have done it, having once undertaken to do it. And, assuredly, had she not done it,—well, there's no knowing what would have happened; but I'm very thankful she *did*.

I have just opened my oldest (in use) Bible,—a small, closely, and very neatly printed volume it is, printed in Edinburgh by Sir D. Hunter Blair and J. Bruce, Printers, to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, in 1816. Yellow, now, with age, and flexible, but not unclean, with much use, except that the lower corners of the pages at 8th of 1st Kings, and 32d Deuteronomy, are worn somewhat thin and dark, the learning of these two chapters having cost me much pains. My mother's list of the chapters with which, thus learned, she established my soul in life, has just fallen out of it. I will take what indulgence the incurious reader can give me, for printing the list thus accidentally occurrent:

Exodus, chapters 15th and 20th. 2 Samuel, " 1st, from 17th verse to end. 1 Kings, " 8th. Psalms, " 23d, 32d, 90th, 91st, 103d, 112th, 119th, 139th. Proverbs, " 2d, 3d, 8th, 12th. Isaiah, " 58th. Matthew, " 5th, 6th, 7th. Acts, " 26th. 1 Corinthians, " 13th, 15th. James, " 4th. Revelation, " 5th, 6th.

And, truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge—in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after life,—and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters, I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one *essential* part of all my education.

And it is perhaps already time to mark what advantage and mischief, by the chances of life up to seven years old, had been irrevocably determined for me.

I will first count my blessings (as a not unwise friend once recommended me to do, continually; whereas I have a bad trick of always numbering the thorns in my fingers and not the bones in them).

And for best and truest beginning of all blessings, I had been taught the perfect meaning of Peace, in thought, act, and word.

I never had heard my father's or mother's voice once raised in any question with each other; nor seen an angry, or even slightly hurt or offended, glance in the eyes of either. I had never heard a servant scolded; nor even suddenly, passionately, or in any severe manner, blamed. I had never seen a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter; nor anything whatever either done in a hurry, or undone in due time. I had no conception of such a feeling as anxiety; my father's occasional vexation in the afternoons, when he had only got an order for twelve butts after expecting one for fifteen, as I have just stated, was never manifested to *me*; and itself related only to the question whether his name would be a step higher or lower in the year's list of sherry exporters; for he never spent more than half his income, and therefore found himself little incommoded by occasional variations in the total of it. I had never done any wrong that I knew of—beyond occasionally delaying the commitment to heart of some improving sentence, that I might watch a wasp on the window pane, or a bird in the cherry tree; and I had never seen any grief.

Next to this quite priceless gift of Peace, I had received the perfect understanding of the natures of Obedience and Faith. I obeyed word, or lifted finger, of father or mother, simply as a ship her helm; not only without idea of resistance, but receiving the direction as a part of my own life and force, a helpful law, as necessary to me in every moral action as the law of gravity in leaping. And my practice in Faith was soon complete: nothing ever threatened me that was not inflicted, and nothing ever told me that was not true.

Peace, obedience, faith; these three for chief good; next to these, the habit of fixed attention with both eyes and mind—on which I will not further enlarge at this moment, this being the main practical faculty of my life, causing Mazzini to say of me, in conversation authentically reported, a year or two before his death, that I had "the most analytic mind in Europe." An opinion in which, so far as I am acquainted with Europe, I am myself entirely disposed to concur.

Lastly, an extreme perfection in palate and all other bodily senses, given by the utter prohibition of cake, wine, comfits, or, except in carefulest restriction, fruit; and by fine preparation of what food was given me. Such I esteem the main blessings of my childhood;—next, let me count the equally dominant calamities.

First, that I had nothing to love.

My parents were—in a sort—visible powers of nature to me, no more loved than the sun and the moon: only I should have been annoyed and puzzled if either of them had gone out; (how much, now, when both are darkened!)—still less did I love God; not that I had any quarrel with Him, or fear of Him; but simply found what people told me was His service, disagreeable; and what people told me was His book, not entertaining. I had no companions to quarrel with, neither; nobody to assist, and nobody to thank. Not a servant was ever allowed to do anything for me, but what it was their duty to do; and why should I have been grateful to the cook for cooking, or the gardener for gardening,—when the one dared not give me a baked potato without asking leave, and the other would not let my ants' nests alone, because they made the walks untidy? The evil consequence of all this was not, however, what might perhaps have been expected, that I grew up selfish or unaffectionate; but that, when affection did come, it came with violence utterly rampant and unmanageable, at least by me, who never before had anything to manage.

For (second of chief calamities) I had nothing to endure. Danger or pain of any kind I knew not: my strength was never exercised, my patience never tried, and my courage never fortified. Not that I was ever afraid of anything,—either ghosts, thunder, or beasts; and one of the nearest approaches to insubordination which I was ever tempted into as a child, was in passionate effort to get leave to play with the lion's cubs in Wombwell's menagerie.

Thirdly, I was taught no precision nor etiquette of manners; it was enough if, in the little society we saw, I remained unobtrusive, and replied to a question without shyness: but the shyness came later, and increased as I grew conscious of the rudeness arising from the want of social discipline, and found it impossible to acquire, in advanced life, dexterity in any bodily exercise, skill in any pleasing accomplishment, or ease and tact in ordinary behaviour.

Lastly, and chief of evils. My judgment of right and wrong, and powers of independent action, were left entirely undeveloped; because the bridle and blinkers were never taken off me. Children should have their times of being off duty, like soldiers; and when once the obedience, if required, is certain, the little creature should be very early put for periods of practice in complete command of itself; set on the barebacked horse of its own will, and left to break it by its own strength. But the ceaseless authority exercised over my youth left me, when cast out at last into the world, unable for some time to do more than drift with its vortices.

My present verdict, therefore, on the general tenor of my education at that time, must be, that it was at once too formal and too luxurious; leaving my character, at the most important moment for its construction, cramped indeed, but not disciplined; and only by protection innocent, instead of by practice virtuous.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 2: From "Praeterita," 1885, Vol. I, Chapter II.]

A CRISIS IN MY MENTAL HISTORY[3]

JOHN STUART MILL

From the winter of 1821, when I first read Bentham, and especially from the commencement of the Westminster Review, I had what might truly be called an object in life; to be a reformer of the world. My conception of my own happiness was entirely identified with this object. The personal sympathies I wished for were those of fellow labourers in this enterprise. I endeavoured to pick up as many flowers as I could by the way; but as a serious and permanent personal satisfaction to rest upon, my whole reliance was placed on this; and I was accustomed to felicitate myself on the certainty of a happy life which I enjoyed, through placing my happiness in something durable and distant, in which some progress might be always making, while it could never be exhausted by complete attainment. This did very well for several years, during which the general improvement going on in the world and the idea of myself as engaged with others in struggling to promote it, seemed enough to fill up an interesting and animated existence. But the time came when I awakened from this as from a dream. It was in the autumn of 1826. I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at

other times, becomes insipid or indifferent; the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are, when smitten by their first "conviction of sin." In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realised; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.

At first I hoped that the cloud would pass away of itself; but it did not. A night's sleep, the sovereign remedy for the smaller vexations of life, had no effect on it. I awoke to a renewed consciousness of the woful fact. I carried it with me into all companies, into all occupations. Hardly anything had power to cause me even a few minutes' oblivion of it. For some months the cloud seemed to grow thicker and thicker. The lines in Coleridge's "Dejection"—I was not then acquainted with them—exactly describe my case:

"A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet or relief
In word, or sigh, or tear."

In vain I sought relief from my favourite books; those memorials of past nobleness and greatness from which I had always hitherto drawn strength and animation. I read them now without feeling, or with the accustomed feeling *minus* all its charm; and I became persuaded, that my love of mankind, and of excellence for its own sake, had worn itself out. I sought no comfort by speaking to others of what I felt. If I had loved any one sufficiently to make confiding my griefs a necessity, I should not have been in the condition I was. I felt, too, that mine was not an interesting, or in any way respectable distress. There was nothing in it to attract sympathy. Advice, if I had known where to seek it, would have been most precious. The words of Macbeth to the physician often occurred to my thoughts. But there was no one on whom I could build the faintest hope of such assistance. My father, to whom it would have been natural to me to have recourse in any practical difficulties, was the last person to whom, in such a case as this, I looked for help. Everything convinced me that he had no knowledge of any such mental state as I was suffering from, and that even if he could be made to understand it, he was not the physician who could heal it. My education, which was wholly his work, had been conducted without any regard to the possibility of its ending in this result; and I saw no use in giving him the pain of thinking that his plans had failed, when the failure was probably irremediable, and, at all events, beyond the power of *his* remedies. Of other friends, I had at that time none to whom I had any hope of making my condition intelligible. It was, however, abundantly intelligible to myself; and the more I dwelt upon it, the more hopeless it appeared.

My course of study had led me to believe, that all mental and moral feelings and qualities, whether of a good or of a bad kind, were the results of association; that we love one thing, and hate another, take pleasure in one sort of action or contemplation, and pain in another sort, through the clinging of pleasurable or painful ideas to those things, from the effect of education or of experience. As a corollary from this, I had always heard it maintained by my father, and was myself convinced, that the object of education should be to form the strongest possible associations of the salutary class; associations of pleasure with all things beneficial to the great whole, and of pain with all things hurtful to it. This doctrine appeared inexpugnable; but it now seemed to me, on retrospect, that my teachers had occupied themselves but superficially with the means of forming and keeping up these salutary associations. They seemed to have trusted altogether to the old familiar instruments, praise and blame, reward and punishment. Now, I did not doubt that by these means, begun early, and applied unremittingly, intense associations of pain and pleasure, especially of pain, might be created, and might produce desires and aversions capable of lasting undiminished to the end of life. But there must always be something artificial and casual in associations thus produced. The pains and pleasures thus forcibly associated with things, are not connected with them by any natural tie; and it is therefore, I thought, essential to the durability of these associations, that they should have become so intense and inveterate as to be practically indissoluble, before the habitual exercise of the power of analysis had commenced. For I now saw, or thought I saw, what I had always before received with incredulity—that the habit of analysis has a tendency to wear away the feelings: as indeed it has, when no other mental habit is cultivated, and the analysing spirit remains without its natural complements and correctives. The very excellence of analysis (I argued) is that it tends to weaken and undermine whatever is the result of prejudice; that it enables us mentally to separate ideas which have only casually clung together: and no associations whatever could ultimately resist this dissolving force, were it not that we owe to analysis our clearest knowledge of the permanent sequences in nature; the real connections

between Things, not dependent on our will and feelings; natural laws, by virtue of which, in many cases, one thing is inseparable from another in fact; which laws, in proportion as they are clearly perceived and imaginatively realised, cause our ideas of things which are always joined together in Nature, to cohere more and more closely in our thoughts. Analytic habits may thus even strengthen the associations between causes and effects, means and ends, but tend altogether to weaken those which are, to speak familiarly, a *mere* matter of feeling. They are therefore (I thought) favourable to prudence and clear-sightedness, but a perpetual worm at the root both of the passions and of the virtues; and, above all, fearfully undermine all desires, and all pleasures, which are the effects of association, that is, according to the theory I held, all except the purely physical and organic; of the entire insufficiency of which to make life desirable, no one had a stronger conviction than I had. These were the laws of human nature, by which, as it seemed to me, I had been brought to my present state. All those to whom I looked up, were of opinion that the pleasure of sympathy with human beings, and the feelings which made the good of others, and especially of mankind on a large scale, the object of existence, were the greatest and surest sources of happiness. Of the truth of this I was convinced, but to know that a feeling would make me happy if I had it, did not give me the feeling. My education, I thought, had failed to create these feelings in sufficient strength to resist the dissolving influence of analysis, while the whole course of my intellectual cultivation had made precocious and premature analysis the inveterate habit of my mind. I was thus, as I said to myself, left stranded at the commencement of my voyage, with a well-equipped ship and a rudder, but no sail; without any real desire for the ends which I had been so carefully fitted out to work for: no delight in virtue, or the general good, but also just as little in anything else. The fountains of vanity and ambition seemed to have dried up within me, as completely as those of benevolence. I had had (as I reflected) some gratification of vanity at too early an age: I had obtained some distinction, and felt myself of some importance, before the desire of distinction and of importance had grown into a passion: and little as it was which I had attained, yet having been attained too early, like all pleasures enjoyed too soon, it had made me *blasé* and indifferent to the pursuit. Thus neither selfish nor unselfish pleasures were pleasures to me. And there seemed no power in nature sufficient to begin the formation of my character anew, and create in a mind now irretrievably analytic, fresh associations of pleasure with any of the objects of human desire.

These were the thoughts which mingled with the dry heavy dejection of the melancholy winter of 1826-7. During this time I was not incapable of my usual occupations. I went on with them mechanically, by the mere force of habit. I had been so drilled in a certain sort of mental exercise, that I could still carry it on when all the spirit had gone out of it. I even composed and spoke several speeches at the debating society, how, or with what degree of success, I know not. Of four years' continual speaking at that society, this is the only year of which I remember next to nothing. Two lines of Coleridge, in whom alone of all writers I have found a true description of what I felt, were often in my thoughts, not at this time (for I had never read them), but in a later period of the same mental malady:

"Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live."

In all probability my case was by no means so peculiar as I fancied it, and I doubt not that many others have passed through a similar state; but the idiosyncrasies of my education had given to the general phenomenon a special character, which made it seem the natural effect of causes that it was hardly possible for time to remove. I frequently asked myself, if I could, or if I was bound to go on living, when life must be passed in this manner. I generally answered to myself, that I did not think I could possibly bear it beyond a year. When, however, not more than half that duration of time had elapsed, a small ray of light broke in upon my gloom. I was reading, accidentally, Marmontel's "Memoires," and came to the passage which relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family, and the sudden inspiration by which he, then a mere boy, felt and made them feel that he would be everything to them—would supply the place of all that they had lost. A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my burden grew lighter. The oppression of the thought that all feeling was dead within me, was gone. I was no longer hopeless: I was not a stock or a stone. I had still, it seemed, some of the material out of which all worth of character, and all capacity for happiness, are made. Relieved from my ever present sense of irremediable wretchedness, I gradually found that the ordinary incidents of life could again give me some pleasure; that I could again find enjoyment, not intense, but sufficient for cheerfulness, in sunshine and sky, in books, in conversation, in public affairs; and that there was, once more, excitement, though of a moderate kind, in exerting myself for my opinions, and for the public good. Thus the cloud gradually drew off, and I again enjoyed life: and though I had several relapses, some of which lasted many months, I never again was as miserable as I had been.

The experiences of this period had two very marked effects on my opinions and character. In the first place, they led me to adopt a theory of life, very unlike that on which I had before acted, and having

much in common with what at that time I certainly had never heard of, the anti-self-consciousness theory of Carlyle. I never, indeed, wavered in the conviction that happiness is the test of all rules of conduct, and the end of life. But I now thought that this end was only to be attained by not making it the direct end. Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. The enjoyments of life (such was now my theory) are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing, when they are taken *en passant*, without being made a principal object. Once make them so, and they are immediately felt to be insufficient. They will not bear a scrutinising examination. Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness, but some end external to it, as the purpose of life. Let your self-consciousness, your scrutiny, your self-interrogation, exhaust themselves on that; and if otherwise fortunately circumstanced you will inhale happiness with the air you breathe, without dwelling on it or thinking about it, without either forestalling it in imagination, or putting it to flight by fatal questioning. This theory now became the basis of my philosophy of life. And I still hold to it as the best theory for all those who have but a moderate degree of sensibility and of capacity for enjoyment, that is, for the great majority of mankind.

The other important change which my opinions at this time underwent, was that I, for the first time, gave its proper place, among the prime necessities of human well-being, to the internal culture of the individual. I ceased to attach almost exclusive importance to the ordering of outward circumstances, and the training of the human being for speculation and for action.

I had now learnt by experience that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and required to be nourished and enriched as well as guided. I did not, for an instant, lose sight of, or undervalue, that part of the truth which I had seen before; I never turned recreant to intellectual culture, or ceased to consider the power and practice of analysis as an essential condition both of individual and of social improvement. But I thought that it had consequences which required to be corrected, by joining other kinds of cultivation with it. The maintenance of a due balance among the faculties, now seemed to me of primary importance. The cultivation of the feelings became one of the cardinal points in my ethical and philosophical creed. And my thoughts and inclinations turned in an increasing degree towards whatever seemed capable of being instrumental to that object.

I now began to find meaning in the things which I had read or heard about the importance of poetry and art as instruments of human culture. But it was some time longer before I began to know this by personal experience. The only one of the imaginative arts in which I had from childhood taken great pleasure, was music; the best effect of which (and in this it surpasses perhaps every other art) consists in exciting enthusiasm; in winding up to a high pitch those feelings of an elevated kind which are already in the character, but to which this excitement gives a glow and a fervour, which, though transitory at its utmost height, is precious for sustaining them at other times. This effect of music I had often experienced; but like all my pleasurable susceptibilities it was suspended during the gloomy period. I had sought relief again and again from this quarter, but found none. After the tide had turned, and I was in process of recovery, I had been helped forward by music, but in a much less elevated manner. I at this time first became acquainted with Weber's Oberon, and the extreme pleasure which I drew from its delicious melodies did me good, by showing me a source of pleasure to which I was as susceptible as ever. The good, however, was much impaired by the thought, that the pleasure of music (as is quite true of such pleasure as this was, that of mere tune) fades with familiarity, and requires either to be revived by intermittence, or fed by continual novelty. And it is very characteristic both of my then state, and of the general tone of my mind at this period of my life, that I was seriously tormented by the thought of the exhaustibility of musical combinations. The octave consists only of five tones and two semi-tones, which can be put together in only a limited number of ways, of which but a small proportion are beautiful: most of these, it seemed to me, must have been already discovered, and there could not be room for a long succession of Mozarts and Webers, to strike out, as these had done, entirely new and surpassingly rich veins of musical beauty. This source of anxiety may, perhaps, be thought to resemble that of the philosophers of Laputa, who feared lest the sun should be burnt out. It was, however, connected with the best feature in my character, and the only good point to be found in my very unromantic and in no way honourable distress. For though my dejection, honestly looked at, could not be called other than egotistical, produced by the ruin, as I thought, of my fabric of happiness, yet the destiny of mankind in general was ever in my thoughts, and could not be separated from my own. I felt that the flaw in my life, must be a flaw in life itself; that the question was, whether, if the reformers of society and government could succeed in their objects, and every person in the community were free and in a state of physical comfort, the pleasures of life, being no longer kept up by struggle and privation, would cease to be pleasures. And I felt that unless I could see my way to some better hope than this for human happiness in general my dejection must continue; but that if I could see such an outlet, I should then look on the world with pleasure; content as far as I was myself concerned, with any fair share of the general lot.

This state of my thoughts and feelings made the fact of my reading Wordsworth for the first time (in the autumn of 1828), an important event in my life. I took up the collection of his poems from curiosity, with no expectation of mental relief from it, though I had before resorted to poetry with that hope. In the worst period of my depression, I had read through the whole of Byron (then new to me), to try whether a poet, whose peculiar department was supposed to be that of the intenser feelings, could rouse any feeling in me. As might be expected, I got no good from this reading, but the reverse. The poet's state of mind was too like my own. His was the lament of a man who had worn out all pleasures, and who seemed to think that life, to all who possess the good things of it, must necessarily be the vapid, uninteresting thing which I found it. His Harold and Manfred had the same burden on them which I had; and I was not in a frame of mind to desire any comfort from the vehement sensual passion of his Giaours, or the sullenness of his Laras. But while Byron was exactly what did not suit my condition, Wordsworth was exactly what did. I had looked into the Excursion two or three years before, and found little in it; and I should probably have found as little, had I read it at this time. But the miscellaneous poems, in the two-volume edition of 1815 (to which little of value was added in the latter part of the author's life), proved to be the precise thing for my mental wants at that particular juncture.

In the first place, these poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery; to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life, but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. In this power of rural beauty over me, there was a foundation laid for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry; the more so, as his scenery lies mostly among mountains, which, owing to my early Pyrenean excursion, were my ideal of natural beauty. But Wordsworth would never have had any great effect on me, if he had merely placed before me beautiful pictures of natural scenery. Scott does this still better than Wordsworth, and a very second-rate landscape does it more effectually than any poet. What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasures, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence. There have certainly been, even in our own age, greater poets than Wordsworth; but poetry of deeper and loftier feeling could not have done for me at that time what his did. I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this, not only without turning away from, but with a greatly increased interest in the common feelings and common destiny of human beings. And the delight which these poems gave me, proved that with culture of this sort, there was nothing to dread from the most confirmed habit of analysis. At the conclusion of the Poems came the famous Ode, falsely called Platonic, "Intimations of Immortality:" in which, along with more than his usual sweetness of melody and rhythm, and along with the two passages of grand imagery but bad philosophy so often quoted, I found that he too had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought for compensation, and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it. The result was that I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it. I long continued to value Wordsworth less according to his intrinsic merits, than by the measure of what he had done for me. Compared with the greatest poets, he may be said to be the poet of unpoetical natures, possessed of quiet and contemplative tastes. But unpoetical natures are precisely those which require poetic cultivation. This cultivation Wordsworth is much more fitted to give, than poets who are intrinsically far more poets than he.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 3: From Chapter V of the Autobiography, 1874.]

OLD CHINA[4]

CHARLES LAMB

I have an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture-gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying

that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends, whom distance cannot diminish, figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Further on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.[5]

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and coextensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula*[6] upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshadow the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state,"—so she was pleased to ramble on,—"in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, oh! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare—and all because of that folio *Beaumont and Fletcher*, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bed-ward) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo which we christened the 'Lady Blanch'; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's bar, and Waltham, when we had a holiday—holidays and all other fun are gone now we are rich—and the little handbasket in which I

used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth—and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator[7] his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we *ride* part of the way, and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense, which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham*, and the *Surrender of Calais*, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the *Children in the Wood*—when we squeezed out our shilling apiece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially; that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going; that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on on the stage, because a word lost would have been a chasm which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then, and I appeal to you whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in, indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough,—but there was still a law of civility to woman recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterward! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never *do* make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet,—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *hearty, cheerful Mr. Cotton*[8], as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year; no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech, on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power, those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances can not straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked: live better and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so

—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return, could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a day, could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them, could the good old one shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now, but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours, and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed, when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Croesus had, or the great Jew R— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 4: From "Last Essays of Elia," 1833.]

[Footnote 5: The hays: an old English dance.]

[Footnote 6: Speciosa miracula: beautiful marvels.]

[Footnote 7: Piscator: The Angler—the author's spokesman in Walton's "The Complete Angler."]

[Footnote 8: Charles Cotton, a humorist of the seventeenth century.]

WHAT IS EDUCATION?[9]

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

What is education? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education?—of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves—of that education which, if we could mould the fates to our own will, we would give our children? Well, I know not what may be your conceptions upon this matter, but I will tell you mine, and I hope I shall find that our views are not very discrepant.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game of chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things

and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard, and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever may be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an extreme case. Suppose that an adult man, in the full vigour of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated? Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him, through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments.

And if to this solitary man entered a second Adam, or, better still, an Eve, a new and greater world, that of social and moral phenomena, would be revealed. Joys and woes, compared with which all others might seem but faint shadows, would spring from the new relations. Happiness and sorrow would take the place of the coarser monitors, pleasure and pain; but conduct would still be shaped by the observation of the natural consequences of actions; or, in other words, by the laws of the nature of man.

To every one of us the world was once as fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other modes of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended untimely by too gross disobedience. Nor should I speak of this process of education as past for any one, be he as old as he may. For every man the world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them. And Nature is still continuing her patient education of us in that great university, the universe, of which we are all members—Nature having no Test-Acts.

Those who take honours in Nature's university, who learn the laws which govern men and things and obey them, are the really great and successful men in this world. The great mass of mankind are the "Poll,"[10] who pick up just enough to get through without much discredit. Those who won't learn at all are plucked; and then you can't come up again. Nature's pluck means extermination.

Thus the question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But, like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as wilful disobedience—incapacity meets with the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first; but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

The object of what we commonly call education—that education in which man intervenes and which I shall distinguish as artificial education—is to make good these defects in Nature's methods; to prepare the child to receive Nature's education, neither incapably nor ignorantly, nor with wilful disobedience; and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her pleasure, without waiting for the box on the ear. In short, all artificial education ought to be an anticipation of natural education. And a liberal education is an artificial education which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards, which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.

Such an one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education; for he is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely; she as his ever beneficent mother; he as her mouthpiece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 9: From "A Liberal Education; and Where to Find It," 1868.]

[Footnote 10: Poll (a slang term used at Cambridge University): those who take a degree without honours.]

KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION TO LEARNING[11]

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

It were well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as "health," as used with reference to the animal frame, and "virtue," with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term;—talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the raw material, which is the subject-matter, not to that excellence which is the result of exercise and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom, again, is certainly a more comprehensive word than any other, but it has a direct relation to conduct, and to human life. Knowledge, indeed, and science express purely intellectual ideas but still not a state or quality of the intellect; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense, is but one of its circumstances, denoting a possession or a habit; and science has been appropriated to the subject-matter of the intellect, instead of belonging in English, as it ought to do, to the intellect itself. The consequence is that, on an occasion like this, many words are necessary, in order, first, to bring out and convey what surely is no difficult idea in itself,—that of the cultivation of the intellect as an end; next, in order to recommend what surely is no unreasonable object; and lastly, to describe and make the mind realise the particular perfection in which that object consists. Every one knows practically what are the constituents of health or of virtue; and every one recognises health and virtue as ends to be pursued; it is otherwise with intellectual excellence, and this must be my excuse, if I seem to anyone to be bestowing a good deal of labour on a preliminary matter.

In default of a recognised term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of mind, or illumination, terms which are not uncommonly given to it by writers of this day: but, whatever name we bestow on it, it is, I believe, as a matter of history, the business of a university to make this intellectual culture its direct scope, or to employ itself in the education of the intellect,—just as the work of a hospital lies in healing the sick or wounded, of a riding or fencing school, or of a gymnasium, in exercising the limbs, of an almshouse, in aiding and solacing the old, of an orphanage, in protecting innocence, of a penitentiary, in restoring the guilty. I say, a university, taken in its bare idea, and before we view it as an instrument of the church, has this object and this mission; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture; here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it.

This, I said in my foregoing discourse, was the object of a university, viewed in itself, and apart from the Catholic Church, or from the state, or from any other power which may use it; and I illustrated this in various ways. I said that the intellect must have an excellence of its own, for there was nothing which had not its specific good; that the word "educate" would not be used of intellectual culture, as it is used, had not the intellect had an end of its own; that, had it not such an end, there would be no meaning in calling certain intellectual exercises "liberal," in contrast with "useful," as is commonly done; that the very notion of a philosophical temper implied it, for it threw us back upon research and system as ends in themselves, distinct from effects and works of any kind; that a philosophical scheme of knowledge, or system of sciences, could not, from the nature of the case, issue in any one definite art or pursuit, as its end; and that, on the other hand, the discovery and contemplation of truth, to which research and systematising led, were surely sufficient ends, though nothing beyond them were added, and that they had ever been accounted sufficient by mankind.

Here then I take up the subject; and having determined that the cultivation of the intellect is an end distinct and sufficient in itself, and that, so far as words go, it is an enlargement or illumination. I proceed to inquire what this mental breadth, or power, or light, or philosophy consists in. A hospital heals a broken limb or cures a fever: what does an institution effect, which professes the health, not of

the body, not of the soul, but of the intellect? What is this good, which in former times, as well as our own, has been found worth the notice, the appropriation of the Catholic Church?

I have then to investigate, in the discourses which follow, those qualities and characteristics of the intellect in which its cultivation issues or rather consists; and, with a view of assisting myself in this undertaking, I shall recur to certain questions which have already been touched upon. These questions are three: viz. the relation of intellectual culture, first, to *mere* knowledge; secondly, to *professional* knowledge; and thirdly, to *religious* knowledge. In other words, are *acquirements* and *attainments* the scope of a university education? or *expertness in particular arts and pursuits*? or *moral and religious proficiency*? or something besides these three? These questions I shall examine in succession, with the purpose I have mentioned; and I hope to be excused, if, in this anxious undertaking, I am led to repeat what, either in these discourses or elsewhere, I have already put upon paper. And first, of *mere knowledge*, or learning, and its connection with intellectual illumination or philosophy.

I suppose the *prima-facie*[12] view which the public at large would take of a university, considering it as a place of education, is nothing more or less than a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects. Memory is one of the first developed of the mental faculties; a boy's business when he goes to school is to learn, that is, to store up things in his memory. For some years his intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them; he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has a lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbours all around him. He has opinions, religious, political and literary, and, for a boy, is very positive in them and sure about them; but he gets them from his schoolfellows, or his masters, or his parents, as the case may be. Such as he is in his other relations, such also is he in his school exercises; his mind is observant, sharp, ready, retentive; he is almost passive in the acquisition of knowledge. I say this in no disparagement of the idea of a clever boy. Geography, chronology, history, language, natural history, he heaps up the matter of these studies as treasures for a future day. It is the seven years of plenty with him: he gathers in by handfuls, like the Egyptians, without counting; and though, as time goes on, there is exercise for his argumentative powers in the elements of mathematics, and for his taste in the poets and orators, still, while at school, or at least, till quite the last years of his time, he acquires, and little more; and when he is leaving for the university, he is mainly the creature of foreign influences and circumstances, and made up of accidents, homogeneous or not, as the case may be. Moreover, the moral habits, which are a boy's praise, encourage and assist this result; that is, diligence, assiduity, regularity, despatch, persevering application; for these are the direct conditions of acquisition, and naturally lead to it. Acquirements, again, are emphatically producible, and at a moment; they are a something to show, both for master and scholar; an audience, even though ignorant themselves of the subjects of an examination, can comprehend when questions are answered and when they are not. Here again is a reason why mental culture is in the minds of men identified with the acquisition of knowledge.

The same notion possesses the public mind, when it passes on from the thought of a school to that of a university: and with the best of reasons so far as this, that there is no true culture without acquirements, and that philosophy presupposes knowledge. It requires a great deal of reading, or a wide range of information, to warrant us in putting forth our opinions on any serious subject; and without such learning the most original mind may be able indeed to dazzle, to amuse, to refute, to perplex, but not to come to any useful result or any trustworthy conclusion. There are indeed persons who profess a different view of the matter, and even act upon it. Every now and then you will find a person of vigorous or fertile mind, who relies upon his own resources, despises all former authors, and gives the world, with the utmost fearlessness, his views upon religion, or history, or any other popular subject. And his works may sell for a while; he may get a name in his day; but this will be all. His readers are sure to find on the long run that his doctrines are mere theories, and not the expression of facts, that they are chaff instead of bread, and then his popularity drops as suddenly as it rose.

Knowledge then is the indispensable condition of expansion of mind, and the instrument of attaining to it; this cannot be denied, it is ever to be insisted on; I begin with it as a first principle; however, the very truth of it carries men too far, and confirms to them the notion that it is the whole of the matter. A narrow mind is thought to be that which contains little knowledge; and an enlarged mind, that which holds a great deal; and what seems to put the matter beyond dispute is, the fact of the great number of studies which are pursued in a university, by its very profession. Lectures are given on every kind of subject; examinations are held; prizes awarded. There are moral, metaphysical, physical professors; professors of languages, of history, of mathematics, of experimental science. Lists of questions are published, wonderful for their range and depth, variety and difficulty; treatises are written, which carry upon their very face the evidence of extensive reading or multifarious information; what then is wanting for mental culture to a person of large reading and scientific attainments? what is grasp of mind but acquirement? where shall philosophical repose be found, but in the consciousness and

enjoyment of large intellectual possessions?

And yet this notion is, I conceive, a mistake, and my present business is to show that it is one, and that the end of a liberal education is not mere knowledge, or knowledge considered in its *matter*; and I shall best attain my object, by actually setting down some cases, which will be generally granted to be instances of the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind, and others which are not, and thus, by the comparison, you will be able to judge for yourselves, gentlemen, whether knowledge, that is, acquirement, is after all the real principle of the enlargement or whether that principle is not rather something beyond it.

For instance, let a person, whose experience has hitherto been confined to the more calm and unpretending scenery of these islands, whether here or in England, go for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as into mountainous districts; or let one, who has ever lived in a quiet village, go for the first time to a great metropolis,—then I suppose he will have a sensation which perhaps he never had before. He has a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature. He will perhaps be borne forward, and find for a time that he has lost his bearings. He has made a certain progress, and he has a consciousness of mental enlargement; he does not stand where he did, he has a new centre, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

Again, the view of the heavens which the telescope opens upon us, if allowed to fill and possess the mind, may almost whirl it round and make it dizzy. It brings in a flood of ideas, and is rightly called an intellectual enlargement, whatever is meant by the term.

And so again, the sight of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness, the originality (if I may use the term) of their forms and gestures and habits, and their variety and independence of each other, throw us out of ourselves into another creation, and as if under another Creator, if I may so express the temptation which may come on the mind. We seem to have new faculties, or a new exercise for our faculties, by this addition to our knowledge; like a prisoner, who, having been accustomed to wear manacles or fetters, suddenly finds his arms and legs free.

Hence physical science generally, in all its departments, as bringing before us the exuberant riches and resources, yet the orderly course, of the universe, elevates and excites the student, and at first, I may say, almost takes away his breath, while in time it exercises a tranquillising influence upon him.

Again the study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind, and why? because, as I conceive, it gives it a power of judging of passing events and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them, which before it did not possess.

And in like manner, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going into society, travelling, gaining acquaintance with the various classes of the community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of various parties, interests, and races, their views, aims, habits and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship,—gaining experience how various yet how alike men are, how low-minded, how bad, how opposed, yet how confident in their opinions; all this exerts a perceptible influence upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it good or be it bad, and is popularly called its enlargement.

And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realise to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that "the world is all before it where to choose," and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of wilful thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation,—an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker. Their eyes are opened; and, like the judgment-stricken king in the tragedy, they see two suns, and a magic universe, out of which they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools, and the dupes of imposture.

On the other hand, religion has its own enlargement, and an enlargement, not of tumult, but of peace. It is often remarked of uneducated persons, who have hitherto thought little of the unseen world, that, on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating their hearts, reforming their conduct, and meditating on death and judgment, heaven and hell, they seem to become, in point of intellect, different

beings from what they were. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one thing than another. But now every event has a meaning; they have their own estimate of whatever happens to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world, no longer dull, monotonous, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a various and complicated drama, with parts and an object, and an awful moral.

Now from these instances, to which many more might be added, it is plain, first, that the communication of knowledge certainly is either a condition or the means of that sense of enlargement or enlightenment, of which at this day we hear so much in certain quarters: this cannot be denied; but next, it is equally plain, that such communication is not the whole of the process. The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematising of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding *then*, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not the mere addition to our knowledge that is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onwards, of that mental centre, to which both what we know, and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our acquirements, gravitates. And therefore a truly great intellect, and recognised to be such by the common opinion of mankind, such as the intellect of Aristotle, or of St. Thomas, or of Newton, or of Goethe (I purposely take instances within and without the Catholic pale, when I would speak of the intellect as such), is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another; without which there is no whole and no centre. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement but as philosophy.

Accordingly, when this analytical, distributive, harmonising process is away, the mind experiences no enlargement, and is not reckoned as enlightened or comprehensive, whatever it may add to its knowledge. For instance, a great memory, as I have already said, does not make a philosopher, any more than a dictionary can be called a grammar. There are men who embrace in their minds a vast multitude of ideas, but with little sensibility about their real relations towards each other. These may be antiquarians, annalists, naturalists; they may be learned in the law; they may be versed in statistics; they are most useful in their own place; I should shrink from speaking disrespectfully of them; still, there is nothing in such attainments to guarantee the absence of narrowness of mind. If they are nothing more than well-read men, or men of information, they have not what specially deserves the name of culture of mind, or fulfils the type of liberal education.

In like manner, we sometimes fall in with persons who have seen much of the world, and of the men who, in their day, have played a conspicuous part in it, but who generalise, nothing, and have no observation, in the true sense of the word. They abound in information in detail, curious and entertaining, about men and things; and, having lived under the influence of no very clear or settled principles, religious or political, they speak of every one and every thing, only as so many phenomena, which are complete in themselves, and lead to nothing, not discussing them, or teaching any truth, or instructing the hearer, but simply talking. No one would say that these persons, well informed as they are, had attained to any great culture of intellect or to philosophy.

The case is the same still more strikingly where the persons in question are beyond dispute men of inferior powers and deficient education. Perhaps they have been much in foreign countries, and they receive, in a passive, otiose, unfruitful way, the various facts which are forced upon them there. Seafaring men, for example, range from one end of the earth to the other; but the multiplicity of external objects, which they have encountered, forms no symmetrical and consistent picture upon their imagination; they see the tapestry of human life, as it were on the wrong side, and it tells no story. They sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves, now in Europe, now in Asia; they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they are in the marts of commerce, or amid the islands of the South; they gaze on Pompey's Pillar, or on the Andes; and nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward, to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Every thing stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was. Perhaps you are near such a man on a particular occasion, and expect him to be shocked or perplexed at something which occurs; but one thing is much the same to him as another, or, if he is perplexed, it is as not knowing what to say, whether it is right to admire, or to ridicule or to disapprove, while conscious that some expression of opinion is expected from him; for in fact he has no standard of judgment at all, and no landmarks to guide him to a conclusion. Such is mere acquisition,

and, I repeat, no one would dream of calling it philosophy.

Instances, such as these, confirm, by the contrast, the conclusion I have already drawn from those which preceded them. That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. Thus is that form of universal knowledge, of which I have on a former occasion spoken, set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection. Possessed of this real illumination, the mind never views any part of the extended subject-matter of knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when mentioned, recall their function in the body, as the word "creation" suggests the Creator, and "subjects" a sovereign, so, in the mind of the philosopher as we are abstractedly conceiving of him, the elements of the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, offices, events, opinions, individualities, are all viewed as one with correlative functions, and as gradually by successive combinations converging, one and all, to the true centre.

To have even a portion of this illuminative reason and true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, unsettlement, and superstition, which is the lot of the many. Men, whose minds are possessed with some one object, take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in the pursuit of it, make it the measure of things which are utterly foreign to it, and are startled and despond if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport. Those on the other hand who have no object or principle whatever to hold by, lose their way every step they take. They are thrown out, and do not know what to think or say, at every fresh juncture; they have no view of persons, or occurrences, or facts, which come suddenly upon them, and they hang upon the opinion of others for want of internal resources. But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another. It is the [Greek: tetragonos][13] of the Peripatetic, and has the *nil admirari*[14] of the Stoic,—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.[15]

There are men who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made intense by opposition. This is genius, this is heroism; it is the exhibition of a natural gift, which no culture can teach, at which no institution can aim: here, on the contrary, we are concerned, not with mere nature, but with training and teaching. That perfection of the intellect, which is the result of education, and its *beau ideal*, to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.

And now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a university is not learning or acquirement, but rather, is thought or reason exercised upon knowledge, or what may be called philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of university education.

I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend; we cannot gain real knowledge on a level; we must generalise, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group and shape our acquisitions by means of them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited; in every case, to command it, is to mount above it. Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steeps, and tangled woods, and every thing smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, when we have no map of its streets.

Hence you hear of practised travellers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitering its neighbourhood. In like manner, you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius or a Burman, unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. *Imperat aut servit*;^[16] if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon; otherwise,

Vis consili expers
Mole ruit suâ.^[17]

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound; there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has passed before us, and wondering why it passed! How many writers are there of Ecclesiastical history, such as Mosheim or Du Pin, who, breaking up their subject into details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts! The sermons, again, of the English divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertoires of miscellaneous and officious learning! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking; and in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that such knowledge is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the memory can tyrannise, as well as the imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another, in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognise the existence of a parallel phenomenon in the case of those who have over-stimulated the memory. In such persons reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self-control; they passively endure the succession of impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and originality of his conceptions, why must we extol the cultivation of that intellect which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop:—it is of great value to others, even when not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal University; they adorn it in the eyes of men; I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years,—not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement, which it is not; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam engine does with matter, the printing press is to do with the mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the school boy, or the school girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have been obliged, as far as they could with a good conscience, to humour a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporising concessions at which they could not but

inwardly smile.

It must not be supposed that, because I so speak, therefore I have some sort of fear of the education of the people: on the contrary, the more education they have, the better, so that it is really education. Nor am I an enemy to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works, which is now in vogue: on the contrary, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical literature and occasional lectures and scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail, is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humour, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep, or by haphazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be parties in the work. A university is, according to the usual designation, an alma mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.

I protest to you, gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called university, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a university which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since, if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of the intellect,—mind, I do not say which is morally the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief,—but if I must determine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that university which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. And, paradox as this may seem, still if results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded, and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate; but so far is certain, that the universities and scholastic establishments, to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions, with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity, and a heathen code of ethics,—I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers, of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is,—able to subdue the earth, able to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained? I suppose as follows: When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practice does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal

existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and it is secured by a large school or a college; and this effect may be fairly called in its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalise, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are inter-relations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is moulded together, and gains one tone and one character.

Let it be clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci*, [18] as it is sometimes called; which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow. Thus it is that, independent of direct instruction on the part of superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of Protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognised standard of judgment is found in them, which, as developed in the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a twofold source of strength to him, both from the distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the bond of union which it creates between him and others,—effects which are shared by the authorities of the place, for they themselves have been educated in it, and at all times are exposed to the influence of its ethical atmosphere. Here then is a real teaching, whatever be its standards and principles, true or false; and it at least tends towards cultivation of the intellect; it at least recognises that knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers with no mutual sympathies and no intercommunion, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no common principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide philosophy, three times a week, or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary.

Nay, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your college gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your babel. Few indeed there are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do anything at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found), who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what every one knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating; they may be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others;—but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premise and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained nothing really by their anxious labours, except perhaps the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us: for its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, it is for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the college and the university altogether, than to submit to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled prince to find "tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks!" How much more genuine an education is that of the poor boy in the poem [19]—a poem, whether in conception or execution, one of the most touching in our language—who, not in the wide world, but ranging day by

day around his widowed mother's home, "a dextrous gleaner" in a narrow field and with only such slender outfit

as the village school and books a few Supplied,

contrived from the beach, and the quay, and the fisher's boat, and the inn's fireside, and the tradesman's shop, and the shepherd's walk, and the smuggler's hut, and the mossy moor, and the screaming gulls, and the restless waves, to fashion for himself a philosophy and a poetry of his own!

But in a large subject, I am exceeding my necessary limits. Gentlemen, I must conclude abruptly; and postpone any summing up of my argument, should that be necessary, to another day.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 11: Discourse VI in "The Idea of a University," 1852.]

[Footnote 12: Prima-facie: based on one's first impression.]

[Footnote 13: Four-square.]

[Footnote 14: To be moved by nothing.]

[Footnote 15: Happy is he who has come to know the sequences of things, and is thus above all fear and the dread march of fate and the roar of greedy Acheron.]

[Footnote 16: It rules or it serves.]

[Footnote 17: Brute force without intelligence falls by its own weight.]

[Footnote 18: Genius loci: spirit of the place.]

[Footnote 19: Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*. This poem, let me say, I read on its first publication, above thirty years ago, with extreme delight, and have never lost my love of it; and on taking it up lately, found I was even more touched by it than heretofore. A work which can please in youth and age, seems to fulfil (in logical language) the *accidental definition* of a classic. (A further course of twenty years has passed, and I bear the same witness in favour of this poem.)]

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE[20]

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Practical people talk with a smile of Plato and of his absolute ideas; and it is impossible to deny that Plato's ideas do often seem unpractical and impracticable, and especially when one views them in connection with the life of a great workaday world like the United States. The necessary staple of the life of such a world Plato regards with disdain; handicraft and trade and the working professions he regards with disdain; but what becomes of the life of an industrial modern community if you take handicraft and trade and the working professions out of it? The base mechanic arts and handicrafts, says Plato, bring about a natural weakness in the principle of excellence in a man, so that he cannot govern the ignoble growths in him, but nurses them, and cannot understand fostering any other. Those who exercise such arts and trades, as they have their bodies, he says, marred by their vulgar businesses, so they have their souls, too, bowed and broken by them. And if one of these uncomely people has a mind to seek self-culture and philosophy, Plato compares him to a bald little tinker, who has scraped together money, and has got his release from service, and has had a bath, and bought a new coat, and is rigged out like a bridegroom about to marry the daughter of his master who has fallen into poor and helpless estate.

Nor do the working professions fare any better than trade at the hands of Plato. He draws for us an inimitable picture of the working lawyer, and of his life of bondage; he shows how this bondage from his youth up has stunted and warped him, and made him small and crooked of soul, encompassing him with difficulties which he is not man enough to rely on justice and truth as means to encounter, but has recourse, for help out of them, to falsehood and wrong. And so, says Plato, this poor creature is bent and broken, and grows up from boy to man without a particle of soundness in him, although exceedingly smart and clever in his own esteem.

One cannot refuse to admire the artist who draws these pictures. But we say to ourselves that his ideas show the influence of a primitive and obsolete order of things, when the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone in honour, and the humble work of the world was done by slaves. We have now changed all that; the modern majority consists in work, as Emerson declares; and in work, we may add, principally of such plain and dusty kind as the work of cultivators of the ground, handicraftsmen, men of trade and business, men of the working professions. Above all is this true in a great industrious community such as that of the United States.

Now education, many people go on to say, is still mainly governed by the ideas of men like Plato, who lived when the warrior caste and the priestly or philosophical class were alone in honour, and the really useful part of the community were slaves. It is an education fitted for persons of leisure in such a community. This education passed from Greece and Rome to the feudal communities of Europe, where also the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone held in honour, and where the really useful and working part of the community, though not nominally slaves as in the pagan world, were practically not much better off than slaves, and not more seriously regarded. And how absurd it is, people end by saying, to inflict this education upon an industrious modern community, where very few indeed are persons of leisure, and the mass to be considered has not leisure, but is bound, for its own great good, and for the great good of the world at large, to plain labour and to industrial pursuits, and the education in question tends necessarily to make men dissatisfied with these pursuits and unfitted for them!

That is what is said. So far I must defend Plato, as to plead that his view of education and studies is in the general, as it seems to me, sound enough, and fitted for all sorts and conditions of men, whatever their pursuits may be. "An intelligent man," says Plato, "will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will less value the others." I cannot consider *that* a bad description of the aim of education, and of the motives which should govern us in the choice of studies, whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary seat in the English House of Lords or for the pork trade in Chicago.

Still I admit that Plato's world was not ours, that his scorn of trade and handicraft is fantastic, that he had no conception of a great industrial community such as that of the United States, and that such a community must and will shape its education to suit its own needs. If the usual education handed down to it from the past does not suit it, it will certainly before long drop this and try another. The usual education in the past has been mainly literary. The question is whether the studies which were long supposed to be the best for all of us are practically the best now; whether others are not better. The tyranny of the past, many think, weighs on us injuriously in the predominance given to letters in education. The question is raised whether, to meet the needs of our modern life, the predominance ought not now to pass from letters to science; and naturally the question is nowhere raised with more energy than here in the United States. The design of abasing what is called "mere literary instruction and education," and of exalting what is called "sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge," is, in this intensely modern world of the United States, even more perhaps than in Europe, a very popular design, and makes great and rapid progress.

I am going to ask whether the present movement for ousting letters from their old predominance in education, and for transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences; whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it really will prevail. An objection may be raised which I will anticipate. My own studies have been almost wholly in letters, and my visits to the field of the natural sciences have been very slight and inadequate, although those sciences have always strongly moved my curiosity. A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural science as means of education. To this objection I reply, first of all, that his incompetence if he attempts the discussion but is really incompetent for it, will be abundantly visible; nobody will be taken in; he will have plenty of sharp observers and critics to save mankind from that danger. But the line I am going to follow is, as you will soon discover, so extremely simple, that perhaps it may be followed without failure even by one who for a more ambitious line of discussion would be quite incompetent.

Some of you may possibly remember a phrase of mine which has been the object of a good deal of comment; an observation to the effect that in our culture, the aim being *to know ourselves and the world*, we have, as the means to this end, *to know the best which has been thought and said in the world*. A man of science, who is also an excellent writer and the very prince of debaters, Professor Huxley, in a discourse at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's College at Birmingham, laying hold of this phrase, expanded it by quoting some more words of mine, which are these: "The civilised world is to be regarded as now being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have for their proper outfit a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special local and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most

progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme."

Now on my phrase, thus enlarged, Professor Huxley remarks that when I speak of the above-mentioned knowledge as enabling us to know ourselves and the world, I assert *literature* to contain the materials which suffice for thus making us know ourselves and the world. But it is not by any means clear, says he, that after having learned all which ancient and modern literatures have to tell us, we have laid a sufficiently broad and deep foundation for that criticism of life, that knowledge of ourselves and the world, which constitutes culture. On the contrary, Professor Huxley declares that he finds himself "wholly unable to admit that either nations or individuals will really advance, if their outfit draws nothing from the stores of physical science. An army without weapons of precision, and with no particular base of operations, might more hopefully enter upon a campaign on the Rhine, than a man, devoid of a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, upon a criticism of life."

This shows how needful it is for those who are to discuss any matter together, to have a common understanding as to the sense of the terms they employ,—how needful, and how difficult. What Professor Huxley says, implies just the reproach which is so often brought against the study of *belles lettres*, as they are called: that the study is an elegant one, but slight and ineffectual; a smattering of Greek and Latin and other ornamental things, of little use for any one whose object is to get at truth, and to be a practical man. So, too, M. Renan talks of the "superficial humanism" of a school course which treats us as if we were all going to be poets, writers, preachers, orators, and he opposes this humanism to positive science, or the critical search after truth. And there is always a tendency in those who are remonstrating against the predominance of letters in education, to understand by letters *belles lettres*, and by *belles lettres* a superficial humanism, the opposite of science or true knowledge.

But when we talk of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, for instance, which is the knowledge people have called the humanities, I for my part mean a knowledge which is something more than a superficial humanism, mainly decorative. "I call all teaching *scientific*," says Wolf, the critic of Homer, "which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources. For example: a knowledge of classical antiquity is scientific when the remains of classical antiquity are correctly studied in the original languages." There can be no doubt that Wolf is perfectly right; that all learning is scientific which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources, and that a genuine humanism is scientific.

When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, therefore, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages; I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value: That, at least, is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavouring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavouring so to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we may still fall short of it.

The same also as to knowing our own and other modern nations, with the like aim of getting to understand ourselves and the world. To know the best that has been thought and said by the modern nations, is to know, says Professor Huxley, "only what modern *literatures* have to tell us; it is the criticism of life contained in modern literature." And yet "the distinctive character of our times," he urges, "lies in the vast and constantly increasing part which is played by natural knowledge." And how, therefore, can a man, devoid of knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, enter hopefully upon a criticism of modern life?

Let us, I say, be agreed about the meaning of the terms we are using. I talk of knowing the best which has been thought and uttered in the world; Professor Huxley says this means knowing *literature*. Literature is a large word; it may mean everything written with letters or printed in a book. Euclid's *Elements* and Newton's *Principia* are thus literature. All knowledge that reaches us through books is literature. But by literature Professor Huxley means *belles lettres*. He means to make me say, that knowing the best which has been thought and said by the modern nations is knowing their *belles lettres* and no more. And this is no sufficient equipment, he argues, for a criticism of modern life. But as I do not mean, by knowing ancient Rome, knowing merely more or less of Latin *belles lettres*, and taking no account of Rome's military, and political, and legal, and administrative work in the world; and as, by knowing ancient Greece, I understand knowing her as the giver of Greek art, and the guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology,—I understand knowing her as all this, and not merely knowing certain Greek poems, and histories, and treatises, and speeches,—so as to the knowledge of modern nations also. By knowing modern nations, I mean not merely knowing their *belles lettres*, but knowing also what has been done by such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin. "Our ancestors learned," says Professor Huxley, "that the earth is the centre of the visible universe, and that man is the cynosure of things terrestrial; and more especially was it inculcated that the course of nature has no fixed order,

but that it could be, and constantly was, altered." But for us now, continues Professor Huxley, "the notions of the beginning and the end of the world entertained by our forefathers are no longer credible. It is very certain that the earth is not the chief body in the material universe, and that the world is not subordinated to man's use. It is even more certain that nature is the expression of a definite order, with which nothing interferes." "And yet," he cries, "the purely classical education advocated by the representatives of the humanists in our day gives no inkling of all this!"

In due place and time I will just touch upon that vexed question of classical education; but at present the question is as to what is meant by knowing the best which modern nations have thought and said. It is not knowing their *belles lettres* merely which is meant. To know Italian *belles lettres* is not to know Italy, and to know English *belles lettres* is not to know England. Into knowing Italy and England there comes a great deal more, Galileo and Newton amongst it. The reproach of being a superficial humanism, a tincture of *belles lettres*, may attach rightly enough to some other disciplines; but to the particular discipline recommended when I proposed knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world, it does not apply. In that best I certainly include what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature.

There is, therefore, really no question between Professor Huxley and me as to whether knowing the great results of the modern scientific study of nature is not required as a part of our culture, as well as knowing the products of literature and art. But to follow the processes by which those results are reached, ought, say the friends of physical science, to be made the staple of education for the bulk of mankind. And here there does arise a question between those whom Professor Huxley calls with playful sarcasm "the Levites of culture," and those whom the poor humanist is sometimes apt to regard as its Nebuchadnezzars.

The great results of the scientific investigation of nature we are agreed upon knowing, but how much of our study are we bound to give to the processes by which those results are reached? The results have their visible bearing on human life. But all the processes, too, all the items of fact by which those results are reached and established, are interesting. All knowledge is interesting to a wise man, and the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men. It is very interesting to know, that, from the albuminous white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood, and feathers; while, from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world. It is less interesting, perhaps, but still it is interesting, to know that when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water. Moreover, it is quite true that the habit of dealing with facts, which is given by the study of nature, is, as the friends of physical science praise it for being, an excellent discipline. The appeal, in the study of nature, is constantly to observation and experiment; not only is it said that the thing is so, but we can be made to see that it is so. Not only does a man tell us that when a taper burns the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, as a man may tell us, if he likes, that Charon is punting his ferry boat on the river Styx, or that Victor Hugo is a sublime poet, or Mr. Gladstone the most admirable of statesmen; but we are made to see that the conversion into carbonic acid and water does actually happen. This reality of natural knowledge it is, which makes the friends of physical science contrast it, as a knowledge of things, with the humanist's knowledge, which is, they say, a knowledge of words. And hence Professor Huxley is moved to lay it down that, "for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education." And a certain President of the Section for Mechanical Science in the British Association is, in Scripture phrase, "very bold," and declares that if a man, in his mental training, "has substituted literature and history for natural science, he has chosen the less useful alternative." But whether we go these lengths or not, we must all admit that in natural science the habit gained of dealing with facts is a most valuable discipline, and that every one should have some experience of it.

More than this, however, is demanded by the reformers. It is proposed to make the training in natural science the main part of education, for the great majority of mankind at any rate. And here, I confess, I part company with the friends of physical science, with whom up to this point I have been agreeing. In differing from them, however, I wish to proceed with the utmost caution and diffidence. The smallness of my own acquaintance with the disciplines of natural science is ever before my mind, and I am fearful of doing these disciplines an injustice. The ability and pugnacity of the partisans of natural science make them formidable persons to contradict. The tone of tentative inquiry, which befits a being of dim faculties and bounded knowledge, is the tone I would wish to take and not to depart from. At present it seems to me, that those who are for giving to natural knowledge, as they call it, the chief place in the education of the majority of mankind, leave one important thing out of their account: the constitution of human nature. But I put this forward on the strength of some facts not at all recondite, very far from it; facts capable of being stated in the simplest possible fashion, and to which, if I so state them, the man of science will, I am sure, be willing to allow their due weight.

Deny the facts altogether, I think, he hardly can. He can hardly deny, that when we set ourselves to

enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners—he can hardly deny that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up by these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness, with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of physical science would admit it.

But perhaps they may not have sufficiently observed another thing: namely, that the several powers just mentioned are not isolated, but there is, in the generality of mankind, a perpetual tendency to relate them one to another in divers ways. With one such way of relating them I am particularly concerned now. Following our instinct for intellect and knowledge, we acquire pieces of knowledge; and presently, in the generality of men, there arises the desire to relate these pieces of knowledge to our sense for conduct, to our sense for beauty,—and there is weariness and dissatisfaction if the desire is balked. Now in this desire lies, I think, the strength of that hold which letters have upon us.

All knowledge is, as I said just now, interesting; and even items of knowledge which from the nature of the case cannot well be related, but must stand isolated in our thoughts, have their interest. Even lists of exceptions have their interest. If we are studying Greek accents, it is interesting to know that *pais* and *pas*, and some other monosyllables of the same form of declension, do not take the circumflex upon the last syllable of the genitive plural, but vary, in this respect, from the common rule. If we are studying physiology, it is interesting to know that the pulmonary artery carries dark blood and the pulmonary vein carries bright blood, departing in this respect from the common rule, for the division of labour between the veins and the arteries. But every one knows how we seek naturally to combine the pieces of our knowledge together, to bring them under general rules, to relate them to principles; and how unsatisfactory and tiresome it would be to go on forever learning lists of exceptions, or accumulating items of fact which must stand isolated.

Well, that same need of relating our knowledge, which operates here within the sphere of our knowledge itself, we shall find operating, also, outside that sphere. We experience, as we go on learning and knowing,—the vast majority of us experience,—the need of relating what we have learned and known to the sense which we have in us for conduct, to the sense which we have in us for beauty.

A certain Greek prophetess of Mantinea in Arcadia, Diotima by name, once explained to the philosopher Socrates that love, and impulse, and bent of all kinds, is, in fact, nothing else but the desire in men that good should forever be present to them. This desire for good, Diotima assured Socrates, is our fundamental desire, of which fundamental desire every impulse in us is only some one particular form. And therefore this fundamental desire it is, I suppose,—this desire in men that good should be forever present to them,—which acts in us when we feel the impulse for relating our knowledge to our sense for conduct and to our sense for beauty. At any rate, with men in general the instinct exists. Such is human nature. And the instinct, it will be admitted, is innocent, and human nature is preserved by our following the lead of its innocent instincts. Therefore, in seeking to gratify this instinct in question, we are following the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

But, no doubt, some kinds of knowledge cannot be made to directly serve the instinct in question, cannot be directly related to the sense for beauty, to the sense for conduct. These are instrument-knowledges; they lead on to other knowledges, which can. A man who passes his life in instrument-knowledges is a specialist. They may be invaluable as instruments to something beyond, for those who have the gift thus to employ them; and they may be disciplines in themselves wherein it is useful for every one to have some schooling. But it is inconceivable that the generality of men should pass all their mental life with Greek accents or with formal logic. My friend Professor Sylvester, who is one of the first mathematicians in the world, holds transcendental doctrines as to the virtue of mathematics, but those doctrines are not for common men. In the very Senate House and heart of our English Cambridge I once ventured, though not without an apology for my profaneness, to hazard the opinion that for the majority of mankind a little of mathematics, even, goes a long way. Of course this is quite consistent with their being of immense importance as an instrument to something else; but it is the few who have the aptitude for thus using them, not the bulk of mankind.

The natural sciences do not, however, stand on the same footing with these instrument-knowledges. Experience shows us that the generality of men will find more interest in learning that, when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, or in learning the explanation of the phenomenon of dew, or in learning how the circulation of the blood is carried on, than they find in learning that the genitive plural of *pais* and *pas* does not take the circumflex on the termination. And one piece of natural knowledge is added to another, and others are added to that, and at last we come to propositions so interesting as Mr. Darwin's famous proposition that "our ancestor was a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits." Or we come to

propositions of such reach and magnitude as those which Professor Huxley delivers, when he says that the notions of our forefathers about the beginning and the end of the world were all wrong and that nature is the expression of a definite order with which nothing interferes.

Interesting, indeed, these results of science are, important they are, and we should all of us be acquainted with them. But what I now wish you to mark is, that we are still, when they are propounded to us and we receive them, we are still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge. And for the generality of men there will be found, I say, to arise, when they have duly taken in the proposition that their ancestor was "a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," there will be found to arise an invincible desire to relate this proposition to the sense in us for conduct, and to the sense in us for beauty. But this the men of science will not do for us, and will hardly even profess to do. They will give us other pieces of knowledge, other facts, about other animals and their ancestors, or about plants, or about stones, or about stars; and they may finally bring us to those great "general conceptions of the universe, which are forced upon us all," says Professor Huxley, "by the progress of physical science." But still it will be *knowledge* only which they give us; knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us, and therefore, to the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying.

Not to the born naturalist, I admit. But what do we mean by a born naturalist? We mean a man in whom the zeal for observing nature is so uncommonly strong and eminent, that it marks him off from the bulk of mankind. Such a man will pass his life happily in collecting natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and will ask for nothing, or hardly anything, more. I have heard it said that the sagacious and admirable naturalist whom we lost not very long ago, Mr. Darwin, once owned to a friend that for his part he did not experience the necessity for two things which most men find so necessary to them,—religion and poetry; science and the domestic affections, he thought, were enough. To a born naturalist, I can well understand that this should seem so. So absorbing is his occupation with nature, so strong his love for his occupation, that he goes on acquiring natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and has little time or inclination for thinking about getting it related to the desire in man for conduct, the desire in man for beauty. He relates it to them for himself as he goes along, so far as he feels the need; and he draws from the domestic affections all the additional solace necessary. But then Darwins are extremely rare. Another great and admirable master of natural knowledge, Faraday, was a Sandemanian. That is to say, he related his knowledge to his instinct for conduct and to his instinct for beauty, by the aid of that respectable Scottish sectary, Robert Sandeman. And so strong, in general, is the demand of religion and poetry to have their share in a man, to associate themselves with his knowing, and to relieve and rejoice it, that probably, for one man amongst us with the disposition to do as Darwin did in this respect, there are at least fifty with the disposition to do as Faraday.

Education lays hold upon us, in fact, by satisfying this demand. Professor Huxley holds up to scorn mediaeval education, with its neglect of the knowledge of nature, its poverty even of literary studies, its formal logic devoted to "showing how and why that which the Church said was true must be true." But the great mediaeval universities were not brought into being, we may be sure, by the zeal for giving a jejune and contemptible education. Kings have been their nursing fathers, and queens have been their nursing mothers, but not for this. The mediaeval universities came into being, because the supposed knowledge, delivered by Scripture and the Church, so deeply engaged men's hearts, by so simply, easily, and powerfully relating itself to their desire for conduct, their desire for beauty. All other knowledge was dominated by this supposed knowledge and was subordinated to it, because of the surpassing strength of the hold which it gained upon the affections of men, by allying itself profoundly with their sense for conduct, their sense for beauty.

But now, says Professor Huxley, conceptions of the universe fatal to the notions held by our forefathers have been forced upon us by physical science. Grant to him that they are thus fatal, that the new conceptions must and will soon become current everywhere, and that every one will finally perceive them to be fatal to the beliefs of our forefathers. The need of humane letters, as they are truly called, because they serve the paramount desire in men that good should be forever present to them,—the need of humane letters to establish a relation between the new conceptions, and our instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct, is only the more visible. The middle age could do without humane letters, as it could do without the study of nature, because its supposed knowledge was made to engage its emotions so powerfully. Grant that the supposed knowledge disappears, its power of being made to engage the emotions will of course disappear along with it,—but the emotions themselves, and their claim to be engaged and satisfied, will remain. Now if we find by experience that humane letters have an undeniable power of engaging the emotions, the importance of humane letters in a man's training becomes not less, but greater, in proportion to the success of modern science in extirpating what it calls "mediaeval thinking."

Have humane letters, then, have poetry and eloquence, the power here attributed to them of

engaging the emotions, and do they exercise it? And if they have it and exercise it, *how* do they exercise it, so as to exert an influence upon man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? Finally, even if they both can and do exert an influence upon the senses in question, how are they to relate to them the results,—the modern results,—of natural science? All these questions may be asked. First, have poetry and eloquence the power of calling out the emotions? The appeal is to experience. Experience shows that for the vast majority of men, for mankind in general, they have the power. Next, do they exercise it? They do. But then, *how* do they exercise it so as to affect man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? And this is perhaps a case for applying the Preacher's words: "Though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it." [21] Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say, "Patience is a virtue," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with Homer,

[Greek: tlaeton gar Moirai thumon thesan anthropoisin—[22]]

"for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men"? Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with philosopher Spinoza, *Felicitas in eo consistit quod homo suum esse conservare potest*—"Man's happiness consists in his being able to preserve his own essence," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the Gospel, "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, forfeit himself?" How does this difference of effect arise? I cannot tell, and I am not much concerned to know; the important thing is that it does arise, and that we can profit by it. But how, finally, are poetry and eloquence to exercise the power of relating the modern results of natural science to man's instinct for conduct, his instinct for beauty? And here again I answer that I do not know *how* they will exercise it, but that they can and will exercise it I am sure. I do not mean that modern philosophical poets and modern philosophical moralists are to come and relate for us, in express terms, the results of modern scientific research to our instinct for conduct, our instinct for beauty. But I mean that we shall find, as a matter of experience, if we know the best that has been thought and uttered in the world, we shall find that the art and poetry and eloquence of men who lived, perhaps, long ago, who had the most limited natural knowledge, who had the most erroneous conceptions about many important matters, we shall find that this art, and poetry, and eloquence, have in fact not only the power of refreshing and delighting us, they have also the power,—such is the strength and worth, in essentials, of their authors' criticism of life,—they have a fortifying, and elevating, and quickening, and suggestive power, capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty. Homer's conceptions of the physical universe were, I imagine, grotesque; but really, under the shock of hearing from modern science that "the world is not subordinated to man's use, and that man is not the cynosure of things terrestrial," I could, for my own part, desire no better comfort than Homer's line which I quoted just now,

[Greek: tlaeton gar Moirai thumon thesan anthropoisin—]

"for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men!"

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are,—the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points;—so much the more will the value of humane letters, and of art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured.

Let us therefore, all of us, avoid indeed as much as possible any invidious comparison between the merits of humane letters, as means of education, and the merits of the natural sciences. But when some President of a Section for Mechanical Science insists on making the comparison, and tells us that "he who in his training has substituted literature and history for natural science has chosen the less useful alternative," let us make answer to him that the student of humane letters only, will, at least, know also the great general conceptions brought in by modern physical science; for science, as Professor Huxley says, forces them upon us all. But the student of the natural sciences only, will, by our very hypothesis, know nothing of humane letters; not to mention that in setting himself to be perpetually accumulating natural knowledge, he sets himself to do what only specialists have in general the gift for doing genially. And so he will probably be unsatisfied, or at any rate incomplete, and even more incomplete than the student of humane letters only.

I once mentioned in a school report, how a young man in one of our English training colleges having to paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning,

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?

turned this line into, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" And I remarked what a curious state of

things it would be, if every pupil of our national schools knew, let us say, that the moon is two thousand one hundred and sixty miles in diameter, and thought at the same time that a good paraphrase for

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?

was, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" If one is driven to choose, I think I would rather have a young person ignorant about the moon's diameter, but aware that "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" is bad, than a young person whose education had been such as to manage things the other way.

Or to go higher than the pupils of our national schools. I have in my mind's eye a member of our British Parliament who comes to travel here in America, who afterwards relates his travels, and who shows a really masterly knowledge of the geology of this great country and of its mining capabilities, but who ends by gravely suggesting that the United States should borrow a prince from our Royal Family, and should make him their king, and should create a House of Lords of great landed proprietors after the pattern of ours; and then America, he thinks, would have her future happily and perfectly secured. Surely, in this case, the President of the Section for Mechanical Science would himself hardly say that our member of Parliament, by concentrating himself upon geology and mineralogy, and so on, and not attending to literature and history, had "chosen the more useful alternative."

If then there is to be separation and option between humane letters on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other, the great majority of mankind, all who have not exceptional and overpowering aptitudes for the study of nature, would do well, I cannot but think, to choose to be educated in humane letters rather than in the natural sciences. Letters will call out their being at more points, will make them live more.

I said that before I ended I would just touch on the question of classical education, and I will keep my word. Even if literature is to retain a large place in our education, yet Latin and Greek, say the friends of progress, will certainly have to go. Greek is the grand offender in the eyes of these gentlemen. The attackers of the established course of study think that against Greek, at any rate, they have irresistible arguments. Literature may perhaps be needed in education, they say; but why on earth should it be Greek literature? Why not French or German? Nay, "has not an Englishman models in his own literature of every kind of excellence?" As before, it is not on any weak pleadings of my own that I rely for convincing the gainsayers; it is on the constitution of human nature itself, and on the instinct of self-preservation in humanity. The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture. We may trust to it for even making the study of Greek more prevalent than it is now. Greek will come, I hope, some day to be studied more rationally than at present; but it will be increasingly studied as men increasingly feel the need in them for beauty, and how powerfully Greek art and Greek literature can serve this need. Women will again study Greek, as Lady Jane Grey did; I believe that in that chain of forts, with which the fair host of the Amazons are now engirdling our English universities,—I find that here in America, in colleges like Smith College in Massachusetts, and Vassar College in the State of New York, and in the happy families of the mixed universities out West,—they are studying it already.

Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca,—"The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me," said Leonardo da Vinci; and he was an Italian. I will not presume to speak for the Americans, but I am sure that, in the Englishman, the want of this admirable symmetry of the Greeks is a thousand times more great and crying than in any Italian. The results of the want show themselves most glaringly, perhaps, in our architecture, but they show themselves, also, in all our art. *Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived*; that is just the beautiful *symmetria prisca* of the Greeks, and it is just where we English fail, where all our art fails. Striking ideas we have, and well-executed details we have; but that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines them, we seldom or never have. The glorious beauty of the Acropolis at Athens did not come from single fine things stuck about on that hill, a statue here, a gateway there;—no, it arose from all things being perfectly combined for a supreme total effect. What must not an Englishman feel about our deficiencies in this respect, as the sense for beauty, whereof this symmetry is an essential element, awakens and strengthens within him! what will not one day be his respect and desire for Greece and its *symmetria prisca*, when the scales drop from his eyes as he walks the London streets, and he sees such a lesson in meanness as the Strand, for instance, in its true deformity! But here we are coming to our friend Mr. Ruskin's province, and I will not intrude upon it, for he is its very sufficient guardian.

And so we at last find, it seems, we find flowing in favor of the humanities the natural and necessary stream of things, which seemed against them when we started. The "hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," this good fellow carried hidden in his nature,

apparently, something destined to develop into a necessity for humane letters. Nay, more: we seem finally to be even led to the further conclusion that our hairy ancestor carried in his nature, also, a necessity for Greek.

And therefore, to say the truth, I cannot really think that humane letters are in much actual danger of being thrust out from their leading place in education, in spite of the array of authorities against them at this moment. So long as human nature is what it is, their attractions will remain irresistible. As with Greek, so with letters generally: they will some day come, we may hope, to be studied more rationally, but they will not lose their place. What will happen will rather be that there will be crowded into education other matters besides, far too many; there will be, perhaps, a period of unsettlement and confusion and false tendency; but letters will not in the end lose their leading place. If they lose it for a time, they will get it back again. We shall be brought back to them by our wants and aspirations. And a poor humanist may possess his soul in patience, neither strive nor cry, admit the energy and brilliancy of the partisans of physical science, and their present favor with the public, to be far greater than his own, and still have a happy faith that the nature of things works silently on behalf of the studies which he loves, and that, while we shall all have to acquaint ourselves with the great results reached by modern science, and to give ourselves as much training in its disciplines as we can conveniently carry, yet the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 20: From "Discourses in America," 1885.]

[Footnote 21: From Ecclesiastes, viii. 17.]

[Footnote 22: From the "Iliad," xxiv. 49.]

HOW TO READ[23]

FREDERIC HARRISON

It is the fashion for those who have any connection with letters to expatiate on the infinite blessings of literature, and the miraculous achievements of the press: to extol, as a gift above price, the taste for study and the love of reading. Far be it from me to gainsay the inestimable value of good books, or to discourage any man from reading the best; but I often think that we forget that other side to this glorious view of literature—the misuse of books, the debilitating waste of brain in aimless, promiscuous, vapid reading, or even, it may be, in the poisonous inhalation of mere literary garbage and bad men's worst thoughts.

For what can a book be more than the man who wrote it? The brightest genius seldom puts the best of his own soul into his printed page; and some famous men have certainly put the worst of theirs. Yet are all men desirable companions, much less teachers, able to give us advice, even of those who get reputation and command a hearing? To put out of the question that writing which is positively bad, are we not, amidst the multiplicity of books and of writers, in continual danger of being drawn off by what is stimulating rather than solid, by curiosity after something accidentally notorious, by what has no intelligible thing to recommend it, except that it is new? Now, to stuff our minds with what is simply trivial, simply curious, or that which at best has but a low nutritive power, this is to close our minds to what is solid and enlarging, and spiritually sustaining. Whether our neglect of the great books comes from our not reading at all, or from an incorrigible habit of reading the little books, it ends in just the same thing. And that thing is ignorance of all the greater literature of the world. To neglect all the abiding parts of knowledge for the sake of the evanescent parts is really to know nothing worth knowing. It is in the end the same, whether we do not use our minds for serious study at all, or whether we exhaust them by an impotent voracity for desultory "information"—a thing as fruitful as whistling. Of the two evils I prefer the former. At least, in that case, the mind is healthy and open. It is not gorged and enfeebled by excess in that which cannot nourish, much less enlarge and beautify our nature.

But there is much more than this. Even to those who resolutely avoid the idleness of reading what is trivial, a difficulty is presented—a difficulty every day increasing by virtue even of our abundance of books. What are the subjects, what are the class of books we are to read, in what order, with what

connection, to what ultimate use or object? Even those who are resolved to read the better books are embarrassed by a field of choice practically boundless. The longest life, the greatest industry, joined to the most powerful memory, would not suffice to make us profit from a hundredth part of the world of books before us. If the great Newton said that he seemed to have been all his life gathering a few shells on the shore, whilst a boundless ocean of truth still lay beyond and unknown to him, how much more to each of us must the sea of literature be a pathless immensity beyond our powers of vision or of reach—an immensity in which industry itself is useless without judgment, method, discipline; where it is of infinite importance what we can learn and remember, and of utterly no importance what we may have once looked at or heard of. Alas! the most of our reading leaves as little mark even in our own education as the foam that gathers round the keel of a passing boat! For myself, I am inclined to think the most useful help to reading is to know what we should not read, what we can keep out from that small cleared spot in the overgrown jungle of "information," the corner which we can call our ordered patch of fruit-bearing knowledge. The incessant accumulation of fresh books must hinder any real knowledge of the old; for the multiplicity of volumes becomes a bar upon our use of any. In literature especially does it hold—that we cannot see the wood for the trees.

How shall we choose our books? Which are the best, the eternal, indispensable books? To all to whom reading is something more than a refined idleness these questions recur, bringing with them the sense of bewilderment; and a still, small voice within us is for ever crying out for some guide across the Slough of Despond of an illimitable and ever-swelling literature. How many a man stands beside it, as uncertain of his pathway as the Pilgrim, when he who dreamed the immortal dream heard him "break out with a lamentable cry; saying, what shall I do?"

And this, which comes home to all of us at times, presses hardest upon those who have lost the opportunity of systematic education, who have to educate themselves, or who seek to guide the education of their young people. Systematic reading is but little in favour even amongst studious men; in a true sense it is hardly possible for women. A comprehensive course of home study, and a guide to books, fit for the highest education of women, is yet a blank page remaining to be filled. Generations of men of culture have laboured to organise a system of reading and materials appropriate for the methodical education of men in academic lines. Teaching equal in mental calibre to any that is open to men in universities, yet modified for the needs of those who must study at home, remains in the dim pages of that melancholy volume entitled *Libri valde desiderati*.^[24]

I do not aspire to fill one of those blank pages; but I long to speak a word or two, as the Pilgrim did to Neighbour Pliable, upon the glories that await those who will pass through the narrow wicket-gate. On this, if one can find anything useful to say, it may be chiefly from the memory of the waste labour and pitiful stumbling in the dark which fill up so much of the travail that one is fain to call one's own education. We who have wandered in the wastes so long, and lost so much of our lives in our wandering, may at least offer warnings to younger wayfarers, as men who in thorny paths have borne the heat and burden of the day might give a clue to their journey to those who have yet a morning and a noon. As I look back and think of those cataracts of printed stuff which honest compositors set up, meaning, let us trust, no harm, and which at least found them in daily bread,—printed stuff which I and the rest of us, to our infinitely small profit, have consumed with our eyes, not even making an honest living of it, but much impairing our substance,—I could almost reckon the printing press as amongst the scourges of mankind. I am grown a wiser and a sadder man, importunate, like that Ancient Mariner, to tell each blithe wedding guest the tale of his shipwreck on the infinite sea of printers' ink, as one escaped by mercy and grace from the region where there is water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink.

A man of power, who has got more from books than most of his contemporaries, once said: "Form a habit of reading, do not mind what you read; the reading of better books will come when you have a habit of reading the inferior." We need not accept this *obiter dictum*^[25] of Lord Sherbrooke. A habit of reading idly debilitates and corrupts the mind for all wholesome reading; the habit of reading wisely is one of the most difficult habits to acquire, needing strong resolution and infinite pains; and reading for mere reading's sake, instead of for the sake of the good we gain from reading, is one of the worst and commonest and most unwholesome habits we have. And so our inimitable humorist has made delightful fun of the solid books,—which no gentleman's library should be without,—the Humes, Gibbons, Adam Smiths, which, he says, are not books at all, and prefers some "kindhearted play-book," or at times the *Town and County Magazine*. Poor Lamb has not a little to answer for, in the revived relish for garbage unearthed from old theatrical dungheaps. Be it jest or earnest, I have little patience with the Elia-tic philosophy of the frivolous. Why do we still suffer the traditional hypocrisy about the dignity of literature—literature, I mean, in the gross, which includes about equal parts of what is useful and what is useless? Why are books as books, writers as writers, readers as readers, meritorious, apart from any good in them, or anything that we can get from them? Why do we pride ourselves on our powers of absorbing print, as our grandfathers did on their gifts in imbibing port, when we know that there is a

mode of absorbing print which makes it impossible that we can ever learn anything good out of books?

Our stately Milton said in a passage which is one of the watchwords of the English race, "as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book." But has he not also said that he would "have a vigilant eye how Bookes demeane themselves, as well as men; and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors"?... Yes! they do kill the good book who deliver up their few and precious hours of reading to the trivial book; they make it dead for them; they do what lies in them to destroy "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, imbalm'd and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life;" they "spill that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Bookes." For in the wilderness of books most men, certainly all busy men, *must* strictly choose. If they saturate their minds with the idler books, the "good book," which Milton calls "an immortality rather than a life," is dead to them: it is a book sealed up and buried.

It is most right that in the great republic of letters there should be freedom of intercourse and a spirit of equality. Every reader who holds a book in his hand is free of the inmost minds of men past and present; their lives both within and without the pale of their uttered thoughts are unveiled to him; he needs no introduction to the greatest; he stands on no ceremony with them; he may, if he be so minded, scribble "doggrel" on his Shelley, or he may kick Lord Byron, if he please, into a corner. He hears Burke perorate, and Johnson dogmatise, and Scott tell his border tales, and Wordsworth muse on the hillside, without the leave of any man, or the payment of any toll. In the republic of letters there are no privileged orders or places reserved. Every man who has written a book, even the diligent Mr. Whitaker, is in one sense an author; "a book's a book although there's nothing in't;" and every man who can decipher a penny journal is in one sense a reader. And your "general reader," like the grave-digger in Hamlet, is hail-fellow with all the mighty dead; he pats the skull of the jester; batters the cheek of lord, lady, or courtier; and uses "imperious Caesar" to teach boys the Latin declensions.

But this noble equality of all writers—of all writers and of all readers—has a perilous side to it. It is apt to make us indiscriminate in the books we read, and somewhat contemptuous of the mighty men of the past. Men who are most observant as to the friends they make, or the conversation they share, are carelessness itself as to the books to whom they entrust themselves, and the printed language with which they saturate their minds. Yet can any friendship or society be more important to us than that of the books which form so large a part of our minds and even of our characters? Do we in real life take any pleasant fellow to our homes and chat with some agreeable rascal by our firesides, we who will take up any pleasant fellow's printed memoirs, we who delight in the agreeable rascal when he is cut up into pages and bound in calf?

If any person given to reading were honestly to keep a register of all the printed stuff that he or she consumes in a year—all the idle tales of which the very names and the story are forgotten in a week, the bookmaker's prattle about nothing at so much a sheet, the fugitive trifling about silly things and empty people, the memoirs of the unmemorable, and lives of those who never really lived at all—of what a mountain of rubbish would it be the catalogue: Exercises for the eye and the memory, as mechanical as if we set ourselves to learn the names, ages, and family histories of every one who lives in our own street, the flirtations of their maiden aunts, and the circumstances surrounding the birth of their grandmother's first baby.

It is impossible to give any method to our reading till we get nerve enough to reject. The most exclusive and careful amongst us will (in literature) take boon companions out of the street, as easily as an idler in a tavern. "I came across such and such a book that I never heard mentioned," says one, "and found it curious, though entirely worthless." "I strayed on a volume by I know not whom, on a subject for which I never cared." And so on. There are curious and worthless creatures enough in any pot-house all day long; and there is incessant talk in omnibus, train, or street by we know not whom, about we care not what. Yet if a printer and a bookseller can be induced to make this gabble as immortal as print and publication can make it, then it straightway is literature, and in due time it becomes "curious."

I have no intention to moralise or to indulge in a homily against the reading of what is deliberately evil. There is not so much need for this now, and I am not discoursing on the whole duty of man. I take that part of our reading which by itself is no doubt harmless, entertaining, and even gently instructive. But of this enormous mass of literature how much deserves to be chosen out, to be preferred to all the great books of the world, to be set apart for those precious hours which are all that the most of us can give to solid reading? The vast proportion of books are books that we shall never be able to read. A serious percentage of books are not worth reading at all. The really vital books for us we also know to be a very trifling portion of the whole. And yet we act as if every book were as good as any other, as if it were merely a question of order which we take up first, as if any book were good enough for us, and as if all were alike honourable, precious, and satisfying. Alas! books cannot be more than the men who write them; and as a fair proportion of the human race now write books, with motives and objects as various as human activity, books, as books, are entitled *à priori*, until their value is proved, to the same

attention and respect as houses, steam-engines, pictures, fiddles, bonnets, and other products of human industry. In the shelves of those libraries which are our pride, libraries public or private, circulating or very stationary, are to be found those great books of the world *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*,[26] those books which are truly "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit." But the very familiarity which their mighty fame has bred in us makes us indifferent; we grow weary of what every one is supposed to have read; and we take down something which looks a little eccentric, some worthless book, on the mere ground that we never heard of it before.

Thus the difficulties of literature are in their way as great as those of the world, the obstacles to finding the right friends are as great, the peril is as great of being lost in a Babel of voices and an ever-changing mass of beings. Books are not wiser than men, the true books are not easier to find than the true men, the bad books or the vulgar books are not less obtrusive and not less ubiquitous than the bad or vulgar men are everywhere; the art of right reading is as long and difficult to learn as the art of right living. Those who are on good terms with the first author they meet, run as much risk as men who surrender their time to the first passer in the street; for to be open to every book is for the most part to gain as little as possible from any. A man aimlessly wandering about in a crowded city is of all men the most lonely; so he who takes up only the books that he "comes across" is pretty certain to meet but few that are worth knowing.

Now this danger is one to which we are specially exposed in this age. Our high-pressure life of emergencies, our whirling industrial organisation or disorganisation have brought us in this (as in most things) their peculiar difficulties and drawbacks. In almost everything vast opportunities and gigantic means of multiplying our products bring with them new perils and troubles which are often at first neglected. Our huge cities, where wealth is piled up and the requirements and appliances of life extended beyond the dreams of our forefathers, seem to breed in themselves new forms of squalor, disease, blights, or risks to life such as we are yet unable to master. So the enormous multiplicity of modern books is not altogether favourable to the knowing of the best. I listen with mixed satisfaction to the paeans that they chant over the works which issue from the press each day: how the books poured forth from Paternoster Row might in a few years be built into a pyramid that would fill the dome of St. Paul's. How in this mountain of literature am I to find the really useful book? How, when I have found it, and found its value, am I to get others to read it? How am I to keep my head clear in the torrent and din of works, all of which distract my attention, most of which promise me something, whilst so few fulfil that promise? The Nile is the source of the Egyptian's bread, and without it he perishes of hunger. But the Nile may be rather too liberal in his flood, and then the Egyptian runs imminent risk of drowning.

And thus there never was a time, at least during the last two hundred years, when the difficulties in the way of making an efficient use of books were greater than they are to-day, when the obstacles were more real between readers and the right books to read, when it was practically so troublesome to find out that which it is of vital importance to know; and that not by the dearth, but by the plethora of printed matter. For it comes to nearly the same thing whether we are actually debarred by physical impossibility, from getting the right book into our hand, or whether we are choked off from the right book by the obtrusive crowd of the wrong books; so that it needs a strong character and a resolute system of reading to keep the head cool in the storm of literature around us. We read nowadays in the market-place—I would rather say in some large steam factory of letter-press, where damp sheets of new print whirl round us perpetually—if it be not rather some noisy book-fair where literary showmen tempt us with performing dolls, and the gongs of rival booths are stunning our ears from morn till night. Contrast with this pandemonium of Leipsic and Paternoster Row the sublime picture of our Milton in his early retirement at Horton, when, musing over his coming flight to the epic heaven, practising his pinions, as he tells Diodati, he consumed five years of solitude in reading the ancient writers—"Et totum rapiunt me, mea vita, libri."[27]

Who now reads the ancient writers? Who systematically reads the great writers, be they ancient or modern, whom the consent of ages has marked out as classics: typical, immortal, peculiar teachers of our race? Alas! the *Paradise Lost* is lost again to us beneath an inundation of graceful academic verse, sugary stanzas of ladylike prettiness, and ceaseless explanations in more or less readable prose of what John Milton meant or did not mean, or what he saw or did not see, who married his great-aunt, and why Adam or Satan is like that, or unlike the other. We read a perfect library about the *Paradise Lost*, but the *Paradise Lost* itself we do not read.

I am not presumptuous enough to assert that the larger part of modern literature is not worth reading in itself, that the prose is not readable, entertaining, one may say highly instructive. Nor do I pretend that the verses which we read so zealously in place of Milton's are not good verses. On the contrary, I think them sweetly conceived, as musical and as graceful as the verse of any age in our history. A great deal of our modern literature is such that it is exceedingly difficult to resist it, and it is undeniable that it gives us real information. It seems perhaps unreasonable to many to assert that a

decent readable book which gives us actual instruction can be otherwise than a useful companion and a solid gain. Possibly many people are ready to cry out upon me as an obscurantist for venturing to doubt a genial confidence in all literature simply as such. But the question, which weighs upon me with such really crushing urgency is this: What are the books that in our little remnant of reading time it is most vital for us to know? For the true use of books is of such sacred value to us that to be simply entertained is to cease to be taught, elevated, inspired by books; merely to gather information of a chance kind is to close the mind to knowledge of the urgent kind.

Every book that we take up without a purpose is an opportunity lost of taking up a book with a purpose—every bit of stray information which we cram into our heads without any sense of its importance, is for the most part a bit of the most useful information driven out of our heads and choked off from our minds. It is so certain that information, i.e., the knowledge, the stored thoughts and observations of mankind, is now grown to proportions so utterly incalculable and prodigious, that even the learned whose lives are given to study can but pick up some crumbs that fall from the table of truth. They delve and tend but a plot in that vast and teeming kingdom, whilst those whom active life leaves with but a few cramped hours of study can hardly come to know the very vastness of the field before them, or how infinitesimally small is the corner they can traverse at the best. We know all is not of equal value. We know that books differ in value as much as diamonds differ from the sand on the seashore, as much as our living friend differs from a dead rat. We know that much in the myriad-peopled world of books—very much in all kinds—is trivial, enervating, inane, even noxious. And thus, where we have infinite opportunities of wasting our efforts to no end, of fatiguing our minds without enriching them, of clogging the spirit without satisfying it, there, I cannot but think, the very infinity of opportunities is robbing us of the actual power of using them. And thus I come often, in my less hopeful moods, to watch the remorseless cataract of daily literature which thunders over the remnants of the past, as if it were a fresh impediment to the men of our day in the way of systematic knowledge and consistent powers of thought, as if it were destined one day to overwhelm the great inheritance of mankind in prose and verse.

I remember, when I was a very young man at college, that a youth, in no spirit of paradox, but out of plenary conviction, undertook to maintain before a body of serious students, the astounding proposition that the invention of printing had been one of the greatest misfortunes that had ever befallen mankind. He argued that exclusive reliance on printed matter had destroyed the higher method of oral teaching, the dissemination of thought by the spoken word to the attentive ear. He insisted that the formation of a vast literary class looking to the making of books as a means of making money, rather than as a social duty, had multiplied books for the sake of the writers rather than for the sake of the readers; that the reliance on books as a cheap and common resource had done much to weaken the powers of memory; that it destroyed the craving for a general culture of taste, and the need of artistic expression in all the surroundings of life. And he argued, lastly, that the sudden multiplication of all kinds of printed matter had been fatal to the orderly arrangement of thought, and had hindered a system of knowledge and a scheme of education.

I am far from sharing this immature view. Of course I hold the invention of printing to have been one of the most momentous facts in the whole history of man. Without it universal social progress, true democratic enlightenment, and the education of the people would have been impossible, or very slow, even if the cultured few, as is likely, could have advanced the knowledge of mankind without it. We place Gutenberg amongst the small list of the unique and special benefactors of mankind, in the sacred choir of those whose work transformed the conditions of life, whose work, once done, could never be repeated. And no doubt the things which our ardent friend regarded as so fatal a disturbance of society were all inevitable and necessary, part of the great revolution of mind through which men grew out of the mediaeval incompleteness to a richer conception of life and of the world.

Yet there is a sense in which this boyish anathema against printing may become true to us by our own fault. We may create for ourselves these very evils. For the art of printing has not been a gift wholly unmixed with evils; it must be used wisely if it is to be a boon to man at all; it entails on us heavy responsibilities, resolution to use it with judgment and self-control, and the will to resist its temptations and its perils. Indeed, we may easily so act that we may make it a clog on the progress of the human mind, a real curse and not a boon. The power of flying at will through space would probably extinguish civilisation and society, for it would release us from the wholesome bondage of place and rest. The power of hearing every word that had ever been uttered on this planet would annihilate thought, as the power of knowing all recorded facts by the process of turning a handle would annihilate true science. Our human faculties and our mental forces are not enlarged simply by multiplying our materials of knowledge and our facilities for communication. Telephones, microphones, pantoscopes, steam-presses, and ubiquity-engines in general may, after all, leave the poor human brain panting and throbbing under the strain of its appliances, no bigger and no stronger than the brains of the men who heard Moses speak, and saw Aristotle and Archimedes pondering over a few worn rolls of crabbed manuscript. Until

some new Gutenberg or Watt can invent a machine for magnifying the human mind, every fresh apparatus for multiplying its work is a fresh strain on the mind, a new realm for it to order and to rule.

And so, I say it most confidently, the first intellectual task of our age is rightly to order and make serviceable the vast realm of printed material which four centuries have swept across our path. To organise our knowledge, to systematise our reading, to save, out of the relentless cataract of ink, the immortal thoughts of the greatest—this is a necessity, unless the productive ingenuity of man is to lead us at last to a measureless and pathless chaos. To know anything that turns up is, in the infinity of knowledge, to know nothing. To read the first book we come across, in the wilderness of books, is to learn nothing. To turn over the pages of ten thousand volumes is to be practically indifferent to all that is good.

But this warns me that I am entering on a subject which is far too big and solemn. It is plain that to organise our knowledge, even to systematise our reading, to make a working selection of books for general study, really implies a complete scheme of education. A scheme of education ultimately implies a system of philosophy, a view of man's duty and powers as a moral and social being—a religion. Before a problem so great as this, on which readers have such different ideas and wants, and differ so profoundly on the very premises from which we start, before such a problem as a general theory of education, I prefer to pause. I will keep silence even from good words. I have chosen my own part, and adopted my own teacher. But to ask men to adopt the education of Auguste Comte, is almost to ask them to adopt Positivism itself.

Nor will I enlarge on the matter for thought, for foreboding, almost for despair, that is presented to us by the fact of our familiar literary ways and our recognised literary profession. That things infinitely trifling in themselves: men, events, societies, phenomena, in no way otherwise more valuable than the myriad other things which flit around us like the sparrows on the housetop, should be glorified, magnified, and perpetuated, set under a literary microscope and focussed in the blaze of a literary magic-lantern—not for what they are in themselves, but solely to amuse and excite the world by showing how it can be done—all this is to me so amazing, so heart-breaking, that I forbear now to treat it, as I cannot say all that I would.

The Choice of Books is really the choice of our education, of a moral and intellectual ideal, of the whole duty of man. But though I shrink from any so high a theme, a few words are needed to indicate my general point of view in the matter.

In the first place, when we speak about books, let us avoid the extravagance of expecting too much from books, the pedant's habit of extolling books as synonymous with education. Books are no more education than laws are virtue; and just as profligacy is easy within the strict limits of law, a boundless knowledge of books may be found with a narrow education. A man may be, as the poet saith, "deep vers'd in books, and shallow in himself." We need to know in order that we may feel rightly and act wisely. The thirst after truth itself may be pushed to a degree where indulgence enfeebles our sympathies and unnerves us in action. Of all men perhaps the book-lover needs most to be reminded that man's business here is to know for the sake of living, not to live for the sake of knowing.

A healthy mode of reading would follow the lines of a sound education. And the first canon of a sound education is to make it the instrument to perfect the whole nature and character. Its aims are comprehensive, not special; they regard life as a whole, not mental curiosity; they have to give us, not so much materials, as capacities. So that, however moderate and limited the opportunity for education, in its way it should be always more or less symmetrical and balanced, appealing equally in turn to the three grand intellectual elements—imagination, memory, reflection: and so having something to give us in poetry, in history, in science, and in philosophy.

And thus our reading will be sadly one-sided, however voluminous it be, if it entirely close to us any of the great types and ideals which the creative instinct of man has produced, if it shut out from us either the ancient world, or other European poetry, as important almost as our own. When our reading, however deep, runs wholly into "pockets," and exhausts itself in the literature of one age, one country, one type, then we may be sure that it is tending to narrow or deform our minds. And the more it leads us into curious byways and nurtures us into indifference for the beaten highways of the world, the sooner we shall end, if we be not specialists and students by profession, in ceasing to treat our books as the companions and solace of our lifetime, and in using them as the instruments of a refined sort of self-indulgence.

A wise education, and so judicious reading, should leave no great type of thought, no dominant phase of human nature, wholly a blank. Whether our reading be great or small, so far as it goes, it should be general. If our lives admit of but a short space for reading, all the more reason that, so far as may be, it should remind us of the vast expanse of human thought, and the wonderful variety of human nature. To read, and yet so to read that we see nothing but a corner of literature, the loose fringe, or flats and

wastes of letters, and by reading only deepen our natural belief that this island is the hub of the universe, and the nineteenth century the only age worth notice, all this is really to call in the aid of books to thicken and harden our untaught prejudices. Be it imagination, memory, or reflection that we address—that is, in poetry, history, science, or philosophy, our first duty is to aim at knowing something at least of the best, at getting some definite idea of the mighty realm whose outer rim we are permitted to approach.

But how are we to know the best; how are we to gain this definite idea of the vast world of letters? There are some who appear to suppose that the "best" are known only to experts in an esoteric way, who may reveal to inquirers what schoolboys and betting-men describe as "tips." There are no "tips" in literature; the "best" authors are never dark horses; we need no "crammers" and "coaches" to thrust us into the presence of the great writers of all time. "Crammers" will only lead us wrong. It is a thing far easier and more common than many imagine, to discover the best. It needs no research, no learning, and is only misguided by recondite information. The world has long ago closed the great assize of letters and judged the first places everywhere. In such a matter the judgment of the world, guided and informed by a long succession of accomplished critics, is almost unerring. When some Zoilus finds blemishes in Homer, and prefers, it may be, the work of some Apollonius of his own discovering, we only laugh. There may be doubts about the third and fourth rank; but the first and the second are hardly open to discussion. The gates which lead to the Elysian fields may slowly wheel back on their adamantine hinges to admit now and then some new and chosen modern. But the company of the masters of those who know, and in especial degree of the great poets, is a roll long closed and complete, and they who are of it hold ever peaceful converse together.

Hence we may find it a useful maxim that, if our reading be utterly closed to the great poems of the world, there is something amiss with our reading. If you find Milton, Dante, Calderon, Goethe, so much "Hebrew-Greek" to you; if your Homer and Virgil, your Molière and Scott, rest year after year undisturbed on their shelves beside your school trigonometry and your old college text-books; if you have never opened the *Cid*, the *Nibelungen*, *Crusoe*, and *Don Quixote* since you were a boy, and are wont to leave the Bible and the Imitation for some wet Sunday afternoon—know, friend, that your reading can do you little real good. Your mental digestion is ruined or sadly out of order. No doubt, to thousands of intelligent educated men who call themselves readers, the reading through a Canto of *The Purgatorio*, or a Book of the *Paradise Lost*, is a task as irksome as it would be to decipher an ill-written manuscript in a language that is almost forgotten. But, although we are not to be always reading epics, and are chiefly in the mood for slighter things, to be absolutely unable to read Milton or Dante with enjoyment, is to be in a very bad way. Aristophanes, Theocritus, Boccaccio, Cervantes, Molière are often as light as the driven foam; but they are not light enough for the general reader. Their humour is too bright and lovely for the groundlings. They are, alas! "classics," somewhat apart from our everyday ways; they are not banal enough for us; and so for us they slumber "unknown in a long night," just *because* they are immortal poets, and are not scribblers of to-day.

When will men understand that the reading of great books is a faculty to be acquired, not a natural gift, at least not to those who are spoiled by our current education and habits of life? *Ceci tuera cela*, [28] the last great poet might have said of the first circulating library. An insatiable appetite for new novels makes it as hard to read a masterpiece as it seems to a Parisian boulevardier to live in a quiet country. Until a man can truly enjoy a draft of clear water bubbling from a mountain side, his taste is in an unwholesome state. And so he who finds the Heliconian spring insipid should look to the state of his nerves. Putting aside the iced air of the difficult mountain tops of epic, tragedy, or psalm, there are some simple pieces which may serve as an unerring test of a healthy or a vicious taste for imaginative work. If the *Cid*, the *Vita Nuova*, the *Canterbury Tales*, Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, and *Lycidas* pall on a man; if he care not for Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and the *Red Cross Knight*; if he thinks *Crusoe* and the *Vicar* books for the young; if he thrill not with *The Ode to the West Wind*, and *The Ode to a Grecian Urn*; if he have no stomach for *Christabel* or the lines written on *The Wye above Tintern Abbey*, he should fall on his knees and pray for a cleaner and quieter spirit.

The intellectual system of most of us in these days needs "to purge and to live cleanly." Only by a course of treatment shall we bring our minds to feel at peace with the grand pure works of the world. Something we ought all to know of the masterpieces of antiquity, and of the other nations of Europe. To understand a great national poet, such as Dante, Calderon, Corneille, or Goethe, is to know other types of human civilisation in ways which a library of histories does not sufficiently teach. The great masterpieces of the world are thus, quite apart from the charm and solace they give us, the master instruments of a solid education.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 23: From "The Choice of Books," 1891. Printed here by permission of The Macmillan Company.]

[Footnote 24: Books intensely desired.]

[Footnote 25: Thing said in passing.]

[Footnote 26: Floating scattered on the vast abyss.]

[Footnote 27: "And here my books—my life—absorb me whole," Cowper's translation of Milton's Latin Epistle to Diodati.]

[Footnote 28: This will destroy that.]

ON GOING A JOURNEY[29]

WILLIAM HAZLITT

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

"The fields his study, nature was his book."

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedge-rows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room, and fewer encumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

———"a friend in my retreat, Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet."

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

"May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,"

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a postchaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sunburnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like "sunken wrack and sumless treasuries," burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, arguments, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. "Leave, oh, leave me to my repose!" I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me "very stuff of the conscience." Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald. Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship," say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's that "he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time." So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy

musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. "Let me have a companion of my way," says Sterne, "were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." It is beautifully said: but in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature, without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for the synthetical method on a journey, in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a beanfield crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill humour. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company, seems extravagance or affectation; and on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered) is a task to which few are competent. We must "give it an understanding, but no tongue." My old friend C—, however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale, a summer's day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. "He talked far above singing." If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden. They had "that fine madness in them which our first poets had;" and if they could have been caught by some rare instrument, would have breathed such strains as the following.

———"Here be woods as green
 As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet
 As when smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
 Face of the curled stream, with flow'rs as many
 As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;
 Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
 Arbours o'ergrown with woodbine, caves and dells;
 Choose where thou wilt, while I sit by and sing,
 Or gather rushes to make many a ring
 For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,
 How the pale Phoebe, hunting in a grove,
 First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
 She took eternal fire that never dies;
 How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,
 His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
 Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,
 Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
 To kiss her sweetest."———

FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS.

Had I words and images at command like these, I would attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds: but at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot:—I must have time to collect myself.—

In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects: it should be reserved for Table-talk. L—— is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at the approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to "take

one's ease at one's inn!" These eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea,

"The cups that cheer, but not inebriate,"

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet! Sancho[30] in such a situation once fixed upon cow-heel; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen—*Procul, O procul este profani!*[31] These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place; he is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathise with him, and he breaks no squares. I associate nothing with my travelling companion but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having some one with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world: but your "unhoused free condition is put into circumscription and confine." The *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges—"lord of one's self, uncumber'd with a name." Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweet-breads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour!* One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions, and become indefinitely respectable and negatively rightworshipful. We baffle prejudice and disappoint conjecture; and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed commonplaces that we appear in the world: an inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society! I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns—sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem, as once at Witham-common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas—at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neot's (I think it was) where I first met with Gribelin's engravings of the Cartoons, into which I entered at once, and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of Westall's drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the figure of a girl who had ferried me over the Severn, standing up in the boat between me and the twilight—at other times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read Paul and Virginia, which I picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madame D'Arblay's Camilla. It was on the tenth of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the New Eloise, at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bon bouche*[32], to crown the evening with. It was my birthday, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. The road to Llangollen turns off between Chirk and Wrexham; and on passing a certain point, you come all at once upon the valley, which opens like an amphitheatre, broad, barren hills rising in majestic state on either side, with "green upland swells that echo to the bleat of flocks" below, and the river Dee babbling over its stony bed in the midst of them. The valley at this time "glittered green with sunny showers," and a budding ash-tree dipped its tender branches in the chiding stream. How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines which I have just quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems! But besides the prospect which opened beneath my feet, another also opened to my inward sight, a heavenly vision, on which were written, in letters large as Hope could make them, these four words, LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE; which have since faded into the light of common day, or mock my idle gaze.

"The beautiful is vanished, and returns not."

Still I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot; but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself, so much have they been broken and defaced! I could stand on some

tall rock, and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet whom I have above named. Where is he now? Not only I myself have changed; the world, which was then new to me, has become old and incorrigible. Yet will I turn to thee in thought, O sylvan Dee, in joy, in youth and gladness as thou then wert; and thou shalt always be to me the river of Paradise, where I will drink of the waters of life freely!

There is hardly any thing that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than travelling does. With change of place we change our ideas; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can by an effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time. The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it: the horizon that shuts it from our sight, also blots it from our memory like a dream. In travelling through a wild barren country, I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. "Beyond Hyde Park," says Sir Fopling Flutter, "all is a desert." All that part of the map that we do not see before us is a blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nutshell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, lands to seas, making an image voluminous and vast;—the mind can form no larger idea of space than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true signification of that immense mass of territory and population, known by the name of China, to us? An inch of paste-board on a wooden globe, of no more account than a China orange! Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our own being only piecemeal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived and with which we have intimate associations, every one must have found that the feeling grows more vivid the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression: we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names, that we had not thought of for years; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten!

To return to the question I have quitted above. I have no objection to go to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to; in taking a solitary ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. "The mind is its own place;" nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honours indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat*—showed them that seat of the Muses at a distance,

"With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn'd"—

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges—was at home in the Bodleian; and at Blenheim quite superseded the powdered Ciceroni that attended us, and that pointed, in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures.—As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen: there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any single contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species by one's self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support.—Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over "the

vine-covered hills and gay regions of France," erect and satisfied; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones: I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open to me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory, freedom, all are fled: nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people!—There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else: but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must "jump" all our present comforts and connections. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr. Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful and in one sense instructive; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings,

"Out of my country and myself I go."

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them: but we can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home!

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 29: From "Table-Talk," 1821-2.]

[Footnote 30: Sancho Panza, a character in Cervantes' romance, "Don Quixote."]

[Footnote 31: Aloof, O keep aloof, ye uninitiated!]

[Footnote 32: A titbit.]

THE REGRETS OF A MOUNTAINEER[33]

LESLIE STEPHEN

I have often felt a sympathy, which almost rises to the pathetic, when looking on at a cricket-match or boat-race. Something of the emotion with which Gray regarded the "distant spires and antique towers" rises within me. It is not, indeed, that I feel very deeply for the fine ingenuous lads who, as somebody says, are about to be degraded into tricky, selfish Members of Parliament. I have seen too much of them. They are very fine animals; but they are rather too exclusively animal. The soul is apt to be in too embryonic a state within these cases of well-strung bone and muscle. It is impossible for a mere athletic machine, however finely constructed, to appeal very deeply to one's finer sentiments. I can scarcely look forward with even an affectation of sorrow for the time when, if more sophisticated, it will at least have made a nearer approach to the dignity of an intellectual being. It is not the boys who make me feel a touch of sadness; their approaching elevation to the dignity of manhood will raise them on the whole in the scale of humanity; it is the older spectators whose aspect has in it something affecting. The shaky old gentleman, who played in the days when it was decidedly less dangerous to stand up to bowling than to a cannon-ball, and who now hobbles about on rheumatic joints, by the help of a stick; the corpulent elder, who rowed when boats had gangways down their middle, and did not require as delicate a balance as an acrobat's at the top of a living pyramid—these are the persons whom I cannot see without an occasional sigh. They are really conscious that they have lost something which they can never regain; or, if they momentarily forget it, it is even more forcibly impressed upon the spectators. To see a respectable old gentleman of sixty, weighing some fifteen stone, suddenly forget a third of his weight and two-thirds of his years, and attempt to caper like a boy, is indeed a startling phenomenon. To the thoughtless, it may be simply comic; but, without being a Jaques, one may contrive also to suck some melancholy out of it.

Now, as I have never caught a cricket-ball, and, on the contrary, have caught numerous crabs in my

life, the sympathy which I feel for these declining athletes is not due to any great personal interest in the matter. But I have long anticipated that a similar day would come for me, when I should no longer be able to pursue my favourite sport of mountaineering. Some day I should find that the ascent of a zigzag was as bad as a performance on the treadmill; that I could not look over a precipice without a swimming in the head; and that I could no more jump a crevasse than the Thames at Westminster. None of these things have come to pass. So far as I know, my physical powers are still equal to the ascent of Mont Blanc or the Jungfrau. But I am no less effectually debarred—it matters not how—from mountaineering. I wander at the foot of the gigantic Alps, and look up longingly to the summits, which are apparently so near, and yet know that they are divided from me by an impassable gulf. In some missionary work I have read that certain South Sea Islanders believed in a future paradise where the good should go on eating for ever with insatiable appetites at an inexhaustible banquet. They were to continue their eternal dinner in a house with open wickerwork sides; and it was to be the punishment of the damned to crawl outside in perpetual hunger and look in through the chinks as little boys look in through the windows of a London cookshop. With similar feelings I lately watched through a telescope the small black dots, which were really men, creeping up the high flanks of Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa. The eternal snows represented for me the Elysian fields, into which entrance was sternly forbidden, and I lingered about the spot with a mixture of pleasure and pain, in the envious contemplation of my more fortunate companions.

I know there are those who will receive these assertions with civil incredulity. Some persons assume that every pleasure with which they cannot sympathise is necessarily affectation, and hold, as a particular case of that doctrine, that Alpine travellers risk their lives merely from fashion or desire of notoriety. Others are kind enough to admit that there is something genuine in the passion, but put it on a level with the passion for climbing greased poles. They think it derogatory to the due dignity of Mont Blanc that he should be used as a greased pole, and assure us that the true pleasures of the Alps are those which are within reach of the old and the invalids, who can only creep about villages and along high-roads. I cannot well argue with such detractors from what I consider a noble sport. As for the first class, it is reduced almost to a question of veracity. I say that I enjoy being on the top of a mountain, or, indeed, halfway up a mountain; that climbing is a pleasure to me, and would be so if no one else climbed and no one ever heard of my climbing. They reply that they don't believe it. No more argument is possible than if I were to say that I liked eating olives, and some one asserted that I really eat them only out of affectation. My reply would be simply to go on eating olives; and I hope the reply of mountaineers will be to go on climbing Alps. The other assault is more intelligible. Our critics admit that we have a pleasure; but assert that it is a puerile pleasure—that it leads to an irreverent view of mountain beauty, and to oversight of that which should really most impress a refined and noble mind. To this I shall only make such an indirect reply as may result from a frank confession of my own regrets at giving up the climbing business—perhaps for ever. I am sinking, so to speak, from the butterfly to the caterpillar stage, and, if the creeping thing is really the highest of the two, it will appear that there is something in the substance of my lamentations unworthy of an intellectual being. Let me try. By way of preface, however, I admit that mountaineering, in my sense of the word, is a sport. It is a sport which, like fishing or shooting, brings one into contact with the sublimest aspects of nature; and, without setting their enjoyment before one as an ultimate end or aim, helps one indirectly to absorb and be penetrated by their influence. Still it is strictly a sport—as strictly as cricket, or rowing, or knurr and spell—and I have no wish to place it on a different footing. The game is won when a mountain-top is reached in spite of difficulties; it is lost when one is forced to retreat; and, whether won or lost, it calls into play a great variety of physical and intellectual energies, and gives the pleasure which always accompanies an energetic use of our faculties. Still it suffers in some degree from this undeniable characteristic, and especially from the tinge which has consequently been communicated to narratives of mountain adventures. There are two ways which have been appropriated to the description of all sporting exploits. One is to indulge in fine writing about them, to burst out in sentences which swell to paragraphs, and in paragraphs which spread over pages; to plunge into ecstasies about infinite abysses and overpowering splendours, to compare mountains to archangels lying down in eternal winding-sheets of snow, and to convert them into allegories about man's highest destinies and aspirations. This is good when it is well done. Mr. Ruskin has covered the Matterhorn, for example, with a whole web of poetical associations, in language which, to a severe taste, is perhaps a trifle too fine, though he has done it with an eloquence which his bitterest antagonists must freely acknowledge. Yet most humble writers will feel that if they try to imitate Mr. Ruskin's eloquence they will pay the penalty of becoming ridiculous. It is not every one who can with impunity compare Alps to archangels. Tall talk is luckily an object of suspicion to Englishmen, and consequently most writers, and especially those who frankly adopt the sporting view of the mountains, adopt the opposite scheme: they affect something like cynicism; they mix descriptions of scenery with allusions to fleas or to bitter beer; they shrink with the prevailing dread of Englishmen from the danger of overstepping the limits of the sublime into its proverbial opposite; and they humbly try to amuse us because they can't strike us with awe. This, too, if I may venture to say so, is good in its way and place; and it seems rather hard to these luckless writers when people assume that, because they make jokes on a mountain, they are necessarily insensible to its

awful sublimities. A sense of humour is not incompatible with imaginative sensibility; and even Wordsworth might have been an equally powerful prophet of nature if he could sometimes have descended from his stilts. In short, a man may worship mountains, and yet have a quiet joke with them when he is wandering all day in their tremendous solitudes.

Joking, however, is, it must be admitted, a dangerous habit. I freely avow that, in my humble contributions to Alpine literature, I have myself made some very poor and very unseasonable witticisms. I confess my error, and only wish that I had no worse errors to confess. Still I think that the poor little jokes in which we mountaineers sometimes indulge have been made liable to rather harsh constructions. We are accused, in downright earnest, not merely of being flippant, but of an arrogant contempt for all persons whose legs are not as strong as our own. We are supposed seriously to wrap ourselves in our own conceit, and to brag intolerably of our exploits. Now I will not say that no mountaineer ever swaggers: the quality called by the vulgar "bounce" is unluckily confined to no profession. Certainly I have seen a man intolerably vain because he could raise a hundred-weight with his little finger; and I dare say that the "champion bill-poster," whose name is advertised on the walls of this metropolis, thinks excellence in bill-posting the highest virtue of a citizen. So some men may be silly enough to brag in all seriousness about mountain exploits. However, most lads of twenty learn that it is silly to give themselves airs about mere muscular eminence; and especially is this true of Alpine exploits—first, because they require less physical prowess than almost any other sport, and secondly, because a good amateur still feels himself the hopeless inferior of half the Alpine peasants whom he sees. You cannot be very conceited about a game in which the first clodhopper you meet can give you ten minutes' start in an hour. Still a man writing in a humorous vein naturally adopts a certain bumptious tone, just as our friend "Punch" ostentatiously declares himself to be omniscient and infallible. Nobody takes him at his word, or supposes that the editor of "Punch" is really the most conceited man in all England. But we poor mountaineers are occasionally fixed with our own careless talk by some outsider who is not in the secret. We know ourselves to be a small sect, and to be often laughed at; we reply by: assuming that we are the salt of the earth, and that our amusement is the first and noblest of all amusements. Our only retort to the good-humoured ridicule with which we are occasionally treated is to adopt an affected strut, and to carry it off as if we were the finest fellows in the world. We make a boast of our shame, and say, if you laugh we must crow. But we don't really mean anything: if we did, the only word which the English language would afford wherewith to describe us would be the very unpleasant antithesis to wise men, and certainly I hold that we have the average amount of common sense. When, therefore, I see us taken to task for swaggering, I think it a trifle hard that this merely playful affectation of superiority should be made a serious fault. For the future I would promise to be careful, if it were worth avoiding the misunderstanding of men who won't take a joke. Meanwhile, I can only state that when Alpine travellers indulge in a little swagger about their own performances and other people's incapacity, they don't mean more than an infinitesimal fraction of what they say, and that they know perfectly well that when history comes to pronounce a final judgment upon the men of the time, it won't put mountain-climbing on a level with patriotism, or even with excellence in the fine arts.

The reproach of real *bonâ fide* arrogance is, so far as I know, very little true of Alpine travellers. With the exception of the necessary fringe hanging on to every set of human beings—consisting of persons whose heads are weaker than their legs—the mountaineer, so far as my experience has gone, is generally modest enough. Perhaps he sometimes flaunts his ice-axes and ropes a little too much before the public eye at Chamonix, as a yachtsman occasionally flourishes his nautical costume at Cowes; but the fault may be pardoned by those not inexorable to human weaknesses. This opinion, I know, cuts at the root of the most popular theory as to our ruling passion. If we do not climb the Alps to gain notoriety, for what purpose can we possibly climb them? That same unlucky trick of joking is taken to indicate that we don't care much about the scenery; for who, with a really susceptible soul, could be facetious under the cliffs of Jungfrau or the ghastly precipices of the Matterhorn? Hence people who kindly excuse us from the blame of notoriety-hunting generally accept the "greased-pole" theory. We are, it seems, overgrown schoolboys, who, like other schoolboys, enjoy being in dirt, and danger, and mischief, and have as much sensibility for natural beauty as the mountain mules. And against this, as a more serious complaint, I wish to make my feeble protest, in order that my lamentations on quitting the profession may not seem unworthy of a thinking being.

Let me try to recall some of the impressions which mountaineering has left with me, and see whether they throw any light upon the subject. As I gaze at the huge cliffs where I may no longer wander, I find innumerable recollections arise—some of them dim, as though belonging to a past existence; and some so brilliant that I can scarcely realise my exclusion from the scenes to which they belong. I am standing at the foot of what, to my mind, is the most glorious of all Alpine wonders—the huge Oberland precipice, on the slopes of the Faulhorn or the Wengern Alp. Innumerable tourists have done all that tourists can do to cocknify (if that is the right derivative from cockney) the scenery; but, like the Pyramids or a Gothic cathedral, it throws off the taint of vulgarity by its imperishable majesty. Even on

turf strewn with sandwich-papers and empty bottles, even in the presence of hideous peasant-women singing "Stand-er auf" for five centimes, we cannot but feel the influence of Alpine beauty. When the sunlight is dying off the snows, or the full moon lighting them up with ethereal tints, even sandwich-papers and singing women may be forgotten. How does the memory of scrambles along snow arêtes, of plunges—luckily not too deep—into crevasses, of toil through long snowfields, towards a refuge that seemed to recede as we advanced—where, to quote Tennyson with due alteration, to the traveller toiling in immeasurable snow—

Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill
The châlet sparkles like a grain of salt;—

how do such memories as these harmonise with the sense of superlative sublimity?

One element of mountain beauty is, we shall all admit, their vast size and steepness. That a mountain is very big, and is faced by perpendicular walls of rock, is the first thing which strikes everybody, and is the whole essence and outcome of a vast quantity of poetical description. Hence the first condition towards a due appreciation of mountain scenery is that these qualities should be impressed upon the imagination. The mere dry statement that a mountain is so many feet in vertical height above the sea, and contains so many tons of granite, is nothing. Mont Blanc, is about three miles high. What of that? Three miles is an hour's walk for a lady—an eighteen-penny cab-fare—the distance from Hyde Park Corner to the Bank—an express train could do it in three minutes, or a racehorse in five. It is a measure which we have learnt to despise, looking at it from a horizontal point of view; and accordingly most persons, on seeing the Alps for the first time, guess them to be higher, as measured in feet, than they really are. What, indeed, is the use of giving measures in feet to any but the scientific mind? Who cares whether the moon is 250,000 or 2,500,000 miles distant? Mathematicians try to impress upon us that the distance of the fixed stars is only expressible by a row of figures which stretches across a page; suppose it stretched across two or across a dozen pages, should we be any the wiser, or have, in the least degree, a clearer notion of the superlative distances? We civilly say, "Dear me!" when the astronomer looks to us for the appropriate stare, but we only say it with the mouth; internally our remark is, "You might as well have multiplied by a few more millions whilst you were about it." Even astronomers, though not a specially imaginative race, feel the impotence of figures, and try to give us some measure which the mind can grasp a little more conveniently. They tell us about the cannon-ball which might have been flying ever since the time of Adam, and not yet have reached the heavenly body, or about the stars which may not yet have become visible, though the light has been flying to us at a rate inconceivable by the mind for an inconceivable number of years; and they succeed in producing a bewildering and giddy sensation, although the numbers are too vast to admit of any accurate apprehension.

We feel a similar need in the case of mountains. Besides the bare statement of figures, it is necessary to have some means for grasping the meaning of the figures. The bare tens and thousands must be clothed with some concrete images. The statement that a mountain is 15,000 feet high is, by itself, little more impressive, than that it is 3,000; we want something more before we can mentally compare Mont Blanc and Snowdon. Indeed, the same people who guess of a mountain's height at a number of feet much exceeding the reality, show, when they are cross-examined, that they fail to appreciate in any tolerable degree the real meaning of the figures. An old lady one day, about 11 A.M., proposed to walk from the Aeggischhorn to the Jungfrau-Joch, and to return for luncheon—the distance being a good twelve hours' journey for trained mountaineers. Every detail of which the huge mass is composed is certain to be underestimated. A gentleman the other day pointed out to me a grand ice-cliff at the end of a hanging glacier, which must have been at least 100 feet high, and asked me whether that snow was three feet deep. Nothing is more common than for tourists to mistake some huge pinnacle of rock, as big as a church tower, for a traveller. The rocks of the Grands Mulets, in one corner of which the châlet is hidden, are often identified with a party ascending Mont Blanc; and I have seen boulders as big as a house pointed out confidently as chamois. People who make these blunders must evidently see the mountains as mere toys, however many feet they may give them at a random guess. Huge overhanging cliffs are to them steps within the reach of human legs; yawning crevasses are ditches to be jumped; and foaming waterfalls are like streams from penny squirts. Everyone knows the avalanches on the Jungfrau, and the curiously disproportionate appearance of the little puffs of white smoke, which are said to be the cause of the thunder; but the disproportion ceases to an eye that has learnt really to measure distance, and to know that these smoke-puffs, represent a cataract of crashing blocks of ice.

Now the first merit of mountaineering is that it enables one to have what theologians would call an experimental faith in the size of mountains—to substitute a real living belief for a dead intellectual assent. It enables one, first, to assign something like its true magnitude to a rock or snow-slope; and, secondly, to measure that magnitude in terms of muscular exertion instead of bare mathematical units. Suppose that we are standing upon the Wengern Alp; between the Mönch and the Eiger there stretches a round white bank, with a curved outline, which we may roughly compare to the back of one of Sir E.

Landseer's lions. The ordinary tourists—the old man, the woman, or the cripple, who are supposed to appreciate the real beauties of Alpine scenery—may look at it comfortably from their hotel. They may see its graceful curve, the long straight lines that are ruled in delicate shading down its sides, and the contrast of the blinding white snow with the dark blue sky above; but they will probably guess it to be a mere bank—a snowdrift, perhaps, which has been piled by the last storm. If you pointed out to them one of the great rocky teeth that projected from its summit, and said that it was a guide, they would probably remark that he looked very small, and would fancy that he could jump over the bank with an effort. Now a mountaineer knows, to begin with, that it is a massive rocky rib, covered with snow, lying at a sharp angle, and varying perhaps from 500 to 1,000 feet in height. So far he might be accompanied by men of less soaring ambition; by an engineer who had been mapping the country, or an artist who had been carefully observing the mountains from their bases. They might learn in time to interpret correctly the real meaning of shapes at which the uninitiated guess at random. But the mountaineer can go a step further, and it is the next step which gives the real significance to those delicate curves and lines. He can translate the 500 or 1,000 feet of snow-slope into a more tangible unit of measurement. To him, perhaps, they recall the memory of a toilsome ascent, the sun beating on his head for five or six hours, the snow returning the glare with still more parching effect; a stalwart guide toiling all the weary time, cutting steps in hard blue ice, the fragments hissing and spinning down the long straight grooves in the frozen snow till they lost themselves in the yawning chasm below; and step after step taken along the slippery staircase, till at length he triumphantly sprang upon the summit of the tremendous wall that no human foot had scaled before. The little black knobs that rise above the edge represent for him huge impassable rocks, sinking on one side in scarped slippery surfaces towards the snow-field, and on the other stooping in one tremendous cliff to a distorted glacier thousands of feet below. The faint blue line across the upper *névé*, scarcely distinguishable to the eye, represents to one observer nothing but a trifling undulation; a second, perhaps, knows that it means a crevasse; the mountaineer remembers that it is the top of a huge chasm, thirty feet across, and perhaps ten times as deep, with perpendicular sides of glimmering blue ice, and fringed by thick rows of enormous pendent icicles. The marks that are scored in delicate lines, such as might be ruled by a diamond on glass, have been cut by innumerable streams trickling in hot weather from the everlasting snow, or ploughed by succeeding avalanches that have slipped from the huge upper snowfields above. In short, there is no insignificant line or mark that has not its memory or its indication of the strange phenomena of the upper world. True, the same picture is painted upon the retina of all classes of observers; and so Porson and a schoolboy and a peasant might receive the same physical impression from a set of black and white marks on the page of a Greek play; but to one they would be an incoherent conglomeration of unmeaning and capricious lines, to another they would represent certain sounds more or less corresponding to some English words; whilst to the scholar they would reveal some of the noblest poetry in the world, and all the associations of successful intellectual labour. I do not say that the difference is quite so great in the case of the mountains; still I am certain that no one can decipher the natural writing on the face of a snow-slope or a precipice who has not wandered amongst their recesses, and learnt by slow experience what is indicated by marks which an ignorant observer would scarcely notice. True, even one who sees a mountain for the first time may know that, as a matter of fact, a scar on the face of a cliff means, for example, a recent fall of a rock; but between the bare knowledge and the acquaintance with all which that knowledge implies—the thunder of the fall, the crash of the smaller fragments, the bounding energy of the descending mass—there is almost as much difference as between hearing that a battle has been fought and being present at it yourself. We have all read descriptions of Waterloo till we are sick of the subject; but I imagine that our emotions on seeing the shattered well of Hougomont are very inferior to those of one of the Guard who should revisit the place where he held out for a long day against the assaults of the French army.

Now to an old mountaineer the Oberland cliffs are full of memories; and, more than this, he has learnt the language spoken by every crag and every wave of glacier. It is strange if they do not affect him rather more powerfully than the casual visitor who has never been initiated by practical experience into their difficulties. To him, the huge buttress which runs down from the *Mönch* is something more than an irregular pyramid, purple with white patches at the bottom and pure white at the top. He fills up the bare outline supplied by the senses with a thousand lively images. He sees tier above tier of rock, rising in a gradually ascending scale of difficulty, covered at first by long lines of the *débris* that have been splintered by frost from the higher wall, and afterwards rising bare and black and threatening. He knows instinctively which of the ledges has a dangerous look—where such a bold mountaineer as John Lauener might slip on the polished surface, or be in danger of an avalanche from above. He sees the little shell-like swelling at the foot of the glacier crawling down the steep slope above, and knows that it means an almost inaccessible wall of ice; and the steep snowfields that rise towards the summit are suggestive of something very different from the picture which might have existed in the mind of a German student, who once asked me whether it was possible to make the ascent on a mule.

Hence, if mountains owe their influence upon the imagination in a great degree to their size and

steepness, and apparent inaccessibility—as no one can doubt that they do, whatever may be the explanation of the fact that people like to look at big, steep, inaccessible objects—the advantages of the mountaineer are obvious. He can measure those qualities on a very different scale from the ordinary traveler. He measures the size, not by the vague abstract term of so many thousand feet, but by the hours of labour, divided into minutes—each separately felt—of strenuous muscular exertion. The steepness is not expressed in degrees, but by the memory of the sensation produced when a snow-slope seems to be rising up and smiting you in the face; when, far away from all human help, you are clinging like a fly to the slippery side of a mighty pinnacle in mid air. And as for the inaccessibility, no one can measure the difficulty of climbing a hill who has not wearied his muscles and brain in struggling against the opposing obstacles. Alpine travellers, it is said, have removed the romance from the mountains by climbing them. What they have really done is to prove that there exists a narrow line by which a way may be found to the top of any given mountain; but the clue leads through innumerable inaccessibilities; true, you can follow one path, but to right and left are cliffs which no human foot will ever tread, and whose terrors can only be realised when you are in their immediate neighbourhood. The cliffs of the Matterhorn do not bar the way to the top effectually, but it is only by forcing a passage through them that you can really appreciate their terrible significance.

Hence I say that the qualities which strike every sensitive observer are impressed upon the mountaineer with tenfold force and intensity. If he is as accessible to poetical influences as his neighbours—and I don't know why he should be less so—he has opened new avenues of access between the scenery and his mind. He has learnt a language which is but partially revealed to ordinary men. An artist is superior to an unlearned picture-seer, not merely because he has greater natural sensibility, but because he has improved it by methodical experience; because his senses have been sharpened by constant practice, till he can catch finer shades of colouring, and more delicate inflexions of line; because, also, the lines and colours have acquired new significance, and been associated with a thousand thoughts with which the mass of mankind has never cared to connect them. The mountaineer is improved by a similar process. But I know some sceptical critics will ask, does not the way in which he is accustomed to regard mountains rather deaden their poetical influence? Doesn't he come to look at them as mere instruments of sport, and overlook their more spiritual teaching? Does not all the excitement of personal adventure and the noisy apparatus of guides, and ropes, and axes, and tobacco, and the fun of climbing, rather dull his perceptions and incapacitate him from perceiving

The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills?

Well, I have known some stupid and unpoetical mountaineers; and, since I have been dismounted from my favourite hobby, I think I have met some similar specimens among the humbler class of tourists. There are persons, I fancy, who "do" the Alps; who look upon the Lake of Lucerne as one more task ticked off from their memorandum book, and count up the list of summits visible from the Görnegrat without being penetrated with any keen sense of sublimity. And there are mountaineers who are capable of making a pun on the top of Mont Blanc—and capable of nothing more. Still I venture to deny that even punning is incompatible with poetry, or that those who make the pun can have no deeper feeling in their bosoms which they are perhaps too shamefaced to utter.

The fact is that that which gives its inexpressible charm to mountaineering is the incessant series of exquisite natural scenes, which are for the most part enjoyed by the mountaineer alone. This is, I am aware, a round assertion; but I will try to support it by a few of the visions which are recalled to me by these Oberland cliffs, and which I have seen profoundly enjoyed by men who perhaps never mentioned them again, and probably in describing their adventures scrupulously avoided the danger of being sentimental.

Thus every traveller has occasionally done a sunrise, and a more lamentable proceeding than the ordinary view of a sunrise can hardly be imagined. You are cold, miserable, breakfastless; have risen shivering from a warm bed, and in your heart long only to creep into bed again. To the mountaineer all this is changed. He is beginning a day full of the anticipation of a pleasant excitement. He has, perhaps, been waiting anxiously for fine weather, to try conclusions with some huge giant not yet scaled. He moves out with something of the feeling with which a soldier goes to the assault of a fortress, but without the same probability of coming home in fragments; the danger is trifling enough to be merely exhilaratory, and to give a pleasant tension to the nerves; his muscles feel firm and springy, and his stomach—no small advantage to the enjoyment of scenery—is in excellent order. He looks at the sparkling stars with keen satisfaction, prepared to enjoy a fine sunrise with all his faculties at their best, and with the added pleasure of a good omen for his day's work. Then a huge dark mass begins to mould itself slowly out of the darkness, the sky begins to form a background of deep purple, against which the outline becomes gradually more definite; one by one, the peaks catch the exquisite Alpine glow, lighting up in rapid succession, like a vast illumination; and when at last the steady sunlight settles upon them, and shows every rock and glacier, without even a delicate film of mist to obscure

them, he feels his heart bound, and steps out gaily to the assault—just as the people on the Rigi are giving thanks that the show is over and that they may go to bed. Still grander is the sight when the mountaineer has already reached some lofty ridge, and, as the sun rises, stands between the day and the night—the valley still in deep sleep, with the mists lying between the folds of the hills, and the snow-peaks standing out clear and pale white just before the sun reaches them, whilst a broad band of orange light runs all round the vast horizon. The glory of sunsets is equally increased in the thin upper air. The grandest of all such sights that live in my memory is that of a sunset from the Aiguille du Goûté. The snow at our feet was glowing with rich light, and the shadows in our footsteps a vivid green by the contrast. Beneath us was a vast horizontal floor of thin level mists suspended in mid air, spread like a canopy over the whole boundless landscape, and tinged with every hue of sunset. Through its rents and gaps we could see the lower mountains, the distant plains, and a fragment of the Lake of Geneva lying in a more sober purple. Above us rose the solemn mass of Mont Blanc in the richest glow of an Alpine sunset. The sense of lonely sublimity was almost oppressive, and although half our party was suffering from sickness, I believe even the guides were moved to a sense of solemn beauty.

These grand scenic effects are occasionally seen by ordinary travellers, though the ordinary traveller is for the most part out of temper at 3 A.M. The mountaineer can enjoy them, both because his frame of mind is properly trained to receive the natural beauty, and because he alone sees them with their best accessories, amidst the silence of the eternal snow, and the vast panoramas visible from the loftier summits. And he has a similar advantage in most of the great natural phenomena of the cloud and the sunshine. No sight in the Alps is more impressive than the huge rocks of a black precipice suddenly frowning out through the chasms of a storm-cloud. But grand as such a sight may be from the safe verandahs of the inn at Grindelwald, it is far grander in the silence of the Central Alps amongst the savage wilderness of rock and snow. Another characteristic effect of the High Alps often presents itself when one has been climbing for two or three hours, with nothing in sight but the varying wreaths of mist that chased each other monotonously along the rocky ribs up whose snow-covered backbone we were laboriously fighting our way. Suddenly there is a puff of wind, and looking round we find that we have in an instant pierced the clouds, and emerged, as it were, on the surface of the ocean of vapour. Beneath us stretches for hundreds of miles the level fleecy floor, and above us shines out clear in the eternal sunshine every mountain, from Mont Blanc to Monte Rosa and the Jungfrau. What, again, in the lower regions, can equal the mysterious charm of gazing from the edge of a torn rocky parapet into an apparently fathomless abyss, where nothing but what an Alpine traveller calls a "strange formless wreathing of vapour" indicates the storm-wind that is raging below us? I might go on indefinitely recalling the strangely impressive scenes that frequently startle the traveller in the waste upper world; but language is feeble indeed to convey even a glimmering of what is to be seen to those who have not seen it for themselves, whilst to them it can be little more than a peg upon which to hang their own recollections. These glories, in which the mountain Spirit reveals himself to his true worshippers, are only to be gained by the appropriate service of climbing—at some risk, though a very trifling risk, if he is approached with due form and ceremony—into the furthest recesses of his shrines. And without seeing them, I maintain that no man has really seen the Alps.

The difference between the exoteric and the esoteric school of mountaineers may be indicated by their different view of glaciers. At Grindelwald, for example, it is the fashion to go and "see the glaciers"—heaven save the mark! Ladies in costumes, heavy German professors, Americans doing the Alps at a gallop, Cook's tourists, and other varieties of a well-known genus, go off in shoals and see—what? A gigantic mass of ice, strangely torn with a few of the exquisite blue crevasses, but denied and prostrate in dirt and ruins. A stream foul with mud oozes out from the base; the whole mass seems to be melting fast away; the summer sun has evidently got the best of it in these lower regions, and nothing can resist him but the great mounds of decaying rock that strew the surface in confused lumps. It is as much like the glacier of the upper regions as the melting fragments of snow in a London street are like the surface of the fresh snow that has just fallen in a country field. And by way of improving its attractions a perpetual picnic is going on, and the ingenious natives have hewed a tunnel into the ice, for admission to which they charge certain centimes. The unlucky glacier reminds me at his latter end of a wretched whale stranded on a beach, dissolving into masses of blubber, and hacked by remorseless fishermen, instead of plunging at his ease in the deep blue water. Far above, where the glacier begins his course, he is seen only by the true mountaineer. There are vast amphitheatres of pure snow, of which the glacier known to tourists is merely the insignificant drainage, but whose very existence they do not generally suspect. They are utterly ignorant that from the top of the icefall which they visit you may walk for hours on the eternal ice. After a long climb you come to the region where the glacier is truly at its noblest; where the surface is a spotless white; where the crevasses are enormous rents sinking to profound depths, with walls of the purest blue; where the glacier is torn and shattered by the energetic forces which mould it, but has an expression of superabundant power, like a full stream fretting against its banks and plunging through the vast gorges that it has hewn for itself in the course of centuries. The bases of the mountains are immersed in a deluge of cockneyism—fortunately a shallow deluge—whilst their summits rise high into the bracing air, where everything is pure and

poetical.

The difference which I have thus endeavoured to indicate is more or less traceable in a wider sense. The mountains are exquisitely beautiful, indeed, from whatever points of view we contemplate them; and the mountaineer would lose much if he never saw the beauties of the lower valleys, of pasturages deep in flowers, and dark pine-forests with the summits shining from far off between the stems. Only, as it seems to me, he has the exclusive prerogative of thoroughly enjoying one—and that the most characteristic, though by no means only, element of the scenery. There may be a very good dinner spread before twenty people; but if nineteen of them were teetotalers, and the twentieth drank his wine like a man, he would be the only one to do it full justice; the others might praise the meat or the fruits, but he would alone enjoy the champagne; and in the great feast which Nature spreads before us (a stock metaphor, which emboldens me to make the comparison), the high mountain scenery acts the part of the champagne. Unluckily, too, the teetotalers are very apt, in this case also, to sit in judgment upon their more adventurous neighbours. Especially are they pleased to carp at the views from high summits. I have been constantly asked, with a covert sneer, "Did it repay you?"—a question which involves the assumption that one wants to be repaid, as though the labour were not itself part of the pleasure, and which implies a doubt that the view is really enjoyable. People are always demonstrating that the lower views are the most beautiful; and at the same time complaining that mountaineers frequently turn back without looking at the view from the top, as though that would necessarily imply that they cared nothing for scenery. In opposition to which I must first remark that, as a rule, every step of an ascent has a beauty of its own, which one is quietly absorbing even when one is not directly making it a subject of contemplation, and that the view from the top is generally the crowning glory of the whole.

It will be enough if I conclude with an attempt to illustrate this last assertion: and I will do it by still referring to the Oberland. Every visitor with a soul for the beautiful admires the noble form of the Wetterhorn—the lofty snow-crowned pyramid rising in such light and yet massive lines from its huge basement of perpendicular cliffs. The Wetterhorn has, however, a further merit. To my mind—and I believe most connoisseurs of mountain tops agree with me—it is one of the most impressive summits in the Alps. It is not a sharp pinnacle like the Weisshorn, or a cupola like Mont Blanc, or a grand rocky tooth like the Monte Rosa, but a long and nearly horizontal knife-edge, which, as seen from either end, has of course the appearance of a sharp-pointed cone. It is when balanced upon this ridge—sitting astride of the knife-edge on which one can hardly stand without giddiness—that one fully appreciates an Alpine precipice. Mr. Justice Wills has admirably described the first ascent, and the impression it made upon him, in a paper which has become classical for succeeding adventurers. Behind you the snow-slope sinks with perilous steepness towards the wilderness of glacier and rock through which the ascent has lain. But in front the ice sinks with even greater steepness for a few feet or yards. Then it curves over and disappears, and the next thing that the eye catches is the meadowland of Grindelwald, some 9,000 feet below. I have looked down many precipices, where the eye can trace the course of every pebble that bounds down the awful slopes, and where I have shuddered as some dislodged fragment of rock showed the course which, in case of accident, fragments of my own body would follow. A precipice is always, for obvious reasons, far more terrible from above than from below. The creeping, tingling sensation which passes through one's limbs—even when one knows oneself to be in perfect safety—testifies to the thrilling influence of the sight. But I have never so realised the terrors of a terrific cliff as when I could not see it. The awful gulf which intervened between me and the green meadows struck the imagination by its invisibility. It was like the view which may be seen from the ridge of a cathedral roof, where the eaves have for their immediate background the pavement of the streets below; only this cathedral was 9,000 feet high. Now, any one standing at the foot of the Wetterhorn may admire their stupendous massiveness and steepness; but, to feel their influence enter in the very marrow of one's bones, it is necessary to stand at the summit, and to fancy the one little slide down the short ice-slope, to be followed apparently by a bound into clear air and a fall down to the houses, from heights where only the eagle ventures to soar.

This is one of the Alpine beauties, which, of course, is: beyond the power of art to imitate, and which people are therefore apt to ignore. But it is not the only one to be seen on the high summits. It is often said that these views are not "beautiful"—apparently because they won't go into a picture, or, to put it more fairly, because no picture: can in the faintest degree imitate them. But without quarrelling about words, I think that, even if "beautiful" be not the most correct epithet, they have a marvellously stimulating effect upon the imagination. Let us look round from this wonderful pinnacle in mid air, and note one or two of the most striking elements of the scenery.

You are, in the first place, perched on a cliff, whose presence is the more felt because it is unseen. Then you are in a region over which eternal silence is brooding. Not a sound ever comes there, except the occasional fall of a splintered fragment of rock, or a layer of snow; no stream is heard trickling, and the sounds of animal life are left thousands of feet below. The most that you can hear is some

mysterious noise made by the wind eddying round the gigantic rocks; sometimes a strange flapping sound, as if an unearthly flag were shaking its invisible folds in the air. The enormous tract of country over which your view extends—most of it dim and almost dissolved into air by distance—intensifies the strange influence of the silence. You feel the force of the line I have quoted from Wordsworth—

The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

None of the travellers whom you can see crawling at your feet has the least conception of what is meant by the silent solitudes of the High Alps. To you, it is like a return to the stir of active life, when, after hours of lonely wandering, you return to hear the tinkling of the cow-bells below; to them the same sound is the ultimate limit of the habitable world.

Whilst your mind is properly toned by these influences, you become conscious of another fact, to which the common variety of tourists is necessarily insensible. You begin to find out for the first time what the mountains really are. On one side, you look back upon the huge reservoirs from which the Oberland glaciers descend. You see the vast stores from which the great rivers of Europe are replenished, the monstrous crawling masses that are carving the mountains into shape, and the gigantic bulwarks that separate two great quarters of the world. From below these wild regions are half invisible; they are masked by the outer line of mountains; and it is not till you are able to command them from some lofty point that you can appreciate the grandeur of the huge barriers, and the snow that is piled within their folds. There is another half of the view equally striking. Looking towards the north, the whole of Switzerland is couched at your feet; the Jura and the Black Forest lie on the far horizon. And then you know what is the nature of a really mountainous country. From below everything is seen in a kind of distorted perspective. The people of the valley naturally think that the valley is everything—that the country resembles old-fashioned maps, where a few sporadic lumps are distributed amongst towns and plains. The true proportions reveal themselves as you ascend. The valleys, you can now see, are nothing but narrow trenches scooped out amidst a tossing waste of mountain, just to carry off the drainage. The great ridges run hither and thither, having it all their own way, wild and untamable regions of rock or open grass or forest, at whose feet the valleys exist on sufferance. Creeping about amongst the roots of the hills, you half miss the hills themselves; you quite fail to understand the massiveness of the mountain chains, and, therefore, the wonderful energy of the forces that have heaved the surface of the world into these distorted shapes. And it is to a half-conscious sense of the powers that must have been at work that a great part of the influence of mountain scenery is due. Geologists tell us that a theory of catastrophes is unphilosophical; but, whatever may be the scientific truth, our minds are impressed as though we were witnessing the results of some incredible convulsion. At Stonehenge we ask what human beings could have erected these strange grey monuments, and in the mountains we instinctively ask what force can have carved out the Matterhorn, and placed the Wetterhorn on its gigantic pedestal. Now, it is not till we reach some commanding point that we realise the amazing extent of country over which the solid ground has been shaking and heaving itself in irresistible tumult.

Something, it is true, of this last effect may be seen from such mountains as the Rigi or the Faulhorn. There, too, one seems to be at the centre of a vast sphere, the earth bending up in a cup-like form to meet the sky, and the blue vault above stretching in an arch majestic by its enormous extent. There you seem to see a sensible fraction of the world at your feet. But the effect is far less striking when other mountains obviously look down upon you; when, as it were, you are looking at the waves of the great ocean of hills merely from the crest of one of the waves themselves, and not from some lighthouse that rises far over their heads; for the Wetterhorn, like the Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau, owes one great beauty to the fact that it is on the edge of the lower country, and stands between the real giants and the crowd of inferior, though still enormous, masses in attendance upon them. And, in the next place, your mind is far better adapted to receive impressions of sublimity when you are alone, in a silent region, with a black sky above and giant cliffs all round; with a sense still in your mind, if not of actual danger, still of danger that would become real with the slightest relaxation of caution, and with the world divided from you by hours of snow and rock.

I will go no further, not because I have no more to say, but because descriptions of scenery soon become wearisome, and because I have, I hope, said enough to show that the mountaineer may boast of some intellectual pleasures; that he is not a mere scrambler, but that he looks for poetical impressions, as well as for such small glory as his achievements may gain in a very small circle. Something of what he gains fortunately sticks by him: he does not quite forget the mountain language; his eye still recognises the space and the height and the glory of the lofty mountains. And yet there is some pain in wandering ghostlike among the scenes of his earlier pleasures. For my part, I try in vain to hug myself in a sense of comfort. I turn over in bed when I hear the stamping of heavily nailed shoes along the passage of an inn about 2 A.M. I feel the skin of my nose complacently when I see others returning with a glistening tight aspect about that unluckily prominent feature, and know that in a day or two it will be raw and blistered and burning. I think, in a comfortable inn at night, of the miseries of those who are

trying to sleep in damp hay, or on hard boards of châteaux, at once cold and stuffy and haunted by innumerable fleas. I congratulate myself on having a whole skin and unfractured bones, and on the small danger of ever breaking them over an Alpine precipice. But yet I secretly know that these consolations are feeble. It is little use to avoid early rising and discomfort, and even fleas, if one also loses the pleasures to which they were the sauce—rather too *piquante* a sauce occasionally, it must be admitted. The philosophy is all very well which recommends moderate enjoyment, regular exercise, and a careful avoidance of risk and over-excitement. That is, it is all very well so long as risk and excitement and immoderate enjoyment are out of your power; but it does not stand the test of looking on and seeing them just beyond your reach. In time, no doubt, a man may grow calm; he may learn to enjoy the pleasures and the exquisite beauties of the lower regions—though they, too, are most fully enjoyed when they have a contrast with beauties of a different, and pleasures of a keener excitement. When first debarred, at any rate, one feels like a balloon full of gas, and fixed by immovable ropes to the prosaic ground. It is pleasant to lie on one's back in a bed of rhododendrons, and look up to a mountain top peering at one from above a bank of cloud; but it is pleasantest when one has qualified oneself for repose by climbing the peak the day before and becoming familiar with its terrors and its beauties. In time, doubtless, one may get reconciled to anything; one may settle down to be a caterpillar, even after one has known the pleasures of being a butterfly; one may become philosophical, and have one's clothes let out; and even in time, perhaps—though it is almost too terrible to contemplate—be content with a mule or a carriage, or that lowest depth to which human beings can sink, and for which the English language happily affords no name, a *chaise à porteurs*: and even in such degradation the memory of better times may be pleasant; for I doubt much whether it is truth the poet sings—

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Certainly, to a philosophical mind, the sentiment is doubtful. For my part, the fate which has cut me off, if I may use the expression, in the flower of my youth, and doomed me to be a non-climbing animal in future, is one which ought to exclude grumbling. I cannot indicate it more plainly, for I might so make even the grumbling in which I have already indulged look like a sin. I can only say that there are some very delightful things in which it is possible to discover an infinitesimal drop of bitterness, and that the mountaineer who undertakes to cut himself off from his favourite pastime, even for reasons which he will admit in his wildest moods to be more than amply sufficient, must expect at times to feel certain pangs of regret, however quickly they may be smothered.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 33: From "The Playground of Europe," 1871.]

BEHAVIOR[34]

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The soul which animates nature is not less significantly published in the figure, movement, and gesture of animated bodies, than in its last vehicle of articulate speech. This silent and subtle language is Manners; not *what*, but *how*. Life expresses. A statue has no tongue, and needs none. Good tableaux do not need declamation. Nature tells every secret once. Yes, but in man she tells it all the time, by form, attitude, gesture, mien, face, and parts of the face, and by the whole action of the machine. The visible carriage or action of the individual, as resulting from his organization and his will combined, we call manners. What are they but thought entering the hands and feet, controlling the movements of the body, the speech and behavior?

There is always a best way of doing everything, if it be to boil an egg. Manners are the happy ways of doing things; each once a stroke of genius or of love,—now repeated and hardened into usage. They form at last a rich varnish, with which the routine of life is washed, and its details adorned. If they are superficial, so are the dew-drops which give such a depth to the morning meadows. Manners are very communicable: men catch them from each other. Consuelo, in the romance, boasts of the lessons she had given the nobles in manners, on the stage: and, in real life, Talma taught Napoleon the arts of behavior. Genius invents fine manners, which the baron and the baroness copy very fast, and, by the advantage of a palace, better the instruction. They stereotype the lesson they have learned into a mode.

The power of manners is incessant,—an element as unconcealable as fire. The nobility cannot in any country be disguised, and no more in a republic or a democracy than in a kingdom. No man can resist

their influence. There are certain manners which are learned in good society, of that force, that, if a person have them, he or she must be considered, and is everywhere welcome, though without beauty, or wealth, or genius. Give a boy address and accomplishments, and you give him the mastery of palaces and fortunes where he goes. He has not the trouble of earning or owning them; they solicit him to enter and possess. We send girls of a timid, retreating disposition to the boarding-school, to the riding-school, to the ballroom, or wheresoever they can come into acquaintance and nearness of leading persons of their own sex; where they might learn address, and see it near at hand. The power of a woman of fashion to lead, and also to daunt and repel, derives from their belief that she knows resources and behaviors not known to them; but when these have mastered her secret, they learn to confront her, and recover their self-possession.

Every day bears witness to their gentle rule. People who would obtrude, now do not obtrude. The mediocre circle learns to demand that which belongs to a high state of nature or of culture. Your manners are always under examination, and by committees little suspected,—a police in citizen's clothes,—but are awarding or denying you very high prizes when you least think of it.

We talk much of utilities,—but 'tis our manners that associate us. In hours of business, we go to him who knows, or has, or does this or that which we want, and we do not let our taste or feeling stand in the way. But this activity over, we return to the indolent state, and wish for those we can be at ease with; those who will go where we go, whose manners do not offend us, whose social tone chimes with ours. When we reflect on their persuasive and cheering force; how they recommend, prepare, and draw people together; how, in all clubs, manners make the members; how manners make the fortune of the ambitious youth; that, for the most part, his manners marry him, and, for the most part, he marries manners; when we think what keys they are, and to what secrets; what high lessons and inspiring tokens of character they convey; and what divination is required in us, for the reading of this fine telegraph; we see what range the subject has, and what relations to convenience, power, and beauty.

Their first service is very low,—when they are the minor morals; but 'tis the beginning of civility,—to make us, I mean, endurable to each other. We prize them for their rough-plastic, abstergent force; to get people out of the quadruped state; to get them washed, clothed, and set up on end; to slough their animal husks and habits; compel them to be clean; overawe their spite and meanness, teach them to stifle the base, and choose the generous expression, and make them know how much happier the generous behaviors are.

Bad behavior the laws cannot reach. Society is invested with rude, cynical, restless, and frivolous persons who prey upon the rest, and whom a public opinion concentrated into good manners, forms accepted by the sense of all, can reach;—the contradictors and railers at public and private tables, who are like terriers, who conceive it the duty of a dog of honor to growl at any passer-by, and do the honors of the house by barking him out of sight;—I have seen men who neigh like a horse when you contradict them, or say something which they do not understand;—then the overbold, who make their own invitation to your hearth; the persevering talker, who gives you his society in large, saturating doses; the pitiers of themselves,—a perilous class; the frivolous Asmodeus, who relies on you to find him in ropes of sand to twist; the monotones; in short, every stripe of absurdity;—these are social inflictions which the magistrate cannot cure or defend you from, and which must be intrusted to the restraining force of custom, and proverbs, and familiar rules of behavior impressed on young people in their school-days.

In the hotels on the banks of the Mississippi, they print, or used to print, among the rules of the house, that "No gentleman can be permitted to come to the public table without his coat;" and in the same country, in the pews of the churches, little placards plead with the worshipper against the fury of expectoration. Charles Dickens self-sacrificingly undertook the reformation of our American manners in unspeakable particulars. I think the lesson was not quite lost; that it held bad manners up, so that the churls could see the deformity. Unhappily, the book had its own deformities. It ought not to need to print in a reading room a caution to strangers not to speak loud; nor to persons who look over fine engravings, that they should be handled like cobwebs and butterflies' wings; nor to persons who look at marble statues, that they shall not smite them with canes. But, even in the perfect civilization of this city, such cautions are not quite needless in the Athenaeum and City Library.

Manners are factitious, and grow out of circumstances as well as out of character. If you look at the pictures of patricians and of peasants, of different periods and countries, you will see how well they match the same classes in our towns. The modern aristocrat not only is well drawn in Titian's Venetian doges, and in Roman coins and statues, but also in the pictures which Commodore Perry brought home of dignitaries in Japan. Broad lands and great interests not only arrive to such heads as can manage them, but form manners of power. A keen eye, too, will see nice gradations of rank, or see in the manners the degree of homage the party is wont to receive. A prince who is accustomed every day to be courted and deferred to by the highest grandees, acquires a corresponding expectation, and a

becoming mode of receiving and replying to this homage.

There are always exceptional people and modes. English grandees affect to be farmers. Claverhouse is a fop, and, under the finish of dress, and levity of behavior, hides the terror of his war. But Nature and Destiny are honest, and never fail to leave their mark, to hang out a sign for each and for every quality. It is much to conquer one's face, and perhaps the ambitious youth thinks he has got the whole secret when he has learned that disengaged manners are commanding. Don't be deceived by a facile exterior. Tender men sometimes have strong wills. We had, in Massachusetts, an old statesman, who had sat all his life in courts and in chairs of state, without overcoming an extreme irritability of face, voice, and bearing: when he spoke, his voice would not serve him; it cracked, it broke, it wheezed, it piped;—little cared he; he knew that it had got to pipe, or wheeze, or screech his argument and his indignation. When he sat down, after speaking, he seemed in a sort of fit, and held on to his chair with both hands: but underneath all this irritability was a puissant will, firm and advancing, and a memory in which lay in order and method, like geologic strata, every fact of his history, and under the control of his will.

Manners are partly factitious, but, mainly, there must be capacity for culture in the blood. Else all culture is vain. The obstinate prejudice in favor of blood, which lies at the base of the feudal and monarchical fabrics of the old world, has some reason in common experience. Every man,—mathematician, artist, soldier, or merchant,—looks with confidence for some traits and talents in his own child, which he would not dare to presume in the child of a stranger. The Orientalists are very orthodox on this point. "Take a thorn-bush," said the emir Abdel-Kader, "and sprinkle it for a whole year with water, it will yield nothing but thorns. Take a date-tree, leave it without culture, and it will always produce dates. Nobility is the date-tree, and the Arab populace is a bush of thorns."

A main fact in the history of manners is the wonderful expressiveness of the human body. If it were made of glass, or of air, and the thoughts were written on steel tablets within, it could not publish more truly its meaning than now. Wise men read very sharply all your private history in your look and gait and behavior. The whole economy of nature is bent on expression. The tell-tale body is all tongues. Men are like Geneva watches with crystal faces which expose the whole movement. They carry the liquor of life flowing up and down in these beautiful bottles, and announcing to the curious how it is with them. The face and eyes reveal what the spirit is doing, how old it is, what aims it has. The eyes indicate the antiquity of the soul, or through how many forms it has already ascended. It almost violates the proprieties, if we say above the breath here what the confessing eyes do not hesitate to utter to every street passenger.

Man cannot fix his eye on the sun, and so far seems imperfect. In Siberia, a late traveller found men who could see the satellites of Jupiter with their unarmed eye. In some respects the animals excel us. The birds have a longer sight, beside the advantage by their wings of a higher observatory. A cow can bid her calf, by secret signal, probably of the eye, to run away, or to lie down and hide itself. The jockeys say of certain horses, that "they look over the whole ground." The outdoor life, and hunting, and labor, give equal vigor to the human eye. A farmer looks out at you as strong as the horse; his eye-beam is like the stroke of a staff. An eye can threaten like a loaded and levelled gun, or can insult like hissing or kicking; or, in its altered mood, by beams of kindness, it can make the heart dance with joy.

The eye obeys exactly the action of the mind. When a thought strikes us, the eyes fix, and remain gazing at a distance; in enumerating the names of persons or of countries, as France, Germany, Spain, Turkey, the eyes wink at each new name. There is no nicety of learning sought by the mind, which the eyes do not vie in acquiring. "An artist," said Michael Angelo, "must have his measuring tools not in the hand, but in the eye;" and there is no end to the catalogue of its performances, whether in indolent vision (that of health and beauty) or in strained vision (that of art and labor).

Eyes are bold as lions,—roving, running, leaping, here and there, far and near. They speak all languages. They wait for no introduction; they are no Englishmen; ask no leave of age or rank; they respect neither poverty nor riches, neither learning nor power, nor virtue, nor sex, but intrude, and come again, and go through and through you, in a moment of time. What inundation of life and thought is discharged from one soul into another through them! The glance is natural magic. The mysterious communication established across a house between two entire strangers moves all the springs of wonder. The communication by the glance is in the greatest part not subject to the control of the will. It is the bodily symbol of identity of nature. We look into the eyes to know if this other form is another self, and the eyes will not lie, but make a faithful confession what inhabitant is there. The revelations are sometimes terrific. The confession of a low, usurping devil is there made, and the observer shall seem to feel the stirring of owls, and bats, and horned hoofs, where he looked for innocence and simplicity. 'Tis remarkable, too, that the spirit that appears at the windows of the house does at once invest himself in a new form of his own to the mind of the beholder.

The eyes of men converse as much as their tongues, with the advantage, that the ocular dialect needs no dictionary, but is understood all the world over. When the eyes say one thing, and the tongue another, a practised man relies on the language of the first. If the man is off his center, the eyes show it. You can read in the eyes of your companion, whether your argument hits him, though his tongue will not confess it. There is a look by which a man shows he is going to say a good thing, and a look when he has said it. Vain and forgotten are all the fine offers and offices of hospitality, if there is no holiday in the eye. How many furtive inclinations avowed by the eye, though dissembled by the lips! One comes away from a company, in which, it may easily happen, he has said nothing, and no important remark has been addressed to him, and yet, if in sympathy with the society he shall not have a sense of this fact, such a stream of life has been flowing into him, and out from him, through the eyes. There are eyes, to be sure, that give no more admission into the man than blue-berries. Others are liquid and deep,—wells that a man might fall into;—others are aggressive and devouring, seem to call out the police, take all too much notice, and require crowded Broadways, and the security of millions, to protect individuals against them. The military eye I meet, now darkly sparkling under clerical, now under rustic brows. 'Tis the city of Lacedaemon; 'tis a stack of bayonets. There are asking eyes, asserting eyes, prowling eyes; and eyes full of fate,—some of good, and some of sinister omen. The alleged power to charm down insanity, or ferocity in beasts, is a power behind the eye. It must be a victory achieved in the will before it can be signified in the eye. 'Tis very certain that each man carries in his eye the exact indication of his rank in the immense scale of men, and we are always learning to read it. A complete man should need no auxiliaries to his personal presence. Whoever looked on him would consent to his will, being certified that his aims were generous and universal. The reason why men do not obey us, is because they see the mud at the bottom of our eye.

If the organ of sight is such a vehicle of power, the other features have their own. A man finds room in the few square inches of the face for the traits of all his ancestors; for the expression of all his history, and his wants. The sculptor, and Winckelmann, and Lavater, will tell you how significant a feature is the nose; how its forms express strength or weakness of will, and good or bad temper. The nose of Julius Caesar, of Dante, and of Pitt, suggest "the terrors of the beak." What refinement, and what limitations, the teeth betray! "Beware you don't laugh," said the wise mother, "for then you show all your faults."

Balzac left in manuscript a chapter, which he called "*Théorie de la démarche*,"[35] in which he says: "The look, the voice, the respiration, and the attitude or walk, are identical. But, as it has not been given to man, the power to stand guard, at once, over these four different simultaneous expressions of his thought, watch that one which speaks out the truth, and you will know the whole man."

Palaces interest us mainly in the exhibition of manners, which, in the idle and expensive society dwelling in them, are raised to a high art. The maxim of courts is, that manner is power. A calm and resolute bearing, a polished speech, an embellishment of trifles, and the art of hiding all uncomfortable feeling, are essential to the courtier: and Saint Simon, and Cardinal de Retz, and Roederer, and an encyclopaedia of *Mémoires*, will instruct you, if you wish, in those potent secrets. Thus, it is a point of pride with kings to remember faces and names. It is reported of one prince, that his head had the air of leaning downwards, in order not to humble the crowd. There are people who come in ever like a child with a piece of good news. It was said of the late Lord Holland, that he always came down to breakfast with the air of a man who had just met with some signal good-fortune. In *Notre Dame*, the grandee took his place on the dais, with the look of one who is thinking of something else. But we must not peep and eavesdrop at palace-doors.

Fine manners need the support of fine manners in others. A scholar may be a well-bred man, or he may not. The enthusiast is introduced to polished scholars in society, and is chilled and silenced by finding himself not in their element. They all have somewhat which he has not, and, it seems, ought to have. But if he finds the scholar apart from his companions, it is then the enthusiast's turn, and the scholar has no defence, but must deal on his terms. Now they must fight the battle out on their private strengths. What is the talent of that character so common,—the successful man of the world,—in all marts, senates, and drawing-rooms? Manners: mariners of power; sense to see his advantage, and manners up to it. See him approach his man. He knows that troops behave as they are handled at first;—that is his cheap secret; just what happens to every two persons who meet on any affair,—one instantly perceives that he has the key of the situation, that his will comprehends the other's will, as the cat does the mouse; and he has only to use courtesy, and furnish good-natured reasons to his victim to cover up the chain, lest he be shamed into resistance.

The theater in which this science of manners has a formal importance is not with us a court, but dress-circles, wherein, after the close of the day's business, men and women meet at leisure, for mutual entertainment, in ornamented drawing-rooms. Of course, it has every variety of attraction and merit; but, to earnest persons, to youths or maidens who have great objects at heart, we cannot extol it highly. A well-dressed, talkative company, where each is bent to amuse the other,—yet the high-born Turk who

came hither fancied that every woman seemed to be suffering for a chair; that all the talkers were brained and exhausted by the deoxygenated air; it spoiled the best persons: it put all on stilts. Yet here are the secret biographies written and read. The aspect of that man is repulsive; I do not wish to deal with him. The other is irritable, shy, and on his guard. The youth looks humble and manly: I choose him. Look on this woman. There is not beauty, nor brilliant sayings, nor distinguished power, to serve you; but all see her gladly; her whole air and impression are healthful. Here come the sentimentalists, and the invalids. Here is Elise, who caught cold in coming into the world, and has always increased it since. Here are creep-mouse manners, and thievish manners. "Look at Northcote," said Fuseli; "he looks like a rat that has seen a cat." In the shallow company, easily excited, easily tired, here is the columnar Bernard: the Alleghanies do not express more repose than his behavior. Here are the sweet following eyes of Cecile: it seemed always that she demanded the heart. Nothing can be more excellent in kind than the Corinthian grace of Gertrude's manners, and yet Blanche, who has no manners, has better manners than she; for the movements of Blanche are the sallies of a spirit which is sufficient for the moment, and she can afford to express every thought by instant action.

Manners have been somewhat cynically defined to be a contrivance of wise men to keep fools at a distance. Fashion is shrewd to detect those who do not belong to her train, and seldom wastes her attentions. Society is very swift in its instincts, and, if you do not belong to it, resists and sneers at you; or quietly drops you. The first weapon enrages the party attacked; the second is still more effective, but is not to be resisted, as the date of the transaction is not easily found. People grow up and grow old under this infliction, and never suspect the truth, ascribing the solitude which acts on them very injuriously to any cause but the right one.

The basis of good manners is self-reliance. Necessity is the law of all who are not self-possessed. Those who are not self-possessed, obtrude, and pain us. Some men appear to feel that they belong to a Pariah caste. They fear to offend, they bend and apologize, and walk through life with a timid step. As we sometimes dream that we are in a well-dressed company without any coat, so Godfrey acts ever as if he suffered from some mortifying circumstance. The hero should find himself at home, wherever he is; should impart comfort by his own security and good-nature to all beholders. The hero is suffered to be himself. A person of strong mind comes to perceive that for him an immunity is secured so long as he renders to society that service which is native and proper to him,—an immunity from all the observances, yea, and duties, which society so tyrannically imposes on the rank and file of its members. "Euripides," says Aspasia, "has not the fine manners of Sophocles; but,"—she adds good-humoredly, "the movers and masters of our souls have surely a right to throw out their limbs as carelessly as they please on the world that belongs to them, and before the creatures they have animated." [36]

Manners require time, as nothing is more vulgar than haste. Friendship should be surrounded with ceremonies and respects, and not crushed into corners. Friendship requires more time than poor busy men can usually command. Here comes to me Roland, with a delicacy of sentiment leading and inwrapping him like a divine cloud or holy ghost. 'Tis a great destitution to both that this should not be entertained with large leisures, but, contrariwise, should be balked by importunate affairs.

But through this lustrous varnish the reality is ever shining. 'Tis hard to keep the *what* from breaking through this pretty painting of the *how*. The core will come to the surface. Strong will and keen perception overpower old manners and create new; and the thought of the present moment has a greater value than all the past. In persons of character, we do not remark manners, because of their instantaneousness. We are surprised by the thing done, out of all power to watch the way of it. Yet nothing is more charming than to recognize the great style which runs through the actions of such. People masquerade before us in their fortunes, titles, offices, and connections, as academic or civil presidents, or senators, or professors, or great lawyers, and impose on the frivolous, and a good deal on each other, by these fames. At least, it is a point of prudent good manners to treat these reputations tenderly, as if they were merited. But the sad realist knows these fellows at a glance, and they know him; as when in Paris the chief of the police enters a ballroom, so many diamonded pretenders shrink and make themselves as inconspicuous as they can, or give him a supplicating look as they pass. "I had received," said a sybil, "I had received at birth the fatal gift of penetration:"—and these Cassandras are always born.

Manners impress as they indicate real power. A man who is sure of his point, carries a broad and contented expression, which everybody reads. And you cannot rightly train one to an air and manner, except by making him the kind of man of whom that manner is the natural expression. Nature for ever puts a premium on reality. What is done for effect, is seen to be done for effect; what is done for love, is felt to be done for love. A man inspires affection and honor, because he was not lying in wait for these. The things of a man for which we visit him, were done in the dark and the cold. A little integrity is better than any career. So deep are the sources of this surface-action, that even the size of your companion seems to vary with his freedom of thought. Not only is he larger, when at ease, and his thoughts generous, but everything around him becomes variable with expression. No carpenter's rule,

no rod and chain, will measure the dimensions of any house or house-lot: go into the house: if the proprietor is constrained and deferring, 'tis of no importance how large his house, how beautiful his grounds,—you quickly come to the end of all; but if the man is self-possessed, happy, and at home, his house is deep-founded, indefinitely large and interesting, the roof and dome buoyant as the sky. Under the humblest roof, the commonest person in plain clothes sits there massive, cheerful, yet formidable, like the Egyptian colossi.

Neither Aristotle, nor Leibnitz, nor Junius, nor Champollion has set down the grammar-rules of this dialect, older than Sanscrit; but they who cannot yet read English, can read this. Men take each other's measure when they meet for the first time,—and every time they meet. How do they get this rapid knowledge, even before they speak, of each other's power and dispositions? One would say, that the persuasion of their speech is not in what they say,—or, that men do not convince by their argument,—but by their personality, by who they are, and what they said and did heretofore. A man already strong is listened to, and everything he says is applauded. Another opposes him with sound argument, but the argument is scouted, until by-and-by it gets into the mind of some weighty person; then it begins to tell on the community.

Self-reliance is the basis of behavior, as it is the guaranty that the powers are not squandered in too much demonstration. In this country, where school education is universal, we have a superficial culture, and a profusion of reading and writing and expression. We parade our nobilities in poems and orations, instead of working them up into happiness. There is a whisper out of the ages to him who can understand it,—"Whatever is known to thyself alone, has always very great value." There is some reason to believe, that, when a man does not write his poetry, it escapes by other vents through him, instead of the one vent of writing; clings to his form and manners, whilst poets have often nothing poetical about them except their verses. Jacobi said that, "when a man has fully expressed his thought, he has somewhat less possession of it." One would say, the rule is,—What a man is irresistibly urged to say, helps him and us. In explaining his thought to others, he explains it to himself: but when he opens it for show, it corrupts him.

Society is the stage on which manners are shown; novels are their literature. Novels are the journal or record of manners; and the new importance of these books derives from the fact, that the novelist begins to penetrate the surface, and treats this part of life more worthily. The novels used to be all alike, and had a quite vulgar tone. The novels used to lead us on to a foolish interest in the fortunes of the boy and girl they described. The boy was to be raised from a humble to a high position. He was in want of a wife and a castle, and the object of the story was to supply him with one or both. We watched sympathetically, step by step, his climbing, until, at last, the point is gained, the wedding day is fixed, and we follow the gala procession home to the castle, when the doors are slammed in our face, and the poor reader is left outside in the cold, not enriched by so much as an idea, or a virtuous impulse.

But the victories of character are instant, and victories for all. Its greatness enlarges all. We are fortified by every heroic anecdote. The novels are as useful as Bibles, if they teach you the secret, that the best of life is conversation, and the greatest success is confidence, or perfect understanding between sincere people. 'Tis a French definition of friendship, *rien que s'entendre*, good understanding. The highest compact we can make with our fellow is,—"Let there be truth between us two for evermore." That is the charm in all good novels, as it is the charm in all good histories, that the heroes mutually understand, from the first, and deal loyally, and with a profound trust in each other. It is sublime to feel and say of another, I need never meet, or speak, or write to him: we need not reinforce ourselves, or send tokens of remembrance: I rely on him as on myself: if he did thus or thus, I know it was right.

In all the superior people I have met, I notice directness, truth spoken more truly, as if everything of obstruction, of malformation, had been trained away. What have they to conceal? What have they to exhibit? Between simple and noble persons, there is always a quick intelligence: they recognize at sight, and meet on a better ground than the talents and skills they may chance to possess, namely, on sincerity and uprightness. For, it is not what talents or genius a man has, but how he is to his talents, that constitutes friendship and character. The man that stands by himself, the universe stands by him also. It is related of the monk Basle, that, being excommunicated by the Pope, he was, at his death, sent in charge of an angel to find a fit place of suffering in hell; but, such was the eloquence and good-humor of the monk, that, wherever he went, he was received gladly, and civilly treated, even by the most uncivil angels: and, when he came to discourse with them, instead of contradicting or forcing him, they took his part, and adopted his manners: and even good angels came from far to see him, and take up their abode with him. The angel that was sent to find a place of torment for him, attempted to remove him to a worse pit, but with no better success; for such was the contented spirit of the monk, that he found something to praise in every place and company, though in hell, and made a kind of heaven of it. At last the escorting angel returned with his prisoner to them that sent him, saying, that no phlegethon could be found that would burn him; for that, in whatever condition, Basle remained

incorrigibly Basle. The legend says, his sentence was remitted, and he was allowed to go into heaven, and was canonized as a saint.

There is a stroke of magnanimity in the correspondence of Bonaparte with his brother Joseph, when the latter was King of Spain, and complained that he missed in Napoleon's letters the affectionate tone which had marked their childish correspondence. "I am sorry," replies Napoleon, "you think you shall find your brother again only in the Elysian Fields. It is natural that at forty he should not feel towards you as he did at twelve. But his feelings towards you have greater truth and strength. His friendship has the features of his mind."

How much we forgive to those who yield us the rare spectacle of heroic manners! We will pardon them the want of books, of arts, and even of the gentler virtues. How tenaciously we remember them! Here is a lesson which I brought along with me in boyhood from the Latin School, and which ranks with the best of Roman anecdotes. Marcus Scaurus was accused by Quintus Varius Hispanus, that he had excited the allies to take arms against the Republic. But he, full of firmness and gravity, defended himself in this manner: "Quintus Varius Hispanus alleges that Marcus Scaurus, President of the Senate, excited the allies to arms: Marcus Scaurus, President of the Senate, denies it. There is no witness. Which do you believe, Romans?" "*Utri creditis, Quirites?*" When he had said these words, he was absolved by the assembly of the people.

I have seen manners that make a similar impression with personal beauty; that give the like exhilaration, and refine us like that; and, in memorable experiences, they are suddenly better than beauty, and make that superfluous and ugly. But they must be marked by fine perception, the acquaintance with real beauty. They must always show self-control: you shall not be facile, apologetic, or leaky, but king over your word; and every gesture and action shall indicate power at rest. Then they must be inspired by the good heart. There is no beautifier of complexion, or form, or behavior, like the wish to scatter joy and not pain around us. 'Tis good to give a stranger a meal, or a night's lodging. 'Tis better to be hospitable to his good meaning and thought, and give courage to a companion. We must be as courteous to a man as we are to a picture, which we are willing to give the advantage of a good light. Special precepts are not to be thought of: the talent of well-doing contains them all. Every hour will show a duty as paramount as that of my whim just now; and yet I will write it,—that there is one topic peremptorily forbidden to all well-bred, to all rational mortals, namely, their distempers. If you have not slept, or if you have slept, or if you have headache, or sciatica, or leprosy, or thunder-stroke, I beseech you, by all angels, to hold your peace, and not pollute the morning, to which all the housemates bring serene and pleasant thoughts, by corruption and groans. Come out in the azure. Love the day. Do not leave the sky out of your landscape. The oldest and the most deserving person should come very modestly into any newly awaked company, respecting the divine communications, out of which all must be presumed to have newly come. An old man who added an elevating culture to a large experience of life, said to me, "When you come into the room, I think I will study how to make humanity beautiful to you."

As respects the delicate question of culture, I do not think that any other than negative rules can be laid down. For positive rules, for suggestion, nature alone inspires it. Who dare assume to guide a youth, a maid, to perfect manners?—the golden mean is so delicate, difficult,—say frankly unattainable. What finest hands would not be clumsy to sketch the genial precepts of the young girl's demeanor? The chances seem infinite against success; and yet success is continually attained. There must not be secondariness, and 'tis a thousand to one that her air and manner will at once betray that she is not primary, but that there is some other one or many of her class, to whom she habitually postpones herself. But nature lifts her easily, and without knowing it, over these impossibilities, and we are continually surprised with graces and felicities not only unteachable, but undescribable.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 34: Chapter V of "The Conduct of Life," 1860.]

[Footnote 35: Theory of gait and demeanor.]

[Footnote 36: From Landor's "Pericles and Aspasia."]

MANNERS AND FASHION[37]

Some who shun drawing-rooms do so from inability to bear the restraints prescribed by a genuine refinement, and they would be greatly improved by being kept under these restraints. But it is not less true that, by adding to the legitimate restraints, which are based on convenience and a regard for others, a host of factitious restraints based only on convention, the refining discipline, which would else have been borne with benefit, is rendered unbearable, and so misses its end. Excess of government invariably defeats itself by driving away those to be governed. And if over all who desert its entertainments in disgust either at their emptiness or their formality, society thus loses its salutary influence—if such not only fail to receive that moral culture which the company of ladies, when rationally regulated, would give them, but, in default of other relaxation, are driven into habits and companionships which often end in gambling and drunkenness; must we not say that here, too, is an evil not to be passed over as insignificant?

Then consider what a blighting effect these multitudinous preparations and ceremonies have upon the pleasures they profess to subserve. Who, on calling to mind the occasions of his highest social enjoyments, does not find them to have been wholly informal, perhaps impromptu? How delightful a picnic of friends, who forget all observances save those dictated by good nature! How pleasant the little unpretended gatherings of book-societies, and the like; or those purely accidental meetings of a few people well known to each other! Then, indeed, we may see that "a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Cheeks flush, and eyes sparkle. The witty grow brilliant, and even the dull are excited into saying good things. There is an overflow of topics; and the right thought, and the right words to put it in, spring up unsought. Grave alternates with gay: now serious converse, and now jokes, anecdotes, and playful raillery. Everyone's best nature is shown, everyone's best feelings are in pleasurable activity; and, for the time, life seems well worth having.

Go now and dress for some half-past eight dinner, or some ten o'clock "at home;" and present yourself in spotless attire, with every hair arranged to perfection. How great the difference! The enjoyment seems in the inverse ratio of the preparation. These figures, got up with such finish and precision, appear but half alive. They have frozen each other by their primness; and your faculties feel the numbing effects of the atmosphere the moment you enter it. All those thoughts, so nimble and so apt awhile since, have disappeared—have suddenly acquired a preternatural power of eluding you. If you venture a remark to your neighbour, there comes a trite rejoinder, and there it ends. No subject you can hit upon outlives half a dozen sentences. Nothing that is said excites any real interest in you; and you feel that all you say is listened to with apathy. By some strange magic, things that usually give pleasure seem to have lost all charm.

You have a taste for art. Weary of frivolous talk, you turn to the table, and find that the book of engravings and the portfolio of photographs are as flat as the conversation. You are fond of music. Yet the singing, good as it is, you hear with utter indifference; and say "Thank you" with a sense of being a profound hypocrite. Wholly at ease though you could be, for your own part, you find that your sympathies will not let you. You see young gentlemen feeling whether their ties are properly adjusted, looking vacantly round, and considering what they shall do next. You see ladies sitting disconsolately, waiting for some one to speak to them, and wishing they had the wherewith to occupy their fingers. You see the hostess standing about the doorway, keeping a factitious smile on her face, and racking her brain to find the requisite nothings with which to greet her guests as they enter. You see numberless traits of weariness and embarrassment; and, if you have any fellow-feeling, these cannot fail to produce a feeling of discomfort. The disorder is catching; and do what you will you cannot resist the general infection. You struggle against it; you make spasmodic efforts to be lively; but none of your sallies or your good stories do more than raise a simper or a forced laugh: intellect and feeling are alike asphyxiated. And when, at length, yielding to your disgust, you rush away, how great is the relief when you get into the fresh air, and see the stars! How you "Thank God, that's over!" and half resolve to avoid all such boredom for the future!

What, now, is the secret of this perpetual miscarriage and disappointment? Does not the fault lie with all these needless adjuncts—these elaborate dressings, these set forms, these expensive preparations, these many devices and arrangements that imply trouble and raise expectation? Who that has lived thirty years in the world has not discovered that Pleasure is coy; and must not be too directly pursued, but must be caught unawares? An air from a street-piano, heard while at work, will often gratify more than the choicest music played at a concert by the most accomplished musicians. A single good picture seen in a dealer's window, may give keener enjoyment than a whole exhibition gone through with catalogue and pencil. By the time we have got ready our elaborate apparatus by which to secure happiness, the happiness is gone. It is too subtle to be contained in these receivers, garnished with compliments, and fenced round with etiquette. The more we multiply and complicate appliances, the more certain are we to drive it away.

The reason is patent enough. These higher emotions to which social intercourse ministers, are of extremely complex nature; they consequently depend for their production upon very numerous

conditions; the more numerous the conditions, the greater the liability that one or other of them will be disturbed, and the emotions consequently prevented. It takes a considerable misfortune to destroy appetite; but cordial sympathy with those around may be extinguished by a look or a word. Hence it follows, that the more multiplied the *unnecessary* requirements with which social intercourse is surrounded, the less likely are its pleasures to be achieved. It is difficult enough to fulfil continuously all the *essentials* to a pleasurable communion with others: how much more difficult, then, must it be continuously to fulfil a host of *non-essentials* also! It is, indeed, impossible. The attempt inevitably ends in the sacrifice of the first to the last—the essentials to the non-essentials. What chance is there of getting any genuine response from the lady who is thinking of your stupidity in taking her in to dinner on the wrong arm? How are you likely to have agreeable converse with the gentleman who is fuming internally because he is not placed next to the hostess? Formalities, familiar as they may become, necessarily occupy attention—necessarily multiply the occasions for mistake, misunderstanding, and jealousy, on the part of one or other—necessarily distract all minds from the thoughts and feelings that should occupy them—necessarily, therefore, subvert those conditions under which only any sterling intercourse is to be had.

And this indeed is the fatal mischief which these conventions entail—a mischief to which every other is secondary. They destroy those highest of our pleasures which they profess to subserve. All institutions are alike in this, that however useful, and needful even, they originally were, they not only in the end cease to be so, but become detrimental. While humanity is growing, they continue fixed; daily get more mechanical and unvital; and by and by tend to strangle what they before preserved. It is not simply that they become corrupt and fail to act; they become obstructions. Old forms of government finally grow so oppressive, that they must be thrown off even at the risk of reigns of terror. Old creeds end in being dead formulas, which no longer aid but distort and arrest the general mind; while the State-churches administering them, come to be instruments for subsidising conservatism and repressing progress. Old schemes of education, incarnated in public schools and colleges, continue filling the heads of new generations with what has become relatively useless knowledge, and, by consequence, excluding knowledge which is useful. Not an organisation of any kind—political, religious, literary, philanthropic—but what, by its ever-multiplying regulations, its accumulating wealth, its yearly addition of officers, and the creeping into it of patronage and party feeling, eventually loses its original spirit, and sinks into a mere lifeless mechanism, worked with a view to private ends—a mechanism which not merely fails of its first purpose, but is a positive hindrance to it.

Thus is it, too, with social usages. We read of the Chinese that they have "ponderous ceremonies transmitted from time immemorial," which make social intercourse a burden. The court forms prescribed by monarchs for their own exaltation, have, in all times and places, ended in consuming the comfort of their lives. And so the artificial observances of the dining-room and saloon, in proportion as they are many and strict, extinguish that agreeable communion which they were originally intended to secure. The dislike with which people commonly speak of society that is "formal," and "stiff," and "ceremonious," implies the general recognition of this fact; and this recognition, logically developed, involves that all usages of behaviour which are not based on natural requirements, are injurious. That these conventions defeat their own ends is no new assertion. Swift, criticising the manners of his day, says—"Wise men are often more uneasy at the over-civility of these refiners than they could possibly be in the conversation of peasants and mechanics."

But it is not only in these details that the self-defeating action of our arrangements is traceable: it is traceable in the very substance and nature of them. Our social intercourse, as commonly managed, is a mere semblance of the reality sought. What is it that we want? Some sympathetic converse with our fellow-creatures: some converse that shall not be mere dead words, but the vehicle of living thoughts and feelings—converse in which the eyes and the face shall speak, and the tones of the voice be full of meaning—converse which shall make us feel no longer alone, but shall draw us closer to another, and double our own emotions by adding another's to them. Who is there that has not, from time to time, felt how cold and flat is all this talk about politics and science, and the new books and the new men, and how a genuine utterance of fellow-feeling outweighs the whole of it? Mark the words of Bacon:—"For a crowd is not a company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love."

If this be true, then it is only after acquaintance has grown into intimacy, and intimacy has ripened into friendship, that the real communion which men need becomes possible. A rationally-formed circle must consist almost wholly of those on terms of familiarity and regard, with but one or two strangers. What folly, then, underlies the whole system of our grand dinners, our "at homes," our evening parties—assemblages made up of many who never met before, many others who just bow to each other, many others who though familiar feel mutual indifference, with just a few real friends lost in the general mass! You need, but look round at the artificial expression of face, to see at once how it is. All have their disguises on; and how can there be sympathy between masks? No wonder that in private every

one exclaims against the stupidity of these gatherings. No wonder that hostesses get them up rather because they must than because they wish. No wonder that the invited go less from the expectation of pleasure than from fear of giving offence. The whole thing is a gigantic mistake—an organised disappointment.

And then note, lastly, that in this case, as in all others, when an organisation has become effete and inoperative for its legitimate purpose, it is employed for quite other ones—quite opposite ones. What is the usual plea put in for giving and attending these tedious assemblies? "I admit that they are stupid and frivolous enough," replies every man to your criticisms; "but then, you know, one must keep up one's connections." And could you get from his wife a sincere answer, it would be—"Like you, I am sick of these frivolities; but then, we must get our daughters married." The one knows that there is a profession to push, a practice to gain, a business to extend: or parliamentary influence, or county patronage, or votes, or office, to be got: position, berths, favours, profit. The other's thoughts run upon husbands and settlements, wives and dowries. Worthless for their ostensible purpose of daily bringing human beings into pleasurable relations with each other, these cumbrous appliances of our social intercourse are now perseveringly kept in action with a view to the pecuniary and matrimonial results which they indirectly produce.

Who then shall say that the reform of our system of observances is unimportant? When we see how this system induces fashionable extravagance, with its entailed bankruptcy and ruin—when we mark how greatly it limits the amount of social intercourse among the less wealthy classes—when we find that many who most need to be disciplined by mixing with the refined are driven away by it, and led into dangerous and often fatal courses—when we count up the many minor evils it inflicts, the extra work which its costliness entails on all professional and mercantile men, the damage to public taste in dress and decoration by the setting up of its absurdities as standards for imitation, the injury to health indicated in the faces of its devotees at the close of the London season, the mortality of milliners and the like, which its sudden exigencies yearly involve;—and when to all these we add its fatal sin, that it blights, withers up, and kills that high enjoyment it professedly ministers to—that enjoyment which is a chief end of our hard struggling in life to obtain—shall we not conclude that to reform our system of etiquette and fashion, is an aim yielding to few in urgency?

There needs, then, a protestantism in social usages. Forms that have ceased to facilitate and have become obstructive—whether political, religious, or other—have ever to be swept away; and eventually are so swept away in all cases. Signs are not wanting that some change is at hand. A host of satirists, led on by Thackeray, have been for years engaged in bringing our sham-festivities, and our fashionable follies, into contempt; and in their candid moods, most men laugh at the frivolities with which they and the world in general are deluded. Ridicule has always been a revolutionary agent. That which is habitually assailed with sneers and sarcasms cannot long survive. Institutions that have lost their roots in men's respect and faith are doomed; and the day of their dissolution is not far off. The time is approaching, then, when our system of social observances must pass through some crisis, out of which it will come purified and comparatively simple.

How this crisis will be brought about, no one can with any certainty say. Whether by the continuance and increase of individual protests, or whether by the union of many persons for the practice and propagation of some better system, the future alone can decide. The influence of dissentients acting without cooperation, seems, under the present state of things, inadequate. Standing severally alone, and having no well-defined views; frowned on by conformists, and expostulated with even by those who secretly sympathise with them; subject to petty persecutions, and unable to trace any benefit produced by their example; they are apt, one by one, to give up their attempts as hopeless. The young convention-breaker eventually finds that he pays too heavily for his nonconformity. Hating, for example, everything that bears about it any remnant of servility, he determines, in the ardour of his independence, that he will uncover to no one. But what he means simply as a general protest, he finds that ladies interpret into a personal disrespect. Though he sees that, from the days of chivalry downwards, these marks of supreme consideration paid to the other sex have been but a hypocritical counterpart to the actual subjection in which men have held them—a pretended submission to compensate for a real domination; and though he sees that when the true dignity of women is recognised, the mock dignities given to them will be abolished, yet he does not like to be thus misunderstood, and so hesitates in his practice.

In other cases, again, his courage fails him. Such of his unconventionalities as can be attributed only to eccentricity, he has no qualms about: for, on the whole, he feels rather complimented than otherwise in being considered a disregarder of public opinion. But when they are liable to be put down to ignorance, to ill-breeding, or to poverty, he becomes a coward. However clearly the recent innovation of eating some kinds of fish with knife and fork proves the fork-and-bread practice to have had little but caprice for its basis, yet he dares not wholly ignore that practice while fashion partially maintains it. Though he thinks that a silk handkerchief is quite as appropriate for drawing-room use as a white

cambric one, he is not altogether at ease in acting out his opinion. Then, too, he begins to perceive that his resistance to prescription brings round disadvantageous results which he had not calculated upon. He had expected that it would save him from a great deal of social intercourse of a frivolous kind—that it would offend the fools, but not the sensible people; and so would serve as a self-acting test by which those worth knowing would be separated from those not worth knowing. But the fools prove to be so greatly in the majority that, by offending them, he closes against himself nearly all the avenues through which the sensible people are to be reached. Thus he finds that his nonconformity is frequently misinterpreted; that there are but few directions in which he dares to carry it consistently out; that the annoyances and disadvantages which it brings upon him are greater than he anticipated; and that the chances of his doing any good are very remote. Hence he gradually loses resolution, and lapses, step by step, into the ordinary routine of observances.

Abortive as individual protests thus generally turn out, it may possibly be that nothing effectual will be done until there arises some organised resistance to this invisible despotism, by which our modes and habits are dictated. It may happen, that the government of Manners and Fashion will be rendered less tyrannical, as the political and religious governments have been, by some antagonistic union. Alike in Church and State, men's first emancipations from excess of restriction were achieved by numbers, bound together by a common creed, or a common political faith. What remained undone while there were but individual schismatics or rebels, was effected when there came to be many acting in concert. It is tolerably clear that these earliest instalments of freedom could not have been obtained in any other way; for so long as the feeling of personal independence was weak and the rule strong, there could never have been a sufficient number of separate dissentients to produce the desired results. Only in these later times, during which the secular and spiritual controls have been growing less coercive, and the tendency towards individual liberty greater, has it become possible for smaller and smaller sects and parties to fight against established creeds and laws; until now men may safely stand even alone in their antagonism.

The failure of individual nonconformity to customs, as above illustrated, suggests that an analogous series of changes may have to be gone through in this case also. It is true that the *lex non scripta* differs from the *lex scripta* in this, that, being unwritten, it is more readily altered; and that it has, from time to time, been quietly ameliorated. Nevertheless, we shall find that the analogy holds substantially good. For in this case, as in the others, the essential revolution is not the substituting of any one set of restraints for any other, but the limiting or abolishing the authority which prescribes restraints. Just as the fundamental change inaugurated by the Reformation, was not a superseding of one creed by another, but an ignoring of the arbiter who before dictated creeds—just as the fundamental change which Democracy long ago commenced, was not from this particular law to that, but from the despotism of one to the freedom of all; so, the parallel change yet to be wrought out in this supplementary government of which we are treating, is not the replacing of absurd usages by sensible ones, but the dethronement of that secret, irresponsible power which now imposes our usages, and the assertion of the right of all individuals to choose their own usages. In rules of living, a West-end clique is our Pope; and we are all papists, with but a mere sprinkling of heretics. On all who decisively rebel, comes down the penalty of excommunication, with its long catalogue of disagreeable and, indeed, serious consequences.

The liberty of the subject asserted in our constitution, and ever on the increase, has yet to be wrested from this subtler tyranny. The right of private judgment, which our ancestors wrung from the church, remains to be claimed from this dictator of our habits. Or, as before said, to free us from these idolatries and superstitious conformities, there has still to come a protestantism in social usages. Parallel, therefore, as is the change to be wrought out, it seems not improbable that it may be wrought out in an analogous way. That influence which solitary dissentients fail to gain, and that perseverance which they lack, may come into existence when they unite. That persecution which the world now visits upon them from mistaking their nonconformity for ignorance or disrespect, may diminish when it is seen to result from principle. The penalty which exclusion now entails may disappear when they become numerous enough to form visiting circles of their own. And when a successful stand has been made, and the brunt of the opposition has passed, that large amount of secret dislike to our observances which now pervades society, may manifest itself with sufficient power to effect the desired emancipation.

Whether such will be the process, time alone can decide. That community of origin, growth, supremacy, and decadence which we have found among all kinds of government, suggests a community in modes of change also. On the other hand, Nature often performs substantially similar operations, in ways apparently different. Hence these details can never be foretold.

Society, in all its developments, undergoes the process of exuviation. These old forms which it successively throws off, have all been once vitally united with it—have severally served as the protective envelopes within which a higher humanity was being evolved. They are cast aside only when

they become hindrances—only when some inner and better envelope has been formed; and they bequeath to us all that there was in them of good. The periodical abolitions of tyrannical laws have left the administration of justice not only uninjured, but purified. Dead and buried creeds have not carried with them the essential morality they contained, which still exists, uncontaminated by the sloughs of superstition. And all that there is of justice and kindness and beauty, embodied in our cumbrous forms of etiquette, will live perennially when the forms themselves have been forgotten.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 37: From "Illustrations of Universal Progress," 1864.]

TALK AND TALKERS[38]

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

"Sir, we had a good talk."—JOHNSON.

"As we must account for every idle word, so we must for every idle silence."—FRANKLIN.

There can be no fairer ambition than to excel in talk; to be affable, gay, ready, clear and welcome; to have a fact, a thought, or an illustration, pat to every subject; and not only to cheer the flight of time among our intimates, but bear our part in that great international congress, always sitting, where public wrongs are first declared, public errors first corrected, and the course of public opinion shaped, day by day, a little nearer to the right. No measure comes before Parliament but it has been long ago prepared by the grand jury of the talkers; no book is written that has not been largely composed by their assistance. Literature in many of its branches is no other than the shadow of good talk; but the imitation falls far short of the original in life, freedom, and effect. There are always two to a talk, giving and taking, comparing experience and according conclusions. Talk is fluid, tentative, continually "in further search and progress;" while written words remain fixed, become idols even to the writer, found wooden dogmatisms, and preserve flies of obvious error in the amber of the truth. Last and chief, while literature, gagged with linsey-woolsey, can only deal with a fraction of the life of man, talk goes fancy free and may call a spade a spade. It cannot, even if it would, become merely aesthetic or merely classical like literature. A jest intervenes, the solemn humbug is dissolved in laughter, and speech runs forth out of the contemporary groove into the open fields of nature, cheery and cheering, like schoolboys out of school. And it is in talk alone that we can learn our period and ourselves. In short, the first duty of a man is to speak; that is his chief business in this world; and talk, which is the harmonious speech of two or more, is by far the most accessible of pleasures. It costs nothing in money; it is all profit; it completes our education, founds and fosters our friendships, and can be enjoyed at any age and in almost any state of health.

The spice of life is battle; the friendliest relations are still a kind of contest; and if we would not forego all that is valuable in our lot, we must continually face some other person, eye to eye, and wrestle a fall whether in love or enmity. It is still by force of body, or power of character or intellect, that we attain to worthy pleasures. Men and women contend for each other in the lists of love, like rival mesmerists; the active and adroit decide their challenges in the sports of the body; and the sedentary sit down to chess or conversation. All sluggish and pacific pleasures are, to the same degree, solitary and selfish; and every durable bond between human beings is founded in or heightened by some element of competition. Now, the relation that has the least root in matter is undoubtedly that airy one of friendship; and hence, I suppose, it is that good talk most commonly arises among friends. Talk is, indeed, both the scene and instrument of friendship. It is in talk alone that the friends can measure strength, and enjoy that amicable counter-assertion of personality which is the gauge of relations and the sport of life.

A good talk is not to be had for the asking. Humours must first be accorded in a kind of overture or prologue; hour, company and circumstance be suited; and then, at a fit juncture, the subject, the quarry of two heated minds, springs up like a deer out of the wood. Not that the talker has any of the hunter's pride, though he has all and more than all his ardour. The genuine artist follows the stream of conversation as an angler follows the windings of a brook, not dallying where he fails to "kill." He trusts implicitly to hazard; and he is rewarded by continual variety, continual pleasure, and those changing prospects of the truth that are the best of education. There is nothing in a subject, so called, that we should regard it as an idol, or follow it beyond the promptings of desire. Indeed, there are few subjects;

and so far as they are truly talkable, more than the half of them may be reduced to three: that I am I, that you are you, and that there are other people dimly understood to be not quite the same as either. Wherever talk may range, it still runs half the time on these eternal lines. The theme being set, each plays on himself as on an instrument; asserts and justifies himself; ransacks his brain for instances and opinions, and brings them forth new-minted, to his own surprise and the admiration of his adversary. All natural talk is a festival of ostentation; and by the laws of the game each accepts and fans the vanity of the other. It is from that reason that we venture to lay ourselves so open, that we dare to be so warmly eloquent, and that we swell in each other's eyes to such a vast proportion. For talkers, once launched, begin to overflow the limits of their ordinary selves, tower up to the height of their secret pretensions, and give themselves out for the heroes, brave, pious, musical, and wise, that in their most shining moments they aspire to be. So they weave for themselves with words and for a while inhabit a palace of delights, temple at once and theatre, where they fill the round of the world's dignities, and feast with the gods, exulting in Kudos.[39] And when the talk is over, each goes his way, still flushed with vanity and admiration, still trailing clouds of glory; each declines from the height of his ideal orgy, not in a moment, but by slow declension. I remember, in the *entr'acte* of an afternoon performance, coming forth into the sunshine, in a beautiful green, gardened corner of a romantic city; and as I sat and smoked, the music moving in my blood, I seemed to sit there and evaporate *The Flying Dutchman* (for it was that I had been hearing) with a wonderful sense of life, warmth, well-being, and pride; and the noises of the city, voices, bells and marching feet, fell together in my ears like a symphonious orchestra. In the same way, the excitement of a good talk lives for a long while after in the blood, the heart still hot within you, the brain still simmering, and the physical earth swimming around you with the colours of the sunset.

Natural talk, like ploughing, should turn up a large surface of life, rather than dig mines into geological strata. Masses of experience, anecdote, incident, cross-lights, quotation, historical instances, the whole flotsam and jetsam of two minds forced in and in upon the matter in hand from every point of the compass, and from every degree of mental elevation and abasement—these are the material with which talk is fortified, the food on which the talkers thrive. Such argument as is proper to the exercise should still be brief and seizing. Talk should proceed by instances; by the apposite, not the expository. It should keep close along the lines of humanity, near the bosoms and businesses of men, at the level where history, fiction and experience intersect and illuminate each other. I am I, and You are You, with all my heart; but conceive how these lean propositions change and brighten when, instead of words, the actual you and I sit cheek by jowl, the spirit housed in the live body, and the very clothes uttering voices to corroborate the story in the face. Not less surprising is the change when we leave off to speak of generalities—the bad, the good, the miser, and all the characters of Theophrastus—and call up other men, by anecdote or instance, in their very trick and feature; or trading on a common knowledge, toss each other famous names, still glowing with the hues of life. Communication is no longer by words, but by the instancing of whole biographies, epics, systems of philosophy, and epochs of history, in bulk. That which is understood excels that which is spoken in quantity and quality alike; ideas thus figured and personified, change hands, as we may say, like coin; and the speakers imply without effort the most obscure and intricate thoughts. Strangers who have a large common ground of reading will, for this reason, come the sooner to the grapple of genuine converse. If they know Othello and Napoleon, Consuelo and Clarissa Harlowe, Vautrin and Steenie Steenson, they can leave generalities and begin at once to speak by figures.

Conduct and art are the two subjects that arise most frequently and that embrace the widest range of facts. A few pleasures bear discussion for their own sake, but only those which are most social or most radically human; and even these can only be discussed among their devotees. A technicality is always welcome to the expert, whether in athletics, art, or law; I have heard the best kind of talk on technicalities from such rare and happy persons as both know and love their business. No human being ever spoke of scenery for above two minutes at a time, which makes me suspect we hear too much of it in literature. The weather is regarded as the very nadir and scoff of conversational topics. And yet the weather, the dramatic element in scenery, is far more tractable in language, and far more human both in import and suggestion than the stable features of the landscape. Sailors and shepherds, and the people generally of coast and mountain, talk well of it; and it is often excitingly presented in literature. But the tendency of all living talk draws it back and back into the common focus of humanity. Talk is a creature of the street and market-place, feeding on gossip; and its last resort is still in a discussion on morals. That is the heroic form of gossip; heroic in virtue of its high pretensions; but still gossip, because it turns on personalities. You can keep no men long, nor Scotchmen at all, off moral or theological discussion. These are to all the world what law is to lawyers; they are everybody's technicalities; the medium through which all consider life, and the dialect in which they express their judgments. I knew three young men who walked together daily for some two months in a solemn and beautiful forest and in cloudless summer weather; daily they talked with unabated zest, and yet scarce wandered that whole time beyond two subjects—theology and love. And perhaps neither a court of love[40] nor an assembly of divines would have granted their premises or welcomed their conclusions.

Conclusions, indeed, are not often reached by talk any more than by private thinking. That is not the profit. The profit is in the exercise, and above all in the experience; for when we reason at large on any subject, we review our state and history in life. From time to time, however, and specially, I think, in talking art, talk becomes effective, conquering like war, widening the boundaries of knowledge like an exploration. A point arises; the question takes a problematical, a baffling, yet a likely air; the talkers begin to feel lively presentiments of some conclusion near at hand; towards this they strive with emulous ardour, each by his own path, and struggling for first utterance; and then one leaps upon the summit of that matter with a shout, and almost at the same moment the other is beside him; and behold they are agreed. Like enough, the progress is illusory, a mere cat's cradle having been wound and unwound out of words. But the sense of joint discovery is none the less giddy and inspiring. And in the life of the talker such triumphs, though imaginary, are neither few nor far apart; they are attained with speed and pleasure, in the hour of mirth; and by the nature of the process, they are always worthily shared.

There is a certain attitude combative at once and deferential, eager to fight yet most averse to quarrel, which marks out at once the talkable man. It is not eloquence, not fairness, not obstinacy, but a certain proportion of all of these that I love to encounter in my amicable adversaries. They must not be pontiffs holding doctrine, but huntsmen questing after elements of truth. Neither must they be boys to be instructed, but fellow-teachers with whom I may wrangle and agree on equal terms. We must reach some solution, some shadow of consent; for without that, eager talk becomes a torture. But we do not wish to reach it cheaply, or quickly, or without the tussle and effort wherein pleasure lies.

The very best talker, with me, is one whom I shall call Spring-Heel'd Jack. I say so, because I never knew any one who mingled so largely the possible ingredients of converse. In the Spanish proverb, the fourth man necessary to compound a salad, is a madman to mix it: Jack is that madman. I know not which is more remarkable: the insane lucidity of his conclusions, the humorous eloquence of his language, or his power of method, bringing the whole of life into the focus of the subject treated, mixing the conversational salad like a drunken god. He doubles like the serpent, changes and flashes like the shaken kaleidoscope, transmigrates bodily into the views of others, and so, in the twinkling of an eye and with a heady rapture, turns questions inside out and flings them empty before you on the ground, like a triumphant conjuror. It is my common practice when a piece of conduct puzzles me, to attack it in the presence of Jack with such grossness, such partiality and such wearing iteration, as at length shall spur him up in its defence. In a moment he transmigrates, dons the required character, and with moonstruck philosophy justifies the act in question. I can fancy nothing to compare with the *vim* of these impersonations, the strange scale of language, flying from Shakespeare to Kant, and from Kant to Major Dyngwell—

"As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument—"

the sudden, sweeping generalisations, the absurd irrelevant particularities, the wit, wisdom, folly, humour, eloquence and bathos, each startling in its kind, and yet all luminous in the admired disorder of their combination. A talker of a different calibre, though belonging to the same school, is Burly. Burly is a man of great presence; he commands a larger atmosphere, gives the impression of a grosser mass of character than most men. It has been said of him that his presence could be felt in a room you entered blindfold; and the same, I think, has been said of other powerful constitutions condemned to much physical inaction. There is something boisterous and piratic in Burly's manner of talk which suits well enough with this impression. He will roar you down, he will bury his face in his hands, he will undergo passions of revolt and agony; and meanwhile his attitude of mind is really both conciliatory and receptive; and after Pistol has been out-Pistol'd, and the welkin rung for hours, you begin to perceive a certain subsidence in these spring torrents, points of agreement issue, and you end arm-in-arm, and in a glow of mutual admiration. The outcry only serves to make your final union the more unexpected and precious. Throughout there has been perfect sincerity, perfect intelligence, a desire to hear although not always to listen, and an unaffected eagerness to meet concessions. You have, with Burly, none of the dangers that attend debate with Spring-Heel'd Jack; who may at any moment turn his powers of transmigration on yourself, create for you a view you never held, and then furiously fall on you for holding it. These, at least, are my two favourites, and both are loud, copious, intolerant talkers. This argues that I myself am in the same category; for if we love talking at all, we love a bright, fierce adversary, who will hold his ground, foot by foot, in much our own manner, sell his attention dearly, and give us our full measure of the dust and exertion of battle. Both these men can be beat from a position, but it takes six hours to do it; a high and hard adventure, worth attempting. With both you can pass days in an enchanted country of the mind, with people, scenery and manners of its own; live a life apart, more arduous, active and glowing than any real existence; and come forth again when the talk is over, as out of a theatre or a dream, to find the east wind still blowing and the chimney-pots of the old battered city still around you. Jack has the far finer mind, Burly the far more honest; Jack gives us the

animated poetry, Burly the romantic prose, of similar themes; the one glances high like a meteor and makes a light in darkness; the other, with many changing hues of fire, burns at the sea-level, like a conflagration; but both have the same humour and artistic interests, the same unquenched ardour in pursuit, the same gusts of talk and thunderclaps of contradiction.

Cockshot[41] is a different article, but vastly entertaining, and has been meat and drink to me for many a long evening. His manner is dry, brisk and pertinacious, and the choice of words not much. The point about him is his extraordinary readiness and spirit. You can propound nothing but he has either a theory about it ready-made, or will have one instantly on the stocks, and proceed to lay its timbers and launch it in your presence. "Let me see," he will say. "Give me a moment. I *should* have some theory for that." A blither spectacle than the vigour with which he sets about the task, it were hard to fancy. He is possessed by a demoniac energy, welding the elements for his life, and bending ideas, as an athlete bends a horseshoe, with a visible and lively effort. He has, in theorising, a compass, an art; what I would call the synthetic gusto; something of a Herbert Spencer, who should see the fun of the thing. You are not bound, and no more is he, to place your faith in these brand-new opinions. But some of them are right enough, durable even for life; and the poorest serve for a cock-shy—as when idle people, after picnics, float a bottle on a pond and have an hour's diversion ere, it sinks. Whichever they are, serious opinions or humours of the moment, he still defends his ventures with indefatigable wit and spirit, hitting savagely himself, but taking punishment like a man. He knows and never forgets that people talk, first of all, for the sake of talking; conducts himself in the ring, to use the old slang, like a thorough "glutton," and honestly enjoys a telling facer from his adversary. Cockshot is bottled effervescency, the sworn foe of sleep. Three-in-the-morning Cockshot, says a victim. His talk is like the driest of all imaginable dry champagnes. Sleight of hand and inimitable quickness are the qualities by which he lives. Athelred, on the other hand, presents you with the spectacle of a sincere and somewhat slow nature thinking aloud. He is the most unready man I ever knew to shine in conversation. You may see him sometimes wrestle with a refractory jest for a minute or two together, and perhaps fail to throw it in the end. And there is something singularly engaging, often instructive, in the simplicity with which he thus exposes the process as well as the result, the works as well as the dial of the clock. Withal he has his hours of inspiration. Apt words come to him as if by accident, and, coming from deeper down, they smack the more personally, they have the more of fine old crusted humanity, rich in sediment and humour. There are sayings of his in which he has stamped himself into the very grain of the language; you would think he must have worn the words next his skin and slept with them. Yet it is not as a sayer of particular good things that Athelred is most to be regarded, rather as the stalwart woodman of thought. I have pulled on a light cord often enough, while he has been wielding the broad-axe; and between us, on this unequal, division, many a specious fallacy has fallen. I have known him to battle the same question night after night for years, keeping it in the reign of talk, constantly applying it and re-applying it to life with humorous or grave intention, and all the while, never hurrying, nor flagging, nor taking an unfair advantage of the facts. Jack at a given moment, when arising, as it were, from the tripod, can be more radiantly just to those from whom he differs; but then the tenor of his thoughts is even calumnious; while Athelred, slower to forge excuses, is yet slower to condemn, and sits over the welter of the world, vacillating but still judicial, and still faithfully contending with his doubts.

Both the last talkers deal much in points of conduct and religion studied in the "dry light" of prose. Indirectly and as if against his will the same elements from time to time appear in the troubled and poetic talk of Opalstein. His various and exotic knowledge, complete although unready sympathies, and fine, full, discriminative flow of language, fit him out to be the best of talkers; so perhaps he is with some, not *quite* with me—*proxime accessit*,[42] I should say. He sings the praises of the earth and the arts, flowers and jewels, wine and music, in a moonlight, serenading manner, as to the light guitar; even wisdom comes from his tongue like singing; no one is, indeed, more tuneful in the upper notes. But even while he sings the song of the Sirens, he still hearkens to the barking of the Sphinx. Jarring Byronic notes interrupt the flow of his Horatian humours. His mirth has something of the tragedy of the world for its perpetual background; and he feasts like Don Giovanni to a double orchestra, one lightly sounding for the dance, one pealing Beethoven in the distance. He is not truly reconciled either with life or with himself; and this instant war in his members sometimes divides the man's attention. He does not always, perhaps not often, frankly surrender himself in conversation. He brings into the talk other thoughts than those which he expresses; you are conscious that he keeps an eye on something else, that he does not shake off the world, nor quite forget himself. Hence arise occasional disappointments; even an occasional unfairness for his companions, who find themselves one day giving too much, and the next, when they are wary out of season, giving perhaps too little. Purcel is in another class from any I have mentioned. He is no debater, but appears in conversation, as occasion rises, in two distinct characters, one of which I admire and fear, and the other love. In the first, he is radiantly civil and rather silent, sits on a high, courtly hilltop, and from that vantage-ground drops you his remarks like favours. He seems not to share in our sublunary contentions; he wears no sign of interest; when on a sudden there falls in a crystal of wit, so polished that the dull do not perceive it, but so right

that the sensitive are silenced. True talk should have more body and blood, should be louder, vainer and more declaratory of the man; the true talker should not hold so steady an advantage over whom he speaks with; and that is one reason out of a score why I prefer my Purcel in his second character, when he unbends into a strain of graceful gossip, singing like the fireside kettle. In these moods he has an elegant homeliness that rings of the true Queen Anne. I know another person who attains, in his moments, to the insolence of a Restoration comedy, speaking, I declare, as Congreve wrote; but that is a sport of nature, and scarce falls under the rubric, for there is none, alas! to give him answer.

One last remark occurs: It is the mark of genuine conversation that the sayings can scarce be quoted with their full effect beyond the circle of common friends. To have their proper weight they, should appear in a biography, and with the portrait of the speaker. Good talk is dramatic; it is like an impromptu piece of acting where each should represent himself to the greatest advantage; and that is the best kind of talk where each speaker is most fully and candidly himself, and where, if you were to shift the speeches, round from one to another, there would be the greatest loss in significance and perspicuity. It is for this reason that talk depends so wholly on our company. We should like to introduce Falstaff and Mercutio, or Falstaff and Sir Toby; but Falstaff in talk with Cordelia seems even painful. Most of us, by the Protean quality of man, can talk to some degree with all; but the true talk, that strikes out all the slumbering best of us, comes only with the peculiar brethren of our spirits, is founded as deep as love in the constitution of our being, and is a thing to relish with all our energy, while yet we have it, and to be grateful for forever.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 38: The first of two papers on this subject written in 1881-2; reprinted here, by permission of the publishers, from "Memories and Portraits" in the Biographical Edition of Stevenson's Works, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.]

[Footnote 39: Kudos (Greek): glory.]

[Footnote 40: Court of love: a mediaeval institution for the discussion of questions of chivalry.]

[Footnote 41: The Late Fleeming Jenkin—Author's note.]

[Footnote 42: Proxime accessit: he comes very close to it.]

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF THE COLLEGE-BRED[43]

WILLIAM JAMES

Of what use is a college training? We who have had it seldom hear the question raised—we might be a little nonplussed to answer it offhand. A certain amount of meditation has brought me to this as the pithiest reply which I myself can give: The best claim that a college education can possibly make on your respect, the best thing it can aspire to accomplish for you, is this: that it should *help you to know a good man when you see him*. This is as true of women's as of men's colleges; but that it is neither a joke nor a one-sided abstraction I shall now endeavor to show.

What talk do we commonly hear about the contrast between college education and the education which business or technical or professional schools confer? The college education is called higher because it is supposed to be so general and so disinterested. At the "schools" you get a relatively narrow practical skill, you are told, whereas the "colleges" give you the more liberal culture, the broader outlook, the historical perspective, the philosophic atmosphere, or something which phrases of that sort try to express. You are made into an efficient instrument for doing a definite thing, you hear, at the schools; but, apart from that, you may remain a crude and smoky kind of petroleum, incapable of spreading light. The universities and colleges, on the other hand, although they may leave you less efficient for this or that practical task, suffuse your whole mentality with something more important than skill. They redeem you, make you well-bred; they make "good company" of you mentally. If they find you with a naturally boorish or caddish mind, they cannot leave you so, as a technical school may leave you. This, at least, is pretended; this is what we hear among college-trained people when they compare their education with every other sort. Now, exactly how much does this signify?

It is certain, to begin with, that the narrowest trade or professional training does something more for a man than to make a skillful practical tool of him—it makes him also a judge of other men's skill. Whether his trade be pleading at the bar or surgery or plastering or plumbing, it develops a critical sense in him for that sort of occupation. He understands the difference between second-rate and first-rate work in his whole branch of industry; he gets to know a good job in his own line as soon as he sees it; and getting to know this in his own line, he gets a faint sense of what good work may mean anyhow, that may, if circumstances favor, spread into his judgments elsewhere. Sound work, clean work, finished work; feeble work, slack work, sham work—these words express an identical contrast in many different departments of activity. In so far, then, even the humblest manual trade may beget in one a certain small degree of power to judge of good work generally.

Now, what is supposed to be the line of us who have the higher college training? Is there any broader line—since our education claims primarily not to be "narrow"—in which we also are made good judges between what is first-rate and what is second-rate only? What is especially taught in the colleges has long been known by the name of the "humanities," and these are often identified with Greek and Latin. But it is only as literatures, not as languages, that Greek and Latin have any general humanity-value; so that in a broad sense the humanities mean literature primarily, and in a still broader sense the study of masterpieces in almost any field of human endeavor. Literature keeps the primacy; for it not only *consists* of masterpieces, but is largely *about* masterpieces, being little more than an appreciative chronicle of human master-strokes, so far as it takes the form of criticism and history. You can give humanistic value to almost anything by teaching it historically. Geology, economics, mechanics, are humanities when taught with reference to the successive achievements of the geniuses to which these sciences owe their being. Not taught thus, literature remains grammar, art a catalogue, history a list of dates, and natural science a sheet of formulas and weights and measures.

The sifting of human creations!—nothing less than this is what we ought to mean by the humanities. Essentially this means biography; what our colleges should teach is, therefore, biographical history, not that of politics merely, but of anything and everything so far as human efforts and conquests are factors that have played their part. Studying in this way, we learn what type's of activity have stood the test of time; we acquire standards of the excellent: and durable. All our arts and sciences and institutions are but so many quests of perfection on the part of men; and when we see how diverse the types of excellence may be, how various the tests, how flexible the adaptations, we gain a richer sense of what the terms "better" and "worse" may signify in general. Our critical sensibilities grow both more acute and less fanatical. We sympathize with men's mistakes even in the act of penetrating them; we feel the pathos of lost causes and misguided epochs even while we applaud what overcame them.

Such words are vague and such ideas are inadequate, but their meaning is unmistakable. What the colleges—teaching humanities by examples which may be special, but which must be typical and pregnant—should at least try to give us, is a general sense of what, under various disguises, *superiority* has always signified and may still signify. The feeling for a good human job anywhere, the admiration of the really admirable, the disesteem of what is cheap and trashy and impermanent—this is what we call the critical sense, the sense for ideal values. It is the better part of what men know as wisdom. Some of us are wise in this way naturally and by genius; some of us never become so. But to have spent one's youth at college, in contact with the choice and rare and precious, and yet still to be a blind prig or vulgarian, unable to scent out human excellence or to divine it amid its accidents, to know it only when ticketed and labeled and forced on us by others, this indeed should be accounted the very calamity and shipwreck of a higher education.

The sense for human superiority ought, then, to be considered our line, as boring subways is the engineer's line and the surgeon's is appendicitis. Our colleges ought to have lit up in us a lasting relish for the better kind of man, a loss of appetite for mediocrities, and a disgust for cheap-jacks. We ought to smell, as it were, the difference of quality in men and their proposals when we enter the world of affairs about us. Expertness in this might well atone for some of our awkwardness at accounts, for some of our ignorance of dynamos. The best claim we can make for the higher education, the best single phrase in which we can tell what it ought to do for us, is, then, exactly what I said: it should enable us to *know a good man when we see him*.

That the phrase is anything but an empty epigram follows from the fact that if you ask in what line it is most important that a democracy like ours should have its sons and daughters skillful, you see that it is this line more than any other. "The people in their wisdom"—this is the kind of wisdom most needed by the people. Democracy is on its trial, and no one knows how it will stand the ordeal. Abounding about us are pessimistic prophets. Fickleness and violence used to be, but are no longer, the vices which they charge to democracy. What its critics now affirm is that its preferences are inveterately for the inferior. So it was in the beginning, they say, and so it will be world without end. Vulgarity enthroned and institutionalized, elbowing everything superior from the highway, this, they tell us, is our irremediable destiny; and the picture papers of the European continent are already drawing Uncle

Sam with the hog instead of the eagle for his heraldic emblem. The privileged aristocracies of the foretime, with all their iniquities, did at least preserve some taste for higher human quality and honor certain forms of refinement by their enduring traditions. But when democracy is sovereign, its doubters say, nobility will form a sort of invisible church, and sincerity and refinement, stripped of honor, precedence, and favor, will have to vegetate on sufferance in private corners. They will have no general influence. They will be harmless eccentricities.

Now, who can be absolutely certain that this may not be the career of democracy? Nothing future is quite secure; states enough have inwardly rotted; and democracy as a whole may undergo self-poisoning. But, on the other hand, democracy is a kind of religion, and we are bound not to admit its failure. Faiths and Utopias are the noblest exercise of human reason, and no one with a spark of reason in him will sit down fatalistically before the croaker's picture. The best of us are filled with the contrary vision of a democracy stumbling through every error till its institutions glow with justice and its customs shine with beauty. Our better men *shall* show the way and we *shall* follow them; so we are brought round again to the mission of the higher education in helping us to know the better kind of man whenever we see him.

The notion that a people can run itself and its affairs anonymously is now well known to be the silliest of absurdities. Mankind does nothing save through initiatives on the part of inventors, great or small, and imitation by the rest of us—these are the sole factors active in human progress. Individuals of genius show the way, and set the patterns, which common people then adopt and follow. *The rivalry of the patterns is the history of the world.* Our democratic problem thus is statable in ultra-simple terms: Who are the kind of men from whom our majorities shall take their cue? Whom shall they treat as rightful leaders? We and our leaders are the x and the y of the equation here; all other historic circumstances, be they economical, political, or intellectual, are only the background of occasion on which the living drama works itself out between us.

In this very simple way does the value of our educated class define itself: we more than others should be able to divine the worthier and better leaders. The terms here are monstrously simplified, of course, but such a bird's-eye view lets us immediately take our bearings. In our democracy, where everything else is so shifting, we alumni and alumnae of the colleges are the only permanent presence that corresponds to the aristocracy in older countries. We have continuous traditions, as they have; our motto, too, is *noblesse oblige*; and, unlike them, we stand for ideal interests solely, for we have no corporate selfishness and wield no powers of corruption. We ought to have our own class-consciousness. "Les intellectuels!" What prouder club name could there be than this one, used ironically by the party of "red blood," the party of every stupid prejudice and passion, during the anti-Dreyfus craze, to satirize the men in France who still retained some critical sense and judgment! Critical sense, it has to be confessed, is not an exciting term, hardly a banner to carry in processions. Affections for old habit, currents of self-interest, and gales of passion are the forces that keep the human ship moving; and the pressure of the judicious pilot's hand upon the tiller is a relatively insignificant energy. But the affections, passions, and interests are shifting, successive, and distraught; they blow in alternation while the pilot's hand is steadfast. He knows the compass, and, with all the leeways he is obliged to tack toward, he always makes some headway. A small force, if it never lets up, will accumulate effects more considerable than those of much greater forces if these work inconsistently. The ceaseless whisper of the more permanent ideals, the steady tug of truth and justice, give them but time, *must* warp the world in their direction.

This bird's-eye view of the general steering function of the college-bred amid the driftings of democracy ought to help us to a wider vision of what our colleges themselves should aim at. If we are to be the yeast cake for democracy's dough, if we are to make it rise with culture's preferences, we must see to it that culture spreads broad sails. We must shake the old double reefs out of the canvas into the wind and sunshine, and let in every modern subject, sure that any subject will prove humanistic, if its setting be kept only wide enough.

Stevenson says somewhere to his reader: "You think you are just making this bargain, but you are really laying down a link in the policy of mankind." Well, your technical school should enable you to make your bargain splendidly; but your college should show you just the place of that kind of bargain—a pretty poor place, possibly—in the whole policy of mankind. That is the kind of liberal outlook, of perspective, of atmosphere, which should surround every subject as a college deals with it.

We of the colleges must eradicate a curious notion which numbers of good people have about such ancient seats of learning as Harvard. To many ignorant outsiders, that name suggests little more than a kind of sterilized conceit and incapacity for being pleased. In Edith Wyatt's exquisite book of Chicago sketches called "Every One his Own Way," there is a couple who stand for culture in the sense of exclusiveness, Richard Elliot and his feminine counterpart—feeble caricatures of mankind, unable to know any good thing when they see it, incapable of enjoyment unless a printed label gives them leave.

Possibly this type of culture may exist near Cambridge and Boston, there may be specimens there, for priggishness is just like painters' colic or any other trade disease. But every good college makes its students immune against this malady, of which the microbe haunts the neighborhood-printed pages. It does so by its general tone being too hearty for the microbe's life. Real culture lives by sympathies and admirations, not by dislikes and disdains—under all misleading wrappings it pounces unerringly upon the human core. If a college, through the inferior human influences that have grown regnant there, fails to catch the robust tone, its failure is colossal, for its social function stops: democracy gives it a wide berth, turns toward it a deaf ear.

"Tone," to be sure, is a terribly vague word to use, but there is no other, and this whole meditation is over questions of tone. By their tone are all things human either lost or saved. If democracy is to be saved it must catch the higher, healthier tone. If we are to impress it with our preferences, we ourselves must use the proper tone, which we, in turn, must have caught from our own teachers. It all reverts in the end to the action of innumerable imitative individuals upon each other and to the question of whose tone has the highest spreading power. As a class, we college graduates should look to it that *ours* has spreading power. It ought to have the highest spreading power.

In our essential function of indicating the better men, we now have formidable competitors outside. *McClure's Magazine*, the *American Magazine*, *Collier's Weekly*, and, in its fashion, the *World's Work*, constitute together a real popular university along this very line. It would be a pity if any future historian were to have to write words like these: "By the middle of the twentieth century the higher institutions of learning had lost all influence over public opinion in the United States. But the mission of raising the tone of democracy, which they had proved themselves so lamentably unfitted to exert, was assumed with rare enthusiasm and prosecuted with extraordinary skill and success by a new educational power; and for the clarification of their human sympathies and elevation of their human preferences, the people at large acquired the habit of resorting exclusively to the guidance of certain private literary adventures, commonly designated in the market by the affectionate name of ten-cent magazines."

Must not we of the colleges see to it that no historian shall ever say anything like this? Vague as the phrase of knowing a good man when you see him may be, diffuse and indefinite as one must leave its application, is there any other formula that describes so well the result at which our institutions *ought* to aim? If they do that, they do the best thing conceivable. If they fail to do it, they fail in very deed. It surely is a fine synthetic formula. If our faculties and graduates could once collectively come to realize it as the great underlying purpose toward which they have always been more or less obscurely groping, great clearness would be shed over many of their problems; and, as for their influence in the midst of our social system, it would embark upon a new career of strength.

FOOTNOTES:

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THE LAW OF HUMAN PROGRESS[44]

HENRY GEORGE

What, then, is the law of human progress—the law under which civilization advances?

It must explain clearly and definitely, and not by vague generalities or superficial analogies, why, though mankind started presumably with the same capacities and at the same time, there now exist such wide differences in social development. It must account for the arrested civilizations and for the decayed and destroyed civilizations; for the general facts as to the rise of civilization, and for the petrifying or enervating force which the progress of civilization has heretofore always evolved. It must account for retrogression as well as for progression; for the differences in general character between Asiatic and European civilizations; for the difference between classical and modern civilizations; for the different rates at which progress goes on; and for those bursts, and starts, and halts of progress which are so marked as minor phenomena. And, thus, it must show us what are the essential conditions of progress, and what social adjustments advance and what retard it.

It is not difficult to discover such a law. We have but to look and we may see it. I do not pretend to

give it scientific precision, but merely to point it out.

The incentives to progress are the desires inherent in human nature—the desire to gratify the wants of the animal nature, the wants of the intellectual nature, and the wants of the sympathetic nature; the desire to be, to know, and to do—desires that short of infinity can never be satisfied, as they grow by what they feed on.

Mind is the instrument by which man advances, and by which each advance is secured and made the vantage ground for new advances. Though he may not by taking thought add a cubit to his stature, man may by taking thought extend his knowledge of the universe and his power over it, in what, so far as we can see, is an infinite degree. The narrow span of human life allows the individual to go but a short distance, but though each generation may do but little, yet generations, succeeding to the gain of their predecessors, may gradually elevate the status of mankind, as coral polyps, building one generation upon the work of the other, gradually elevate themselves from the bottom of the sea.

Mental power is, therefore, the motor of progress, and men tend to advance in proportion to the mental power expended in progression—the mental power which is devoted to the extension of knowledge, the improvement of methods, and the betterment of social conditions.

Now mental power is a fixed quantity—that is to say, there is a limit to the work a man can do with his mind, as there is to the work he can do with his body; therefore, the mental power which can be devoted to progress is only what is left after what is required for non-progressive purposes.

These non-progressive purposes in which mental power is consumed may be classified as maintenance and conflict. By maintenance I mean, not only the support of existence, but the keeping up of the social condition and the holding of advances already gained. By conflict I mean not merely warfare and preparation for warfare, but all expenditure of mental power in seeking the gratification of desire at the expense of others, and in resistance to such aggression.

To compare society to a boat. Her progress through the water will not depend upon the exertion of her crew, but upon the exertion devoted to propelling her. This will be lessened by any expenditure of force required for bailing, or any expenditure of force in fighting among themselves, or in pulling in different directions.

Now, as in a separated state the whole powers of man are required to maintain existence, and mental power is set free for higher uses only by the association of men in communities, which permits the division of labor and all the economies which come with the co-operation of, increased numbers, association is the first essential of progress. Improvement becomes possible as men come together in peaceful association, and the wider and closer the association, the greater the possibilities of improvement. And as the wasteful expenditure of mental power in conflict becomes greater or less as the moral law which accords to each an equality of rights is ignored or is recognized, equality (or justice) is the second essential of progress.

Thus association in equality is the law of progress. Association frees mental power for expenditure in improvement, and equality, or justice, or freedom—for the terms here signify the same thing, the recognition of the moral law—prevents the dissipation of this power in fruitless struggles.

Here is the law of progress, which will explain all diversities, all advances, all halts, and retrogressions. Men tend to progress just as they come closer together, and by co-operation with each other increase the mental power that may be devoted to improvement; but just as conflict is provoked, or association develops inequality of condition and power, this tendency to progression is lessened, checked, and finally reversed.

Given the same innate capacity, and it is evident that social development will go on faster or slower, will stop or turn back, according to the resistances it meets. In a general way these obstacles to improvement may, in relation to the society itself, be classed as external and internal—the first operating with greater force in the earlier stages of civilization, the latter becoming more important in the later stages.

Man is social in his nature. He does not require to be caught and tamed in order to induce him to live with his fellows. The utter helplessness with which he enters the world, and the long period required for the maturity of his powers, necessitate the family relation; which, as we may observe, is wider, and in its extensions stronger, among the ruder than among the more cultivated peoples. The first societies are families, expanding into tribes, still holding a mutual blood relationship, and even when they have become great nations claiming a common descent.

Given beings of this kind, placed on a globe of such diversified surface and climate as this, and it is evident that, even with equal capacity, and an equal start, social development must be very different.

The first limit or resistance to association will come from the conditions of physical nature, and as these greatly vary with locality, corresponding differences in social progress must show themselves. The net rapidity of increase, and the closeness with which men, as they increase, can keep together, will, in the rude state of knowledge in which reliance for subsistence must be principally upon the spontaneous offerings of nature, very largely depend upon climate, soil, and physical conformation. Where much animal food and warm clothing are required; where the earth seems poor and niggard; where the exuberant life of tropical forests mocks barbarous man's puny efforts to control; where mountains, deserts, or arms of the sea separate and isolate men; association, and the power of improvement which it evolves, can at first go but a little way. But on the rich plains of warm climates, where human existence can be maintained with a smaller expenditure of force, and from a much smaller area, men can keep closer together, and the mental power which can at first be devoted to improvement is much greater. Hence civilization naturally first arises in the great valleys and table-lands where we find its earliest monuments.

But these diversities in natural conditions, not merely thus directly produce diversities in social development, but, by producing diversities in social development, bring out in man himself an obstacle, or rather an active counterforce, to improvement. As families and tribes are separated from each other, the social feeling ceases to operate between them, and differences arise in language, custom, tradition, religion—in short, in the whole social web which each community, however small or large, constantly spins. With these differences, prejudices grow, animosities spring up, contact easily produces quarrels, aggression begets aggression, and wrong kindles revenge.[45] And so between these separate social aggregates arises the feeling of Ishmael and the spirit of Cain, warfare becomes the chronic and seemingly natural relation of societies to each other, and the powers of men are expended in attack or defense, in mutual slaughter and mutual destruction of wealth, or in warlike preparations. How long this hostility persists, the protective tariffs and the standing armies of the civilized world to-day bear witness; how difficult it is to get over the idea that it is not theft to steal from a foreigner, the difficulty in procuring an international copyright act will show. Can we wonder at the perpetual hostilities of tribes and clans? Can we wonder that when each community was isolated from the others—when each, uninfluenced by the others, was spinning its separate web of social environment, which no individual can escape, that war should have been the rule and peace the exception? "They were even as we are."

Now, warfare is the negation of association. The separation of men into diverse tribes, by increasing warfare, thus checks improvement; while in the localities where a large increase in numbers is possible without much separation; civilization gains the advantage of exemption from tribal war, even when the community as a whole is carrying on warfare beyond its borders. Thus, where the resistance of nature to the close association of men is slightest, the counterforce of warfare is likely at first to be least felt; and in the rich plains where civilization first begins, it may rise to a great height while scattered tribes are yet barbarous. And thus, when small, separated communities exist in a state of chronic warfare which forbids advance, the first step to their civilization is the advent of some conquering tribe or nation that unites these smaller communities into a larger one, in which internal peace is preserved. Where this power of peaceable association is broken up, either by external assaults or internal dissensions, the advance ceases and retrogression begins.

But it is not conquest alone that has operated to promote association, and, by liberating mental power from the necessities of warfare, to promote civilization. If the diversities of climate, soil, and configuration of the earth's surface operate at first to separate mankind, they also operate to encourage exchange. And commerce, which is in itself a form of association or co-operation, operates to promote civilization, not only directly, but by building up interests which are opposed to warfare, and dispelling the ignorance which is the fertile mother of prejudices and animosities.

And so of religion. Though the forms it has assumed and the animosities it has aroused have often sundered men and produced warfare, yet it has at other times been the means of promoting association. A common worship has often, as among the Greeks, mitigated war and furnished the basis of union, while it is from the triumph of Christianity over the barbarians of Europe that modern civilization springs. Had not the Christian Church existed when the Roman Empire went to pieces, Europe, destitute of any bond of association, might have fallen to a condition not much above that of the North American Indians or only received civilization with an Asiatic impress from the conquering scimiters of the invading hordes which had been welded into a mighty power by a religion which, springing up in the deserts of Arabia, had united tribes separated from time immemorial, and, thence issuing, brought into the association of a common faith a great part of the human race.

Looking over what we know of the history of the world, we thus see civilization everywhere springing up where men are brought into association, and everywhere disappearing as this association is broken up. Thus the Roman civilization, spread over Europe by the conquests which insured internal peace, was overwhelmed by the incursions of the northern nations that broke society again into disconnected fragments; and the progress that now goes on in our modern civilization began as the feudal system

again began to associate men in larger communities, and the spiritual supremacy of Rome to bring these communities into a common relation, as her legions had done before. As the feudal bonds grew into national autonomies, and Christianity worked the amelioration of manners, brought forth the knowledge that during the dark days she had hidden, bound the threads of peaceful union in her all-pervading organization, and taught association in her religious orders, a greater progress became possible, which, as men have been brought into closer and closer association and co-operation, has gone on with greater and greater force.

But we shall never understand the course of civilization, and the varied phenomena which its history presents, without a consideration of what I may term the internal resistances, or counter forces, which arise in the heart of advancing society, and which can alone explain how a civilization once fairly started should either come of itself to a halt or be destroyed by barbarians.

The mental power, which is the motor of social progress, is set free by association, which is,—what, perhaps, it may be more properly called,—an integration. Society in this process becomes more complex; its individuals more dependent upon each other. Occupations and functions are specialized. Instead of wandering, population becomes fixed. Instead of each man attempting to supply all of his wants, the various trades and industries are separated—one man acquires skill in one thing, and another in another thing. So, too, of knowledge, the body of which constantly tends to become vaster than one man can grasp, and is separated into different parts, which different individuals acquire and pursue. So, too, the performance of religious ceremonies tends to pass into the hands of a body of men specially devoted to that purpose, and the preservation of order, the administration of justice, the assignment of public duties and the distribution of awards, the conduct of war, etc., to be made the special functions of an organized government. In short, to use the language in which Herbert Spencer has defined evolution, the development of society is, in relation to its component individuals, the passing from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity. The lower the stage of social development, the more society resembles one of those lowest of animal organisms which are without organs or limbs, and from which a part may be cut and yet live. The higher the stage of social development, the more society resembles those higher organisms in which functions and powers are specialized, and each member is vitally dependent on the others.

Now, this process of integration, of the specialization of functions and powers, as it goes on in society, is, by virtue of what is probably one of the deepest laws of human nature, accompanied by a constant liability to inequality. I do not mean that inequality is the necessary result of social growth, but that it is the constant tendency of social growth if unaccompanied by changes in social adjustments, which, in the new conditions that growth produces, will secure equality. I mean, so to speak, that the garment of laws, customs, and political institutions, which each society weaves for itself, is constantly tending to become too tight as the society develops. I mean, so to speak, that man, as he advances, threads a labyrinth, in which, if he keeps straight ahead, he will infallibly lose his way, and through which reason and justice can alone keep him continuously in an ascending path.

For, while the integration which accompanies growth tends in itself to set free mental power to work improvement, there is, both with increase of numbers and with increase in complexity of the social organization, a counter tendency set up to the production of a state of inequality, which wastes mental power, and, as it increases, brings improvement to a halt.

To trace to its highest expression the law which thus operates to evolve with progress the force which stops progress, would be, it seems to me, to go far to the solution of a problem deeper than that of the genesis of the material universe—the problem of the genesis of evil. Let me content myself with pointing out the manner in which, as society develops, there arise tendencies which check development.

There are two qualities of human nature which it will be well, however, to first call to mind. The one is the power of habit:—the tendency to continue to do things in the same way; the other is the possibility of mental and moral deterioration. The effect of the first in social development is to continue habits, customs, laws and methods, long after they have lost their original usefulness, and the effect of the other is to permit the growth of institutions and modes of thought from which the normal perceptions of men instinctively revolt.

Now the growth and development of society not merely tend to make each more and more dependent upon all, and to lessen the influence of individuals, even over their own conditions, as compared with the influence of society; but the effect of association or integration is to give rise to a collective power which is distinguishable from the sum of individual powers. Analogies, or, perhaps, rather illustrations of the same law, may be found in all directions. As animal organisms increase in complexity, there arise, above the life and power of the parts, a life and power of the integrated whole; above the capability of involuntary movements, the capability of voluntary movements. The actions and impulses

of bodies of men are, as has often been observed, different from those which, under the same circumstances, would be called forth in individuals. The fighting qualities of a regiment may be very different from those of the individual soldiers. But there is no need of illustrations. In our inquiries into the nature and rise of rent, we traced the very thing to which I allude. Where population is sparse, land has no value; just as men congregate together, the value of land appears and rises—a clearly distinguishable thing from the values produced by individual effort; a value which springs from association, which increases as association grows greater, and disappears as association is broken up. And the same thing is true of power in other forms than those generally expressed in terms of wealth.

Now, as society grows, the disposition to continue previous, social adjustments tends to lodge this collective power, as it arises, in the hands of a portion of the community; and this unequal distribution of the wealth and power gained as society advances tends to produce greater inequality, since aggression grows by what it feeds on, and the idea of justice is blurred by the habitual toleration of injustice.

In this way the patriarchal organization of society can easily grow into hereditary monarchy, in which the king is as a god on earth, and the masses of the people mere slaves of his caprice. It is natural that the father should be the directing head of the family, and that at his death the eldest son, as the oldest and most experienced member of the little community, should succeed to the headship. But to continue this arrangement as the family expands, is to lodge power in a particular line, and the power thus lodged necessarily continues to increase, as the common stock becomes larger and larger, and the power of the community grows. The head of the family passes into the hereditary king, who comes to look upon himself and to be looked upon by others as a being of superior rights. With the growth of the collective power as compared with the power of the individual, his power to reward and to punish increases, and so increase the inducements to flatter and to fear him; until finally, if the process be not disturbed, a nation grovels at the foot of a throne, and a hundred thousand men toil for fifty years to prepare a tomb for one of their own mortal kind.

So the war-chief of a little band of savages is but one of their number, whom they follow as their bravest and most wary. But when large bodies come to act together, personal selection becomes more difficult, a blinder obedience becomes necessary and can be enforced, and from the very necessities of warfare when conducted on a large scale absolute power arises.

And so of the specialization of function. There is a manifest gain in productive power when social growth has gone so far that instead of every producer being summoned from his work for fighting purposes, a regular military force can be specialized; but this inevitably tends to the concentration of power in the hands of the military class or their chiefs. The preservation of internal order, the administration of justice, the construction and care of public works, and, notably, the observances of religion, all tend in similar manner to pass into the hands of special classes, whose disposition it is to magnify their function and extend their power.

But the great cause of inequality is in the natural monopoly which is given by the possession of land. The first perceptions of men seem always to be that land is common property; but the rude devices by which this is at first recognized—such as annual partitions or cultivation in common—are consistent with only a low stage of development. The idea of property, which naturally arises with reference to things of human production, is easily transferred to land, and an institution which when population is sparse merely secures to the improver and user the due reward of his labor, finally, as population becomes dense and rent arises, operates to strip the producer of his wages. Not merely this, but the appropriation of rent for public purposes, which is the only way in which, with anything like a high development, land can be readily retained as common property, becomes, when political and religious power passes into the hands of a class, the ownership of the land by that class, and the rest of the community become merely tenants. And wars and conquests, which tend to the concentration of political power and to the institution of slavery, naturally result, where social growth has given land a value, in the appropriation of the soil. A dominant class, who concentrate power in their hands, will likewise soon concentrate ownership of the land. To them will fall large partitions of conquered land, which the former inhabitants will till as tenants or serfs, and the public domain, or common lands, which in the natural course of social growth are left for a while in every country, and in which state the primitive system of village culture leaves pasture and woodland, are readily acquired, as we see by modern instances. And inequality once established, the ownership of land tends to concentrate as development goes on.

I am merely attempting to set forth the general fact that as a social development goes on, inequality tends to establish itself, and not to point out the particular sequence, which must necessarily vary with different conditions. But this main fact makes intelligible all the phenomena of petrification and retrogression. The unequal distribution of the power and wealth gained by the integration of men in society tends to check, and finally to counterbalance, the force by which improvements are made and

society advances. On the one side, the masses of the community are compelled to expend their mental powers in merely maintaining existence. On the other side, mental power is expended in keeping up and intensifying the system of inequality, in ostentation, luxury, and warfare. A community divided into a class that rules and a class that is ruled—into the very rich and the very poor—may "build like giants and finish like jewelers;" but it will be monuments of ruthless pride and barren vanity, or of a religion turned from its office of elevating man into an instrument for keeping him down. Invention may for a while to some degree go on; but it will be the invention of refinements in luxury, not the inventions that relieve toil and increase power. In the arcana of temples or in the chambers of court physicians knowledge may still be sought; but it will be hidden as a secret thing, or if it dares come out to elevate common thought or brighten common life, it will be trodden down as a dangerous innovator. For as it tends to lessen the mental power devoted to improvement, so does inequality tend to render men adverse to improvement. How strong is the disposition to adhere to old methods among the classes who are kept in ignorance by being compelled to toil for a mere existence, is too well known to require illustration, and on the other hand the conservatism of the classes to whom the existing social adjustment gives special advantages is equally apparent. This tendency to resist innovation, even though it be improvement, is observable in every special organization—in religion, in law, in medicine, in science, in trade guilds; and it becomes intense just as the organization is close. A close corporation has always an instinctive dislike of innovation and innovators, which is but the expression of an instinctive fear that change may tend to throw down the barriers which hedge it in from the common herd, and so rob it of importance and power; and it is always disposed to guard carefully its special knowledge or skill.

It is in this way that petrification succeeds progress. The advance of inequality necessarily brings improvement to a halt, and as it still persists or provokes unavailing reactions, draws even upon the mental power necessary for maintenance, and retrogression begins.

These principles make intelligible the history of civilization.

In the localities where climate, soil, and physical conformation tended least to separate men as they increased, and where, accordingly, the first civilizations grew up, the internal resistances to progress would naturally develop in a more regular and thorough manner than where smaller communities, which in their separation had developed diversities, were afterward brought together into a closer association. It is this, it seems to me, which accounts for the general characteristics of the earlier civilizations as compared with the later civilizations of Europe. Such homogeneous communities, developing from the first without the jar of conflict between different customs, laws, religions, etc., would show a much greater uniformity. The concentrating and conservative forces would all, so to speak, pull together. Rival chieftains would not counterbalance each other, nor diversities of belief hold the growth of priestly influence in check. Political and religious power, wealth and knowledge, would thus tend to concentrate in the same centres. The same causes which tended to produce the hereditary king and hereditary priest would tend to produce the hereditary artisan and laborer, and to separate society into castes. The power which association sets free for progress would thus be wasted, and barriers to further progress be gradually raised. The surplus energies of the masses would be devoted to the construction of temples, palaces, and pyramids; to ministering to the pride and pampering the luxury of their rulers; and should any disposition to improvement arise among the classes of leisure it would at once be checked by the dread of innovation. Society developing in this way must at length stop in a conservatism which permits no further progress.

How long such a state of complete petrification, when once reached, will continue, seems to depend upon external causes, for the iron bonds of the social environment which grows up repress disintegrating forces as well as improvement. Such a community can be most easily conquered, for the masses of the people are trained to a passive acquiescence in a life of hopeless labor. If the conquerors merely take the place of the ruling class, as the Hyksos did in Egypt and the Tartars in China, everything will go on as before. If they ravage and destroy, the glory of palace and temple remains but in ruins, population becomes sparse, and knowledge and art are lost.

European civilization differs in character from civilizations of the Egyptian type because it springs not from the association of a homogeneous people developing from the beginning, or at least for a long time, under the same conditions, but from the association of peoples who in separation had acquired distinctive social characteristics, and whose smaller organizations longer prevented the concentration of power and wealth in one centre. The physical conformation of the Grecian peninsula is such as to separate the people at first into a number of small communities. As those petty republics and nominal kingdoms ceased to waste their energies in warfare, and the peaceable co-operation of commerce extended, the light of civilization blazed up. But the principle of association was never strong enough to save Greece from inter-tribal war, and when this was put an end to by conquest, the tendency to inequality, which had been combated with various devices by Grecian sages and statesmen, worked its result, and Grecian valor, art, and literature became things of the past. And so in the rise and

extension, the decline and fall, of Roman civilization, may be seen the working of these two principles of association and equality, from the combination of which springs progress.

Springing from the association of the independent husbandmen and free citizens of Italy, and gaining fresh strength from conquests which brought hostile nations into common relations, the Roman power hushed the world in peace. But the tendency to inequality, checking real progress from the first, increased as the Roman civilization extended. The Roman civilization did not petrify as did the homogeneous civilizations where the strong bonds of custom and superstition that held the people in subjection probably also protected them, or at any rate kept the peace between rulers and ruled: it rotted, declined and fell. Long before Goth or Vandal had broken through the cordon of the legions, even while her frontiers were advancing, Rome was dead at the heart. Great estates had ruined Italy. Inequality had dried up the strength and destroyed the vigor of the Roman world. Government became despotism, which even assassination could not temper; patriotism became servility; vices the most foul flouted themselves in public; literature sank to puerilities; learning was forgotten; fertile districts became waste without the ravages of war—everywhere inequality produced decay, political, mental, moral, and material. The barbarism which overwhelmed Rome came not from without, but from within. It was the necessary product of the system which had substituted slaves and *colonii* for the independent husbandmen of Italy, and carved the provinces into estates of senatorial families.

Modern civilization owes its superiority to the growth of equality with the growth of association. Two great causes contributed to this—the splitting up of concentrated power into innumerable little centers by the influx of the Northern nations, and the influence of Christianity. Without the first there would have been the petrification and slow decay of the Eastern Empire, where church and state were closely married and loss of external power brought no relief of internal tyranny. And but for the other there would have been barbarism without principle of association or amelioration. The petty chiefs and allodial lords who everywhere grasped local sovereignty held each other in check. Italian cities recovered their ancient liberty, free towns were founded, village communities took root, and serfs acquired rights in the soil they tilled. The leaven of Teutonic ideas of equality worked through the disorganized and disjointed fabric of society. And although society was split up into an innumerable number of separated fragments, yet the idea of closer association was always present—it existed in the recollections of a universal empire; it existed in the claims of a universal church.

Though Christianity became distorted and alloyed in percolating through a rotting civilization; though pagan gods were taken into her pantheon, and pagan forms into her ritual, and pagan ideas into her creed; yet her essential idea of the equality of men was never wholly destroyed. And two things happened of the utmost moment to incipient civilization—the establishment of the papacy and the celibacy of the clergy. The first prevented the spiritual power from concentrating in the same lines as the temporal power; and the latter prevented the establishment of a priestly caste, during a time when all power tended to hereditary form.

In her efforts for the abolition of slavery; in her Truce of God; in her monastic orders; in her councils which united nations, and her edicts which ran without regard to political boundaries; in the low-born hands in which she placed a sign before which the proudest knelt; in her bishops who by consecration became the peers of the greatest nobles; in her "Servant of Servants," for so his official title ran, who, by virtue of the ring of a simple fisherman, claimed the right to arbitrate between nations, and whose stirrup was held by kings; the Church, in spite of everything, was yet a promoter of association, a witness for the natural equality of men; and by the Church herself was nurtured a spirit that, when her early work of association and emancipation was well-nigh done—when the ties she had knit had become strong, and the learning she had preserved had been given to the world—broke the chains with which she would have fettered the human mind, and in a great part of Europe rent her organization.

The rise and growth of European civilization is too vast and complex a subject to be thrown into proper perspective and relation in a few paragraphs; but in all its details, as in its main features, it illustrates the truth that progress goes on just as society tends toward closer association and greater equality. Civilization is co-operation. Union and liberty are its factors. The great extension of association—not alone in the growth of larger and denser communities, but in the increase of commerce and the manifold exchanges which knit each community together and link them with other though widely separated communities; the growth of international and municipal law; the advances in security of property and of person, in individual liberty, and towards democratic government—advances, in short, towards the recognition of the equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—it is these that make our modern civilization so much greater, so much higher, than any that has gone before. It is these that have set free the mental power which has rolled back the veil of ignorance which hid all but a small portion of the globe from men's knowledge; which has measured the orbits of the circling spheres and bids us see moving, pulsing life in a drop of water; which has opened to us the antechamber of nature's mysteries and read the secrets of a long-buried past; which has harnessed in our service physical forces beside which man's efforts are puny; and increased

productive power by a thousand great inventions.

In that spirit of fatalism to which I have alluded as pervading current literature, it is the fashion to speak even of war and slavery as means of human progress. But war, which is the opposite of association, can aid progress only when it prevents further war or breaks down antisocial barriers which are themselves passive war.

As for slavery, I cannot see how it could ever have aided in establishing freedom, and freedom, the synonym of equality is, from the very rudest state in which man can be imagined, the stimulus and condition of progress. Auguste Comte's idea that the institution of slavery destroyed cannibalism is as fanciful as Elia's humorous notion of the way mankind acquired a taste for roast pig. It assumes that a propensity that has never been found developed in man save as the result of the most unnatural conditions—the direst want or the most brutalizing superstitions[46]—is an original impulse, and that he, even in his lowest state the highest of all animals, has natural appetites which the nobler brutes do not show. And so of the idea that slavery began civilization by giving slave owners leisure for improvement.

Slavery never did and never could aid improvement. Whether the community consist of a single master and a single slave, or of thousands of masters and millions of slaves, slavery necessarily involves a waste of human power; for not only is slave labor less productive than free labor, but the power of masters is likewise wasted in holding and watching their slaves, and is called away from directions in which real improvement lies. From first to last, slavery, like every other denial of the natural equality of men, has hampered and prevented progress. Just in proportion as slavery plays an important part in the social organization does improvement cease. That in the classical world slavery was so universal, is undoubtedly the reason why the mental activity which so polished literature and refined art never hit on any of the great discoveries and inventions which distinguish modern civilization. No slave-holding people ever were an inventive people. In a slave-holding community the upper classes may become luxurious and polished; but never inventive. Whatever degrades the laborer and robs him of the fruits of his toil stifles the spirit of invention and forbids the utilization of inventions and discoveries even when made. To freedom alone is given the spell of power which summons the genii in whose keeping are the treasures of earth and the viewless forces of the air.

The law of human progress, what is it but the moral law? Just as social adjustments promote justice, just as they acknowledge the equality of right between man and man, just as they insure to each the perfect liberty which is bounded only by the equal liberty of every other, must civilization advance. Just as they fail in this, must advancing civilization come to a halt and recede. Political economy and social science cannot teach any lessons that are not embraced in the simple truths that were taught to poor fishermen and Jewish peasants by One who eighteen hundred years ago was crucified—the simple truths which, beneath the warpings of selfishness and the distortions of superstition, seem to underlie every religion that has ever striven to formulate the spiritual yearnings of man.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 44: Chapter III, Book X, of "Progress and Poverty," copyright, 1907, by Henry George, Richard F. George, and Anna G. de Mille. The chapter is here reprinted by permission of Mr. Henry George, Junior, and the publishers, Messrs. Doubleday, Page and Company.]

[Footnote 45: How easy it is for ignorance to pass into contempt and dislike; how natural it is for us to consider any difference in manners, customs, religion, etc., as proof of the inferiority of those who differ from us, any one who has emancipated himself in any degree from prejudice, and who mixes with different classes, may see in civilized society. In religion, for instance, the spirit of the hymn—

"I'd rather be a Baptist, and wear a shining face,
Than for to be a Methodist and always fall from grace,"

is observable in all denominations. As the English Bishop said, "Orthodoxy is my doxy, and heterodoxy is any other doxy," while the universal tendency is to classify all outside of the orthodoxies and heterodoxies of the prevailing religion as heathens or atheists. And the like tendency is observable as to all other differences.—Author's note.]

[Footnote 46: The Sandwich Islanders did honor to their good chiefs by eating their bodies. Their bad and tyrannical chiefs they would not touch. The New Zealanders had a notion that by eating their enemies they acquired their strength and valor. And this seems to be the general origin of eating prisoners of war.—Author's note.]

THE MORALS OF TRADE[47]

HERBERT SPENCER

On all sides we have found the result of long personal experience, to be the conviction that trade is essentially corrupt. In tones of disgust or discouragement, reprehension or derision, according to their several natures, men in business have one after another expressed or implied this belief. Omitting the highest mercantile classes, a few of the less common trades, and those exceptional cases where an entire command of the market has been obtained, the uniform testimony of competent judges is, that success is incompatible with strict integrity. To live in the commercial world it appears necessary to adopt its ethical code: neither exceeding nor falling short of it—neither being less honest nor more honest. Those who sink below its standard are expelled; while those who rise above it are either pulled down to it or ruined. As, in self-defence, the civilised man becomes savage among savages; so, it seems that in self-defence, the scrupulous trader is obliged to become as little scrupulous as his competitors. It has been said that the law of the animal creation is—"Eat and be eaten;" and of our trading community it may be similarly said that its law is—Cheat and be cheated. A system of keen competition, carried on, as it is, without adequate moral restraint, is very much a system of commercial cannibalism. Its alternatives are—Use the same weapons as your antagonists, or be conquered and devoured.

Of questions suggested by these facts, one of the most obvious is—Are not the prejudices that have ever been entertained against trade and traders, thus fully justified? do not these meannesses and dishonesties, and the moral degradation they imply, warrant the disrespect shown to men in business? A prompt affirmative answer will probably be looked for; but we very much doubt whether it should be given. We are rather of opinion that these delinquencies are products of the average English character placed under special conditions. There is no good reason for assuming that the trading classes are intrinsically worse than other classes. Men taken at random from higher and lower ranks, would, most likely, if similarly circumstanced, do much the same. Indeed the mercantile world might readily recriminate. Is it a solicitor who comments on their misdoings? They may quickly silence him by referring to the countless dark stains on the reputation of his fraternity. Is it a barrister? His frequent practice of putting in pleas which he knows are not valid; and his established habit of taking fees for work that he does not perform; make his criticism somewhat suicidal. Does the condemnation come through the press? The condemned may remind those who write, of the fact that it is not quite honest to utter a positive verdict on a book merely glanced through, or to pen glowing eulogies on the mediocre work of a friend while slighting the good one of an enemy; and may further ask whether those who, at the dictation of an employer, write what they disbelieve, are not guilty of the serious offence of adulterating public opinion.

Moreover, traders might contend that many of their delinquencies are thrust on them by the injustice of their customers. They, and especially drapers, might point to the fact that the habitual demand for an abatement of price, is made in utter disregard of their reasonable profits; and that to protect themselves against attempts to gain by their loss, they are obliged to name prices greater than those they intend to take. They might also urge that the strait to which they are often brought by the non-payment of accounts due from their wealthier customers, is itself a cause of their malpractices: obliging them, as it does, to use all means, illegitimate as well as legitimate, for getting the wherewith to meet their engagements. In proof of the wrongs inflicted on them by the non-trading classes, they might instance the well-known cases of large shopkeepers in the West-end, who have been either ruined by the unpunctuality of their customers, or have been obliged periodically to stop payment, as the only way of getting their bills settled. And then, after proving that those without excuse show this disregard of other men's claims, traders might ask whether they, who have the excuse of having to contend with a merciless competition, are alone to be blamed if they display a like disregard in other forms.

Nay, even to the guardians of social rectitude—members of the legislature—they might use the *tu quoque* argument: asking whether bribery of a customer's servant, is any worse than bribery of an elector? or whether the gaining of suffrages by claptrap hustings-speeches, containing insincere professions adapted to the taste of the constituency, is not as bad as getting an order for goods by delusive representations respecting their quality? No; it seems probable that close inquiry would show few if any classes to be free from immoralities that are as great, *relatively to the temptations*, as those which we have been exposing. Of course they will not be so petty or so gross where the circumstances do not prompt pettiness or grossness; nor so constant and organised where the class-conditions have not tended to make them habitual. But, taken with these qualifications, we think that much might be said for the proposition that the trading classes, neither better nor worse intrinsically than other classes, are betrayed into their flagitious habits by external causes.

Another question, here naturally arising, is—"Are not these evils growing worse?" Many of the facts

we have cited seem to imply that they are. And yet there are many other facts which point as distinctly the other way. In weighing the evidence, we must bear in mind, that the much greater public attention at present paid to such matters, is itself a source of error—is apt to generate the belief that evils now becoming recognised, are evils that have recently arisen; when in truth they have merely been hitherto disregarded, or less regarded. It has been clearly thus with crime, with distress, with popular ignorance; and it is very probably thus with trading-dishonesties. As it is true of individual beings, that their height in the scale of creation may be measured by the degree of their self-consciousness; so, in a sense, it is true of societies. Advanced and highly-organised societies are distinguished from lower ones by the evolution of something that stands for a *social self-consciousness*—a consciousness in each citizen, of the state of the aggregate of citizens. Among ourselves there has, happily, been of late years a remarkable growth of this social self-consciousness; and we believe that to this is chiefly ascribable the impression that commercial malpractices are increasing.

Such facts as have come down to us respecting the trade of past times, confirm this view. In his "Complete English Tradesman," Defoe mentions, among other manoeuvres of retailers, the false lights which they introduced into their shops, for the purpose of giving delusive appearances to their goods. He comments on the "shop rhetorick," the "flux of falsehoods," which tradesmen habitually uttered to their customers; and quotes their defence as being that they could not live without lying. He says, too, that there was scarce a shopkeeper who had not a bag of spurious or debased coin, from which he gave change whenever he could; and that men, even the most honest, triumphed in their skill in getting rid of bad money. These facts show that the mercantile morals of that day were, at any rate, not better than ours; and if we call to mind the numerous Acts of Parliament passed in old times to prevent frauds of all kinds, we perceive the like implication. As much may, indeed, be safely inferred from the general state of society.

When, reign after reign, governments debased the coinage, the moral tone of the middle classes could scarcely have been higher than now. Among generations whose sympathy with the claims of fellow-creatures was so weak, that the slave-trade was not only thought justifiable, but the initiator of it was rewarded by permission to record the feat in his coat of arms, it is hardly possible that men respected the claims of their fellow-citizens more than at present. Times characterized by an administration of justice so inefficient that there were in London nests of criminals who defied the law, and on all high roads robbers who eluded it, cannot have been distinguished by just mercantile dealings. While, conversely, an age which, like ours, has seen so many equitable social changes thrust on the legislature by public opinion, is very unlikely to be an age in which the transactions between individuals have been growing more inequitable. Yet, on the other hand, it is undeniable that many of the dishonesties we have described are of modern origin. Not a few of them have become established during the last thirty years; and others are even now arising. How are the seeming contradictions to be reconciled?

We believe the reconciliation is not difficult. It lies in the fact that while the *great* and *direct* frauds have been diminishing, the *small* and *indirect* frauds have been increasing: alike in variety and in number. And this admission we take to be quite consistent with the opinion that the standard of commercial morals is higher than it was. For, if we omit, as excluded from the question, the penal restraints—religious and legal—and ask what is the ultimate moral restraint to the aggression of man on man, we find it to be—sympathy with the pain inflicted. Now the keenness of the sympathy, depending on the vividness with which this pain is realised, varies with the conditions of the case. It may be active enough to check misdeeds which will cause great suffering; and yet not be active enough to check misdeeds which will cause but slight annoyance. While sufficiently acute to prevent a man from doing that which will entail immediate injury on a given person, it may not be sufficiently acute to prevent him from doing that which will entail remote injuries on unknown persons. And we find the facts to agree with this deduction, that the moral restraint varies according to the clearness with which the evil consequences are conceived. Many a one who would shrink from picking a pocket does not scruple to adulterate his goods; and he who never dreams of passing base coin, will yet be a party to joint-stock-bank deceptions. Hence, as we say, the multiplication of the more subtle and complex forms of fraud, is consistent with a general progress in morality; provided it is accompanied with a decrease in the grosser forms of fraud.

But the question which most concerns us is, not whether the morals of trade are better or worse than they have been, but rather—why are they so bad? Why in this civilised state of ours, is there so much that betrays the cunning selfishness of the savage? Why, after the careful inculcations of rectitude during education, comes there in afterlife all this knavery? Why, in spite of all the exhortations to which the commercial classes listen every Sunday, do they next morning recommence their evil deeds? What is this so potent agency which almost neutralises the discipline of education, of law, of religion?

Various subsidiary causes that might be assigned, must be passed over, that we may have space to deal with the chief cause. In an exhaustive statement, something would have to be said on the credulity

of consumers, which leads them to believe in representations of impossible advantages; and something, too, on their greediness, which, ever prompting them to look for more than they ought to get, encourages the sellers to offer delusive bargains. The increased difficulty of living consequent on growing pressure of population, might perhaps come in as a part cause; and that greater cost of bringing up a family, which results from the higher standard of education, might be added. But all these are relatively insignificant. The great inciter of these trading malpractices is, intense desire for wealth. And if we ask—Why this intense desire? the reply is—It results from the *indiscriminate respect paid to wealth*.

To be distinguished from the common herd—to be somebody—to make a name, a position—this is the universal ambition; and to accumulate riches, is alike the surest and the easiest way of fulfilling this ambition. Very early in life all learn this. At school, the court paid to one whose parents have called in their carriage to see him, is conspicuous; while the poor boy, whose insufficient stock of clothes implies the small means of his family, soon has burnt into his memory the fact that poverty is contemptible. On entering the world, the lessons that may have been taught about the nobility of self-sacrifice, the reverence due to genius, the admirableness of high integrity, are quickly neutralised by experience: men's actions proving that these are not their standards of respect. It is soon perceived that while abundant outward marks of deference from fellow-citizens, may almost certainly be gained by directing every energy to the accumulation of property, they are but rarely to be gained in any other way; and that even in the few cases where they are otherwise gained, they are not given with entire unreserve; but are commonly joined with a more or less manifest display of patronage. When, seeing this, the young man further sees that while the acquisition of property is quite possible with his mediocre endowments, the acquirement of distinction by brilliant discoveries, or heroic acts, or high achievements in art, implies faculties and feelings which he does not possess; it is not difficult to understand why he devotes himself heart and soul to business.

We do not mean to say that men act on the consciously reasoned-out conclusions thus indicated; but we mean that these conclusions are the unconsciously-formed products of their daily experience. From early childhood, the sayings and doings of all around them have generated the idea that wealth and respectability are two sides of the same thing. This idea, growing with their growth, and strengthening with their strength, becomes at last almost what we may call an organic conviction. And this organic conviction it is, which prompts the expenditure of all their energies in money-making. We contend that the chief stimulus is not the desire for the wealth itself; but for the applause and position which the wealth brings. And in this belief, we find ourselves at one with various intelligent traders with whom we have talked on the matter.

It is incredible that men should make the sacrifices, mental and bodily, which they do, merely to get the material benefits which money purchases. Who would undertake an extra burden of business for the purpose of getting a cellar of choice wines for his own drinking? He who does it, does it that he may have choice wines to give his guests and gain their praises. What merchant would spend an additional hour at his office daily, merely that he might move into a larger house in a better quarter? In so far as health and comfort are concerned, he knows he will be a loser by the exchange; and would never be induced to make it, were it not for the increased social consideration which the new house will bring him. Where is the man who would lie awake at nights devising means of increasing his income in the hope of being able to provide his wife with a carriage, were the use of the carriage the sole consideration? It is because of the *éclat* which the carriage will give, that he enters on these additional anxieties. So manifest, so trite, indeed, are these truths, that we should be ashamed of insisting on them, did not our argument require it.

For if the desire for that homage which wealth brings, is the chief stimulus to these strivings after wealth, then is the giving of this homage (when given, as it is, with but little discrimination) the chief cause of the dishonesties into which these strivings betray mercantile men. When the shopkeeper, on the strength of a prosperous year and favourable prospects, has yielded to his wife's persuasions, and replaced the old furniture with new, at an outlay greater than his income covers—when, instead of the hoped-for increase, the next year brings a decrease in his returns—when he finds that his expenses are out-running his revenue; then does he fall under the strongest temptation to adopt some newly-introduced adulteration or other malpractice. When, having by display gained a certain recognition, the wholesale trader begins to give dinners appropriate only to those of ten times his income, with expensive other entertainments to match—when, having for a time carried on this style at a cost greater than he can afford, he finds that he cannot discontinue it without giving up his position: then is he most strongly prompted to enter into larger transactions; to trade beyond his means; to seek undue credit; to get into that ever-complicating series of misdeeds, which ends in disgraceful bankruptcy. And if these are the facts—the undeniable facts—then is it an unavoidable conclusion that the blind admiration which society gives to mere wealth, and the display of wealth, is the chief source of these multitudinous immoralities.

Yes, the evil is deeper than appears—draws its nutriment from far below the surface. This gigantic system of dishonesty, branching out into every conceivable form of fraud, has roots that run underneath our whole social fabric, and, sending fibres into every house, suck up strength from our daily sayings and doings. In every dining-room a rootlet finds food, when the conversation turns on So-and-so's successful speculations, his purchase of an estate, his probable worth—on this man's recent large legacy, and the other's advantageous match; for being thus talked about is one form of that tacit respect which men struggle for. Every drawing-room furnishes nourishment, in the admiration awarded to costliness—to silks that are "rich," that is, expensive; to dresses that contain an enormous quantity of material, that is, are expensive; to laces that are handmade, that is, expensive; to diamonds that are rare, that is, expensive; to china that is old, that is, expensive. And from scores of small remarks and minutiae of behaviour, which, in all circles, hourly imply how completely the idea of respectability involves that of costly externals, there is drawn fresh pabulum.

We are all implicated. We all, whether with self-approbation or not, give expression to the established feeling. Even he who disapproves this feeling, finds himself unable to treat virtue in threadbare apparel with a cordiality as great as that which he would show to the same virtue endowed with prosperity. Scarcely a man is to be found who would not behave with more civility to a knave in broadcloth than to a knave in fustian. Though for the deference which they have shown to the vulgar rich, or the dishonestly successful, men afterwards compound with their consciences by privately venting their contempt; yet when they again come face to face with these imposing externals covering worthlessness, they do as before. And so long as imposing worthlessness gets the visible marks of respect, while the disrespect felt for it is hidden, it naturally flourishes.

Hence, then, is it that men persevere in these evil practices which all condemn. They can so purchase a homage, which if not genuine, is yet, so far as appearances go, as good as the best. To one whose wealth has been gained by a life of frauds, what matters it that his name is in all circles a synonym of roguery? Has he not been conspicuously honoured by being twice elected mayor of his town? (we state a fact) and does not this, joined to the personal consideration shown him, outweigh in his estimation all that is said against him: of which he hears scarcely anything? When, not many years after the exposure of his inequitable dealing, a trader attains to the highest civic distinction which the kingdom has to offer; and that, too, through the instrumentality of those who best know his delinquency; is not the fact an encouragement to him, and to all others, to sacrifice rectitude to aggrandisement? If, after listening to a sermon that has by implication denounced the dishonesties he has been guilty of, the rich ill-doer finds, on leaving church, that his neighbours cap to him; does not this tacit approval go far to neutralise the effect of all he has heard? The truth is, that with the great majority of men, the visible expression of social opinion is far the most efficient of incentives and restraints. Let any one who wishes to estimate the strength of this control, propose to himself to walk through the streets in the dress of a dustman, or hawk vegetables from door to door. Let him feel, as he probably will, that he had rather do something morally wrong than commit such a breach of usage, and suffer the resulting derision. And he will then better estimate how powerful a curb to men is the open disapproval of their fellows; and how, conversely, the outward applause of their fellows is a stimulus surpassing all others in intensity. Fully realising which facts, he will see that the immoralities of trade are in great part traceable to an immoral public opinion.

Let none infer, from what has been said, that the payment of respect to wealth rightly acquired and rightly used, is deprecated. In its original meaning, and in due degree, the feeling which prompts such respect is good. Primarily, wealth is the sign of mental power; and this is always respectable. To have honestly-acquired property, implies intelligence, energy, self-control; and these are worthy of the homage that is indirectly paid to them by admiring their results. Moreover, the good administration and increase of inherited property, also requires its virtues; and therefore demands its share of approbation. And besides being applauded for their display of faculty, men who gain and increase wealth are to be applauded as public benefactors. For he who as manufacturer or merchant, has, without injustice to others, realised a fortune, is thereby proved to have discharged his functions better than those who have been less successful. By greater skill, better judgment, or more economy than his competitors, he has afforded the public greater advantages. His extra profits are but a share of the extra produce obtained by the same expenditure: the other share going to the consumers. And similarly, the landowner who, by judicious outlay, has increased the value (that is, the productiveness) of his estate, has thereby added to the stock of national capital. By all means, then, let the right acquisition and proper use of wealth, have their due share of admiration.

But that which we condemn as the chief cause of commercial dishonesty, is the *indiscriminate* admiration of wealth—an admiration that has little or no reference to the character of the possessor. When, as very generally happens, the external signs are revered, where they signify no internal worthiness—nay, even where they cover internal unworthiness; then does the feeling become vicious. It is this idolatry which worships the symbol apart from the thing symbolised, that is the root of all these

evils we have been exposing. So long as men pay homage to those social benefactors who have grown rich honestly, they give a wholesome stimulus to industry; but when they accord a share of their homage to those social malefactors who have grown rich dishonestly, then do they foster corruption—then do they become accomplices in all these frauds of commerce.

As for remedy, it manifestly follows that there is none save a purified public opinion. When that abhorrence which society now shows to direct theft, is shown to theft of all degrees of indirectness, then will these mercantile vices disappear. When not only the trader who adulterates or gives short measure, but also the merchant who over-trades, the bank-director who countenances an exaggerated report, and the railway-director who repudiates his guarantee, come to be regarded as of the same genus as the pickpocket, and are treated with like disdain; then will the morals of trade become what they should be.

We have little hope, however, that any such higher tone of public opinion will shortly be reached. The present condition of things appears to be, in great measure, a necessary accompaniment of our present phase of progress. Throughout the civilised world, especially in England, and above all in America, social activity is almost wholly expended in material development. To subjugate Nature, and bring the powers of production and distribution to their highest perfection, is the task of our age; and probably of many future ages. And as in times when national defence and conquest were the chief desiderata, military achievement was honoured above all other things; so now, when the chief desideratum is industrial growth, honour is most conspicuously given to that which generally indicates the aiding of industrial growth. The English nation at present displays what we may call the commercial diathesis; and the undue admiration for wealth appears to be its concomitant—a relation still more conspicuous in the worship of "the almighty dollar" by the Americans. And while the commercial diathesis, with its accompanying standard of distinction, continues, we fear the evils we have been delineating can be but partially cured. It seems hopeless to expect that men will distinguish between that wealth which represents personal superiority and benefits done to society, from that which does not. The symbols, the externals, have all the world through swayed the masses; and must long continue to do so. Even the cultivated, who are on their guard against the bias of associated ideas, and try to separate the real from the seeming, cannot escape the influence of current opinion. We must, therefore, content ourselves with looking for a slow amelioration.

Something, however, may even now be done by vigorous protest against adoration of mere success. And it is important that it should be done, considering how this vicious sentiment is being fostered. When we have one of our leading moralists preaching, with increasing vehemence, the doctrine of sanctification by force—when we are told that while a selfishness troubled with qualms of conscience is contemptible, a selfishness intense enough to trample down every thing in the unscrupulous pursuit of its ends, is worthy of all admiration—when we find that if it be sufficiently great, power, no matter of what kind or how directed, is held up for our reverence; we may fear lest the prevalent applause of mere success, together with the commercial vices which it stimulates, should be increased rather than diminished. Not at all by this hero-worship grown into brute-worship, is society to be made better; but by exactly the opposite—by a stern criticism of the means through which success has been achieved; and by according honour to the higher and less selfish modes of activity.

And happily the signs of this more moral public opinion are already showing themselves. It is becoming a tacitly-received doctrine that the rich should not, as in by-gone times, spend their lives in personal gratification; but should devote them to the general welfare. Year by year is the improvement of the people occupying a larger share of the attention of the upper classes. Year by year are they voluntarily devoting more and more energy to furthering the material and mental progress of the masses. And those among them who do not join in the discharge of these high functions, are beginning to be looked upon with more or less contempt by their own order. This latest and most hopeful fact in human history—this new and better chivalry—promises to evolve a higher standard of honour; and so to ameliorate many evils: among others those which we have detailed. When wealth obtained by illegitimate means inevitably brings nothing but disgrace—when to wealth rightly acquired is accorded only its due share of homage, while the greatest homage is given to those who consecrate their energies and their means to the noblest ends; then may we be sure that along with other accompanying benefits, the morals of trade will be greatly purified.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 47: From "Essays: Moral, Political and Aesthetic," 1864.]

ON THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF LIFE[48]

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

In order to make the title of this discourse generally intelligible, I have translated the term "Protoplasm," which is the scientific name of the substance of which I am about to speak, by the words "the physical basis of life." I suppose that, to many, the idea that there is such a thing as a physical basis, or matter, of life may be novel—so widely spread is the conception of life as a something which works through matter, but is independent of it; and even those who are aware that matter and life are inseparably connected, may not be prepared for the conclusion plainly suggested by the phrase, "*the physical basis or matter of life*," that there is some one kind of matter which is common to all living beings, and that their endless diversities are bound together by a physical, as well as an ideal, unity. In fact, when first apprehended, such a doctrine as this appears almost shocking to common sense.

What, truly, can seem to be more obviously different from one another, in faculty, in form, and in substance, than the various kinds of living beings? What community of faculty can there be between the brightly-coloured lichen, which so nearly resembles a mere mineral incrustation of the bare rock on which it grows, and the painter, to whom it is instinct with beauty, or the botanist, whom it feeds with knowledge?

Again, think of the microscopic fungus—a mere infinitesimal ovoid particle, which finds space and duration enough to multiply into countless millions in the body of a living fly; and then of the wealth of foliage, the luxuriance of flower and fruit, which lies between this bald sketch of a plant and the giant pine of California, towering to the dimensions of a cathedral spire, or the Indian fig, which covers acres with its profound shadow, and endures while nations and empires come and go around its vast circumference. Or, turning to the other half of the world of life, picture to yourselves the great Finner whale, hugest of beasts that live, or have lived, disporting his eighty or ninety feet of bone, muscle, and blubber, with easy roll, among waves in which the stoutest ship that ever left dockyard would flounder hopelessly; and contrast him with the invisible animalcules—mere gelatinous specks, multitudes of which could, in fact, dance upon the point of a needle with the same ease as the angels of the Schoolmen could, in imagination. With these images before your minds, you may well ask, what community of form, or structure, is there between the animalcule and the whale; or between the fungus and the fig-tree? And, *à fortiori*[49], between all four?

Finally, if we regard substance, or material composition, what hidden bond can connect the flower which a girl wears in her hair and the blood which courses through her youthful veins; or, what is there in common between the dense and resisting mass of the oak, or the strong fabric of the tortoise, and those broad disks of glassy jelly which may be seen pulsating through the waters of a calm sea, but which drain away to mere films in the hand which raises them out of their element?

Such objections as these must, I think, arise in the mind of every one who ponders, for the first time, upon the conception of a single physical basis of life underlying all the diversities of vital existence; but I propose to demonstrate to you that, notwithstanding these apparent difficulties, a threefold unity—namely, a unity of power or faculty, a unity of form, and a unity of substantial composition—does pervade the whole living world.

No very abstruse argumentation is needed, in the first place, to prove that the powers, or faculties, of all kinds of living matter, diverse as they may be in degree, are substantially similar in kind.

Goethe has condensed a survey of all powers of mankind into the well-known epigram:—

"Warum treibt sich das Volk so und schreit? Es will sich ernähren,
Kinder zeugen, und die nähren so gut es vermag.

* * * * *

Weiter bringt es kein Mensch, stell' er sich wie er auch will."[50]

In physiological language this means, that all the multifarious and complicated activities of man are comprehensible under three categories. Either they are immediately directed towards the maintenance and development of the body, or they effect transitory changes in the relative positions of parts of the body, or they tend towards the continuance of the species. Even those manifestations of intellect, of feeling, and of will, which we rightly name the higher faculties, are not excluded from this classification, inasmuch as to every one but the subject of them, they are known only as transitory changes in the relative positions of parts of the body. Speech, gesture, and every other form of human

action are, in the long run, resolvable into muscular contraction, and muscular contraction is but a transitory change in the relative positions of the parts of a muscle. But the scheme which is large enough to embrace the activities of the highest form of life, covers all those of the lower creatures. The lowest plant, or animalcule, feeds, grows, and reproduces its kind. In addition, all animals manifest those transitory changes of form which we class under irritability and contractility; and it is more than probable that when the vegetable world is thoroughly explored, we shall find all plants in possession of the same powers, at one time or other of their existence.

I am not now alluding to such phenomena, at once rare and conspicuous, as those exhibited by the leaflets of the sensitive plants, or the stamens of the barberry, but to much more widely spread, and at the same time, more subtle and hidden, manifestations of vegetable contractility. You are doubtless aware that the common nettle owes its stinging property to the innumerable stiff and needle-like, though exquisitely delicate, hairs which cover its surface. Each stinging-needle tapers from a broad base to a slender summit, which, though rounded at the end, is of such microscopic fineness that it readily penetrates, and breaks off in, the skin. The whole hair consists of a very delicate outer case of wood, closely applied to the inner surface of which is a layer of semi-fluid matter, full of innumerable granules of extreme minuteness. This semi-fluid lining is protoplasm, which thus constitutes a kind of bag, full of a limpid liquid, and roughly corresponding in form with the interior of the hair which it fills. When viewed with a sufficiently high magnifying power, the protoplasmic layer of the nettle hair is seen to be in a condition of unceasing activity. Local contractions of the whole thickness of its substance pass slowly and gradually from point to point, and give rise to the appearance of progressive waves, just as the bending of successive stalks of corn by a breeze produces the apparent billows of a corn-field.

But, in addition to these movements, and independently of them, the granules are driven, in relatively rapid streams, through channels in the protoplasm which seem to have a considerable amount of persistence. Most commonly, the currents in adjacent parts of the protoplasm take similar directions; and, thus, there is a general stream up one side of the hair and down the other. But this does not prevent the existence of partial currents which take different routes; and sometimes trains of granules may be seen coursing swiftly in opposite directions within a twenty-thousandth of an inch of one another; while, occasionally, opposite streams come into direct collision, and, after a longer or shorter struggle, one predominates. The cause of these currents seems to lie in contractions of the protoplasm which bounds the channels in which they flow, but which are so minute that the best microscopes show only their effects, and not themselves.

The spectacle afforded by the wonderful energies prisoned within the compass of the microscopic hair of a plant, which we commonly regard as a merely passive organism, is not easily forgotten by one who has watched its display, continued hour after hour, without pause or sign of weakening. The possible complexity of many other organic forms, seemingly as simple as the protoplasm of the nettle, dawns upon one; and the comparison of such a protoplasm to a body with an internal circulation, which has been put forward by an eminent physiologist, loses much of its startling character. Currents similar to those of the hairs of the nettle have been observed in a great multitude of very different plants, and weighty authorities have suggested that they probably occur, in more or less perfection, in all young vegetable cells. If such be the case, the wonderful noonday silence of a tropical forest is, after all, due only to the dullness of our hearing; and could our ears catch the murmur of these tiny Maelstroms, as they whirl in the innumerable myriads of living cells which constitute each tree, we should be stunned, as with the roar of a great city.

Among the lower plants, it is the rule rather than the exception, that contractility should be still more openly manifested at some periods of their existence. The protoplasm of *Algae* and *Fungi* becomes, under many circumstances, partially, or completely, freed from its woody case, and exhibits movements of its whole mass, or is propelled by the contractility of one, or more, hair-like prolongations of its body, which are called vibratile cilia. And, so far as the conditions of the manifestation of the phenomena of contractility have yet been studied, they are the same for the plant as for the animal. Heat and electric shocks influence both, and in the same way, though it may be in different degrees. It is by no means my intention to suggest that there is no difference in faculty between the lowest plant and the highest, or between plants and animals. But the difference between the powers of the lowest plant, or animal, and those of the highest, is one of degree, not of kind, and depends, as Milne-Edwards long ago so well pointed out, upon the extent to which the principle of the division of labour is carried out in the living economy. In the lowest organism all parts are competent to perform all functions, and one and the same portion of protoplasm may successfully take on the function of feeding, moving, or reproducing apparatus. In the highest, on the contrary, a great number of parts combine to perform each function, each part doing its allotted share of the work with great accuracy and efficiency, but being useless for any other purpose.

On the other hand, notwithstanding all the fundamental resemblances which exist between the

powers of the protoplasm in plants and in animals, they present a striking difference (to which I shall advert more at length presently), in the fact that plants can manufacture fresh protoplasm out of mineral compounds, whereas animals are obliged to procure it ready made, and hence, in the long run, depend upon plants. Upon what condition this difference in the powers of the two great divisions of the world of life depends, nothing is at present known.

With such qualifications as arise out of the last-mentioned fact, it may be truly said that the acts of all living things are fundamentally one. Is any such unity predicable of their forms? Let us seek in easily verified facts for a reply to this question. If a drop of blood be drawn by pricking one's finger, and viewed with proper precautions, and under a sufficiently high microscopic power, there will be seen, among the innumerable multitude of little, circular, discoidal bodies, or corpuscles, which float in it and give it its colour, a comparatively small number of colourless corpuscles, of somewhat larger size and very irregular shape. If the drop of blood be kept at the temperature of the body, these colourless corpuscles will be seen to exhibit a marvellous activity, changing their forms with great rapidity, drawing in and thrusting out prolongations of their substance, and creeping about as if they were independent organisms.

The substance which is thus active is a mass of protoplasm, and its activity differs in detail, rather than in principle, from that of the protoplasm of the nettle. Under sundry circumstances the corpuscle dies and becomes distended into a round mass, in the midst of which is seen a smaller spherical body, which existed, but was more or less hidden, in the living corpuscle, and is called its *nucleus*. Corpuscles of essentially similar structure are to be found in the skin, in the lining of the mouth, and scattered through the whole framework of the body. Nay, more: in the earliest condition of the human organism, in that state in which it has but just become distinguishable from the egg in which it arises, it is nothing but an aggregation of such corpuscles, and every organ of the body was, once, no more than such an aggregation.

Thus a nucleated mass of protoplasm turns out to be what may be termed the structural unit of the human body. As a matter of fact, the body, in its earliest state, is a mere multiple of such units; and in its perfect condition, it is a multiple of such units, variously modified.

But does the formula which expresses the essential structural character of the highest animal cover all the rest, as the statement of its powers and faculties covered that of all others? Very nearly. Beast and fowl, reptile and fish, mollusk, worm, and polype, are all composed of structural units of the same character, namely, masses of protoplasm with a nucleus. There are sundry very low animals, each of which, structurally, is a mere colourless blood-corpuscle, leading an independent life. But, at the very bottom of the animal scale, even this simplicity becomes simplified, and all the phenomena of life are manifested by a particle of protoplasm without a nucleus. Nor are such organisms insignificant by reason of their want of complexity. It is a fair question whether the protoplasm of those simplest forms of life, which people an immense extent of the bottom of the sea, would not outweigh that of all the higher living beings which inhabit the land put together. And in ancient times, no less than at the present day, such living beings as these have been the greatest of rock builders.

What has been said of the animal world is no less true of plants. Imbedded in the protoplasm at the broad, or attached, end of the nettle hair, there lies a spheroidal nucleus. Careful examination further proves that the whole substance of the nettle is made up of a repetition of such masses of nucleated protoplasm, each contained in a wooden case, which is modified in form, sometimes into a woody fibre, sometimes into a duct or spiral vessel, sometimes into a pollen grain, or an ovule. Traced back to its earliest state, the nettle arises as the man does, in a particle of nucleated protoplasm. And in the lowest plants, as in the lowest animals, a single mass of such protoplasm may constitute the whole plant, or the protoplasm may exist without a nucleus.

Under these circumstances it may well be asked, how is one mass of non-nucleated protoplasm to be distinguished from another? why call one "plant" and the other "animal"?

The only reply is that, so far as form is concerned, plants and animals are not separable, and that, in many cases, it is a mere matter of convention whether we call a given organism an animal or a plant. There is a living body called *Aethalium septicum*, which appears upon decaying vegetable substances, and, in one of its forms, is common upon the surfaces of tan-pits. In this condition it is, to all intents and purposes, a fungus, and formerly was always regarded as such; but the remarkable investigations of De Bary have shown that, in another condition, the *Aethalium* is an actively locomotive creature, and takes in solid matters, upon which, apparently, it feeds, thus exhibiting the most characteristic feature of animality. Is this a plant; or is it an animal? Is it both; or is it neither? Some decide in favour of the last supposition, and establish an intermediate kingdom, a sort of biological No Man's Land for all these questionable forms. But, as it is admittedly impossible to draw any distinct boundary line between this no man's land and the vegetable world on the one hand, or the animal on the other, it appears to me

that this proceeding merely doubles the difficulty which, before, was single.

Protoplasm, simple or nucleated, is the formal basis of all life. It is the clay of the potter: which, bake it and paint it as he will, remains clay, separated by artifice, and not by nature, from the commonest brick or sun-dried clod.

Thus it becomes clear that all living powers are cognate, and that all living forms are fundamentally of one character. The researches of the chemist have revealed a no less striking uniformity of material composition in living matter.

In perfect strictness, it is true that chemical investigation can tell us little or nothing, directly, of the composition of living matter, inasmuch as such matter must needs die in the act of analysis,—and upon this very obvious ground, objections, which I confess seem to me to be somewhat frivolous, have been raised to the drawing of any conclusions whatever respecting the composition of actually living matter, from that of the dead matter of life, which alone is accessible to us. But objectors of this class do not seem to reflect that it is also, in strictness, true that we know nothing about the composition of any body whatever, as it is. The statement that a crystal of calc-spar consists of carbonate of lime, is quite true, if we only mean that, by appropriate processes, it may be resolved into carbonic acid and quicklime. If you pass the same carbonic acid over the very quicklime thus obtained, you will obtain carbonate of lime again; but it will not be calc-spar, nor anything like it. Can it, therefore, be said that chemical analysis teaches nothing about the chemical composition of calc-spar? Such a statement would be absurd; but it is hardly more so than the talk one occasionally hears about the uselessness of applying the results of chemical analysis to the living bodies which have yielded them.

One fact, at any rate, is out of reach of such refinements, and this is, that all the forms of protoplasm which have yet been examined contain the four elements, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, in very complex union, and that they behave similarly towards several reagents. To this complex combination, the nature of which has never been determined with exactness, the name of Protein has been applied. And if we use this term with such caution as may properly arise out of our comparative ignorance of the things for which it stands, it may be truly said that all protoplasm is proteinaceous, or, as the white, or albumen, of an egg is one of the commonest examples of a nearly pure proteine matter, we may say that all living matter is more or less albuminoid.

Perhaps it would not yet be safe to say that all forms of protoplasm are affected by the direct action of electric shocks; and yet the number of cases in which the contraction of protoplasm is shown to be affected by this agency increases every day.

Nor can it be affirmed with perfect confidence, that all forms of protoplasm are liable to undergo that peculiar coagulation at a temperature of 40°-50° Centigrade, which has been called "heat-stiffening," though Kühne's beautiful researches have proved this occurrence to take place in so many and such diverse living beings, that it is hardly rash to expect that the law holds good for all.

Enough has, perhaps, been said, to prove the existence of a general uniformity in the character of the protoplasm, or physical basis, of life, in whatever group of living beings it may be studied. But it will be understood that this general uniformity by no means excludes any amount of special modifications of the fundamental substance. The mineral, carbonate of lime, assumes an immense diversity of characters, though no one doubts that, under all these Protean changes, is one and the same thing.

And now, what is the ultimate fate, and what the origin, of the matter of life?

Is it, as some of the older naturalists supposed, diffused throughout the universe in molecules, which are indestructible and unchangeable in themselves; but, in endless transmigration, unite in innumerable permutations, into the diversified forms of life we know? Or, is the matter of life composed of ordinary matter, differing from it only in the manner in which its atoms are aggregated? Is it built up of ordinary matter, and again resolved into ordinary matter when its work is done?

Modern science does not hesitate a moment between these alternatives. Physiology writes over the portals of life—

"Debemur morti nos nostraque,"[51]

with a profounder meaning than the Roman poet attached to that melancholy line. Under whatever disguise it takes refuge, whether fungus or oak, worm or man, the living protoplasm not only ultimately dies and is resolved into its mineral and lifeless constituents, but is always dying, and, strange as the paradox may sound, could not live unless it died.

In the wonderful story of the *Peau de Chagrin*, the hero becomes possessed of a magical wild ass' skin, which yields him the means of gratifying all his wishes. But its surface represents the duration of

the proprietor's life; and for every satisfied desire the skin shrinks in proportion to the intensity of fruition, until at length life and the last handbreath of the *peau de chagrin*, disappear with the gratification of a last wish.

Balzac's studies had led him over a wide range of thought and speculation, and his shadowing forth of physiological truth in this strange story may have been intentional. At any rate, the matter of life is a veritable *peau de chagrin*, and for every vital act it is somewhat the smaller. All work implies waste, and the work of life results, directly or indirectly, in the waste of protoplasm.

Every word uttered by a speaker costs him some physical loss; and, in the strictest sense, he burns that others may have light—so much eloquence, so much of his body resolved into carbonic acid, water, and urea. It is clear that this process of expenditure cannot go on forever. But, happily, the protoplasmic *peau de chagrin* differs from Balzac's in its capacity of being repaired, and brought back to its full size, after every exertion.

For example, this present lecture, whatever its intellectual worth to you, has a certain physical value to me, which is, conceivably, expressible by the number of grains of protoplasm and other bodily substance wasted in maintaining my vital processes during its delivery. My *peau de chagrin* will be distinctly smaller at the end of the discourse than it was at the beginning. By and by, I shall probably have recourse to the substance commonly called mutton, for the purpose of stretching it back to its original size. Now this mutton was once the living protoplasm, more or less modified, of another animal—a sheep. As I shall eat it, it is the same matter altered, not only by death, but by exposure to sundry artificial operations in the process of cooking.

But these changes, whatever be their extent, have not rendered it incompetent to resume its old functions as matter of life. A singular inward laboratory, which I possess, will dissolve a certain portion of the modified protoplasm; the solution so formed will pass into my veins; and the subtle influences to which it will then be subjected will convert the dead protoplasm into living protoplasm, and transubstantiate sheep into man.

Nor is this all. If digestion were a thing to be trifled with, I might sup upon lobster, and the matter of life of the crustacean would undergo the same wonderful metamorphosis into humanity. And were I to return to my own place by sea, and undergo shipwreck, the crustacean might, and probably would, return the compliment, and demonstrate our common nature by turning my protoplasm into living lobster. Or, if nothing better were to be had, I might supply my wants with mere bread, and I should find the protoplasm of the wheat-plant to be convertible into man with no more trouble than that of the sheep, and with far less, I fancy, than that of the lobster.

Hence it appears to be a matter of no great moment what animal, or what plant, I lay under contribution for protoplasm, and the fact speaks volumes for the general identity of that substance in all living beings. I share this catholicity of assimilation with other animals, all of which, so far as we know, could thrive equally well on the protoplasm of any of their fellows, or of any plant; but here the assimilative powers of the animal world cease. A solution of smelling-salts in water, with an infinitesimal proportion of some other saline matters, contains all the elementary bodies which enter into the composition of protoplasm; but, as I need hardly say, a hogshead of that fluid would not keep a hungry man from starving, nor would it save any animal whatever from a like fate. An animal cannot make protoplasm, but must take it ready-made from some other animal, or some plant—the animal's highest feat of constructive chemistry being to convert dead protoplasm into that living matter of life which is appropriate to itself.

Therefore, in seeking for the origin of protoplasm, we must eventually turn to the vegetable world. A fluid containing carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous salts, which offers such a Barmecide feast[52] to the animal, is a table richly spread to multitudes of plants; and, with a due supply of only such materials, many a plant will not only maintain itself in vigour, but grow and multiply until it has increased a million-fold, or a million million-fold, the quantity of protoplasm which it originally possessed; in this way building up the matter of life, to an indefinite extent, from the common matter of the universe.

Thus, the animal can only raise the complex substance of dead protoplasm to the higher power, as one may say, of living protoplasm; while the plant can raise the less complex substances—carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous salts—to the same stage of living protoplasm, if not to the same level. But the plant also has its limitations. Some of the fungi, for example, appear to need higher compounds to start with; and no known plant can live upon the uncompounded elements of protoplasm. A plant supplied with pure carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, and the like, would as infallibly die as the animal in his bath of smelling-salts, though it would be surrounded by all the constituents of protoplasm. Nor, indeed, need the process of simplification of vegetable food be carried so far as this, in order to arrive at the limit of the plant's thaumaturgy. Let water, carbonic acid, and all

the other needful constituents be supplied except nitrogenous salts, and an ordinary plant will still be unable to manufacture protoplasm.

Thus the matter of life, so far as we know it (and we have no right to speculate on any other), breaks up, in consequence of that continual death which is the condition of its manifesting vitality, into carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous compounds, which certainly possess no properties but those of ordinary matter. And out of these same forms of ordinary matter, and from none which are simpler, the vegetable world builds up all the protoplasm which keeps the animal world a-going. Plants are the accumulators of the power which animals distribute and disperse.

But it will be observed, that the existence of the matter of life depends on the pre-existence of certain compounds; namely, carbonic acid, water, and certain nitrogenous bodies. Withdraw any one of these three from the world, and all vital phenomena come to an end. They are as necessary to the protoplasm of the plant, as the protoplasm of the plant is to that of the animal. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen are all lifeless bodies. Of these, carbon and oxygen unite in certain proportions and under certain conditions, to give rise to carbonic acid; hydrogen and oxygen produce water; nitrogen and other elements give rise to nitrogenous salts. These new compounds, like the elementary bodies of which they are composed, are lifeless. But when they are brought together, under certain conditions, they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, and this protoplasm exhibits the phenomena of life.

I see no break in this series of steps in molecular complication, and I am unable to understand why the language which is applicable to any one term of the series may not be used to any of the others. We think fit to call different kinds of matter carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen, and to speak of the various powers and activities of these substances as the properties of the matter of which they are composed.

When hydrogen and oxygen are mixed in a certain proportion, and an electric spark is passed through them, they disappear, and a quantity of water, equal in weight to the sum of their weights, appears in their place. There is not the slightest parity between the passive and active powers of the water and those of the oxygen and hydrogen which have given rise to it. At 32° Fahrenheit, and far below that temperature, oxygen and hydrogen are elastic gaseous bodies, whose particles tend to rush away from one another with great force. Water, at the same temperature, is a strong though brittle solid, whose particles tend to cohere into definite geometrical shapes, and sometimes build up frosty imitations of the most complex forms of vegetable foliage.

Nevertheless we call these, and many other strange phenomena, the properties of the water, and we do not hesitate to believe that, in some way or another, they result from the properties of the component elements of the water. We do not assume that a something called "aquosity" entered into and took possession of the oxidated hydrogen as soon as it was formed, and then guided the aqueous particles to their places in the facets of the crystal, or amongst the leaflets of the hoar-frost. On the contrary, we live in the hope and in the faith that, by the advance of molecular physics, we shall by and by be able to see our way as clearly from the constituents of water to the properties of water, as we are now able to deduce the operations of a watch from the form of its parts and the manner in which they are put together.

Is the case in any way changed when carbonic acid, water, and nitrogenous salts disappear, and in their place, under the influence of pre-existing living protoplasm, an equivalent weight of the matter of life makes its appearance?

It is true that there is no sort of parity between the properties of the components and the properties of the resultant, but neither was there in the case of the water. It is also true that what I have spoken of as the influence of pre-existing living matter is something quite unintelligible; but does anybody quite comprehend the *modus operandi*[53] of an electric spark, which traverses a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen?

What justification is there, then, for the assumption of the existence in the living matter of a something which has no representative, or correlative, in the not living matter which gave rise to it? What better philosophical status has "vitality" than "aquosity"? And why should "vitality" hope for a better fate than the other "ityes" which have disappeared since Martinus Scriblerus accounted for the operation of the meat-jack by its inherent "meat-roasting quality," and scorned the "materialism" of those who explained the turning of the spit by a certain mechanism worked by the draught of the chimney?

If scientific language is to possess a definite and constant signification whenever it is employed, it seems to me that we are logically bound to apply to the protoplasm, or physical basis of life, the same conceptions as those which are held to be legitimate elsewhere. If the phenomena exhibited by water

are its properties, so are those presented by protoplasm, living or dead, its properties.

If the properties of water may be properly said to result from the nature and disposition of its component molecules, I can find no intelligible ground for refusing to say that the properties of protoplasm result from the nature and disposition of its molecules.

But I bid you beware that, in accepting these conclusions, you are placing your feet on the first rung of a ladder which, in most people's estimation, is the reverse of Jacob's and leads to the antipodes of heaven. It may seem a small thing to admit that the dull vital actions of a fungus, or a foraminifer, are the properties of their protoplasm, and are the direct results of the nature of the matter of which they are composed. But if, as I have endeavoured to prove to you, their protoplasm is essentially identical with, and most readily converted into, that of any animal, I can discover no logical halting-place between the admission that such is the case, and the further concession that all vital action may, with equal propriety, be said to be the result of the molecular forces of the protoplasm which displays it. And if so, it must be true, in the same sense and to the same extent, that the thoughts to which I am now giving utterance, and your thoughts regarding them, are the expression of molecular changes in that matter of life which is the source of our other vital phenomena.

Past experience leads me to be tolerably certain that, when the propositions I have just placed before you are accessible to public comment and criticism, they will be condemned by many zealous persons, and perhaps by some few of the wise and thoughtful. I should not wonder if "gross and brutal materialism" were the mildest phrase applied to them in certain quarters. And, most undoubtedly, the terms of the propositions are distinctly materialistic. Nevertheless two things are certain: the one, that I hold the statements to be substantially true; the other, that I, individually, am no materialist, but, on the contrary, believe materialism to involve grave philosophical error.

This union of materialistic terminology with the repudiation of materialistic philosophy I share with some of the most thoughtful men with whom I am acquainted. And, when I first undertook to deliver the present discourse, it appeared to me to be a fitting opportunity to explain how such a union is not only consistent with, but necessitated by, sound logic. I purposed to lead you through the territory of vital phenomena to the materialistic slough in which you find yourselves now plunged, and then to point out to you the sole path by which, in my judgment, extrication is possible.

* * * * *

Let us suppose that knowledge is absolute, and not relative, and therefore, that our conception of matter represents that which it really is. Let us suppose, further, that we do know more of cause and effect than a certain definite order of succession among facts, and that we have a knowledge of the necessity of that succession—and hence, of necessary laws—and I, for my part, do not see what escape there is from utter materialism and necessarianism. For it is obvious that our knowledge of what we call the material world is, to begin with, at least as certain and definite as that of the spiritual world, and that our acquaintance with law is of as old a date as our knowledge of spontaneity. Further, I take it to be demonstrable that it is utterly impossible to prove that anything whatever may not be the effect of a material and necessary cause, and that human logic is equally incompetent to prove that any act is really spontaneous. A really spontaneous act is one which, by the assumption, has no cause; and the attempt to prove such a negative as this is, on the face of the matter, absurd. And while it is thus a philosophical impossibility to demonstrate that any given phenomenon is not the effect of a material cause, any one who is acquainted with the history of science will admit, that its progress has, in all ages, meant, and now, more than ever, means, the extension of the province of what we call matter and causation, and the concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity.

I have endeavoured, in the first part of this discourse, to give you a conception of the direction towards which modern physiology is tending; and I ask you, what is the difference between the conception of life as the product of a certain disposition of material molecules, and the old notion of an *Archaeus*[54] governing and directing blind matter within each living body, except this—that here, as elsewhere, matter and law have devoured spirit and spontaneity? And as surely as every future grows out of past and present, so will the physiology of the future gradually extend the realm of matter and law until it is co-extensive with knowledge, with feeling, and with action.

The consciousness of this great truth weighs like a nightmare, I believe, upon many of the best minds of these days. They watch what they conceive to be the progress of materialism, in such fear and powerless anger as a savage feels when, during an eclipse, the great shadow creeps over the face of the sun. The advancing tide of matter threatens to drown their souls; the tightening grasp of law impedes their freedom; they are alarmed lest man's moral nature be debased by the increase of his wisdom.

If the "New Philosophy" be worthy of the reprobation with which it is visited, I confess their fears seem to me to be well founded. While, on the contrary, could David Hume be consulted, I think he would smile at their perplexities, and chide them for doing even as the heathen, and falling down in terror before the hideous idols their own hands have raised.

For, after all, what do we know of this terrible "matter," except as a name for the unknown and hypothetical cause of states of our own consciousness? And what do we know of that "spirit" over whose threatened extinction by matter a great lamentation is arising, like that which was heard at the death of Pan, except that it is also a name for an unknown and hypothetical cause, or condition, of states of consciousness? In other words, matter and spirit are but names for the imaginary substrata of groups of natural phenomena.

And what is the dire necessity and "iron" law under which men groan? Truly, most gratuitously invented bugbears. I suppose if there be an "iron" law, it is that of gravitation; and if there be a physical necessity, it is that a stone, unsupported, must fall to the ground. But what is all we really know, and can know, about the latter phenomenon? Simply, that, in all human experience, stones have fallen to the ground under these conditions; that we have not the smallest reason for believing that any stone so circumstanced will not fall to the ground; and that we have, on the contrary, every reason to believe that it will so fall. It is very convenient to indicate that all the conditions of belief have been fulfilled in this case, by calling the statement that unsupported stones will fall to the ground, "a law of Nature." But when, as commonly happens, we change *will* into *must*, we introduce an idea of necessity which most assuredly does not lie in the observed facts, and has no warranty that I can discover elsewhere. For my part, I utterly repudiate and anathematise the intruder. Fact I know; and Law I know; but what is this Necessity save an empty shadow of my own mind's throwing?

But, if it is certain that we can have no knowledge of the nature of either matter or spirit, and that the notion of necessity is something illegitimately thrust into the perfectly legitimate conception of law, the materialistic position that there is nothing in the world but matter, force, and necessity, is as utterly devoid of justification as the most baseless of theological dogmas. The fundamental doctrines of materialism, like those of spiritualism, and most other "isms," lie outside "the limits of philosophical inquiry," and David Hume's great service to humanity is his irrefragable demonstration of what these limits are. Hume called himself a sceptic, and therefore others cannot be blamed if they apply the same title to him; but that does not alter the fact that the name, with its existing implications, does him gross injustice.

If a man asks me what the politics of the inhabitants of the moon are, and I reply that I do not know; that neither I, nor any one else, has any means of knowing; and that, under these circumstances, I decline to trouble myself about the subject at all; I do not think he has any right to call me a sceptic. On the contrary, in replying thus, I conceive that I am simply honest and truthful, and show a proper regard for the economy of time. So Hume's strong and subtle intellect takes up a great many problems about which we are naturally curious, and shows us that they are essentially questions of lunar politics, in their essence incapable of being answered, and therefore not worth the attention of men who have work to do in the world. And he thus ends one of his essays:—

"If we take in hand any volume of Divinity, or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."^[55]

Permit me to enforce this most wise advice. Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing, and can know nothing? We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it. To do this effectually it is necessary to be fully possessed of only two beliefs: the first, that the order of Nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimited; the second, that our volition^[56] counts for something as a condition of the course of events.

Each of these beliefs can be verified experimentally, as often as we like to try. Each, therefore, stands upon the strongest foundation upon which any belief can rest, and forms one of our highest truths. If we find that the ascertainment of the order of nature is facilitated by using one terminology, or one set of symbols, rather than another, it is our clear duty to use the former; and no harm can accrue, so long as we bear in mind that we are dealing merely with terms and symbols.

In itself it is of little moment whether we express the phenomena of matter in terms of spirit; or the phenomena of spirit in terms of matter: matter may be regarded as a form of thought, thought may be regarded as a property of matter—each statement has a certain relative truth. But with a view to the progress of science, the materialistic terminology is in every way to be preferred. For it connects

thought with the other phenomena of the universe, and suggests inquiry into the nature of those physical conditions, or concomitants of thought, which are more or less accessible to us, and a knowledge of which may, in future, help us to exercise the same kind of control over the world of thought as we already possess in respect of the material world; whereas, the alternative, or spiritualistic, terminology is utterly barren, and leads to nothing but obscurity and confusion of ideas.

Thus there can be little doubt, that the further science advances, the more extensively and consistently will all the phenomena of Nature be represented by materialistic formulae and symbols.

But the man of science, who, forgetting the limits of philosophical inquiry, slides from these formulae and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism, seems to me to place himself on a level with the mathematician who should mistake the x's and y's with which he works his problems, for real entities—and with this further disadvantage, as compared with the mathematician, that the blunders of the latter are of no practical consequence, while the errors of systematic materialism may paralyse the energies and destroy the beauty of a life.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 48: The substance of this paper was contained in an address which was delivered in Edinburgh in 1868. The paper was published in "Lay Sermons," 1870.]

[Footnote 49: *à fortiori*: with stronger reason.]

[Footnote 50: Why does the populace rush so and make clamor? It wishes to eat, bring forth children, and feed these as well as it may.... No man can do better, strive how he will.]

[Footnote 51: We and ours must die.]

[Footnote 52: In one of the Arabian Nights stories, a nobleman called Barmecide set before a beggar a number of empty dishes supposed to contain a feast.]

[Footnote 53: Mode of working.]

[Footnote 54: Archæus: a spirit, having essentially the same form as the body within which it resided.]

[Footnote 55: Hume's Essay "Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy," in the *Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding*.—[Many critics of this passage seem to forget that the subject-matter of Ethics and Aesthetics consists of matters of fact and existence.—1892.]—Author's note.]

[Footnote 56: Or, to speak more accurately, the physical state of which volition is the expression.—1892.—Author's note.]

COMPARISON OF THE MENTAL POWERS OF MAN AND THE LOWER ANIMALS[57]

CHARLES DARWIN

My object in this chapter is to show that there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties. Each division of the subject might have been extended into a separate essay, but must here be treated briefly. As no classification of the mental powers has been universally accepted, I shall arrange my remarks in the order most convenient for my purpose; and will select those facts which have struck me most, with the hope that they may produce some effect on the reader.

As man possesses the same senses as the lower animals, his fundamental intuitions must be the same. Man has also some few instincts in common, as that of self-preservation, sexual love, the love of the mother for her new-born offspring, the desire possessed by the latter to suck, and so forth. But man, perhaps, has somewhat fewer instincts: than those possessed by the animals which come next to him in the series. The orang in the Eastern islands and the chimpanzee in Africa build platforms on which they sleep; and as both species follow the same habit, it might be argued that this was due to instinct, but we cannot feel sure that it is not the result of both animals having similar wants and

possessing similar powers of reasoning. These apes, as we may assume, avoid the many poisonous fruits of the tropics, and man has no such knowledge; but as our domestic animals, when taken to foreign lands, and when first turned out in the spring, often eat poisonous herbs, which they afterward avoid, we cannot feel sure that the apes do not learn from their own experience or from that of their parents what fruits to select. It is, however, certain, as we shall presently see, that apes have an instinctive dread of serpents, and probably of other dangerous animals.

The fewness and the comparative simplicity of the instincts in the higher animals are remarkable in contrast with those of the lower animals. Cuvier maintained that instinct and intelligence stand in an inverse ratio to each other; and some have thought that the intellectual faculties of the higher animals have been gradually developed from their instincts. But Pouchet, in an interesting essay, has shown that no such inverse ratio really exists. Those insects which possess the most wonderful instincts are certainly the most intelligent. In the vertebrate series, the least intelligent members, namely fishes and amphibians, do not possess complex instincts; and among mammals the animal most remarkable for its instincts, namely the beaver, is highly intelligent, as will be admitted by every one who has read Mr. Morgan's excellent work.[58]

But although, as we learn from the above-mentioned insects and the beaver, a high degree of intelligence is certainly compatible with complex instincts, and although actions, at first learned voluntarily, can soon through habit be performed with the quickness and certainty of a reflex action, yet it is not improbable that there is a certain amount of interference between the development of free intelligence and of instinct, since the latter implies some inherited modification of the brain. Little is known about the functions of the brain, but we can perceive that as the intellectual powers become highly developed the various parts of the brain must be connected by very intricate channels of the freest intercommunication; and as a consequence each separate part would perhaps tend to be less well fitted to answer to particular sensations or associations in a definite and inherited—that is, instinctive—manner. There seems even to exist some relation between a low degree of intelligence and a strong tendency to the formation of fixed, though not inherited, habits; for as a sagacious physician remarked to me, persons who are slightly imbecile tend to act in everything by routine or habit; and they are rendered much happier if this is encouraged.

I have thought this digression worth giving, because we may easily underrate the mental powers of the higher animals, and especially of man, when we compare their actions founded on the memory of past events, on foresight, reason and imagination, with exactly similar actions instinctively performed by the lower animals; in this latter case the capacity of performing such actions has been gained, step by step, through the variability of the mental organs and natural selection, without any conscious intelligence on the part of the animal during each successive generation. No doubt, as Mr. Wallace has argued, much of the intelligent work done by man is due to imitation and not to reason; but there is this great difference between his actions and many of those performed by the lower animals, namely, that man cannot, on his first trial, make, for instance, a stone hatchet or a canoe, through his power of imitation. He has to learn his work by practice; a beaver, on the other hand, can make its dam or canal, and a bird its nest, as well, or nearly as well, and a spider its wonderful web quite as well, the first time it tries as when old and experienced.

To return to our immediate subject: the lower animals, like man, manifestly feel pleasure and pain, happiness and misery. Happiness is never better exhibited than by young animals, such as puppies, kittens, lambs, etc., when playing together, like our own children. Even insects play together, as has been described by that excellent observer, P. Huber, who saw ants chasing and pretending to bite each other, like so many puppies.

The fact that the lower animals are excited by the same emotions as ourselves is so well established that it will not be necessary to weary the reader by many details. Terror acts in the same manner on them as on us, causing the muscles to tremble, the heart to palpitate, the sphincters to be relaxed, and the hair to stand on end. Suspicion, the offspring of fear, is eminently characteristic of most wild animals. It is, I think, impossible to read the account given by Sir E. Tennent, of the behaviour of the female elephants used as decoys, without admitting that they intentionally practise deceit, and well know what they are about. Courage and timidity are extremely variable qualities in the individuals of the same species, as is plainly seen in our dogs. Some dogs and horses are ill-tempered and easily turn sulky; others are good-tempered; and these qualities are certainly inherited. Every one knows how liable animals are to furious rage and how plainly they show it. Many, and probably true, anecdotes have been published on the long-delayed and artful revenge of various animals. The accurate Rengger and Brehm[59] state that the American and African monkeys which they kept tame certainly revenged themselves. Sir Andrew Smith, a zoologist whose scrupulous accuracy was known to many persons, told me the following story of which he was himself an eye-witness: At the Cape of Good Hope an officer had often plagued a certain baboon, and the animal, seeing him approaching one Sunday for parade, poured water into a hole and hastily made some thick mud, which he skilfully dashed over the officer as

he passed by, to the amusement of many bystanders. For long afterwards the baboon rejoiced and triumphed whenever he saw his victim.

The love of a dog for his master is notorious; as an old writer quaintly says: "A dog is the only thing on this earth that luv's you more than he luv's himself." In the agony of death a dog has been known to caress his master, and every one has heard of the dog suffering under vivisection, who licked the hand of the operator; this man, unless the operation was fully justified by an increase of our knowledge, or unless he had a heart of stone, must have felt remorse to the last hour of his life.

As Whewell has well asked: "Who that reads the touching instances of maternal affection, related so often of the women of all nations and of the females of all animals, can doubt that the principle of action is the same in the two cases?" We see maternal affection exhibited in the most trifling details; thus, Rengger observed an American monkey (a Cebus) carefully driving away the flies which plagued her infant; and Duvaucel saw a Hylobates washing the face of her young ones in a stream. So intense is the grief of female monkeys for the loss of their young that it invariably caused the death of certain kinds kept under confinement by Brehm in N. Africa. Orphan monkeys were always adopted and carefully guarded by the other monkeys, both males and females. One female baboon had so capacious a heart that she not only adopted young monkeys of other species, but stole young dogs and cats, which she continually carried about. Her kindness, however, did not go so far as to share her food with her adopted offspring, at which Brehm was surprised, as his monkeys always divided everything quite fairly with their own young ones. An adopted kitten scratched this affectionate baboon, who certainly had a fine intellect, for she was much astonished at being scratched, and immediately examined the kitten's feet, and without more ado bit off the claws.[60] In the Zoological Gardens I heard from the keeper that an old baboon (*C. chacma*) had adopted a Rhesus monkey; but when a young drill and mandrill were placed in the cage she seemed to perceive that these monkeys, though distinct species, were her nearer relatives, for she at once rejected the Rhesus and adopted both of them. The young Rhesus, as I saw, was greatly discontented at being thus rejected, and it would, like a naughty child, annoy and attack the young drill and mandrill whenever it could do so with safety; this conduct exciting great indignation in the old baboon. Monkeys will also, according to Brehm, defend their master when attacked by any one, as well as dogs to whom they are attached, from the attacks of other dogs. But we here trench on the subjects of sympathy and fidelity to which I shall recur. Some of Brehm's monkeys took much delight in teasing a certain old dog whom they disliked, as well as other animals, in various ingenious ways.

Most of the more complex emotions are common to the higher animals and ourselves. Every one has seen how jealous a dog is of his master's affections if lavished on any other creature; and I have observed the same fact with monkeys. This shows that animals not only love, but have a desire to be loved. Animals manifestly feel emulation. They love approbation or praise; and a dog carrying a basket for his master exhibits in a high degree self-complacency or pride. There can, I think, be no doubt that a dog feels shame, as distinct from fear, and something very like modesty when begging too often for food. A great dog scorns the snarling of a little dog, and this may be called magnanimity. Several observers have stated that monkeys certainly dislike being laughed at; and they sometimes invent imaginary offenses. In the Zoological Gardens I saw a baboon who always got into a furious rage when his keeper took out a letter or book and read it aloud to him; and his rage was so violent that, as I witnessed on one occasion, he bit his own leg till the blood flowed. Dogs show what may be fairly called a sense of humour as distinct from mere play; if a bit of stick or other such object be thrown to one, he will often carry it away for a short distance; and then squatting down with it on the ground close before him, will wait until his master comes quite close to take it away. The dog will then seize it and rush away in triumph, repeating the same maneuver, and evidently enjoying the practical joke.

We will now turn to the more intellectual emotions and faculties, which are very important, as forming the basis for the development of the higher mental powers. Animals manifestly enjoy excitement, and suffer from ennui, as may be seen with dogs, and, according to Rengger, with monkeys. All animals feel *Wonder* and many exhibit *Curiosity*. They sometimes suffer from this latter quality, as when the hunter plays antics and thus attracts them; I have witnessed this with deer, and so it is with the wary chamois, and with some kinds of wild ducks. Brehm gives a curious account of the instinctive dread, which his monkeys exhibited, for snakes; but their curiosity was so great that they could not desist from occasionally satiating their horror in a most human fashion by lifting up the lid of the box in which the snakes were kept. I was so much surprised at his account that I took a stuffed and coiled-up snake into the monkey-house at the Zoological Gardens, and the excitement thus caused was one of the most curious spectacles which I ever beheld. Three species of *Cercopithecus* were the most alarmed; they dashed about their cages and uttered sharp signal cries of danger, which were understood by the other monkeys. A few young monkeys and one old Anubis baboon alone took no notice of the snake. I then placed the stuffed specimen on the ground in one of the larger compartments. After a time all the monkeys collected round it in a large circle, and, staring intently,

presented a most ludicrous appearance. They became extremely nervous; so that when a wooden ball, with which they were familiar as a plaything, was accidentally moved in the straw, under which it was partly hidden, they all instantly started away. These monkeys behaved very differently when a dead fish, a mouse, a living turtle, and other new objects were placed in their cages; for though at first frightened, they soon approached, handled, and examined them. I then placed a live snake in a paper bag, with the mouth loosely closed, in one of the larger compartments. One of the monkeys immediately approached, cautiously opened the bag a little, peeped in, and instantly dashed away. Then I witnessed what Brehm has described; for monkey after monkey, with head raised high and turned on one side, could not resist taking a momentary peep into the upright bag, at the dreadful object lying quietly at the bottom. It would almost appear as if monkeys had some notion of zoological affinities, for those kept by Brehm exhibited a strange, although mistaken, instinctive dread of innocent lizards and frogs. An orang, also, has been known to be much alarmed at the first sight of a turtle.

The principle of *Imitation* is strong in man, and especially, as I have myself observed, with savages. In certain morbid states of the brain this tendency is exaggerated to an extraordinary degree; some hemiplegic patients and others, at the commencement of inflammatory softening of the brain, unconsciously imitate every word which is uttered, whether in their own or a foreign language, and every gesture or action which is performed near them. Desor has remarked that no animal voluntarily imitates an action performed by man, until, in the ascending scale, we come to monkeys, which are well known to be ridiculous mockers. Animals, however, sometimes imitate each other's actions; thus two species of wolves, which had been reared by dogs, learned to bark, as does sometimes the jackal, but whether this can be called voluntary imitation is another question. Birds imitate the songs of their parents, and sometimes of other birds; and parrots are notorious imitators of any sound which they often hear. Dureau de la Malle gives an account of a dog reared by a cat, who learned to imitate the well-known action of a cat licking her paws, and thus washing her ears and face; this was also witnessed by the celebrated naturalist Audouin. I have received several confirmatory accounts; in one of these, a dog had not been suckled by a cat, but had been brought up with one, together with kittens, and had thus acquired the above habit, which he ever afterward practised during his life of thirteen years. Dureau de la Malle's dog likewise learned from the kittens to play with a ball by rolling it about with his fore-paws and springing on it. A correspondent assures me that a cat in his house used to put her paws into jugs of milk having too narrow a mouth for her head. A kitten of this cat soon learned the same trick, and practised it ever afterward whenever there was an opportunity.

The parents of many animals, trusting to the principle of imitation in their young, and more especially to their instinctive or inherited tendencies, may be said to educate them. We see this when a cat brings a live mouse to her kittens; and Dureau de la Malle has given a curious account (in the paper above quoted) of his observations on hawks which taught their young dexterity, as well as judgment of distances, by first dropping through the air dead mice and sparrows, which the young generally failed to catch, and then bringing them live birds and letting them loose.

Hardly any faculty is more important for the intellectual progress of man than *Attention*. Animals clearly manifest this power, as when a cat watches by a hole and prepares to spring on its prey. Wild animals sometimes become so absorbed when thus engaged that they may be easily approached. Mr. Bartlett has given me a curious proof of how variable this faculty is in monkeys. A man who trains monkeys to act in plays used to purchase common kinds from the Zoological Society at the price of five pounds for each; but he offered to give double the price if he might keep three or four of them for a few days in order to select one. When asked how he could possibly learn so soon whether a particular monkey would turn out a good actor, he answered that it all depended on their power of attention. If when he was talking and explaining anything to a monkey its attention was easily distracted, as by a fly on the wall or other trifling object, the case was hopeless. If he tried by punishment to make an inattentive monkey act, it turned sulky. On the other hand, a monkey which carefully attended to him could always be trained.

It is almost superfluous to state that animals have excellent *memories* for persons and places. A baboon at the Cape of Good Hope, as I have been informed by Sir Andrew Smith, recognised him with joy after an absence of nine months. I had a dog who was savage and averse to all strangers, and I purposely tried his memory after an absence of five years and two days. I went near the stable where he lived and shouted to him in my old manner; he showed no joy, but instantly followed me out walking, and obeyed me exactly as if I had parted with him only half an hour before. A train of old associations, dormant during five years, had thus been instantaneously awakened in his mind. Even ants, as P. Huber has clearly shown, recognised their fellow-ants belonging to the same community after a separation of four months. Animals can certainly by some means judge of the intervals of time between recurrent events.

The *Imagination* is one of the highest prerogatives of man. By this faculty he may unite former images and ideas, independently of the will, and thus create brilliant and novel results. A poet, as Jean

Paul Richter remarks, "who must reflect whether he shall make a character say yes or no—to the devil with him; he is only a stupid corpse." The value of the products of our imagination depends of course on the number, accuracy, and clearness of our impressions, on our judgment and taste in selecting or rejecting the involuntary combinations, and to a certain extent on our power of voluntarily combining them. As dogs, cats, horses, and probably all the higher animals, even birds, have vivid dreams, and this is shown by their movements and the sounds uttered, we must admit that they possess some power of imagination. There must be something special which causes dogs to howl in the night, and especially during moonlight, in that remarkable and melancholy manner called baying. All dogs do not do so; and, according to Houzeau, they do not then look at the moon, but at some fixed point near the horizon. Houzeau thinks that their imaginations are disturbed by the vague outlines of the surrounding objects, and conjure up before them fantastic images; if this be so, their feelings may almost be called superstitious.

Of all the faculties of the human mind, it will, I presume, be admitted that *Reason* stands at the summit. Only a few persons now dispute that animals possess some power of reasoning. Animals may constantly be seen to pause, deliberate, and resolve. It is a significant fact, that the more the habits of any particular animal are studied by a naturalist, the more he attributes to reason and the less to unlearned instincts. In future chapters we shall see that some animals extremely low in the scale apparently display a certain amount of reason. No doubt it is often difficult to distinguish between the power of reason and that of instinct. For instance, Dr. Hayes, in his work on "The Open Polar Sea," repeatedly remarks that his dogs, instead of continuing to draw the sledges in a compact body, diverged and separated when they came to thin ice, so that their weight might be more evenly distributed. This was often the first warning which the travellers received that the ice was becoming thin and dangerous. Now, did the dogs act thus from the experience of each individual, or from the example of the older and wiser dogs, or from an inherited habit, that is from instinct? This instinct may possibly have arisen since the time, long ago, when dogs were first employed by the natives in drawing their sledges; or the Arctic wolves, the parent-stock of the Esquimau dog, may have acquired an instinct impelling them not to attack their prey in a close pack, when on thin ice.

We can only judge by the circumstances under which actions are performed, whether they are due to instinct, or to reason, or to the mere association of ideas; this latter principle, however, is intimately connected with reason. A curious case has been given by Professor Möbius, of a pike, separated by a plate of glass from an adjoining aquarium stocked with fish, and who often dashed himself with such violence against the glass in trying to catch the other fishes, that he was sometimes completely stunned. The pike went on thus for three months, but at last learned caution, and ceased to do so. The plate of glass was then removed, but the pike would not attack these particular fishes, though he would devour others which were afterward introduced; so strongly was the idea of a violent shock associated in his feeble mind with the attempt on his former neighbours. If a savage who had never seen a large plate-glass window, were to dash himself even once against it, he would for a long time afterward associate a shock with a window-frame; but, very differently from the pike, he would probably reflect on the nature of the impediment, and be cautious under analogous circumstances. Now with monkeys, as we shall presently see, a painful or merely a disagreeable impression, from an action once performed, is sometimes sufficient to prevent the animal from repeating it. If we attribute this difference between the monkeys and the pike solely to the association of ideas being so much stronger and more persistent in the one than the other, though the pike often received much the more severe injury, can we maintain in the case of man that a similar difference implies the possession of a fundamentally different mind?

Houzeau relates that, while crossing a wide and arid plain in Texas, his two dogs suffered greatly from thirst, and that between thirty and forty times they rushed down the hollows to search for water. These hollows were not valleys, and there were no trees in them, or any other difference in the vegetation, and as they were absolutely dry, there could have been no smell of damp earth. The dogs behaved as if they knew that a dip in the ground offered them the best chance of finding water, and Houzeau has often witnessed the same behaviour in other animals. I have seen, as I dare say have others, that when a small object is thrown on the ground beyond the reach of one of the elephants in the Zoological Gardens, he blows through his trunk on the ground beyond the object, so that the current reflected on all sides may drive the object within his reach. Again, a well-known ethnologist, Mr. Westropp, informs me that he observed in Vienna a bear deliberately making with his paw a current in some water, which was close to the bars of his cage, so as to draw a piece of floating bread within his reach. These actions of the elephant and bear can hardly be attributed to instinct or inherited habit, as they would be of little use to an animal in a state of nature. Now, what is the difference between such actions, when performed by an uncultivated man, and by one of the higher animals?

The savage and the dog have often found water at a low level, and the coincidence under such

circumstances has become associated in their minds. A cultivated man would perhaps make some general proposition on the subject; but from all that we know of savages it is extremely doubtful whether they would do so, and a dog would certainly not. But a savage, as well as a dog, would search in the same way, though frequently disappointed, and in both it seems to be equally an act of reason, whether or not any general proposition on the subject is consciously placed before the mind. The same would apply to the elephant and the bear making currents in the air or water. The savage would certainly neither know nor care by what law the desired movements were effected; yet his act would be guided by a rude process of reasoning, as surely as would a philosopher in his longest chain of deductions. There would no doubt be this difference between him and one of the higher animals, that he would take notice of much slighter circumstances and conditions, and would observe any connection between them after much less experience, and this would be of paramount importance. I kept a daily record of the actions of one of my infants, and when he was about eleven months old, and before he could speak a single word, I was continually struck with the greater quickness with which all sorts of objects and sounds were associated together in his mind, compared with that of the most intelligent dogs I ever knew. But the higher animals differ in exactly the same way in this power of association from those low in the scale, such as the pike, as well as in that of drawing inferences and of observation.

The promptings of reason, after very short experience, are well shown by the following actions of American monkeys, which stand low in their order. Rengger, a most careful observer, states that when he first gave eggs to his monkeys in Paraguay they smashed them and thus lost much of their contents; afterward they gently hit one end against some hard body, and picked off the bits of shell with their fingers. After cutting themselves only once with any sharp tool, they would not touch it again, or would handle it with the greatest caution. Lumps of sugar were often given them wrapped up in paper; and Rengger sometimes put a live wasp in the paper, so that in hastily unfolding it they got stung; after this had once happened they always held the packet to their ears to detect any movement within.

The following cases relate to dogs. Mr. Colquhoun winged two wild ducks, which fell on the farther side of a stream; his retriever tried to bring over both at once, but could not succeed; she then, though never before known to ruffle a feather, deliberately killed one, brought over the other, and returned for the dead bird. Colonel Hutchinson relates that two partridges were shot at once, one being killed, the other wounded; the latter ran away and was caught by the retriever, who on her return came across the dead bird: "She stopped, evidently greatly puzzled, and after one or two trials, finding she could not take it up without permitting the escape of the winged bird, she considered a moment, then deliberately murdered it by giving it a severe crunch, and afterward brought away both together. This was the only known instance of her ever having wilfully injured any game." Here we have reason, though not quite perfect, for the retriever might have brought the wounded bird first and then returned for the dead one, as in the case of the two wild-ducks. I give the above cases as resting on the evidence of two independent witnesses and because in both instances the retrievers, after deliberation, broke through a habit which is inherited by them (that of not killing the game retrieved), and because they show how strong their reasoning faculty must have been to overcome a fixed habit.

I will conclude by quoting a remark by the illustrious Humboldt. "The muleteers in South America say, 'I will not give you the mule whose step is easiest, but *la mas racional*—the one that reasons best;'" and, as he adds, "this popular expression, dictated by long experience, combats the system of animated machines better perhaps than all the arguments of speculative philosophy." Nevertheless some writers even yet deny that the higher animals possess a trace of reason; and they endeavour to explain away, by what appears to be mere verbiage, all such facts as those above given.

It has, I think, now been shown that man and the higher animals, especially the Primates, have some few instincts in common. All have the same senses, intuitions, and sensations—similar passions, affections, and emotions, even the more complex ones, such as jealousy, suspicion, emulation, gratitude and magnanimity; they practise deceit and are revengeful; they are sometimes susceptible to ridicule, and even have a sense of humour; they feel wonder and curiosity; they possess the same faculties of imitation, attention, deliberation, choice, memory, imagination, the association of ideas, and reason, though in very different degrees.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 57: From Chapter III of "The Descent of Man," 1871. All except three of the author's footnotes have been omitted.]

[Footnote 58: "The American Beaver and his Works," 1868.—Author's note.]

[Footnote 59: All the following statements, given on the authority of these two naturalists, are taken from Rengger's "Naturgesch. der

Säugethiere von Paraguay," 1830, s. 41-57, and from Brehm's "Thierleben," B.i. s. 10-87.—Author's note.]

[Footnote 60: A critic, without any grounds ("Quarterly Review," July, 1871, p. 72), disputes the possibility of this act as described by Brehm, for the sake of discrediting my work. Therefore I tried, and found that I could readily seize with my own teeth the sharp little claws of a kitten nearly five weeks old.—Author's note.]

THE IMPORTANCE OF DUST: A SOURCE OF BEAUTY AND ESSENTIAL TO LIFE[61]

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE

The majority of persons, if asked what were the uses of dust, would reply that they did not know it had any, but they were sure it was a great nuisance. It is true that dust, in our towns and in our houses, is often not only a nuisance but a serious source of disease: while in many countries it produces ophthalmia, often resulting in total blindness. Dust, however, as it is usually perceived by us, is, like dirt, only matter in the wrong place, and whatever injurious or disagreeable effects it produces are largely due to our own dealings with nature. So soon as we dispense with horsepower and adopt purely mechanical means of traction and conveyance, we can almost wholly abolish disease-bearing dust from our streets, and ultimately from all our highways; while another kind of dust, that caused by the imperfect combustion of coal, may be got rid of with equal facility so soon as we consider pure air, sunlight, and natural beauty to be of more importance to the population as a whole than are the prejudices or the vested interests of those who produce the smoke.

But though we can thus minimize the dangers and the inconveniences arising from the grosser forms of dust, we cannot wholly abolish it; and it is, indeed, fortunate we cannot do so, since it has now been discovered that it is to the presence of dust we owe much of the beauty, and perhaps even the very habitability of the earth we live upon. Few of the fairy tales of science are more marvelous than these recent discoveries as to the varied effects and important uses of dust in the economy of nature.

The question why the sky and the deep ocean are both blue did not much concern the earlier physicists. It was thought to be the natural color of pure air and water, so pale as not to be visible when small quantities were seen, and only exhibiting its true tint when we looked through great depth of atmosphere or of organic water. But this theory did not explain the familiar facts of the gorgeous tints seen at sunset and sunrise, not only in the atmosphere and on the clouds near the horizon, but also in equally resplendent hues when the invisible sun shines upon Alpine peaks and snowfields. A true theory should explain all these colors, which comprise almost every tint of the rainbow.

The explanation was found through experiments on the visibility or non-visibility of air, which were made by the late Professor Tyndall about the year 1868. Everyone has seen the floating dust in a sunbeam when sunshine enters a partially darkened room; but it is not generally known that if there was absolutely no dust in the air the path of the sunbeam would be totally black and invisible, while if only very little dust was present in very minute particles the air would be as blue as the summer sky.

This was proved by passing a ray of electric light lengthways through a long glass cylinder filled with air of varying degrees of purity as regards dust. In the air of an ordinary room, however clean and well ventilated, the interior of the cylinder appears brilliantly illuminated. But if the cylinder is exhausted and then filled with air which is passed slowly through a fine gauze of intensely heated platinum wire, so as to burn up all the floating dust particles, which are mainly organic, the light will pass through the cylinder without illuminating the interior, which, viewed laterally, will appear as if filled with a dense black cloud. If, now, more air is passed into the cylinder through the heated gauze, but so rapidly that the dust particles are not wholly consumed, a slight blue haze will begin to appear, which will gradually become a pure blue, equal to that of a summer sky. If more and more dust particles are allowed to enter, the blue becomes paler, and gradually changes to the colourless illumination of the ordinary air.

The explanation of these phenomena is that the number of dust particles in ordinary air is so great that they reflect abundance of light of all wave-lengths, and thus cause the interior of the vessel containing them to appear illuminated with white light. The air which is passed slowly over white-hot platinum has had the dust particles destroyed, thus showing that they were almost wholly of organic origin, which is also indicated by their extreme lightness, causing them to float permanently in the

atmosphere. The dust being thus got rid of, and pure air being entirely transparent, there is nothing in the cylinder to reflect the light, which is sent through its centre in a beam of parallel rays so that none of it strikes against the sides; hence the inside of the cylinder appears absolutely dark. But when the larger dust particles are wholly or partially burnt, so that only the very smallest fragments remain, a blue light appears, because these are so minute as to reflect chiefly the more refrangible rays, which are of shorter wave-length—those at the blue end of the spectrum—and which are thus scattered in all directions, while the red and yellow rays pass straight on as before.

We have seen that the air near the earth's surface is full of rather coarse particles which reflect all the rays, and which therefore produce no one colour. But higher up the particles necessarily become smaller and smaller, since the comparatively rare atmosphere will support only the very smallest and lightest. These exist throughout a great thickness of air, perhaps from one mile to ten miles high or, even more, and blue or violet rays being reflected from the innumerable particles in this great mass of air, which is nearly uniform in all parts of the world as regards the presence of minute dust particles, produces the constant and nearly uniform tint we call sky-blue. A certain amount of white or yellow light is no doubt reflected from the coarser dust in the lower atmosphere, and slightly dilutes the blue and renders it not quite so deep and pure as it otherwise would be. This is shown by the increasing depth of the sky-colour when seen from the tops of lofty mountains, while from the still greater heights attained in balloons the sky appears of a blue-black colour, the blue reflected from the comparatively small amount of dust particles being seen against the intense black of stellar space. It is for the same reason that the "Italian skies" are of so rich a blue, because the Mediterranean Sea on one side and the snowy Alps on the other do not furnish so large a quantity of atmospheric dust in the lower strata of air as in less favorably situated countries, thus leaving the blue reflected by the more uniformly distributed fine dust of the higher strata undiluted. But these Mediterranean skies are surpassed by those of the central Pacific ocean, where, owing to the small area of land, the lower atmosphere is more free from coarse dust than in any other part of the world.

If we look at the sky on a perfectly fine summer's day, we shall find that the blue colour is the most pure and intense overhead, and when looking high up in a direction opposite to the sun. Near the horizon it is always less bright, while in the region immediately around the sun it is more or less yellow. The reason of this is that near the horizon we look through a very great thickness of the lower atmosphere, which is full of the larger dust particles reflecting white light, and this dilutes the pure blue of the higher atmosphere seen beyond. And in the vicinity of the sun a good deal of the blue light is reflected back into space by the finer dust, thus giving a yellowish tinge to that which reaches us reflected chiefly from the coarse dust of the lower atmosphere. At sunset and sunrise, however, this last effect is greatly intensified, owing to the great thickness of the strata of air through which the light reaches us. The enormous amount of this dust is well shown by the fact that, then only, we can look full at the sun, even when the whole sky is free from clouds and there is no apparent mist. But the sun's rays then reach us after having passed, first, through an enormous thickness of the higher strata of the air, the minute dust of which reflects most of the blue rays away from us, leaving the complementary yellow light to pass on. Then, the somewhat coarser dust reflects the green rays, leaving a more orange coloured light to pass on; and finally some of the yellow is reflected, leaving almost pure red. But owing to the constant presence of air currents, arranging both the dust and vapour in strata of varying extent and density, and of high or low clouds, which both absorb and reflect the light in varying degrees, we see produced all those wondrous combinations of tints and those gorgeous ever-changing colours, which are a constant source of admiration and delight to all who have the advantage of an uninterrupted view to the west, and who are accustomed to watch for these not unfrequent exhibitions of nature's kaleidoscopic colour-painting. With every change in the altitude of the sun the display changes its character; and most of all when it has sunk below the horizon, and, owing to the more favourable angles, a larger quantity of the coloured light is reflected toward us. Especially is this the case when there is a certain amount of cloud. The clouds, so long as the sun is above the horizon, intercept much of the light and colour; but, when the great luminary has passed away from our direct vision, his light shines more directly on the under sides of all the clouds and air strata of different densities; a new and more brilliant light flushes the western sky, and a display of gorgeous ever-changing tints occurs which are at once the delight of the beholder and the despair of the artist. And all this unsurpassable glory we owe to—dust!

A remarkable confirmation of this theory was given during the two or three years after the great eruption of Krakatoa, near Java. The volcanic débris was shot up from the crater many miles high, and the heavier portion of it fell upon the sea for several hundred miles around, and was found to be mainly composed of very thin flakes of volcanic glass. Much of this was of course ground to impalpable dust by the violence of the discharge, and was carried up to a height of many miles. Here it was caught by the return currents of air continually flowing northward and southward above the equatorial zone; and since, when these currents reach the temperate zone, where the surface rotation of the earth is less rapid, they continually flow eastward, the fine dust was thus carried at a great altitude completely

around the earth. Its effects were traced some months after the eruption in the appearance of brilliant sunset glows of an exceptional character, often flushing with crimson the whole western half of the visible sky. These glows continued in diminishing splendour for about three years; they were seen all over the temperate zone; and it was calculated that, before they finally disappeared, some of this fine dust must have travelled three times round the globe.

The same principle is thought to explain the exquisite blue colour of the deep seas and oceans and of many lakes and springs. Absolutely pure water, like pure air, is colourless, but all seas and lakes, however clear and translucent, contain abundance of very finely divided matter, organic or inorganic, which, as in the atmosphere, reflects the blue rays in such quantity as to overpower the white or coloured light-reflected from the fewer and more rapidly sinking particles of larger size. The oceanic dust is derived from many sources. Minute organisms are constantly dying near the surface, and their skeletons, or fragments of them, fall slowly to the bottom. The mud brought down by rivers, though it cannot be traced on the ocean floor more than about 150 miles from land, yet no doubt furnishes many particles of organic matter which are carried by surface currents to enormous distances and are ultimately dissolved before they reach the bottom. A more important source of finely divided matter is to be found in volcanic dust which, as in the case of Krakatoa, may remain for years in the atmosphere, but which must ultimately fall upon the surface of the earth and ocean. This can be traced in all the deep-sea oozes. Finally there is meteoric dust, which is continually falling to the surface of the earth, but in such minute quantities and in such a finely-divided state that it can be detected only in the oozes of the deepest oceans, where both inorganic and organic débris is almost absent.

The blue of the ocean varies in different parts from a pure blue somewhat lighter than that of the sky, as seen about the northern tropic in the Atlantic, to a deep indigo tint, as seen in the north temperate portions of the same ocean: owing, probably, to differences in the nature, quantity, and distribution of the solid matter which causes the colour. The Mediterranean, and the deeper Swiss lakes, are also a blue of various tints, due also to the presence of suspended matter, which Professor Tyndall thought might be so fine that it would require ages of quiet subsidence to reach the bottom. All the evidence goes to show, therefore, that the exquisite blue tints of sky and ocean, as well as all the sunset hues of sky and cloud, of mountain peak and Alpine snows, are due to the finer particles of that very dust which, in its coarser forms, we find so annoying and even dangerous.

But if this production of colour and beauty were the only useful function of dust, some persons might be disposed to dispense with it in order to escape its less agreeable effects. It has, however, been recently discovered that dust has another part to play in nature; a part so important that it is doubtful whether we could even live without it. To the presence of dust in the higher atmosphere we owe the formation of mists, clouds, and gentle beneficial rains, instead of water spouts and destructive torrents.

It is barely twenty years ago since the discovery was made, first in France by Coulier and Mascart, but more thoroughly worked out by Mr. John Aitken in 1880. He found that if a jet of steam is admitted into two large glass receivers,—one filled with ordinary air, the other with air which has been filtered through cotton wool so as to keep back all particles of solid matter,—the first will be instantly filled with condensed vapour in the usual cloudy form, while the other vessel will remain quite transparent. Another experiment was made, more nearly reproducing what occurs in nature. Some water was placed in the two vessels prepared as before. When the water had evaporated sufficiently to saturate the air the vessels were slightly cooled; a dense cloud was at once formed in the one while the other remained quite clear. These experiments, and many others, show that the mere cooling of vapour in air will not condense it into mist clouds or rain, unless *particles of solid matter* are present to form *nuclei* upon which condensation can begin. The density of the cloud is proportionate to the number of the particles; hence the fact that the steam issuing from the safety-valve or the chimney of a locomotive forms a dense white cloud, shows that the air is really full of dust particles, most of which are microscopic but none the less serving as centres of condensation for the vapour. Hence, if there were no dust in the air, escaping steam would remain invisible; there would be no cloud in the sky; and the vapour in the atmosphere, constantly accumulating through evaporation from seas and oceans and from the earth's surface, would have to find some other means of returning to its source.

One of these modes would be the deposition of dew, which is itself an illustration of the principle that vapour requires solid or liquid surfaces to condense upon; dew forms most readily and abundantly on grass, on account of the numerous centres of condensation this affords. Dew, however, is now formed only on clear cold nights after warm or moist days. The air near the surface is warm and contains much vapour, though below the point of saturation. But the innumerable points and extensive surfaces of grass radiate heat quickly, and becoming cool, lower the temperature of the adjacent air, which then reaches saturation point and condenses the contained atmosphere on the grass. Hence, if the atmosphere at the earth's surface became super-saturated with aqueous vapour, dew would be continuously deposited, especially on every form of vegetation, the result being that everything, including our clothing, would be constantly dripping wet. If there were absolutely no particles of solid

matter in the upper atmosphere, all the moisture would be returned to the earth in the form of dense mists, and frequent and copious dews, which in forests would form torrents of rain by the rapid condensation on the leaves. But if we suppose that solid particles were occasionally carried higher up through violent winds or tornadoes, then on those occasions the super-saturated atmosphere would condense rapidly upon them, and while falling would gather almost all the moisture in the atmosphere in that locality, resulting in masses or sheets of water, which would be so ruinously destructive by the mere weight and impetus of their fall that it is doubtful whether they would not render the earth almost wholly uninhabitable.

The chief mode of discharging the atmospheric vapour in the absence of dust would, however, be by contact with the higher slopes of all mountain ranges. Atmospheric vapour, being lighter than air, would accumulate in enormous quantities in the upper strata of the atmosphere, which would be always super-saturated and ready to condense upon any solid or liquid surfaces. But the quantity of land comprised in the upper half of all the mountains of the world is a very small fraction of the total surface of the globe, and this would lead to very disastrous results. The air in contact with the higher mountain slopes would rapidly discharge its water, which would run down the mountain sides in torrents. This condensation on every side of the mountains would leave a partial vacuum which would set up currents from every direction to restore the equilibrium, thus bringing in more super-saturated air to suffer condensation and add its supply of water, again increasing the in-draught of more air. The result would be that winds would be constantly blowing toward every mountain range from all directions, keeping up the condensation and discharging, day and night and from one year's end to another, an amount of water equal to that which falls during the heaviest tropical rains. All of the rain that now falls over the whole surface of the earth and ocean, with the exception of a few desert areas, would then fall only on rather high mountains or steep isolated hills, tearing down their sides in huge torrents, cutting deep ravines, and rendering all growth of vegetation impossible. The mountains would therefore be so devastated as to be uninhabitable, and would be equally incapable of supporting either vegetable or animal life.

But this constant condensation on the mountains would probably check the deposit on the lowlands in the form of dew, because the continual up-draught toward the higher slopes would withdraw almost the whole of the vapour as it arose from the oceans, and other water-surfaces, and thus leave the lower strata over the plains almost or quite dry. And if this were the case there would be no vegetation, and therefore no animal life, on the plains and lowlands, which would thus be all arid deserts cut through by the great rivers formed by the meeting together of the innumerable torrents from the mountains.

Now, although it may not be possible to determine with perfect accuracy what would happen under the supposed condition of the atmosphere, it is certain that the total absence of dust would so fundamentally change the meteorology of our globe as, not improbably, to render it uninhabitable by man, and equally unsuitable for the larger portion of its existing animal and vegetable life.

Let us now briefly summarise what we owe to the universality of dust, and especially to that most finely divided portion of it which is constantly present in the atmosphere up to the height of many miles. First of all it gives us the pure blue of the sky, one of the most exquisitely beautiful colours in nature. It gives us also the glories of the sunset and the sunrise, and all those brilliant hues seen in high mountain regions. Half the beauty of the world would vanish with the absence of dust. But, what is far more important than the colour of sky and beauty of sunset, dust gives us also diffused daylight, or skylight, that most equable, and soothing, and useful, of all illuminating agencies. Without dust the sky would appear absolutely black, and the stars would be visible even at noonday. The sky itself would therefore give us no light. We should have bright glaring sunlight or intensely dark shadows, with hardly any half-tones. From this cause alone the world would be so totally different from what it is that all vegetable and animal life would probably have developed into very different forms, and even our own organisation would have been modified in order that we might enjoy life in a world of such harsh and violent contrasts.

In our houses we should have little light except when the sun shone directly into them, and even then every spot out of its direct rays would be completely dark, except for light reflected from the walls. It would be necessary to have windows all around and the walls all white; and on the north side of every house a high white wall would have to be built to reflect the light and prevent that side from being in total darkness. Even then we should have to live in a perpetual glare, or shut out the sun altogether and use artificial light as being a far superior article.

Much more important would be the effects of a dust-free atmosphere in banishing clouds, or mist, or the "gentle rain of heaven," and in giving us in their place perpetual sunshine, desert lowlands, and mountains devastated by unceasing floods and raging torrents, so as, apparently, to render all life on the earth impossible.

There are a few other phenomena, apparently due to the same general causes, which may here be referred to. Everyone must have noticed the difference in the atmospheric effects and general character of the light in spring and autumn, at times when the days are of the same length, and consequently when the sun has the same altitude at corresponding hours. In spring we have a bluer sky and greater transparency of the atmosphere; in autumn, even on very fine days, there is always a kind of yellowish haze, resulting in a want of clearness in the air and purity of colour in the sky. These phenomena are quite intelligible when we consider that during winter less dust is formed, and more is brought down to the earth by rain and snow, resulting in the transparent atmosphere of spring, while exactly opposite conditions during summer bring about the mellow autumnal light. Again, the well-known beneficial effects of rain on vegetation, as compared with any amount of artificial watering, though, no doubt, largely due to the minute quantity of ammonia which the rain brings down with it from the air, must yet be partly derived from the organic or mineral particles which serve as the nuclei of every raindrop, and which, being so minute, are the more readily dissolved in the soil and appropriated as nourishment by the roots of plants.

It will be observed that all these beneficial effects of dust are due to its presence in such quantities as are produced by natural causes, since both gentle showers as well as ample rains and deep blue skies are present throughout the vast equatorial forest districts, where dust-forming agencies seem to be at a minimum. But in all densely-populated countries there is an enormous artificial production of dust—from our ploughed fields, from our roads and streets, where dust is continually formed by the iron-shod hoofs of innumerable horses, but chiefly from our enormous combustion of fuel pouring into the air volumes of smoke charged with unconsumed particles of carbon. This superabundance of dust, probably many times greater than that which would be produced under the more natural conditions which prevailed when our country was more thinly populated, must almost certainly produce some effect on our climate; and the particular effect it seems calculated to produce is the increase of cloud and fog, but not necessarily any increase of rain. Rain depends on the supply of aqueous vapour by evaporation; on temperature, which determines the dew point; and on changes in barometric pressure, which determine the winds. There is probably always and everywhere enough atmospheric dust to serve as centres of condensation at considerable altitudes, and thus to initiate rainfall when the other conditions are favourable; but the presence of increased quantities of dust at the lower levels must lead to the formation of denser clouds, although the minute water-vesicles cannot descend as rain, because, as they pass down into warmer and dryer strata of air, they are again evaporated.

Now, there is much evidence to show that there has been a considerable increase in the amount of cloud, and consequent decrease in the amount of sunshine, in all parts of our country. It is an undoubted fact that in the Middle Ages England was a wine-producing country, and this implies more sunshine than we have now. Sunshine has a double effect, in heating the surface soil and thus causing more rapid growth, besides its direct effect in ripening the fruit. This is well seen in Canada, where, notwithstanding a six months' winter of extreme severity, vines are grown as bushes in the open ground, and produce fruit equal to that of our ordinary greenhouses. Some years back one of our gardening periodicals obtained from gardeners of forty or fifty years' experience a body of facts clearly indicating a comparatively recent change of climate. It was stated that in many parts of the country, especially in the north, fruits were formerly grown successfully and of good quality in gardens where they cannot be grown now; and this occurred in places sufficiently removed from manufacturing centres to be unaffected by any direct deleterious influence of smoke. But an increase of cloud, and consequent diminution of sunshine, would produce just such a result; and this increase is almost certain to have occurred owing to the enormously increased amount of dust thrown into the atmosphere as our country has become more densely populated, and especially owing to the vast increase of our smoke-producing manufactories. It seems highly probable, therefore, that to increase the wealth of our capitalist-manufacturers we are allowing the climate of our whole country to be greatly deteriorated in a way which diminishes both its productiveness and its beauty, thus injuriously affecting the enjoyment and the health of the whole population, since sunshine is itself an essential condition of healthy life. When this fact is thoroughly realised we shall surely put a stop to such a reckless and wholly unnecessary production of injurious smoke and dust.

In conclusion, we find that the much-abused and all-pervading dust, which, when too freely produced, deteriorates our climate and brings us dirt, discomfort, and even disease, is, nevertheless, under natural conditions, an essential portion of the economy of nature. It gives us much of the beauty of natural scenery, as due to varying atmospheric effects of sky, and cloud, and sunset tints, and thus renders life more enjoyable; while, as an essential condition of diffused daylight and of moderate rainfalls combined with a dry atmosphere, it appears to be absolutely necessary for our existence upon the earth, perhaps even for the very development of terrestrial, as opposed to aquatic life. The overwhelming importance of the small things, and even of the despised things, of our world has never, perhaps, been so strikingly brought home to us as in these recent investigations into the wide-spread and far-reaching beneficial influences of Atmospheric Dust.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 61: Chapter IX of "The Wonderful Century," copyright, 1898, by Dodd, Mead and Company. The chapter is here reprinted by permission of the author, Dr. Wallace, and of the publishers.]

THE BATTLE OF THE ANTS[62]

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

One day when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battlefield I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war; the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noon-day prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bull-dogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry was Conquer or Die. In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hill-side of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus.[63] He saw this unequal combat from afar,—for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the reds; he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right foreleg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden. Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick,—"Fire! for God's sake, fire!"—and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer. There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near fore-leg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breast-plate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddlebow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he

accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hotel des Invalides, I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

Kirby and Spence tell us that the battles of ants have long been celebrated and the date of them recorded, though they say that Huber is the only modern author who appears to have witnessed them. "Aeneas Sylvius," say they, "after giving a very circumstantial account of one contested with great obstinacy by a great and small species on the trunk of a pear tree," adds that "'This action was fought in the pontificate of Eugenius the Fourth, in the presence of Nicholas Pistoriensis, an eminent lawyer, who related the whole history of the battle with the greatest fidelity.'" A similar engagement between great and small ants is recorded by Olaus Magnus, in which the small ones being victorious, are said to have buried the bodies of their own soldiers, but left those of their giant enemies a prey to the birds. This event happened previous to the expulsion of the tyrant Christiern the Second from Sweden." The battle which I witnessed took place in the Presidency of Polk, five years before the passage of Webster's Fugitive-Slave Bill.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 62: From Chapter XII of "Walden," 1854.]

[Footnote 63: Patroclus, in Homer's Iliad, was the friend whose death at the hands of the Trojans roused Achilles to action.]

A WIND-STORM IN THE FORESTS[64]

JOHN MUIR

The mountain winds, like the dew and rain, sunshine and snow, are measured and bestowed with love on the forests, to develop their strength and beauty. However restricted the scope of other forest influences, that of the winds is universal. The snow bends and trims the upper forests every winter, the lightning strikes a single tree here and there, while avalanches mow down thousands at a swoop as a gardener trims out a bed of flowers. But the winds go to every tree, fingering every leaf and branch and furrowed hole; not one is forgotten: the Mountain Pine towering with outstretched arms on the rugged buttresses of the icy peaks, the lowliest and most retiring tenant of the dells—they seek and find them all, caressing them tenderly, bending them in lusty exercise, stimulating their growth, plucking off a leaf or limb as required, or removing an entire tree or grove, now whispering and cooing through the branches like a sleepy child, now roaring like the ocean; the winds blessing the forests, the forests the winds, with ineffable beauty and harmony as the sure result.

After one has seen pines six feet in diameter bending like grasses before a mountain gale, and ever and anon some giant falling with a crash that shakes the hills, it seems astonishing that any, save the lowest thick-set trees, could ever have found a period sufficiently stormless to establish themselves; or once established, that they should not sooner or later have been blown down. But when the storm is over, and we behold the same forests tranquil again, towering fresh and unscathed in erect majesty, and consider what centuries of storms have fallen upon them since they were first planted: hail, to break the tender seedlings; lightning, to scorch and shatter; snow, winds, and avalanches, to crush and overwhelm,—while the manifest result of all this wild storm-culture is the glorious perfection we behold: then faith in Nature's forestry is established, and we cease to deplore the violence of her most destructive gales, or of any other storm implement whatsoever.

There are two trees in the Sierra forests that are never blown down, so long as they continue in sound health. These are the Juniper and the Dwarf Pine of the summit peaks. Their stiff, crooked roots grip the storm-beaten ledges like eagles' claws; while their lithe, cord-like branches bend round compliantly, offering but slight holds for winds, however violent. The other alpine conifers—the Needle Pine, Mountain Pine, Two-leaved Pine, and Hemlock Spruce—are never thinned out by this agent to any destructive extent, on account of their admirable toughness and the closeness of their growth. In general the same is true of the giants of the lower zones. The kingly Sugar Pine, towering aloft to a height of more than two hundred feet, offers a fine mark to storm-winds; but it is not densely foliated,

and its long horizontal arms swing round compliantly in the blast, like tresses of green, fluent algae in a brook: while the Silver Firs in most places keep their ranks well together in united strength.

The Yellow or Silver Pine is more frequently overturned than any other tree on the Sierra, because its leaves and branches form a larger mass in proportion to its height; while in many places it is planted sparsely, leaving open lanes through which storms may enter with full force. Furthermore, because it is distributed along the lower portion of the range, which was the first to be left bare on the breaking up of the ice-sheet at the close of the glacial winter, the soil it is growing upon has been longer exposed to post-glacial weathering, and consequently is in a more crumbling, decayed condition than the fresher soils farther up the range, and therefore offers a less secure anchorage for the roots. While exploring the forest zones of Mount Shasta, I discovered the path of a hurricane strewn with thousands of pines of this species. Great and small had been uprooted or wrenched off by sheer force, making a clean gap, like that made by a snow avalanche. But hurricanes capable of doing this class of work are rare in the Sierra; and when we have explored the forests from one extremity of the range to the other, we are compelled to believe that they are the most beautiful on the face of the earth, however we may regard the agents that have made them so.

There is always something deeply exciting, not only in the sounds of winds in the woods, which exert more or less influence over every mind, but in their varied water-like flow as manifested by the movements of the trees, especially those of the conifers. By no other trees are they rendered so extensively and impressively visible; not even by the lordly tropic palms or tree-ferns responsive to the gentlest breeze. The waving of a forest of the giant Sequoias is indescribably impressive and sublime; but the pines seem to me the best interpreters of winds. They are mighty waving golden-rods, ever in tune, singing and writing wind-music all their long century lives. Little, however, of this noble tree-waving and tree-music will you see or hear in the strictly alpine portion of the forests. The burly Juniper whose girth sometimes more than equals its height, is about as rigid as the rocks on which it grows. The slender lash-like sprays of the Dwarf Pine stream out in wavering ripples, but the tallest and slenderest are far too unyielding to wave even in the heaviest gales. They only shake in quick, short vibrations. The Hemlock Spruce, however, and the Mountain Pine, and some of the tallest thickets of the Two-leaved species, bow in storms with considerable scope and gracefulness. But it is only in the lower and middle zones that the meeting of winds and woods is to be seen in all its grandeur.

One of the most beautiful and exhilarating storms I ever enjoyed in the Sierra occurred in December, 1874, when I happened to be exploring one of the tributary valleys of the Yuba River. The sky and the ground and the trees had been thoroughly rain-washed and were dry again. The day was intensely pure: one of those incomparable bits of California winter, warm and balmy and full of white sparkling sunshine, redolent of all the purest influences of the spring, and at the same time enlivened with one of the most bracing wind-storms conceivable. Instead of camping out, as I usually do, I then chanced to be stopping at the house of a friend. But when the storm began to sound, I lost no time in pushing out into the woods to enjoy it. For on such occasions Nature has always something rare to show us, and the danger to life and limb is hardly greater than one would experience crouching deprecatingly beneath a roof.

It was still early morning when I found myself fairly adrift. Delicious sunshine came pouring over the hills, lighting the tops of the pines, and setting free a steam of summery fragrance that contrasted strangely with the wild tones of the storm. The air was mottled with pine-tassels and bright green plumes, that went flashing past in the sunlight like birds pursued. But there was not the slightest dustiness; nothing less pure than leaves, and ripe pollen, and flecks of withered bracken and moss. I heard trees falling for hours at the rate of one every two or three minutes: some uprooted, partly on account of the loose, water-soaked condition of the ground; others broken straight across, where some weakness caused by fire had determined the spot. The gestures of the various trees made a delightful study. Young Sugar Pines, light and feathery as squirrel-tails, were bowing almost to the ground; while the grand old patriarchs, whose massive boles had been tried in a hundred storms, waved solemnly above them, their long, arching branches streaming fluently on the gale, and every needle thrilling and ringing and shedding off keen lances of light like a diamond. The Douglas Spruces, with long sprays drawn out in level tresses, and needles massed in a gray, shimmering glow, presented a most striking appearance as they stood in bold relief along the hilltops. The madroños in the dells, with their red bark and large glossy leaves tilted every way, reflected the sunshine in throbbing spangles like those one so often sees on the rippled surface of a glacier lake. But the Silver Pines were now the most impressively beautiful of all. Colossal spires two hundred feet in height waved like supple golden-rods chanting and bowing low as if in worship; while the whole mass of their long, tremulous foliage was kindled into one continuous blaze of white sun-fire. The force of the gale was such that the most steadfast monarch of them all rocked down to its roots, with a motion plainly perceptible when one leaned against it. Nature was holding high festival, and every fiber of the most rigid giants thrilled with glad excitement.

I drifted on through the midst of this passionate music and motion, across many a glen, from ridge to

ridge; often halting in the lee of a rock for shelter, or to gaze and listen. Even when the grand anthem had swelled to its highest pitch, I could distinctly hear the varying tones of individual trees—Spruce, and Fir, and Pine, and leafless Oak—and even the infinitely gentle rustle of the withered grasses at my feet. Each was expressing itself in its own way—singing its own song, and making its own peculiar gestures—manifesting a richness of variety to be found in no other forest I have yet seen. The coniferous woods of Canada and the Carolinas and Florida, are made up of trees that resemble one another about as nearly as blades of grass, and grow close together in much the same way. Coniferous trees, in general, seldom possess individual character, such as is manifest among Oaks and Elms. But the California forests are made up of a greater number of distinct species than any other in the world. And in them we find, not only a marked differentiation into special groups, but also a marked individuality in almost every tree, giving rise to storm effects indescribably glorious.

Toward midday, after a long, tingling scramble through copses of hazel and ceanothus, I gained the summit of the highest ridge in the neighborhood; and then it occurred to me that it would be a fine thing to climb one of the trees, to obtain a wider outlook and get my ear close to the Aeolian music of its topmost needles. But under the circumstances the choice of a tree was a serious matter. One whose instep was not very strong seemed in danger of being blown down, or of being struck by others in case they should fall; another was branchless to a considerable height above the ground, and at the same time too large to be grasped with arms and legs in climbing; while others were not favorably situated for clear views. After cautiously casting about, I made choice of the tallest of a group of Douglas Spruces that were growing close together like a tuft of grass, no one of which seemed likely to fall unless all the rest fell with it. Though comparatively young, they were about a hundred feet high, and their lithe, brushy tops were rocking and swirling in wild ecstasy. Being accustomed to climb trees in making botanical studies, I experienced no difficulty in reaching the top of this one; and never before did I enjoy so noble an exhilaration of motion. The slender tops fairly flapped and swished in the passionate torrent, bending and swirling backward and forward, round and round, tracing indescribable combinations of vertical and horizontal curves, while I clung with muscles firm-braced, like a bobolink on a reed.

In its widest sweeps my tree-top described an arc of from twenty to thirty degrees; but I felt sure of its elastic temper, having seen others of the same species still more severely tried—bent almost to the ground indeed, in heavy snows—without breaking a fiber. I was therefore safe, and free to take the wind into my pulses and enjoy the excited forest from my superb outlook. The view from here must be extremely beautiful in any weather. Now my eye roved over the piny hills and dales as over fields of waving grain, and felt the light running in ripples and broad swelling undulations across the valleys from ridge to ridge, as the shining foliage was stirred by corresponding waves of air. Oftentimes these waves of reflected light would break one another in regular order, they would seem to bend forward in concentric curves, and disappear on some hillside, like sea waves on a shelving shore. The quantity of light reflected from the bent needles was so great as to make whole groves appear as if covered with snow, while the black shadows beneath the trees greatly enhanced the effect of the silvery splendor.

Excepting only the shadows, there was nothing somber in all this wild sea of pines. On the contrary, notwithstanding this was the winter season, the colors were remarkably beautiful. The shafts of the pine and libocedrus were brown and purple, and most of the foliage was well tinged with yellow; the laurel groves, with the pale under sides of their leaves turned upward, made masses of gray; and then there was many a dash of chocolate color from clumps of manzanita, and jet of vivid crimson from the bark of the madroños; while the ground on the hillsides, appearing here and there through openings between the groves, displayed masses of pale purple and brown.

The sounds of the storm corresponded gloriously with this wild exuberance of light and motion. The profound bass of the naked branches and boles booming like waterfalls; the quick, tense vibrations of the pine-needles, now rising to a shrill, whistling hiss, now falling to a silky murmur; the rustling of laurel groves in the dells, and the keen metallic click of leaf on leaf—all this was heard in easy analysis when the attention was calmly bent.

The varied gestures of the multitude were seen to find advantage, so that one could recognize the different species at a distance of several miles by this means alone, as well as by their forms and colors and the way they reflected the light. All seemed strong and comfortable, as if really enjoying the storm, while responding to its most enthusiastic greetings. We hear much nowadays concerning the universal struggle for existence, but no struggle in the common meaning of the word was manifest here; no recognition of danger by any tree; no deprecation; but rather an invincible gladness, as remote from exultation as from fear.

I kept my lofty perch for hours, frequently closing my eyes to enjoy the music by itself, or to feast quietly on the delicious fragrance that was streaming past. The fragrance of the woods was less marked than that produced during warm rain, when so many balsamic buds and leaves are steeped like tea; but

from the chafing of resinous branches against each other, and the incessant attrition of myriads of needles, the gale was spiced to a very tonic degree. And besides the fragrance from these local sources, there were traces of scents brought from afar. For this wind came first from the sea, rubbing against its fresh, briny waves, then distilled through the redwoods, threading rich ferny gulches, and spreading itself in broad undulating currents over many a flower-enameled ridge of the coast mountains, then across the golden plains, up the purple foot-hills, and into these piny woods with the varied incense gathered by the way.

Winds are advertisements of all they touch, however much or little we may be able to read them; telling their wanderings even by their scents alone. Mariners detect the flowery perfume of land-winds far at sea, and sea-winds carry the fragrance of dulce and tangle far inland, where it is quickly recognized, though mingled with the scents of a thousand land-flowers. As an illustration of this, I may tell here that I breathed sea-air on the Firth of Forth, in Scotland, while a boy; then was taken to Wisconsin, where I remained nineteen years; then, without in all this time having breathed one breath of the sea, I walked quietly, alone, from the middle of the Mississippi Valley to the Gulf of Mexico, on a botanical excursion; and while in Florida, far from the coast, my attention wholly bent on the splendid tropical vegetation about me, I suddenly recognized a sea-breeze, as it came sifting through the palmettos and blooming vine-tangles, which at once awakened and set free a thousand dormant associations, and made me a boy again in Scotland, as if all the intervening years had been annihilated.

Most people like to look at mountain rivers, and bear them in mind; but few care to look at the winds, though far more beautiful and sublime, and though they become at times about as visible as flowing water. When the north winds in winter are making upward sweeps over the curving summits of the High Sierra, the fact is sometimes published with flying snow-banners a mile long. Those portions of the winds thus embodied can scarce be wholly invisible, even to the darkest imagination. And when we look around over an agitated forest, we may see something of the wind that stirs it, by its effects upon the trees. Yonder it descends in a rush of water-like ripples, and sweeps over the bending pines from hill to hill. Nearer, we see detached plumes and leaves, now speeding by on level currents, now whirling in eddies, or escaping over the edges of the whirls, soaring aloft on grand, upswelling domes of air, or tossing on flame-like crests. Smooth, deep currents, cascades, falls, and swirling eddies, sing around every tree and leaf, and over all the varied topography of the region with telling changes of form, like mountain rivers conforming to the features of their channels.

After tracing the Sierra streams from their fountains to the plains, marking where they bloom white in falls, glide in crystal plumes, surge gray and foam-filled in boulder-choked gorges, and slip through the woods in long, tranquil reaches—after thus learning their language and forms in detail, we may at length hear them chanting all together in one grand anthem, and comprehend them all in clear inner vision, covering the range like lace. But even this spectacle is far less sublime and not a whit more substantial than what we may behold of these storm-streams of air in the mountain woods.

We all travel the Milky Way together, trees and men; but it never occurred to me until this storm day, while swinging in the wind, that trees are travelers, in the ordinary sense. They make many journeys; not extensive ones, it is true; but our own little journeys, away and back again, are only little more than tree-wavings—many of them not so much.

When the storm began to abate, I dismounted and sauntered down through the calming woods. The storm-tones died away, and turning toward the east, I beheld the countless hosts of the forests hushed and tranquil, towering above one another on the slopes of the hills like a devout audience. The setting sun filled them with amber light, and seemed to say, while they listened, "My peace I give unto you."

As I gazed on the impressive scene, all the so-called ruin of the storm was forgotten; and never before did these noble woods appear so fresh, so joyous, so immortal.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 64: From "The Mountains of California," copyright 1894. Printed here by permission of the Century Company.]

WALDEN POND[65]

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Occasionally, after my hoeing was done for the day, I joined some impatient companion who had been fishing on the pond since morning, as silent and motionless as a duck or a floating leaf, and, after practising various kinds of philosophy, had concluded commonly, by the time I arrived, that he belonged to the ancient sect of Coenobites. There was one older man, an excellent fisher and skilled in all kinds of woodcraft, who was pleased to look upon my house as a building erected for the convenience of fishermen; and I was equally pleased when he sat in my doorway to arrange his lines. Once in a while we sat together on the pond, he at one end of the boat, and I at the other; but not many words passed between us, for he had grown deaf in his later years, but he occasionally hummed a psalm, which harmonized well enough with my philosophy. Our intercourse was thus altogether one of unbroken harmony, far more pleasing to remember than if it had been carried on by speech. When, as was commonly the case, I had none to commune with, I used to raise the echoes by striking with a paddle on the side of my boat, filling the surrounding woods with circling and dilating sound, stirring them up as the keeper of a menagerie his wild beasts, until I elicited a growl from every wooded vale and hillside.

In warm evenings I frequently sat in the boat playing the flute, and saw the perch, which I seemed to have charmed, hovering around me, and the moon travelling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewn with the wrecks of the forest. Formerly I had come to this pond adventurously, from time to time, in dark summer nights, with a companion, and making a fire close to the water's edge, which we thought attracted the fishes, we caught pouts with a bunch of worms strung on a thread; and when we had done, far in the night, threw the burning brands high into the air like sky-rockets, which, coming down into the pond, were quenched with a loud hissing, and we were suddenly groping in total darkness. Through this, whistling a tune, we took our way to the haunts of men again. But now I had made my home by the shore.

Sometimes, after staying in a village parlor till the family had all retired, I have returned to the woods, and, partly with a view to the next day's dinner, spent the hours of midnight fishing from a boat by moonlight, serenaded by owls and foxes, and hearing, from time to time, the creaking note of some unknown bird close at hand. These experiences were very memorable and valuable to me,—anchored in forty feet of water, and twenty or thirty rods from the shore, surrounded sometimes by thousands of small perch and shiners, dimpling the surface with their tails in the moonlight, and communicating by a long flaxen line with mysterious nocturnal fishes which had their dwelling forty feet below, or sometimes dragging sixty feet of line about the pond as I drifted in the gentle night breeze, now and then feeling a slight vibration along it, indicative of some life prowling about its extremity, of dull uncertain blundering purpose there, and slow to make up its mind. At length you slowly raise, pulling hand over hand, some homed pout squeaking and squirming to the upper air. It was very queer, especially in dark nights, when your thoughts had wandered to vast and cosmogonical themes in other spheres, to feel this faint jerk, which came to interrupt your dreams and link you to Nature again. It seemed as if I might next cast my line upward into the air, as well as downward into this element which was scarcely more dense. Thus I caught two fishes as it were with one hook.

The scenery of Walden is on a humble scale, and, though very beautiful, does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it, or lived by its shore; yet this pond is so remarkable for its depth and purity as to merit a particular description. It is a clear and deep green well, half a mile long and a mile and three quarters in circumference, and contains about sixty-one and a half acres; a perennial spring in the midst of pine and oak woods, without any visible inlet or outlet except by the clouds and evaporation. The surrounding hills rise abruptly from the water to the height of forty to eighty feet, though on the southeast and east they attain to about one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet respectively, within a quarter and a third of a mile. They are exclusively woodland. All our Concord waters have two colors at least, one when viewed at a distance, and another, more proper, close at hand. The first depends more on the light, and follows the sky. In clear weather, in summer, they appear blue at a little distance, especially if agitated, and at a great distance all appear alike. In stormy weather they are sometimes of a dark slate color. The sea, however, is said to be blue one day and green another without any perceptible change in the atmosphere. I have seen our river, when, the landscape being covered with snow, both water and ice were almost as green as grass. Some consider blue "to be the color of pure water, whether liquid or solid." But looking directly down into our waters from a boat, they are seen to be of very different colors. Walden is blue at one time and green at another, even from the same point of view. Lying between the earth and the heavens, it partakes of the color of both. Viewed from a hilltop it reflects the color of the sky, but near at hand it is of a yellowish tint next the shore where you can see the sand, then a light green, which gradually deepens to a uniform dark green in the body of the pond. In some lights, viewed even from a hilltop, it is of a vivid green next the shore. Some have referred this to the reflection of the verdure; but it is equally green there against the railroad sand-bank, and in the spring, before the leaves are expanded, and it may be simply the result of the prevailing blue mixed with the yellow of the sand. Such is the color of its iris. This is that portion, also, where in the spring, the ice being warmed by the heat of the

sun reflected from the bottom, and also transmitted through the earth, melts first and forms a narrow canal about the still frozen middle. Like the rest of our waters, when much agitated, in clear weather, so that the surface of the waves may reflect the sky at the right angle, or because there is more light mixed with it, it appears at a little distance of a darker blue than the sky itself; and at such a time, being on its surface, and looking with divided vision, so as to see the reflection, I have discerned a matchless and indescribable light blue, such as watered or changeable silks and sword blades suggest, more cerulean than the sky itself, alternating with the original dark green on the opposite sides of the waves, which last appeared but muddy in comparison. It is a vitreous greenish blue, as I remember it, like those patches of the winter sky seen through cloud vistas in the west before sundown. Yet a single glass of its water held up to the light is as colorless as an equal quantity of air. It is well-known that a large plate of glass will have a green tint, owing, as the makers say, to its "body," but a small piece of the same will be colorless. How large a body of Walden water would be required to reflect a green tint I have never proved. The water of our river is black or a very dark brown to one looking directly down on it, and like that of most ponds, imparts to the body of one bathing in it a yellowish tinge; but this water is of such crystalline purity that the body of the bather appears of an alabaster whiteness, still more unnatural, which, as the limbs are magnified and distorted withal, produces a monstrous effect, making fit studies for a Michael Angelo.

The water is so transparent that the bottom can easily be discerned at the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet. Paddling over it, you may see many feet beneath the surface the schools of perch and shiners, perhaps only an inch long, yet the former easily distinguished by their transverse bars, and you think that they must be ascetic fish that find a subsistence there. Once, in the winter, many years ago, when I had been cutting holes through the ice in order to catch pickerel, as I stepped ashore I tossed my axe back on to the ice, but, as if some evil genius had directed it, it slid four or five rods directly into one of the holes, where the water was twenty-five feet deep. Out of curiosity, I lay down on the ice and looked through the hole, until I saw the axe a little on one side, standing on its head, with its helve erect and gently swaying to and fro with the pulse of the pond; and there it might have stood erect and swaying till in the course of time the handle rotted off, if I had not disturbed it. Making another hole directly over it with an ice chisel which I had, and cutting down the longest birch which I could find in the neighborhood with my knife, I made a slip-noose, which I attached to its end, and, letting it down carefully, passed it over the knob of the handle, and drew it by a line along the birch, and so pulled the axe out again.

The shore is composed of a belt of smooth rounded white stones like paving stones, excepting one or two short sand beaches, and is so steep that in many places a single leap will carry you into water over your head; and were it not for its remarkable transparency, that would be the last to be seen of its bottom till it rose on the opposite side. Some think it is bottomless. It is nowhere muddy, and a casual observer would say that there were no weeds at all in it; and of noticeable plants, except in the little meadows recently overflowed, which do not properly belong to it, a closer scrutiny does not detect a flag nor a bulrush, nor even a lily, yellow or white, but only a few small heart-leaves and potamogetons, and perhaps a water-target or two; all which however a bather might not perceive; and these plants are clean and bright like the element they grow in. The stones extend a rod or two into the water, and then the bottom is pure sand, except in the deepest parts, where there is usually a little sediment, probably from the decay of the leaves, which have been wafted on to it so many successive falls, and a bright green weed is brought up on anchors even in midwinter.

We have one other pond just like this, White Pond in Nine Acre Corner, about two and a half miles westerly; but, though I am acquainted with most of the ponds within a dozen miles of this center, I do not know a third of this pure and well-like character. Successive nations perchance have drunk at, admired, and fathomed it, and passed away, and still its water is green and pellucid as ever. Not an intermitting spring! Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden, Walden Pond was already in existence, and even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain accompanied with mist and a southerly wind, and covered with myriads of ducks and geese, which had not heard of the fall, when still such pure lakes sufficed them. Even then it had commenced to rise and fall, and had clarified its waters and colored them of the hue they now wear, and obtained a patent of heaven to be the only Walden Pond in the world and distiller of celestial dews. Who knows in how many unremembered nations' literatures this has been the Castalian Fountain?^[66] or what nymphs presided over it in the Golden Age? It is a gem of the first water which Concord wears in her coronet.

Yet perchance the first who came to this well have left some trace of their footsteps. I have been surprised to detect encircling the pond, even where a thickwood has just been cut down on the shore, a narrow shelf-like path in the steep hillside, alternately rising and falling, approaching and receding from the water's edge, as old probably as the race of man here, worn by the feet of aboriginal hunters, and still from time to time unwittingly trodden by the present occupants of the land. This is particularly distinct to one standing on the middle of the pond in winter, just after a light snow has fallen,

appearing as a clear undulating white line, unobscured by weeds and twigs, and very obvious a quarter of a mile off in many places where in summer it is hardly distinguishable close at hand. The snow reprints it, as it were, in clear white type alto-relievo. The ornamented grounds of villas which will one day be built here may still preserve some trace of this.

The pond rises and falls, but whether regularly or not, and within what period, nobody knows, though, as usual, many pretend to know. It is commonly higher in the winter and lower in the summer, though not corresponding to the general wet and dryness. I can remember when it was a foot or two lower, and also when it was at least five feet higher, than when I lived by it. There is a narrow sand-bar running into it, very deep water on one side, on which I helped boil a kettle of chowder, some six rods from the main shore, about the year 1824, which it has not been possible to do for twenty-five years; and on the other hand, my friends used to listen with incredulity when I told them that a few years later I was accustomed to fish from a boat in a secluded cove in the woods, fifteen rods from the only shore they knew, which place was long since converted into a meadow. But the pond has risen steadily for two years, and now, in the summer of '52, is just five feet higher than when I lived there, or as high as it was thirty years ago, and fishing goes on again in the meadow. This makes a difference of level, at the outside, of six or seven feet; and yet the water shed by the surrounding hills is insignificant in amount, and this overflow must be referred to causes which affect the deep springs. This same summer the pond has begun to fall again. It is remarkable that this fluctuation, whether periodical or not, appears thus to require many years for its accomplishment. I have observed one rise and a part of two falls, and I expect that a dozen or fifteen years hence the water will again be as low as I have ever known it. Flint's Pond, a mile eastward, allowing for the disturbance occasioned by its inlets and outlets, and the smaller intermediate ponds also, sympathize with Walden, and recently attained their greatest height at the same time with the latter. The same is true, as far as my observation goes, of White Pond.

This rise and fall of Walden at long intervals serves this use at least: the water standing at this great height for a year or more, though it makes it difficult to walk round it, kills the shrubs and trees which have sprung up about its edge since the last rise, pitch-pines, birches, alders, aspens, and others, and, falling again, leaves an unobstructed shore; for, unlike many ponds, and all waters which are subject to a daily tide, its shore is cleanest when the water is lowest. On the side of the pond next my house, a row of pitch-pines fifteen feet high has been killed and tipped over as if by a lever, and thus a stop put to their encroachments; and their size indicates how many years have elapsed since the last rise to this height. By this fluctuation the pond asserts its title to a shore, and thus the *shore* is *shorn*, and the trees cannot hold it by right of possession. These are the lips of the lake on which no beard grows. It licks its chaps from time to time. When the water is at its height, the alders, willows, and maples send forth a mass of fibrous red roots several feet long from all sides of their stems in the water, and to the height of three or four feet from the ground, in the effort to maintain themselves; and I have known the high blueberry bushes about the shore, which commonly produce no fruit, bear an abundant crop under these circumstances.

Some have been puzzled to tell how the shore became so regularly paved. My townsmen have all heard the tradition—the oldest people tell me that they heard it in their youth—that anciently the Indians were holding a pow-wow upon a hill here, which rose as high into the heavens as the pond now sinks deep into the earth, and they used much profanity, as the story goes, though this vice is one of which the Indians were never guilty, and while they were thus engaged the hill shook and suddenly sank, and only one old squaw, named Walden, escaped, and from her the pond was named. It has been conjectured that when the hill shook, these stones rolled down its side and became the present shore. It is very certain, at any rate, that once there was no pond here, and now there is one; and this Indian fable does not in any respect conflict with the account of that ancient settler whom I have mentioned, who remembers so well when he first came here with his divining-rod, saw a thin vapor rising from the sward, and the hazel pointed steadily downward, and he concluded to dig a well here. As for the stones, many still think that they are hardly to be accounted for by the action of the waves on these hills; but I observe that the surrounding hills are remarkably full of the same kind of stones, so that they have been obliged to pile them up in walls on both sides of the railroad cut nearest the pond; and, moreover, there are most stones where the shore is most abrupt; so that, unfortunately, it is no longer a mystery to me. I detect the paver. If the name was not derived from that of some English locality—Saffron Walden, for instance—one might suppose that it was called, originally, *Walled-in* Pond.

The pond was my well ready dug. For four months in the year its water is as cold as it is pure at all times; and I think that it is then as good as any, if not the best, in the town. In the winter, all water which is exposed to the air is colder than springs and wells which are protected from it. The temperature of the pond water which had stood in the room where I sat from five o'clock in the afternoon till noon the next day, the sixth of March, 1846, the thermometer having been up to 65° or 70° some of the time, owing partly to the sun on the roof, was 42°, or one degree colder than the water

of one of the coldest wells in the village just drawn. The temperature of the Boiling Spring the same day was 45°, or the warmest of any water tried, though it is the coldest that I know of in summer, when, besides, shallow and stagnant surface water is not mingled with it. Moreover, in summer, Walden never becomes so warm as most water which is exposed to the sun, on account of its depth. In the warmest weather I usually placed a pailful in my cellar, where it became cool in the night, and remained so during the day; though I also resorted to a spring in the neighborhood. It was as good when a week old as the day it was dipped, and had no taste of the pump. Whoever camps for a week in summer by the shore of a pond, needs only bury a pail of water a few feet deep in the shade of his camp to be independent of the luxury of ice.

There have been caught in Walden, pickerel, one weighing seven pounds, to say nothing of another which carried off a reel with great velocity, which the fisherman safely set down at eight pounds because he did not see him, perch and pouts, some of each weighing over two pounds, shiners, chivins or roach (*Leuciscus pulchellus*), a very few breams, and a couple of eels, one weighing four pounds—I am thus particular because the weight of a fish is commonly its only title to fame, and these are the only eels I have heard of here; also, I have a faint recollection of a little fish some five inches long, with silvery sides and a greenish back, somewhat dace-like in its character, which I mention here chiefly to link my facts to fable. Nevertheless, this pond is not very fertile in fish. Its pickerel, though not abundant, are its chief boast. I have seen at one time lying on the ice pickerel of at least three different kinds: a long and shallow one, steel-colored, most like those caught in the river; a bright golden kind, with greenish reflections and remarkably deep, which is the most common here; and another, golden-colored, and shaped like the last, but peppered on the sides with small dark brown or black spots, intermixed with a few faint blood-red ones very much like a trout. The specific name *reticulatus*[67] would not apply to this; it should be *guttatus*[68] rather. These are all very firm fish, and weigh more than their size promises. The shiners, pouts, and perch, also, and indeed all the fishes which inhabit this pond, are much cleaner, handsomer, and firmer fleshed than those in the river and most other ponds, as the water is purer, and they can easily be distinguished from them. Probably many ichthyologists would make new varieties of some of them. There are also a clean race of frogs and tortoises, and a few mussels in it; muskrats and minks leave their traces about it, and occasionally a travelling mud-turtle visits it. Sometimes, when I pushed off my boat in the morning, I disturbed a great mud-turtle which had secreted himself under the boat in the night. Ducks and geese frequent it in the spring and fall, the white-bellied swallows (*Hirundo bicolor*) skim over it, and the peewees (*Totanus macularius*) "teter" along its stony shores all summer. I have sometimes disturbed a fishhawk sitting on a white-pine over the water; but I doubt if it is ever profaned by the wing of a gull, like Fair-Haven. At most, it tolerates one annual loon. These are all the animals of consequence which frequent it now.

You may see from a boat, in calm weather, near the sandy eastern shore, where the water is eight or ten feet deep, and also in some other parts of the pond, some circular heaps half a dozen feet in diameter by a foot in height, consisting of small stones less than a hen's egg in size, where all around is bare sand. At first you wonder if the Indians could have formed them on the ice for any purpose, and so, when the ice melted, they sank to the bottom; but they are too regular and some of them plainly too fresh for that. They are similar to those found in rivers; but as there are no suckers or lampreys here, I know not by what fish they could be made. Perhaps they are the nests of the chivin. These lend a pleasing mystery to the bottom.

The shore is irregular enough not to be monotonous. I have in my mind's eye the western indented with deep bays, the bolder northern, and the beautifully scalloped southern shore, where successive capes overlap each other and suggest unexplored coves between. The forest has never so good a setting, nor is so distinctly beautiful, as when seen from the middle of a small lake amid hills which rise from the water's edge; for the water in which it is reflected not only makes the best foreground in such a case, but, with its winding shore, the most natural and agreeable boundary to it. There is no rawness nor imperfection in its edge there, as where the axe has cleared a part, or a cultivated field abuts on it. The trees have ample room to expand on the water side, and each sends forth its most vigorous branch in that direction. There Nature has woven a natural selvage, and the eye rises by just gradations from the low shrubs of the shore to the highest trees. There are few traces of man's hand to be seen. The water laves the shore as it did a thousand years ago.

A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluvial trees next the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows.

Standing on the smooth sandy beach at the east end of the pond, in a calm September afternoon, when a slight haze makes the opposite shore line indistinct, I have seen whence came the expression, "the glassy surface of a lake." When you invert your head, it looks like a thread of finest gossamer stretched across the valley, and gleaming against the distant pine woods, separating one stratum of the atmosphere from another. You would think that you could walk dry under it to the opposite hills, and

that the swallows which skim over might perch on it. Indeed, they sometimes dive below the line, as it were by mistake, and are undeceived. As you look over the pond westward you are obliged to employ both your hands to defend your eyes against the reflected as well as the true sun, for they are equally bright; and if, between the two, you survey its surface critically, it is literally as smooth as glass, except where the skater insects, at equal intervals scattered over its whole extent, by their motions in the sun produce the finest imaginable sparkle on it, or, perchance, a duck plumes itself, or, as I have said, a swallow skims so low as to touch it. It may be that in the distance a fish describes an arc of three or four feet in the air, and there is one bright flash where it emerges, and another where it strikes the water; sometimes the whole silvery arc is revealed; or here and there, perhaps, is a thistle-down floating on its surface, which the fishes dart at and so dimple it again. It is like molten glass cooled but not congealed, and the few motes in it are pure and beautiful like the imperfections in glass. You may often detect a yet smoother and darker water, separated from the rest as if by an invisible cobweb, boom of the water nymphs, resting on it. From a hilltop you can see a fish leap in almost any part; for not a pickerel or shiner picks an insect from this smooth surface but it manifestly disturbs the equilibrium of the whole lake. It is wonderful with what elaborateness this simple fact is advertised—this piscine murder will out—and from my distant perch I distinguish the circling undulations when they are half a dozen rods in diameter. You can even detect a water-bug (*Gyrinus*) ceaselessly progressing over the smooth surface a quarter of a mile off; for they furrow the water slightly, making a conspicuous ripple bounded by two diverging lines, but the skaters glide over it without rippling it perceptibly. When the surface is considerably agitated there are no skaters nor water-bugs on it, but apparently, in calm days, they leave their havens and adventurously glide forth from the shore by short impulses till they completely cover it. It is a soothing employment, on one of those fine days in the fall when all the warmth of the sun is fully appreciated, to sit on a stump on such a height as this, overlooking the pond, and study the dimpling circles which are incessantly inscribed on its otherwise invisible surface amid the reflected skies and trees. Over this great expanse there is no disturbance but it is thus at once gently smoothed away and assuaged, as, when a vase of water is jarred, the trembling circles seek the shore and all is smooth again. Not a fish can leap or an insect fall on the pond but it is thus reported in circling dimples, in lines of beauty, as it were the constant welling up of its fountain, the gentle pulsing of its life, the heaving of its breast. The thrills of joy and thrills of pain are undistinguishable. How peaceful the phenomena of the lake! Again the works of man shine as in the spring. Ay, every leaf and twig and stone and cobweb sparkles now at mid-afternoon as when covered with dew in a spring morning. Every motion of an oar or an insect produces a flash of light; and if an oar falls, how sweet the echo!

In such a day in September or October, Walden is a perfect forest mirror, set round with stones as precious to my eye as if fewer or rarer. Nothing so fair, so pure, and at the same time so large, as a lake, perchance, lies on the surface of the earth. Sky water. It needs no fence. Nations come and go without defiling it. It is a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off, whose gilding Nature continually repairs; no storms, no dust, can dim its surface ever fresh—a mirror in which all impurity presented to it sinks, swept and dusted by the sun's hazy brush—this the light dust-cloth—which retains no breath that is breathed on it, but sends its own to float as clouds high above its surface, and be reflected in its bosom still.

A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air. It is continually receiving new life and motion from above. It is intermediate in its nature between land and sky. On land only the grass and trees wave, but the water itself is rippled by the wind. I see where the breeze dashes across it by the streaks or flakes of light. It is remarkable that we can look down on its surface. We shall, perhaps, look down thus on the surface of air at length, and mark where a still subtler spirit sweeps over it.

The skaters and water-bugs finally disappear in the latter part of October, when the severe frosts have come; and then and in November, usually, on a calm day, there is absolutely nothing to ripple the surface. One November afternoon, in the calm at the end of a rain storm of several days' duration, when the sky was still completely overcast and the air was full of mist, I observed that the pond was remarkably smooth, so that it was difficult to distinguish its surface; though it no longer reflected the bright tints of October, but the somber November colors of the surrounding hills. Though I passed over it as gently as possible, the slight undulations produced by my boat extended almost as far as I could see, and gave a ribbed appearance to the reflections. But, as I was looking over the surface, I saw here and there at a distance a faint glimmer, as if some skater insects which had escaped the frosts might be collected there, or, perchance, the surface, being so smooth, betrayed where a spring welled up from the bottom. Paddling gently to one of these places, I was surprised to find myself surrounded by myriads of small perch, about five inches long, of a rich bronze color in the green water, sporting there and constantly rising to the surface and dimpling it, sometimes leaving bubbles on it. In such transparent and seemingly bottomless water, reflecting the clouds, I seemed to be floating through the air as in a balloon, and their swimming impressed me as a kind of flight or hovering, as if they were a compact flock of birds passing just beneath my level on the right or left, their fins, like sails, set all

around them. There were many such schools in the pond, apparently improving the short season before winter would draw an icy shutter over their broad skylight, sometimes giving to the surface an appearance as if a slight breeze struck it, or a few rain-drops fell there. When I approached carelessly and alarmed them, they made a sudden splash and rippling with their tails, as if one had struck the water with a brushy bough, and instantly took refuge in the depths. At length the wind rose, the mist increased, and the waves began to run, and the perch leaped much higher than before, half out of water, a hundred black points, three inches long, at once above the surface. Even as late as the fifth of December, one year, I saw some dimples on the surface, and thinking it was going to rain hard immediately, the air being full of mist, I made haste to take my place at the oars and row homeward; already the rain seemed rapidly increasing, though I felt none on my cheek, and I anticipated a thorough soaking. But suddenly the dimples ceased, for they were produced by the perch, which the noise of my oars had scared into the depths, and I saw their schools dimly disappearing; so I spent a dry afternoon after all.

An old man who used to frequent this pond nearly sixty years ago, when it was dark with surrounding forests, tells me that in those days he sometimes saw it all alive with ducks and other water fowl, and that there were many eagles about it. He came here a-fishing, and used an old log canoe which he found on the shore. It was made of two white-pine logs dug out and pinned together, and was cut off square at the ends. It was very clumsy, but lasted a great many years before it became water-logged and perhaps sank to the bottom. He did not know whose it was; it belonged to the pond. He used to make a cable for his anchor of strips of hickory bark tied together. An old man, a potter, who lived by the pond before the Revolution, told him once that there was an iron chest at the bottom, and that he had seen it. Sometimes it would come floating up to the shore; but when you went toward it, it would go back into deep water and disappear. I was pleased to hear of the old log canoe, which took the place of an Indian one of the same material but more graceful construction, which perchance had first been a tree on the bank, and then, as it were, fell into the water, to float there for a generation, the most proper vessel for the lake. I remember that when I first looked into these depths there were many large trunks to be seen indistinctly lying on the bottom, which had either been blown over formerly, or left on the ice at the last cutting, when wood was cheaper; but now they have mostly disappeared.

When I first paddled a boat on Walden, it was completely surrounded by thick and lofty pine and oak woods, and in some of its coves grape vines had run over the trees next the water and formed bowers under which a boat could pass. The hills which form its shores are so steep, and the woods on them were then so high, that, as you looked down from the west end, it had the appearance of an amphitheatre for some kind of sylvan spectacle. I have spent many an hour, when I was younger, floating over its surface as the zephyr willed, having paddled my boat to the middle, and lying on my back across the seats, in a summer forenoon, dreaming awake, until I was aroused by the boat touching the sand, and I arose to see what shore my fates had impelled me to; days when idleness was the most attractive and productive industry. Many a forenoon have I stolen away, preferring to spend thus the most valued part of the day; for I was rich, if not in money, in sunny hours and summer days, and spent them lavishly; nor do I regret that I did not waste more of them in the workshop or at the teacher's desk. But since I left those shores the wood-choppers have still further laid them waste, and now for many a year there will be no more rambling through the aisles of the wood, with occasional vistas through which you see the water. My Muse may be excused if she is silent henceforth. How can you expect the birds to sing when their groves are cut down?

Now the trunks of trees on the bottom, and the old log canoe, and the dark surrounding woods, are gone, and the villagers, who scarcely know where it lies, instead of going to the pond to bathe or drink, are thinking to bring its water, which should be as sacred as the Ganges at least, to the village in a pipe, to wash their dishes with!—to earn their Walden by the turning of a cock or drawing of a plug! That devilish Iron Horse, whose ear-rending neigh is heard throughout the town, has muddied the Boiling Spring with his foot, and he it is that has browsed off all the woods on Walden shore; that Trojan horse, with a thousand men in his belly, introduced by mercenary Greeks! Where is the country's champion, the Moore of Moore Hall,[69] to meet him at the Deep Cut and thrust an avenging lance between the ribs of the bloated pest?

Nevertheless, of all the characters I have known, perhaps Walden wears best, and best preserves its purity. Many men have been likened to it, but few deserve that honor. Though the wood-choppers have laid bare first this shore and then that, and the Irish have built their sties by it, and the railroad has infringed on its border, and the ice-men have skimmed it once, it is itself unchanged, the same water which my youthful eyes fell on; all the change is in me. It has not acquired one permanent wrinkle after all its ripples. It is perennially young, and I may stand and see a swallow dip apparently to pick an insect from its surface as of yore. It struck me again to-night, as if I had not seen it almost daily for more than twenty years—Why, here is Walden, the same woodland lake that I discovered so many years ago; where a forest was cut down last winter another is springing up by its shore as lustily as ever; the

same thought is welling up to its surface that was then; it is the same liquid joy and happiness to itself and its Maker, ay, and it *may* be to me. It is the work of a brave man, surely, in whom there was no guile! He rounded this water with his hand, deepened and clarified it in his thought, and in his will bequeathed it to Concord. I see by its face that it is visited by the same reflection; and I can almost say, Walden, is it you?

It is no dream of mine,
To ornament a line;
I cannot come nearer to God and Heaven
Than I live to Walden even.
I am its stony shore,
And the breeze that passes o'er;
In the hollow of my hand
Are its water and its sand,
And its deepest resort
Lies high in my thought.

The cars never pause to look at it; yet I fancy that the engineers and firemen and brakemen, and those passengers who have a season ticket and see it often, are better men for the sight. The engineer does not forget at night, or his nature does not, that he has beheld this vision of serenity and purity once at least during the day. Though seen but once, it helps to wash out State-street and the engine's soot. One proposes that it be called "God's Drop."

I have said that Walden has no visible inlet or outlet, but it is on the one hand distantly and indirectly related to Flint's Pond, which is more elevated, by a chain of small ponds coming from that quarter, and on the other directly and manifestly to Concord River, which is lower, by a similar chain of ponds through which in some other geological period it may have flowed; and by a little digging, which God forbid, it can be made to flow thither again. If by living thus reserved and austere, like a hermit in the woods, so long, it has acquired such wonderful purity, who would not regret that the comparatively impure waters of Flint's Pond should be mingled with it, or itself should ever go to waste its sweetness in the ocean wave?

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 65: From Chapter IX of "Walden," 1854.]

[Footnote 66: The Castalian Fountain on Mount Parnassus was sacred to Apollo and the Muses.]

[Footnote 67: With net-like markings.]

[Footnote 68: Speckled.]

[Footnote 69: The hero of an old ballad.]

SELECTIONS FROM RUSKIN

A. LEAFAGE OF TREES[70]

One of the most remarkable characters of natural leafage is the constancy with which, while the leaves are arranged on the spray with exquisite regularity, that regularity is modified in their actual effect. For as in every group of leaves some are seen sideways, forming merely long lines, some foreshortened, some crossing each other, every one differently turned and placed from all the others, the forms of the leaves, though in themselves similar, give rise to a thousand strange and differing forms in the group; and the shadows of some, passing over the others, still farther disguise and confuse the mass until the eye can distinguish nothing but a graceful and flexible disorder of innumerable forms, with here and there a perfect leaf on the extremity, or a symmetrical association of one or two, just enough to mark the specific character and to give unity and grace, but never enough to repeat in one group what was done in another, never enough to prevent the eye from feeling that, however regular and mathematical may be the structure of parts, what is composed out of them is as various and infinite as any other part of nature. Nor does this take place in general effect only. Break off an elm

bough three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf. It is ten to one if in the whole bough (provided you do not twist it about as you work) you find one form of leaf exactly like another; perhaps you will not even have *one* complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it; and though the whole bough will look graceful, and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of it like another....

But if Nature is so various when you have a bough on the table before you, what must she be when she retires from you, and gives you her whole mass and multitude? The leaves then at the extremities become as fine as dust, a mere confusion of points and lines between you and the sky, a confusion which you might as well hope to draw sea-sand particle by particle, as to imitate leaf for leaf. This, as it comes down into the body of the tree, gets closer, but never opaque; it is always transparent, with crumbling lights in it letting you through to the sky; then, out of this, come, heavier and heavier, the masses of illumined foliage, all dazzling and inextricable, save here and there a single leaf on the extremities; then, under these, you get deep passages of broken irregular gloom, passing into transparent, green-lighted, misty hollows; the twisted stems glancing through them in their pale and entangled infinity, and the shafted sunbeams, rained from above, running along the lustrous leaves for an instant; then lost, then caught again on some emerald bank or knotted root, to be sent up again with a faint reflex on the white under-sides of dim groups of drooping foliage, the shadows of the upper boughs running in grey network down the glossy stems, and resting in quiet chequers upon the glittering earth; but all penetrable and transparent, and, in proportion, inextricable and incomprehensible, except where across the labyrinth and the mystery of the dazzling light and dream-like shadow, falls, close to us, some solitary spray, some wreath of two or three motionless, large leaves, the type and embodying of all that in the rest we feel and imagine, but can never see.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 70: From "Modern Painters," Vol. I, 1843, Pt. II, Sec. VI Chapter I.]

B. WATER[71]

Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen; then as it exists in the foam of the torrent, in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul.

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water, to lay on canvas as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant, is, perhaps, the easiest task of art; and even ordinary running or falling water may be sufficiently rendered, by observing careful curves of projection with a dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgment and truth by Ruysdael. But to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself; to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea wave, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient, so mountainous in its form, yet so cloudlike in its motion, with its variety and delicacy of colour, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below—to do this perfectly is beyond the power of man; to do it even partially has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it....

The fact is that there is hardly a road-side pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all

manner of hues of variable pleasant light out of the sky. Nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain-bars in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky. So it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 71: From "Modern Painters," Vol. I, Pt. II, Sec. V, Chapter I.]

C. THE MOUNTAIN GLORY[72]

The best image which the world can give of Paradise is in the slope of the meadows, orchards, and corn-fields on the sides of a great Alp, with its purple rocks and eternal snows above; this excellence not being in any wise a matter referable to feeling, or individual preferences, but demonstrable by calm enumeration of the number of lovely colours on the rocks, the varied grouping of the trees, and quantity of noble incidents in stream, crag, or cloud, presented to the eye at any given moment.

For consider, first, the difference produced in the whole tone of landscape colour by the introductions of purple, violet, and deep ultramarine blue, which we owe to mountains. In an ordinary lowland landscape we have the blue of the sky; the green of grass, which I will suppose (and this is an unnecessary concession to the lowlands) entirely fresh and bright; the green of trees; and certain elements of purple, far more rich and beautiful than we generally should think, in their bark and shadows (bare hedges and thickets, or tops of trees, in subdued afternoon sunshine, are nearly perfect purple, and of an exquisite tone), as well as in ploughed fields, and dark ground in general. But among mountains, in addition to all this, large unbroken spaces of pure violet and purple are introduced in their distances; and even near, by films of cloud passing over the darkness of ravines or forests, blues are produced of the most subtle tenderness; these azures and purples passing into rose-colour of otherwise wholly unattainable delicacy among the upper summits, the blue of the sky being at the same time purer and deeper than in the plains. Nay, in some sense, a person who has never seen the rose-colour of the rays of dawn crossing a blue mountain twelve or fifteen miles away, can hardly be said to know what *tenderness* in colour means at all; *bright* tenderness he may, indeed, see in the sky or in a flower, but this grave tenderness of the faraway hill-purples he cannot conceive.

Together with this great source of pre-eminence in *mass* of colour, we have to estimate the influence of the finished inlaying and enamel-work of the colour-jewellery on every stone; and that of the continual variety in species of flower; most of the mountain flowers being, besides, separately lovelier than the lowland ones. The wood hyacinth and the wild rose are, indeed, the only *supreme* flowers that the lowlands can generally show; and the wild rose is also a mountaineer, and more fragrant in the hills, while the wood hyacinth, at its best, cannot match even the dark bell-gentian, leaving the light-blue star-gentian in its uncontested queenliness, and the Alpine rose and Highland heather wholly without similitude. The violet, lily of the valley, crocus, and wood anemone are, I suppose, claimable partly by the plains as well as the hills; but the large orange lily and narcissus I have never seen but on hill pastures, and the exquisite oxalis is pre-eminently a mountaineer.

To this supremacy in mosses and flowers we have next to add an inestimable gain in the continual presence and power of water. Neither in its clearness, its colour, its fantasy of motion, its calmness of space, depth, and reflection, or its wrath, can water be conceived by a lowlander, out of sight of sea. A sea wave is far grander than any torrent—but of the sea and its influences we are not now speaking; and the sea itself, though it *can* be clear, is never calm, among our shores, in the sense that a mountain lake can be calm. The sea seems only to pause; the mountain lake to sleep, and to dream. Out of sight of the ocean a lowlander cannot be considered ever to have seen water at all. The mantling of the pools in the rock shadows, with the golden flakes of light sinking down through them like falling leaves, the ringing of the thin currents among the shallows, the flash and the cloud of the cascade, the earthquake and foam-fire of the cataract, the long lines of alternate mirror and mist that lull the imagery of the hills reversed in the blue of morning,—all these things belong to those hills as their undivided inheritance.

To this supremacy in wave and stream is joined a no less manifest pre-eminence in the character of trees. It is possible among plains, in the species of trees which properly belong to them, the poplars of Amiens, for instance, to obtain a serene simplicity of grace, which, as I said, is a better help to the study of gracefulness, as such, than any of the wilder groupings of the hills; so, also, there are certain conditions of symmetrical luxuriance developed in the park and avenue, rarely rivalled in their way among mountains; and yet the mountain superiority in foliage is, on the whole, nearly as complete as it

is in water: for exactly as there are some expressions in the broad reaches of a navigable lowland river, such as the Loire or Thames, not, in their way, to be matched among the rock rivers, and yet for all that a lowlander cannot be said to have truly seen the element of water at all; so even in the richest parks and avenues he cannot be said to have truly seen trees. For the resources of trees are not developed until they have difficulty to contend with; neither their tenderness of brotherly love and harmony, till they are forced to choose their ways of various life where there is contracted room for them, talking to each other with their restrained branches. The various action of trees rooting themselves in inhospitable rocks, stooping to look into ravines, hiding from the search of glacier winds, reaching forth to the rays of rare sunshine, crowding down together to drink at sweetest streams, climbing hand in hand among the difficult slopes, opening in sudden dances round the mossy knolls, gathering into companies at rest among the fragrant fields, gliding in grave procession over the heavenward ridges—nothing of this can be conceived among the unvexed and unvaried felicities of the lowland forest: while to all these direct sources of greater beauty are added, first the power of redundance,—the mere quantity of foliage visible in the folds and on the promontories of a single Alp being greater than that of an entire lowland landscape (unless a view from some cathedral tower); and to this charm of redundance, that of clearer *visibility*,—tree after tree being constantly shown in successive height, one behind another, instead of the mere tops and flanks of masses, as in the plains; and the forms of multitudes of them continually defined against the clear sky, near and above, or against white clouds entangled among their branches, instead of being confused in dimness of distance.

Finally, to this supremacy in foliage we have to add the still less questionable supremacy in clouds. There is no effect of sky possible in the lowlands which may not in equal perfection be seen among the hills; but there are effects by tens of thousands, for ever invisible and inconceivable to the inhabitant of the plains, manifested among the hills in the course of one day. The mere power of familiarity with the clouds, of walking with them and above them, alters and renders clear our whole conception of the baseless architecture of the sky; and for the beauty of it, there is more in a single wreath of early cloud, pacing its way up an avenue of pines, or pausing among the points of their fringes, than in all the white heaps that fill the arched sky of the plains from one horizon to the other. And of the nobler cloud manifestations,—the breaking of their troublous seas against the crags, their black spray sparkling with lightning; or the going forth of the morning along their pavements of moving marble, level-laid between dome and dome of snow;—of these things there can be as little imagination or understanding in an inhabitant of the plains as of the scenery of another planet than his own.

And, observe, all these superiorities are matters plainly measurable and calculable, not in any wise to be referred to estimate of *sensation*. Of the grandeur or expression of the hills I have not spoken; how far they are great, or strong, or terrible, I do not for the moment consider, because vastness, and strength, and terror, are not to all minds subjects of desired contemplation. It may make no difference to some men whether a natural object be large or small, whether it be strong or feeble. But loveliness of colour, perfectness of form, endlessness of change, wonderfulness of structure, are precious to all undiseased human minds; and the superiority of the mountains in all these things to the lowland is, I repeat, as measurable as the richness of a painted window matched with a white one, or the wealth of a museum compared with that of a simply furnished chamber. They seem to have been built for the human race, as at once their schools and cathedrals; full of treasures of illuminated manuscript for the scholar, kindly in simple lessons to the worker, quiet in pale cloisters for the thinker, glorious in holiness for the worshipper.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 72: From "Modern Painters," Vol. IV, 1856, Chapter XX.]

D. SPLENDOURS OF SUNSET[73]

We have been speaking hitherto of what is constant and necessary in nature, of the ordinary effects of daylight on ordinary colours, and we repeat again that no gorgeousness of the pallet can reach even these. But it is a widely different thing when Nature herself takes a colouring fit, and does something extraordinary, something really to exhibit her power. She has a thousand ways and means of rising above herself, but incomparably the noblest manifestations of her capability of colour are in these sunsets among the high clouds. I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose-colour, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapour, which would in common daylight be pure snow-

white, and which give, therefore, fair field to the tone of light. There is, then, no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity, of the hues assumed. The whole sky from the zenith to the horizon becomes one molten mantling sea of colour and fire; every black bar turns into massy gold, every ripple and wave into unsullied shadowless crimson, and purple, and scarlet, and colours for which there are no words in language, and no ideas in the mind—things which can only be conceived while they are visible; the intense hollow blue of the upper sky melting through it all, showing here deep, and pure, and lightless; there, modulated by the filmy formless body of the transparent vapour, till it is lost imperceptibly in its crimson and gold. The concurrence of circumstances necessary to produce the sunsets of which I speak does not take place above five or six times in a summer, and then only for a space of from five to ten minutes, just as the sun reaches the horizon. Considering how seldom people think of looking for a sunset at all, and how seldom, if they do, they are in a position from which it can be fully seen, the chances that their attention should be awake, and their position favourable, during these few flying instants of the year, are almost as nothing. What can the citizen, who can see only the red light on the canvas of the wagon at the end of the street, and the crimson colour of the bricks of his neighbour's chimney, know of the flood of fire which deluges the sky from the horizon to the zenith? What can even the quiet inhabitant of the English lowlands, whose scene for the manifestation of the fire of heaven is limited to the tops of hayricks, and the rooks' nests in the old elm trees, know of the mighty passages of splendour which are tossed from Alp to Alp over the azure of a thousand miles of champaign? Even granting the constant vigour of observation, and supposing the possession of such impossible knowledge, it needs but a moment's reflection to prove how incapable the memory is of retaining for any time the distinct image of the sources even of its most vivid impressions. What recollection have we of the sunsets which delighted us last year? We may know that they were magnificent, or glowing, but no distinct image of colour or form is retained—nothing of whose *degree* (for the great difficulty with the memory is to retain, not facts, but *degrees* of fact) we could be so certain as to say of anything now presented to us, that it is like it. If we did say so, we should be wrong; for we may be quite certain that the energy of an impression fades from the memory, and becomes more and more indistinct every day; and thus we compare a faded and indistinct image with the decision and certainty of one present to the senses. How constantly do we affirm that the thunderstorm of last week was the most terrible one we ever saw in our lives, because we compare it, not with the thunderstorm of last year, but with the faded and feeble recollection of it.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 73: From "Modern Painters," Vol. I, Pt. II, Sec. II, Chapter II.]

THE STOICS[74]

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY

The Stoics asserted two cardinal principles—that virtue was the sole legitimate object to be aspired to, and that it involved so complete an ascendancy of the reason as altogether to extinguish the affections. The Peripatetics and many other philosophers, who derived their opinions chiefly from Plato, endeavoured to soften down the exaggeration of these principles. They admitted that virtue was an object wholly distinct from interest, and that it should be the leading motive of life; but they maintained that happiness was also a good, and a certain regard for it legitimate. They admitted that virtue consisted in the supremacy of the reason over the affections, but they allowed the exercise of the latter within restricted limits. The main distinguishing features, however, of stoicism, the unselfish ideal and the controlling reason, were acquiesced in, and each represents an important side of the ancient conception of excellence which we must now proceed to examine.

In the first we may easily trace the intellectual expression of the high spirit of self-sacrifice which the patriotic enthusiasm had elicited. The spirit of patriotism has this peculiar characteristic, that while it has evoked acts of heroism which are both very numerous and very sublime, it has done so without presenting any prospect of personal immortality as a reward. Of all the forms of human heroism, it is probably the most unselfish. The Spartan and the Roman died for his country because he loved it. The martyr's ecstasy of hope had no place in his dying hour. He gave up all he had, he closed his eyes, as he believed, for ever, and he asked for no reward in this world or in the next. Even the hope of posthumous fame—the most refined and supersensual of all that can be called reward—could exist only for the most conspicuous leaders. It was examples of this nature that formed the culminations or ideals

of ancient systems of virtue, and they naturally led men to draw a very clear and deep distinction between the notions of interest and of duty. It may indeed be truly said, that while the conception of what constituted duty was often very imperfect in antiquity, the conviction that duty, as distinguished from every modification of selfishness, should be the supreme motive of life, was more clearly enforced among the Stoics than in any later society.

The reader will probably have gathered from the last chapter that there are four distinct motives which moral teachers may propose for the purpose of leading men to virtue. They may argue that the disposition of events is such that prosperity will attend a virtuous life, and adversity a vicious one—a proposition they may prove by pointing to the normal course of affairs, and by asserting the existence of a special Providence in behalf of the good in the present world, and of rewards and punishments in the future. As far as these latter arguments are concerned, the efficacy of such teaching rests upon the firmness with which certain theological tenets are held, while the force of the first considerations will depend upon the degree and manner in which society is organised, for there are undoubtedly some conditions of society in which a perfectly upright life has not even a general tendency to prosperity. The peculiar circumstances and dispositions of individuals will also influence largely the way in which they receive such teaching, and, as Cicero observed, "what one utility has created, another will often destroy."

They may argue, again, that vice is to the mind what disease is to the body, and that a state of virtue is in consequence a state of health. Just as bodily health is desired for its own sake, as being the absence of a painful or at least displeasing state, so a well-ordered and virtuous mind may be valued for its own sake, and independently of all the external good to which it may lead, as being a condition of happiness; and a mind distracted by passion and vice may be avoided, not so much because it is an obstacle in the pursuit of prosperity, as because it is in itself essentially painful and disturbing. This conception of virtue and vice as states of health or sickness, the one being in itself a good, and the other in itself an evil, was a fundamental proposition in the ethics of Plato. It was admitted, but only to a subsidiary place, by the Stoics, and has passed more or less into all the succeeding systems. It is especially favourable to large and elevating conceptions of self-culture, for it leads men to dwell much less upon isolated acts of virtue or vice than upon the habitual condition of mind from which they spring.

It is possible, in the third place, to argue in favour of virtue by offering as a motive that sense of pleasure which follows the deliberate performance of a virtuous act. This emotion is a distinct and isolated gratification following a distinct action, and may therefore be easily separated from that habitual placidity of temper which results from the extinction of vicious and perturbing impulses. It is this theory which is implied in the common exhortations to enjoy "the luxury of doing good," and though especially strong in acts of benevolence, in which case sympathy with the happiness created intensifies the feeling, this pleasure attends every kind of virtue.

These three motives of action have all this common characteristic, that they point as their ultimate end to the happiness of the agent. The first seeks that happiness in external circumstances; the second and third in psychological conditions. There is, however, a fourth kind of motive which may be urged, and which is the peculiar characteristic of the intuitive school of moralists and the stumbling-block of its opponents. It is asserted that we are so constituted that the notion of duty furnishes in itself a natural motive of action of the highest order, and wholly distinct from all the refinements and modifications of self-interest. The coactive force of this motive is altogether independent of surrounding circumstances, and of all forms of belief. It is equally true for the man who believes and for the man who rejects the Christian faith, for the believer in a future world and for the believer in the mortality of the soul. It is not a question of happiness or unhappiness, of reward or punishment, but of a generically different nature. Men feel that a certain course of life is the natural end of their being, and they feel bound, even at the expense of happiness, to pursue it. They feel that certain acts are essentially good and noble, and others essentially base and vile, and this perception leads them to pursue the one and to avoid the other, irrespective of all considerations of enjoyment.

The school of philosophy we are reviewing furnishes the most perfect of all historical examples of the power which the higher of these motives can exercise over the mind. The coarser forms of self-interest were in stoicism absolutely condemned. It was one of the first principles of these philosophers that all things that are not in our power should be esteemed indifferent; that the object of all mental discipline should be to withdraw the mind from all the gifts of fortune, and that prudence must in consequence be altogether excluded from the motives of virtue. To enforce these principles they continually dilated upon the vanity of human things, and upon the majesty of the independent mind, and they indulged, though scarcely more than other sects, in many exaggerations about the impassive tranquillity of the sage. In the Roman empire stoicism flourished at a period which, beyond almost any other, seemed most unfavourable to such teaching. There were reigns when, in the emphatic words of Tacitus, "virtue was a sentence of death." In no period had brute force more completely triumphed, in none was the

thirst for material advantages more intense, in very few was vice more ostentatiously glorified. Yet in the midst of all these circumstances the Stoics taught a philosophy which was not a compromise, not an attempt to moderate the popular excesses, but which in its austere sanctity was the extreme antithesis of all that the prevailing examples and their own interests could dictate. And these men were no impassioned fanatics, fired with the prospect of coming glory. They were men from whose motives of action the belief in the immortality of the soul was resolutely excluded. In the scepticism that accompanied the first introduction of philosophy into Rome, in the dissolution of the old fables about Tartarus and the Styx, and the dissemination of Epicureanism among the people, this doctrine, notwithstanding the beautiful reasonings of Cicero and the religious faith of a few who clung like Plutarch to the mysteries in which it was perpetuated, had sunk very low. An interlocutor in Cicero expressed what was probably a common feeling, when he acknowledged that, with the writings of Plato before him, he could believe and realise it; but when he closed the book, the reasonings seemed to lose their power, and the world of spirits grew pale and unreal. If Ennius could elicit the plaudits of a theatre when he proclaimed that the gods took no part in human affairs, Caesar could assert in the senate, without scandal and almost without dissent, that death was the end of all things. Pliny, perhaps the greatest of all the Roman scholars, adopting the sentiment of all the school of Epicurus, describes the belief in a future life as a form of madness, a puerile and a pernicious illusion. The opinions of the Stoics were wavering and uncertain. Their first doctrine was that the soul of man has a future and independent, but not an eternal existence, that it survives until the conflagration that was to destroy the world when all finite things would be absorbed in the all-pervading soul of nature. Chrysippus, however, restricted to the best and noblest souls this future existence, which Cleanthes had awarded to all, and among the Roman Stoics even this was greatly doubted. The belief that the human soul is a detached fragment of the Deity, naturally led to the belief that after death it would be reabsorbed in the parent Spirit. The doctrine that there is no real good but virtue deprived the Stoics of the argument for a future world derived from unrequited merit and unpunished crimes, and the earnestness with which they contended that a good man should act irrespectively of reward, inclined them, as it is said to have inclined some Jewish thinkers, to the denial of the existence of the reward. Panaetius, the founder of Roman stoicism, maintained that the soul perished with the body, and his opinion was followed by Epictetus and Cornutus. Seneca contradicted himself on the subject. Marcus Aurelius never rose beyond a vague and mournful aspiration. Those who believed in a future world believed it faintly and uncertainly, and even when they accepted it as a fact, they shrank from proposing it as a motive. The whole system of stoical ethics, which carried self-sacrifice to a point that has scarcely been equalled, and exercised an influence which has rarely been surpassed, was evolved without any assistance from the doctrine of a future life. Pagan antiquity has bequeathed us few nobler treatises of morals than the "De Officiis" of Cicero, which was avowedly an expansion of a work of Panaetius. It has left us no grander example than that of Epictetus, the sickly, deformed slave of a master who was notorious for his barbarity, enfranchised late in life, but soon driven into exile by Domitian, who, while sounding the very abyss of human misery, and looking forward to death as to simple decomposition, was yet so filled with the sense of the Divine presence, that his life was one continued hymn to Providence, and his writings and his example, which appeared to his contemporaries almost the ideal of human goodness, have not lost their consoling power through all the ages and the vicissitudes they have survived.

There was, however, another form of immortality which exercised a much greater influence among the Roman moralists. The desire for reputation, and especially for posthumous reputation—that "last infirmity of noble minds"—assumed an extraordinary prominence among the springs of Roman heroism, and was also the origin of that theatrical and overstrained phraseology which the greatest of ancient moralists rarely escaped. But we should be altogether in error if we inferred, as some have done, that paganism never rose to the conception of virtue concealing itself from the world, and consenting voluntarily to degradation. No characters were more highly appreciated in antiquity than those of men who, through a sense of duty, opposed the strong current of popular favour; of men like Fabius, who consented for the sake of their country to incur the reputation that is most fatal to a soldier; of men like Cato, who remained unmoved among the scoffs, the insults, and the ridicule of an angry crowd. Cicero, expounding the principles of stoicism, declared that no one has attained to true philosophy who has not learnt that all vice should be avoided, "though it were concealed from the eyes of gods and men," and that no deeds are more laudable than those which are done without ostentation, and far from the sight of men. The writings of the Stoics are crowded with sentences to the same effect. "Nothing for opinion, all for conscience." "He who wishes his virtue to be blazed abroad is not labouring for virtue but for fame." "No one is more virtuous than the man who sacrifices the reputation of a good man rather than sacrifice his conscience." "I do not shrink from praise, but I refuse to make it the end and term of right." "If you do anything to please men, you have fallen from your estate." "Even a bad reputation nobly earned is pleasing." "A great man is not the less great when he lies vanquished and prostrate in the dust." "Never forget that it is possible to be at once a divine man, yet a man unknown to all the world." "That which is beautiful is beautiful in itself; the praise of man adds nothing to its quality." Marcus Aurelius, following an example that is ascribed to Pythagoras, made it a special object of mental discipline, by continually meditating on death, and evoking, by an effort of the imagination,

whole societies that had passed away, to acquire a realised sense of the vanity of posthumous fame. The younger Pliny painted faithfully the ideal of stoicism when he described one of his friends as a man "who did nothing for ostentation but all for conscience; who sought the reward of virtue in itself, and not in the praise of man." Nor were the Stoics less emphatic in distinguishing the obligation from the attraction of virtue. It was on this point that they separated from the more refined Epicureans, who were often willing to sublimate to the highest degree the kind of pleasure they proposed as an object, provided only it were admitted that pleasure is necessarily the ultimate end of our actions. But this the Stoics firmly denied. "Pleasure," they argued, "is the companion, not the guide, of our course." "We do not love virtue because it gives us pleasure, but it gives us pleasure because we love it." "The wise man will not sin, though both gods and men should overlook the deed, for it is not through the fear of punishment or of shame that he abstains from sin. It is from the desire and obligation of what is just and good." "To ask to be paid for virtue is as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking." In doing good, man "should be like the vine which has produced grapes, and asks for nothing more after it has produced its proper fruit." His end, according to these teachers, is not to find peace either in life or in death. It is to do his duty, and to tell the truth.

The second distinguishing feature of stoicism I have noticed was the complete suppression of the affections to make way for the absolute ascendancy of reason. There are two great divisions of character corresponding very nearly to the stoical and epicurean temperaments I have described—that in which the will predominates, and that in which the desires are supreme. A good man of the first class is one whose will, directed by a sense of duty, pursues the course he believes to be right, in spite of strong temptations to pursue an opposite course, arising either from his own passions and tendencies, or from the circumstances that surround him. A good man of the second class is one who is so happily constituted that his sympathies and desires instinctively tend to virtuous ends. The first character is the only one to which we can, strictly speaking, attach the idea of merit, and is also the only one which is capable of rising to high efforts of continuous and heroic self-sacrifice; but on the other hand, there is a charm in the spontaneous action of the unforced desires which disciplined virtue can perhaps never attain. The man who is consistently generous through a sense of duty, when his natural temperament impels him to avarice, and when every exercise of benevolence causes him a pang, deserves in the very highest degree our admiration; but he whose generosity costs him no effort, but is the natural gratification of his affections, attracts a far larger measure of our love. Corresponding to these two casts of character, we find two distinct theories of education, the aim of the one being chiefly to strengthen the will, and that of the other to guide the desires. The principal examples of the first are the Spartan and stoical systems of antiquity, and, with some modifications, the asceticism of the Middle Ages. The object of these systems was to enable men to endure pain, to repress manifest and acknowledged desires, to relinquish enjoyments, to establish an absolute empire over their emotions. On the other hand, there is a method of education which was never more prevalent than in the present day, which exhausts its efforts in making virtue attractive, in associating it with all the charms of imagination and of prosperity, and in thus insensibly drawing the desires in the wished for direction. As the first system is especially suited to a disturbed and military society, which requires and elicits strong efforts of the will, and is therefore the special sphere of heroic virtues, so the latter belongs naturally to a tranquil and highly organised civilisation, which is therefore very favourable to the amiable qualities, and it is probable that as civilisation advances, the heroic type will, in consequence, become more and more rare, and a kind of self-indulgent goodness more common. The circumstances of the ancient societies led them to the former type, of which the Stoics furnished the extreme expression in their doctrine that the affections are of the nature of a disease—a doctrine which they justified by the same kind of arguments as those which are now often employed by metaphysicians to prove that love, anger and the like, can only be ascribed by a figure of speech to the Deity. Perturbation, they contended, is necessarily imperfection, and none of its forms can in consequence be ascribed to a perfect being. We have a clear intuitive perception that reason is the highest, and should be the directing power of an intelligent being; but every act which is performed at the instigation of the emotions is withdrawn from the empire of reason. Hence it was inferred that while the will should be educated to act habitually in the direction of virtue, even the emotions that seem most fitted to second it should be absolutely proscribed. Thus Seneca has elaborated at length the distinction between clemency and pity, the first being one of the highest virtues, and the latter a positive vice. Clemency, he says, is an habitual disposition to gentleness in the application of punishments. It is that moderation which remits something of an incurred penalty; it is the opposite of cruelty, which is an habitual disposition to rigour. Pity, on the other hand, bears to clemency the same kind of relation as superstition to religion. It is the weakness of a feeble mind that flinches at the sight of suffering. Clemency is an act of judgment, but pity disturbs the judgment. Clemency adjudicates upon the proportion between suffering and guilt. Pity contemplates only suffering, and gives no thoughts to its cause. Clemency, in the midst of its noblest efforts, is perfectly passionless; pity is unreasoning emotion. Clemency is an essential characteristic of the sage; pity is only suited for weak women and for diseased minds. "The sage will console those who weep, but without weeping with them; he will succour the shipwrecked, give hospitality to the proscribed, and alms to the poor, ... restore the son to the mother's tears, save the captive from the

arena, and even bury the criminal; but in all, his mind and his countenance will be alike untroubled. He will feel no pity. He will succour, he will do good, for he is born to assist his fellows, to labour for the welfare of mankind, and to offer each one his part. His countenance and his soul will betray no emotion as he looks upon the withered legs, the tattered rags, the bent and emaciated frame of the beggar. But he will help those who are worthy, and, like the gods, his leaning will be towards the wretched.... It is only diseased eyes that grow moist in beholding tears in other eyes, as it is no true sympathy, but only weakness of nerves, that leads some to laugh always when others laugh, or to yawn when others yawn."

Cicero, in a sentence which might be adopted as the motto of stoicism, said that Homer "attributed human qualities to the gods; it would have been better to have imparted divine qualities to men." The remarkable passage I have just cited serves to show the extremes to which the Stoics pushed this imitation. And indeed, if we compare the different virtues that have flourished among Pagans and Christians, we invariably find that the prevailing type of excellence among the former is that in which the will and judgment, and among the latter, that in which the emotions are most prominent. Friendship rather than love, hospitality rather than charity, magnanimity rather than tenderness, clemency rather than sympathy, are the characteristics of ancient goodness. The Stoics, who carried the suppression of the emotions farther than any other school, laboured with great zeal to compensate the injury thus done to the benevolent side of our nature, by greatly enlarging the sphere of reasoned and passionless philanthropy. They taught, in the most emphatic language, the fraternity of all men, and the consequent duty of each man consecrating his life to the welfare of others. They developed this general doctrine in a series of detailed precepts, which, for the range, depth, and beauty of their charity, have never been surpassed. They even extended their compassion to crime, and adopting the paradox of Plato, that all guilt is ignorance, treated it as an involuntary disease, and declared that the only legitimate ground of punishment is prevention. But however fully they might recognise in theory their principles with the widest and most active benevolence, they could not wholly counteract the practical evil of a system which declared war against the whole emotional side of our being, and reduced human virtue to a kind of majestic egotism; proposing as examples such men as Anaxagoras, who when told that his son had died, simply observed, "I never supposed that I had begotten an immortal," or as Stilpo, who when his country had been ruined, his native city captured, and his daughters carried away as slaves or as concubines, boasted that he had lost nothing, for the sage is independent of circumstances. The framework or theory of benevolence might be there, but the animating spirit was absent. Men who taught that the husband or the father should look with perfect indifference on the death of his wife or his child, and that the philosopher, though he may shed tears of pretended sympathy in order to console his suffering friend, must suffer no real emotion to penetrate his breast, could never find a true or lasting religion of benevolence. Men who refused to recognise pain and sickness as evils were scarcely likely to be very eager to relieve them in others.

In truth, the Stoics, who taught that all virtue was conformity to nature, were, in this respect, eminently false to their own principle. Human nature, as revealed to us by reason, is a composite thing, a constitution of many parts differing in kind and dignity, a hierarchy in which many powers are intended to co-exist, but in different positions of ascendancy or subordination. To make the higher part of our nature our whole nature is not to restore but to mutilate humanity, and this mutilation has never been attempted without producing grave evils. As philanthropists, the Stoics, through their passion for unity, were led to the extirpation of those emotions which nature intended as the chief springs of benevolence. As speculative philosophers, they were entangled by the same desire in a long train of pitiable paradoxes. Their famous doctrines that all virtues are equal, or, more correctly, are the same, that all vices are equal, that nothing is an evil which does not affect our will, and that pain and bereavement are, in consequence, no ills, though partially explained away and frequently disregarded by the Roman Stoics, were yet sufficiently prominent to give their teaching something of an unnatural and affected appearance. Prizing only a single object, and developing only a single side of their nature, their minds became narrow and their views contracted. Thus, while the Epicureans, urging men to study nature in order to banish superstition, endeavoured to correct the ignorance of physical science which was one of the chief impediments to the progress of the ancient mind, the Stoics for the most part disdained a study which was other than the pursuit of virtue. While the Epicurean poet painted in magnificent language the perpetual progress of mankind, the Stoic was essentially retrospective, and exhausted his strength in vain efforts to restore the simplicity of a by-gone age. While, too, the school of Zeno produced many of the best and greatest men who have ever lived, it must be acknowledged that its records exhibit a rather unusual number of examples of high professions falsified in action, and of men who, displaying in some forms the most undoubted and transcendent virtue, fell in others far below the average of mankind. The elder Cato, who, though not a philosopher, was a model of philosophers, was conspicuous for his inhumanity to his slaves. Brutus was one of the most extortionate usurers of his time, and several citizens of Salamis died of starvation, imprisoned because they could not pay the sum he demanded. No one eulogised more eloquently the austere simplicity of life which stoicism advocated than Sallust, who in a corrupt age was notorious for his rapacity. Seneca himself was constitutionally a nervous and timid man, endeavouring, not always with success, to support

himself by a sublime philosophy. He guided, under circumstances of extreme difficulty, the cause of virtue, and his death is one of the noblest antiquity records; but his life was deeply marked by the taint of flattery, and not free from the taint of avarice, and it is unhappily certain that, after its accomplishment, he lent his pen to conceal or varnish one of the worst crimes of Nero. The courage of Lucan failed signally under torture, and the flattery which he bestowed upon Nero, in his "Pharsalia," ranks with the Epigrams of Martial as probably the extreme limit of sycophancy to which Roman literature descended.

While, too, the main object of the Stoics was to popularise philosophy, the high standard of self-control they exacted rendered their system exceedingly unfit for the great majority of mankind, and for the ordinary condition of affairs. Life is history, not poetry. It consists mainly of little things, rarely illumined by flashes of great heroism, rarely broken by great dangers, or demanding great exertions. A moral system, to govern society, must accommodate itself to common characters and mingled motives. It must be capable of influencing natures that can never rise to an heroic level. It must tincture, modify, and mitigate where it cannot eradicate or transform. In Christianity there are always a few persons seeking by continual and painful efforts to reverse or extinguish the ordinary feelings of humanity, but in the great majority of cases the influence of the religious principle upon the mind, though very real, is not of a nature to cause any serious strain or struggle. It is displayed in a certain acquired spontaneity of impulse. It softens the character, purifies and directs the imagination, blends insensibly with the habitual modes of thought, and, without revolutionising, gives a tone and bias to all the forms of action. But stoicism was simply a school of heroes. It recognised no gradations of virtue or vice. It condemned all emotions, all spontaneity, all mingled motives, all the principles, feelings, and impulses upon which the virtue of common men mainly depends. It was capable of acting only on moral natures that were strung to the highest tension, and it was therefore naturally rejected by the multitude.

The central conception of this philosophy of self-control was the dignity of man. Pride, which looks within, making man seek his own approbation, as distinguished from vanity, which looks without, and shapes its conduct according to the opinions of others, was not only permitted in stoicism, it was its leading moral agent. The sense of virtue, as I have elsewhere observed, occupies in this system much the same place as the sense of sin in Christianity. Sin, in the conception of the ancients, was simply disease, and they deemed it the part of a wise man to correct it, but not to dwell upon its circumstances. In the many disquisitions which Epictetus and others have left us concerning the proper frame of mind in which man should approach death, repentance for past sin has absolutely no place, nor do the ancients appear to have ever realised the purifying and spiritualising influence it exercises upon the character. And while the reality of moral disease was fully recognised, while an ideal of lofty and indeed unattainable excellence was continually proposed, no one doubted the essential excellence of human nature, and very few doubted the possibility of man acquiring by his own will a high degree of virtue.

The doctrine of suicide was the culminating point of Roman stoicism. The proud, self-reliant, unbending character of the philosopher, could only be sustained when he felt that he had a sure refuge against the extreme forms of suffering or of despair. Although virtue is not a mere creature of interest, no great system has ever yet flourished which did not present an ideal of happiness as well as an ideal of duty. Stoicism taught men to hope little, but to fear nothing. It did not array death in brilliant colours, as the path to positive felicity, but it endeavoured to divest it, as the end of suffering, of every terror. Life lost much of its bitterness when men had found a refuge from the storms of fate, a speedy deliverance from dotage and pain. Death ceased to be terrible when it was regarded rather as a remedy than as a sentence. Life and death in the stoical system were attuned to the same key. The deification of human virtue, the total absence of all sense of sin, the proud stubborn will that deemed humiliation the worst of stains, appeared alike in each. The type of its own kind was perfect. All the virtues and all the majesty that accompany human pride, when developed to the highest point, and directed to the noblest ends, were here displayed. All those which accompany humility and self-abasement were absent.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 74: From Chapter II, Vol. I, of "History of European Morals," 1869. The author's foot-notes have been omitted.]

The first method of training this passion which Christ employed was the direct one of making it a point of duty to feel it. To love one's neighbour as oneself was, he said, the first and greatest *law*. And in the Sermon on the Mount he requires the passion to be felt in such strength as to include those whom we have most reason to hate—our enemies and those who maliciously injure us—and delivers an imperative precept, "Love your enemies."

It has been shown that to do this is not, as might at first appear, in the nature of things impossible, but the further question suggests itself, Can it be done to order? Has the verb to love really an imperative mood? Certainly, to say that we can love at pleasure, and by a mere effort of will summon up a passion which does not arise of itself, is to take up a paradoxical and novel position. Yet if this position be really untenable, how is it possible to obey Christ's commands?

The difficulty seems to admit of only one solution. We are not commanded to create by an effort of will a feeling of love in ourselves which otherwise would have had no existence; the feeling must arise naturally or it cannot arise at all. But a number of causes which are removable may interfere to prevent the feeling from arising or to stifle it as it arises, and we are commanded to remove these hindrances. It is natural to man to love his kind, and Christ commands us only to give nature play. He does not expect us to procure for ourselves hearts of some new supernatural texture, but merely the heart of flesh for the heart of stone.

What, then, are the causes of this paralysis of the heart? The experience of human life furnishes us readily with the answer. It constantly happens that one whose affections were originally not less lively than those of most men is thrown into the society of persons destitute of sympathy or tenderness. In this society each person is either totally indifferent to his neighbour or secretly endeavouring to injure or overreach him. The new-comer is at first open-hearted and cordial; he presumes every one he meets to be a friend, and is disposed to serve and expects to be served by all alike. But his advances are met by some with cautious reserve, by others with icy coldness, by others with hypocritical warmth followed by treacherous injury, by others with open hostility. The heart which naturally grew warm at the mere sight of a human being, under the operation of this new experience slowly becomes paralysed. There seats itself gradually in the man's mind a presumption concerning every new face that it is the face of an enemy, and a habit of gathering himself into an attitude of self-defence whenever he deals with a fellow-creature. If when this new disposition has grown confirmed and habitual, he be introduced into a society of an opposite kind and meet with people as friendly and kind as he himself was originally, he will not at first be able to believe in their sincerity, and the old kindly affections from long disuse will be slow to rouse themselves within him. Now to such a person the imperative mood of the verb to love may fairly be used. He may properly be told to make an effort, to shake off the distrust that oppresses him,—not to suffer unproved suspicions, causeless jealousies, to stifle by the mere force of prejudice and mistaken opinion the warmth of feeling natural to him.

But we shall have a closer illustration if we suppose the cold-hearted society itself to be addressed by a preacher who wishes to bring them to a better mind. He too may fairly use the imperative mood of the verb to love. For he may say, "Your mutual coldness does not spring from an original want of the power of sympathy. If it did, admonitions would indeed be useless. But it springs from a habit of thought which you have formed, a maxim which has been received among you, that all men are devoted to self-interest, that kindness is but feebleness and invites injury. If you will at once and by a common act throw off this false opinion of human nature, and adopt a new plan of life for yourselves and new expectations of each other, you will find the old affections natural to all of you, weakened indeed and chilled, but existing and capable of being revived by an effort."

Such a preacher might go further and say, "If but a small minority are convinced by my words, yet let that minority for itself abandon the selfish theory, let it renounce the safety which that theory affords in dealing with selfish men, let it treat the enemy as if he were indeed the friend he ought to be, let it dare to forego retaliation and even self-defence. By this means it will shame many into kindness; by despising self-interest for itself it will sometimes make it seem despicable to others; by sincerity and persistency it will gradually convert the majority to a higher law of intercourse."

The world has been always more or less like this cold-hearted society; the natural kindness and fellow-feeling of men have always been more or less repressed by low-minded maxims and cynicism. But in the time of Christ, and in the last decrepitude of ethnic morality, the selfishness of human intercourse was much greater than the present age can easily understand. That system of morality, even in the times when it was powerful and in many respects beneficial, had made it almost as much a duty to hate foreigners as to love fellow-citizens. Plato congratulates the Athenians on having shown in their relations to Persia, beyond all the other Greeks, "a pure and heartfelt hatred of the foreign nature."^[76] Instead of opposing, it had sanctioned and consecrated the savage instinct which leads us

to hate whatever is strange or unintelligible, to distrust those who live on the further side of a river, to suppose that those whom we hear talking together in a foreign tongue must be plotting some mischief against ourselves. The lapse of time and the fusion of races doubtless diminished this antipathy considerably, but at the utmost it could but be transformed into an icy indifference, for no cause was in operation to convert it into kindness. On the other hand, the closeness of the bond which united fellow-citizens was considerably relaxed. Common interests and common dangers had drawn it close; these in the wide security of the Roman Empire had no longer a place. It had depended upon an imagined blood-relationship; fellow-citizens could now no longer feel themselves to be united by the tie of blood. Every town was full of resident aliens and emancipated slaves, persons between whom and the citizens nature had established no connection, and whose presence in the city had originally been barely tolerated from motives of expediency. The selfishness of modern times exists in defiance of morality, in ancient times it was approved, sheltered, and even in part enjoined by morality. We are therefore to consider the ancient world as a society of men in whom natural humanity existed but had been, as it were, crusted or frosted over. Inveterate feuds and narrow-minded local jealousies, arising out of an isolated position or differences of language and institutions, had created endless divisions between man and man. And as the special virtues of antiquity, patriotism and all that it implies, had been in a manner caused and fostered by these very divisions, they were not regarded as evils but rather cherished as essential to morality. Selfishness, therefore, was not a mere abuse or corruption arising out of the infirmity of human nature, but a theory and almost a part of moral philosophy. Humanity was cramped by a mistaken prejudice, by a perverse presumption of the intellect. In a case like this it was necessary and proper to prescribe humanity by direct authoritative precept. Such a precept would have been powerless to create the feeling, nor would it have done much to protect it from being overpowered by the opposite passion, but the opposite passion of selfishness was at this period justified by authority and claimed to be on the side of reason and law. Precept is fairly matched against precept, and what the law of love and the golden rule did for mankind was to place for the first time the love of man as man distinctly in the list of virtues, to dissipate the exclusive prejudices of ethnic morality, and to give selfishness the character of sin.

When a theory of selfishness is rife in a whole community, it is a bold and hazardous step for a part of the community to abandon it. For in the society of selfish people selfishness is simply self-defence; to renounce it is to evacuate one's entrenched position, to surrender at discretion to the enemy. If society is to disarm, it should do so by common consent. Christ, however, though he confidently expected ultimately to gather all mankind into his society, did not expect to do so soon. Accordingly he commands his followers not to wait for this consummation but, in spite of the hazardous nature of the step, to disarm at once. They are sent forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves." Injuries they are to expect, but they are neither to shun nor to retaliate them. Harmless they are to be as *doves*. The discipline of suffering will wean them more and more from self, and make the channels of humanity freer within them; and sometimes their patience may shame the spoiler; he may grow weary of rapacity which meets with no resistance, and be induced to envy those who can forego without reluctance that which he devotes every thought to acquire.

But we shall soon be convinced that Christ could not design by a mere edict, however authoritative, to give this passion of humanity strength enough to make it a living and infallible principle of morality in every man, when we consider, first, what an ardent enthusiasm he demanded from his followers, and secondly, how frail and tender a germ this passion naturally is in human nature. Widely diffused indeed it is, and seldom entirely eradicated; but for the most part, at least in the ancient world, it was crushed under a weight of predominant passions and interests; it had seldom power enough to dictate any action, but made itself felt in faint misgivings and relents, which sometimes restrained men from extremes of cruelty. Like Enceladus under Aetna, it lay fettered at the bottom of human nature, now and then making the mass above it quake by an uneasy change of posture. To make this outraged and enslaved passion predominant, to give it, instead of a veto rarely used, the whole power of government, to train it from a dim misgiving into a clear and strong passion, required much more than a precept. The precept had its use; it could make men feel it right to be humane and desire to be so, but it could never inspire them with an enthusiasm of humanity. From what source was this inspiration to be derived?

Humanity, we have already observed, is neither a love for the whole human race, nor a love for each individual of it, but a love for the race, or for the ideal of man, in each individual. In other and less pedantic words, he who is truly humane considers every human being as such interesting and important, and without waiting to criticise each individual specimen, pays in advance to all alike the tribute of good wishes and sympathy. Now this favourable presumption with regard to human beings is not a causeless prepossession, it is no idle superstition of the mind, nor is it a natural instinct. It is a feeling founded on the actual observation and discovery of interesting and noble qualities in particular human beings, and it is strong or weak in proportion as the person who has the feeling has known many or few noble and amiable human beings. There are men who have, been so unfortunate as to live

in the perpetual society of the mean and the base; they have never, except in a few faint glimpses, seen anything glorious or good in human nature. With these the feeling of humanity has a perpetual struggle for existence, their minds tend by a fatal gravitation to the belief that the happiness or misery of such a paltry race is wholly unimportant; they may arrive finally at a fixed condition, in which it may be said of them without qualification, that "man delights not them, nor woman neither." In this final stage they are men who, beyond the routine of life, should not be trusted, being "fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils." On the other hand, there are those whose lot it has been from earliest childhood to see the fair side of humanity, who have been surrounded with clear and candid countenances, in the changes of which might be traced the working of passions strong and simple, the impress of a firm and tender nature, wearing when it looked abroad the glow of sympathy, and when it looked within the bloom of modesty. They have seen, and not once or twice, a man forget himself; they have witnessed devotion, unselfish sorrow, unaffected delicacy, spontaneous charity, ingenuous self-reproach; and it may be that on seeing a human being surrender for another's good not something but his uttermost all, they have dimly suspected in human nature a glory connecting it with the divine. In these the passion of humanity is warm and ready to become on occasion a burning flame; their whole minds are elevated, because they are possessed with the dignity of that nature they share, and of the society in the midst of which they move.

But it is not absolutely necessary to humanity that a man shall have seen *many* men whom he can respect. The most lost cynic will get a new heart by learning thoroughly to believe in the virtue of *one* man. Our estimate of human nature is in proportion to the best specimen of it we have witnessed. This then it is which is wanted to raise the feeling of humanity into an enthusiasm; when the precept of love has been given, an image must be set before the eyes of those who are called upon to obey it, an ideal or type of man which may be noble and amiable enough to raise the whole race and make the meanest member of it sacred with reflected glory.

Did not Christ do this? Did the command to love go forth to those who had never seen a human being they could revere? Could his followers turn upon him and say, How can we love a creature so degraded, full of vile wants and contemptible passions, whose little life is most harmlessly spent when it is an empty round of eating and sleeping; a creature destined for the grave and for oblivion when his allotted term of fretfulness and folly has expired? Of this race Christ himself was a member, and to this day is it not the best answer to all blasphemers of the species, the best consolation when our sense of its degradation is keenest, that a human brain was behind his forehead and a human heart beating in his breast, and that within the whole creation of God nothing more elevated or more attractive has yet been found than he? And if it be answered that there was in his nature something exceptional and peculiar, that humanity must not be measured by the stature of Christ, let us remember that it was precisely thus that he wished it to be measured, delighting to call himself the Son of Man, delighting to call the meanest of mankind his brothers. If some human beings are abject and contemptible, if it be incredible to us that they can have any high dignity or destiny, do we regard them from so great a height as Christ? Are we likely to be more pained by their faults and deficiencies than he was? Is our standard higher than his? And yet he associated by preference with these meanest of the race; no contempt for them did he ever express, no suspicion that they might be less dear than the best and wisest to the common Father, no doubt that they were naturally capable of rising to a moral elevation like his own. There is nothing of which a man may be prouder than of this; it is the most hopeful and redeeming fact in history; it is precisely what was wanting to raise the love of man as man to enthusiasm. An eternal glory has been shed upon the human race by the love Christ bore to it. And it was because the Edict of Universal Love went forth to men whose hearts were in no cynical mood but possessed with a spirit of devotion to a man, that words which at any other time, however grandly they might sound, would have been but words, penetrated so deeply, and along with the law of love the power of Jove was given. Therefore also the first Christians were enabled to dispense with philosophical phrases, and instead of saying that they loved the ideal of man in man could simply say and feel that they loved Christ in every man.

We have here the very kernel of the Christian moral scheme. We have distinctly before us the end Christ proposed to himself, and the means he considered adequate to the attainment of it. His object was, instead of drawing up, after the example of previous legislators, a list of actions prescribed, allowed, and prohibited, to give his disciples a universal test by which they might discover what it was right and what it was wrong to do. Now as the difficulty of discovering what is right arises commonly from the prevalence of self-interest in our minds, and as we commonly behave rightly to anyone for whom we feel affection or sympathy, Christ considered that he who could feel sympathy for all would behave rightly to all. But how to give to the meagre and narrow hearts of men such enlargement? How to make them capable of a universal sympathy? Christ believed it possible to bind men to their kind, but on one condition—that they were first bound fast to himself. He stood forth as the representative of men, he identified himself with the cause and with the interests of all human beings, he was destined, as he began before long obscurely to intimate, to lay down his life for them. Few of us sympathise

originally and directly with this devotion; few of us can perceive in human nature itself any merit sufficient to evoke it. But it is not so hard to love and venerate him who felt it. So vast a passion of love, a devotion so comprehensive, elevated, deliberate and profound, has not elsewhere been in any degree approached save by some of his imitators. And as love provokes love, many have found it possible to conceive for Christ an attachment the closeness of which no words can describe, a veneration so possessing and absorbing the man within them, that they have said, "I live no more, but Christ lives in me." Now such a feeling carries with it of necessity the feeling of love for all human beings. It matters no longer what quality men may exhibit; amiable or unamiable, as the brothers of Christ, as belonging to his sacred and consecrated kind, as the objects of his love in life and death, they must be dear to all to whom he is dear. And those who would for a moment know his heart and understand his life must begin by thinking of the whole race of man, and of each member of the race, with awful reverence and hope.

Love, wheresoever it appears, is in its measure a law-making power. "Love is *dutiful* in thought and deed." And as the lover of his country is free from the temptation to treason, so is he who loves Christ secure from the temptation to injure any human being, whether it be himself or another. He is indeed much more than this. He is bound and he is eager to benefit and bless to the utmost of his power all that bear his Master's nature, and that not merely with the good gifts of the earth, but with whatever cherishes and trains best the Christ within them. But for the present we are concerned merely with the power of this passion to lift the man out of sin. The injuries he committed lightly when he regarded his fellow-creatures simply as animals who added to the fierceness of the brute an ingenuity and forethought that made them doubly noxious, become horrible sacrilege when he sees in them no longer the animal but the Christ. And that other class of crimes which belongs more especially to ages of civilisation, and arises out of a cynical contempt for the species, is rendered equally impossible to the man who hears with reverence the announcement, "The good deeds you did to the least of these my brethren you did to me."

There are two objections which may suggest themselves at this point, the one to intellectual, the other to practical men. The intellectual man may say, "To discover what it is right to do in any given case is not the province of any feeling or passion however sublime, but requires the application of the same intellectual power which solves mathematical problems. The common acts of life may no doubt be performed correctly by unintellectual people, but this is because these constantly recurring problems have been solved long ago by clever people, and the vulgar are now in possession of the results. Whenever a new combination occurs it is a matter for casuists; the best intentions will avail little; there is doubtless a great difference between a good man and a bad one; the one will do what is right when he knows it, and the other will not; but in respect for the power of ascertaining what it is right to do, supposing their knowledge of casuistry to be equal, they are on a par. Goodness or the passion of humanity, or Christian love, may be a motive inducing men to keep the law, but it has no right to be called the law-making power. And what has Christianity added to our theoretic knowledge of morality? It may have made men practically more moral, but has it added anything to Aristotle's Ethics?"

Certainly Christianity has no ambition to invade the provinces of the moralist or the casuist. But the difficulties which beset the discovery of the right moral course are of two kinds. There are the difficulties which arise, from the blinding and confusing effect of selfish passions, and which obscure from the view the end which should be aimed at in action; when these have been overcome there arises a new set of difficulties concerning the means by which the end should be attained. In dealing with your neighbour the first thing to be understood is that his interest is to be considered as well as your own; but when this has been settled, it remains to be considered what his interest is. The latter class of difficulties requires to be dealt with by the intellectual or calculating faculty. The former class can only be dealt with by the moral force of sympathy. Now it is true that the right action will not be performed without the operation of both these agencies. But the moral agency is the dominant one throughout; it is that without which the very conception of law is impossible; it overcomes those difficulties which in the vast majority of practical cases are the most serious. The calculating casuistical faculty is, as it were, in its employ, and it is no more improper to call it the law-making power, although it does not ultimately decide what action is to be performed, than to say that a house was built by one who did not with his own hands lay the bricks and spread the mortar.

The objection which practical men take is a very important one, as the criticisms of such men always are, being founded commonly upon large observation and not perverted by theory. They say that the love of Christ does not in practice produce the nobleness and largeness of character which has been represented as its proper and natural result; that instead of inspiring those who feel it with reverence and hope for their kind, it makes them exceedingly narrow in their sympathies, disposed to deny and explain away even the most manifest virtues displayed by men, and to despair of the future destiny of the great majority of their fellow-creatures; that instead of binding them to their kind, it divides them from it by a gulf which they themselves proclaim to be impassable and eternal, and unites them only in

a gloomy conspiracy of misanthropy with each other; that it is indeed a law-making power, but that the laws it makes are little-minded and vexatious prohibitions of things innocent, demoralising restraints upon the freedom of joy and the healthy instincts of nature; that it favours hypocrisy, moroseness, and sometimes lunacy; that the only vice it has power to check is thoughtlessness, and its only beneficial effect is that of forcing into activity, though not always into healthy activity, the faculty of serious reflection.

This may be a just picture of a large class of religious men, but it is impossible in the nature of things that such effects should be produced by a pure personal devotion to Christ. We are to remember that nothing has been subjected to such multiform and grotesque perversion as Christianity. Certainly the direct love of Christ, as it was felt by its first followers, is a rare thing among modern Christians. His character has been so much obscured by scholasticism, as to have lost in a great measure its attractive power. The prevalent feeling towards him now among religious men is an awful fear of his supernatural greatness, and a disposition to obey his commands arising partly from dread of future punishment and hope of reward, and partly from a nobler feeling of loyalty, which, however, is inspired rather by his office than his person. Beyond this we may discern in them an uneasy conviction that he requires a more personal devotion, which leads to spasmodic efforts to kindle the feeling by means of violent raptures of panegyric and by repeating over and getting by rote the ardent expressions of those who really had it. That is wanting for the most part which Christ held to be all in all, spontaneous warmth, free and generous devotion. That the fruits of a Christianity so hollow should be poor and sickly is not surprising.

But that Christ's method, when rightly applied, is really of mighty force may be shown by an argument which the severest censor of Christians will hardly refuse to admit. Compare the ancient with the modern world: "Look on this picture and on that." One broad distinction in the characters of men forces itself into prominence. Among all the men of the ancient heathen world there were scarcely one or two to whom we might venture to apply the epithet "holy." In other words, there were not more than one or two, if any, who besides being virtuous in their actions were possessed with an unaffected enthusiasm of goodness, and besides abstaining from vice regarded even a vicious thought with horror. Probably no one will deny that in Christian countries this higher-toned goodness, which we call holiness, has existed. Few will maintain that it has been exceedingly rare. Perhaps the truth is, that there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself. And if this be so, has Christ failed? or can Christianity die?

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 75: Chapter XIV of "Ecce Homo, a Survey of the Life and work of Jesus Christ," 1865.]

[Footnote 76: Plato, Menexenus.—Author's note.]

LOYALTY AND INSIGHT[77]

JOSIAH ROYCE

Upon an occasion like this, when the children, the servants, and the friends of this institution meet for their annual festival, there is one word that best expresses the spirit of the occasion. It is the word "loyalty,"—loyalty to your College, to its ideals, to its life, and to the unity and effectiveness of this life. And amongst the ideals that inspire the life of your College, and make that life effective and united, there is one which is prominent in all your minds, whatever your special studies, your practical aims, or your hopes. It is the ideal of furthering, in all your minds, what we may call insight,—the ideal of learning to see life as it is, to know the world as we men need to know it, and to guide our purposes as we ought to guide them. It is also the ideal of teaching to others the art of just such insight.

These two words, then, "loyalty" and "insight," name, one of them, the spirit in which, upon such occasions as this, we all meet; the other, the ideal that determines the studies and the researches of any modern institution of learning. Upon each day of its year of work your College says to its children and to its servants and to its community: "Let us know, let us see, let us comprehend, let us guide life by wisdom, and in turn let us discover new wisdom for the sake of winning new life." But upon a day like the present one, the work of the year being laid aside, your College asks and receives your united

expression of loyalty to its cause. Perhaps some of you may feel that for just this moment you have left behind, at least temporarily, the task of winning insight. You enjoy, for the hour, the fruits of toil. Study and research cease, you may say, for to-day, while the spirit of loyalty finds its own free expression and takes content in its holiday.

I agree that the holidays and the working days have a different place in our lives. But it is my purpose in this address to say something about the connections between the spirit which rules this occasion—the spirit of loyalty—and the ideal by which the year's work has to be guided,—the ideal of furthering true insight. The loyalty that now fills your minds is merely one expression of a certain spirit which ought to pervade all our lives—not only in our studies, but in our homes, in our offices, in our political and civic life—not merely upon holidays, or upon other great occasions, but upon our working days; and most of all when our tasks seem commonplace and heavy. And, on the other hand, the insight which you seek to get whenever, in the academic world, you work in the laboratory or in the field, in the library or in the classroom or alone in your study, the insight that you try both to embody in your practical life and to enrich through your researches,—just this insight, I say, is best to be furthered by a right cultivation of the spirit of loyalty.

I suppose that when I utter these words, you will easily give to them a certain general assent. But I want to devote this address to making just such words mean more to you than at first they may appear to mean.

First, then, let me tell you what I myself mean by the term "loyalty." Then let me deal with my principal thesis, which is that the true spirit of loyalty is not merely a proper accompaniment of all serious work, but is an especially important source of a very deep insight into the meaning of life, and, as I personally believe, into the nature of the whole universe.

Three sorts of persons, I have noticed, are fond of using the term "loyalty." These are quite different types of persons; or, in any case, they use the word upon very different occasions. But these very differences are to my mind important. The first type of those who love to use the term "loyalty" consists of those who employ it to express a certain glow of enthusiastic devotion, the type of the lovers, of the students when the athletic contests are near, of the partisans in the heat of a political contest, or of the friends of an institution upon a day like this. To such persons, or at least at such moments, loyalty is conceived as something brilliantly emotional, as a passion of devotion. The second class of those who are fond of the word "loyalty" are the warriors and their admirers. To such persons loyalty means a willingness to do dangerous service, to sacrifice life, to toil long and hard for the flag that one follows. But for a third type of those who employ the word, loyalty especially means steady, often unobtrusive, fidelity to more or less formal obligations, such as the business world and the workshop impose upon us. Such persons think of loyalty as, first of all, faithfulness in obeying the law of the land, or in executing the plans of one's official superiors, or in serving one's employer or one's client or one's chief, or one's fraternity or other social union. In this sense the loyal servant may be obscure and unemotional. But he is trustworthy. Now, a word which thus so forcibly appeals to the lovers who want to express their passionate devotion, and also to the soldiers who want to name that obstinate following of the flag which makes victory possible; a word which business men also sometimes use to characterize the quietly and industriously faithful employee who obeys orders, who betrays no secrets, and who regards the firm's interest as his own;—well, such a word, I think, is not as much ambiguous as deep in its meaning. For, after all, loyal emotions, loyal sacrifice of life, loyal steadiness in obscure service, are but various symptoms of a certain spirit which lies beneath all its various expressions. This spirit is a well-known one. All the higher life of society depends upon it. It may manifest itself as enthusiasm upon an occasion like this, or as contempt for death upon the battle field, or as quiet service when the toil of life is grim, or as the cool fidelity that pursues the daily routine of office or of workshop or of kitchen with a steady persistence and with a simple acceptance of traditional duties or of the day's toil. But the spirit thus manifested is not exhausted by any of its symptoms. The appearances of loyalty are manifold. Its meaning is one. And I myself venture to state what the true spirit of loyalty is by defining the term thus: By loyalty I mean the thorough-going, the voluntary, and the practical devotion of a self to a cause. And by a cause I mean something of the nature that the true lover has in mind when he is wisely devoted to his love; that the faithful member of a family serves when the family itself is the cause dear to him; that the member of a fraternity, or the child of a college, or the devoted professional man, or the patriot, or the martyr, or the faithful workman conceives when he thinks of that to which he gives his life. As all these illustrations suggest, the cause to which one can be loyal is never a mere collection of individuals; nor is it ever a mere abstract principle. This cause, whether in the church or the army or the workshop, in the home or in the friendship, is some sort of unity whereby many persons are joined in one common life. The cause to which a loyal man is devoted is of the nature of an institution, or of a home life, or of a fraternity, wherein two or more persons aim to become one; or of a religion, wherein the unity of the spirit is sought through the communion of the faithful. Loyalty respects individuals, but aims to bring them together into one common life. Its

command to the loyal is: "Be 'one undivided soul of many a soul'". It recognizes that, when apart, individuals fail; but that when they try to unite their lives into one common higher selfhood, to live as if they were the expressions, the instruments, the organs of one ideally beautiful social group, they win the only possible fulfillment of the meaning of human existence. Through loyalty to such a cause, through devotion to an ideally united social group, and only through such loyalty, can the problems of human personality be solved. By nature, and apart from some cause to which we are loyal, each of us is but a mass of caprices, a chaos of distracting passions, a longing for happiness that is never fulfilled, a seeking for success which never attains its goal. Meanwhile, no merely customary morality ever adequately guides our lives. Mere social authority never meets our needs. But a cause, some unity of many lives in one, some call upon the individual to give himself over to the service of an idealized community—this gives sense to life. This, when we feel its presence, as we do upon this occasion, we love, as the lovers love the common life of friendship that is to make them one, or as the mothers delight in the life that is to unite themselves and their children in the family, or as the devout feel that through their communion in the life of their church they become one with the Divine Spirit. For such a cause we can make sacrifices, such as the soldier makes in following the flag. For what is the fortune of any detached self as compared with the one cause of the whole country? And just such a voluntary devotion to a cause can ennoble the routine of the humblest daily business, in the office, in the household, in the school, at the desk, or in the market place, if one only finds the cause that can hold his devotion—be this cause his business firm or his profession or his household or his country or his church, or all these at once. For all these causes have their value in this: that through the business firm, or the household, or the profession, or the spiritual community, the lives of many human selves are woven into one, so that our fortunes and interests are no longer conceived as detached and private, but as a giving of ourselves in order that the social group to which we are devoted should live its own united life.

With this bare indication of what I mean by loyalty, I may now say that of late years I have attempted to show in detail, in various discussions of our topic, that the spirit of loyalty, rightly understood, and practically applied, furnishes an adequate solution for all the problems of the moral life. The whole moral law can be summed up in the two commandments: first, Be loyal; and secondly, So choose, so serve, and so unify the life causes to which you yourself are loyal that, through your choice, through your service, through your example, and through your dealings with all men, you may, as far as in you lies, help other people to be loyal to their own causes; may avoid cheating them of their opportunities for loyalty; may inspire them with their own best type of loyalty, and may so best serve the one great cause of the spread of loyalty among mankind. Or, if I may borrow and adapt for a worthy end Lincoln's immortal words, the moral law is this: Let us so live, so love, and so serve, that loyalty "of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth," but shall prosper and abound.

The scheme of life thus suggested is, I believe, adequate. I next want to tell what bearing the spirit of loyalty has upon insight.

The insight that all of us most need and desire is an insight, first, into the business of life itself, and next into the nature and meaning of the real world in which we live. Our forefathers used to center all their views of life and of the world about their religion. Many of the leading minds of to-day center their modern insight about the results of science. In consequence, what I may call the general problems of insight, and the views of life and of the world which most of us get from our studies, have come of late to appear very different from the views and the problems which our own leading countrymen a century ago regarded as most important. The result is that the great problem of the philosophy of life to-day may be defined as the effort to see whether, and how, you can cling to a genuinely ideal and spiritual interpretation of your own nature and of your duty, while abandoning superstition, and while keeping in close touch with the results of modern knowledge about man and nature.

Let me briefly indicate what I mean by this problem of a modern philosophy of life. From the modern point of view great stress has been laid upon the fact that man, as we know man, appears to be subject to the laws of the natural world. Modern knowledge makes these laws appear very far-reaching, very rigid, and very much of the type that we call mechanical. We have, therefore, most of us, learned not to expect miraculous interferences with the course of nature as aids in our human conflict with destiny. We have been taught to regard ourselves as the products of a long process of natural evolution. We have come to think that man's control over nature has to take the general form which our industrial arts illustrate, and which our recent contests with disease, such as the wars with tuberculosis and with yellow fever, exemplify. Man, we have been led to say, wins his way only by studying nature and by applying his carefully won empirical knowledge to the guidance of his arts. The business of life—so we have been moved to assert—must therefore be guided simply by an union of plain common sense with the scientific study of nature. The real world, we have been disposed to say, is, on the whole, so far as we can know it, a mechanism. Therefore the best ideal of life involves simply the more or less complete control of this mechanism for useful and humane ends. Such, I say, is one very commonly accepted

result to which modern knowledge seems to have led men. The practical view of life and of its business which expresses this result has been, for many of us, twofold. First, we have been led to this well-known precept: If you want to live wisely, you must, at all events, avoid superstition. That is, you must not try to guide human life by dealing with such supernatural powers, good and evil, as the mythologies of the past used to view as the controlling forces of human destiny. You must take natural laws as you find them. You must believe about the real world simply what you can confirm by the verdict of human experience. You must put no false hopes either in magic arts or in useless appeals to the gods. You must, for instance, fight tuberculosis not by prayer, but by knowing the conditions that produce it and the natural processes that tend to destroy its germs. And so, in general, in order to live well and wisely you must be a naturalist and not a supernaturalist. Or in any case you must conform your common sense not to the imagination that in the past peopled the dream world of humanity with good and evil spirits, but to the carefully won insight that has shown us that our world is one where natural law reigns unyielding, defying equally our magic arts and our prayerful desires for divine aid. But secondly, side by side with this decidedly positive advice, many of us have been brought to accept a practical attitude towards the world which has seemed to us negative and discouraging. This second attitude may be expressed in the sad precept: Hope not to find this world in any universal sense a world of ideal values. Nature is indifferent to values. Values are human, and merely human. Man can indeed give to his own life much of what he calls value, if he uses his natural knowledge for human ends. But when he sets out upon this task, he ought to know that, however sweet and ideal human companionship may be as it exists among men, humanity as a whole must fight its battle with nature and with the universe substantially alone, comfortless except for the comforts that it wins precisely as it builds its houses; namely, by using the mechanisms of nature for its own purposes. The world happens, indeed, to give man some power to control natural conditions. But even this power is due to the very fact that man also is one of nature's products,—a product possessing a certain stability, a certain natural plasticity and docility, a limited range of natural initiative. As a rock may deflect a stream, so man, himself a natural mechanism, may turn the stream of nature's energies into paths that are temporarily useful for human purposes. But from the modern point of view the ancient plaint of the Book of Job remains true, both for the rock and for the man:

"The waters wear away stones,
And the hope of frail man thou destroyest."

In the end, our relations to the universe thus seem to remain relations to an essentially foreign power, which cares for our ideals as the stormy sea cares for the boat, and as the bacteria care for the human organism upon which they prey. If we ourselves, as products of nature, are sufficiently strong mechanisms, we may be able to win, while life lasts, many ideal goods. But just so, if the boat is well enough built, it may weather one or another passing storm. If the body is well knit, it may long remain immune to disease. Yet in the end the boat and the human body fail. And in no case, so this view asserts, does the real world essentially care for or help or encourage our ideals. Our ideals are as foreign to the real natural world as the interests of the ship's company are to the ocean that may tolerate, but also may drown them. Be free from superstition, then; and next: avoid false hopes. Such are the two theses that seem to embody for many minds the essentially modern view of things and the essential result for the philosophy of life of what we have now learned.

But hereupon the question arises whether this is indeed the last word of insight; whether this outcome of modern knowledge does indeed tell the whole story of our relations to the real world. That this modern view has its own share of deeper truth we all recognize. But is this the whole truth? Have we no access whatever to any other aspect of reality than the one which this naturalistic view emphasizes? And again, the question still arises: Is there any place left for a religion that can be free from superstition, that can accept just so much of the foregoing modern results as are indeed established, and that can yet supplement them by an insight which may show the universe to be, after all, something more than a mechanism? In sum, are we merely stones that deflect the stream for a while, until the waters wear them away? Or are there spiritual hopes of humanity which the mechanism of nature cannot destroy? Is the philosophy of life capable of giving us something more than a naturalism—humanized merely by the thought that man, being, after all, a well-knit and plastic mechanism, can for a time mold nature to his ends? So much for the great problem of modern insight. Let us turn to consider the relation of the spirit of loyalty to this problem.

What light can a study of the spirit of loyalty, as I just defined loyalty—what light, I say, can such a study throw upon this problem? Very little—so some of you may say; for any discussion of the spirit of loyalty can tell us nothing to make nature's mechanism more comprehensible. One who favors loyalty as a way of solving life's problems tells us about a certain ideal of human life,—an ideal which, as I have asserted, does tend to solve our personal moral problems precisely in so far as we are able to express this ideal in our practical lives. In order to be loyal you indeed have no need to believe in any of the well-known miracles of popular tradition. And equally, in order to be loyal, you have no need, first, to

decide whether nature is or is not a mechanism; or whether the modern view of reality, as just summarized, is or is not adequate; or whether the gods exist; or whether man is or is not one of nature's products and temporarily well-knit and plastic machines. Our doctrine of loyalty is founded not upon a decision about nature's supposed mechanism, but upon a study of man's own inner and deeper needs. It is a doctrine about the plan and the business of human life. It seems, therefore, to be neutral as to every so-called conflict between science and religion.

But now, in answer to these remarks, I have to show that the doctrine of loyalty, once rightly understood, has yet a further application. It is a doctrine that, when more fully interpreted, helps us toward a genuine insight, not only into the plan of life, but into the nature of things. The philosophy of loyalty has nothing to say against precisely so much of naturalism as is indeed an established result of common sense and of the scientific study of nature. The theory of the loyal life involves nothing superstitious—no trust in magic, no leaning upon the intervention of such spiritual agencies as the old mythologies conceived. And yet, as I shall insist, nobody can understand and practise the loyal spirit without tending thereby to get a true view of the nature of things, a genuine touch with reality, which cannot be gained without seeing that, however much of a mechanism nature may appear to be, the real world is something much more than a mechanism, and much more significant than are the waters which wear away stones.

Let me indicate what I mean by repeating in brief my doctrine of loyalty—with reference to the spirit which it involves, and with reference to the view of the realities of human life which it inevitably includes.

Whoever is loyal has found some cause, I have said,—a cause to which, by his inner interests, he is indeed attracted so that the cause is fascinating to his sentiments. But the cause is also one to which the loyal man is meanwhile practically and voluntarily devoted, so that his loyalty is no mere glow of enthusiasm, but is an affair of his deeds as well as of his emotions. Loyalty I therefore defined as the thorough-going and practical devotion of a self to a cause. Why loyalty is a duty; how loyalty is possible for every normal human being; how it can appear early in youth, and then grow through life; how it can be at once faithful to its own, and yet can constantly enlarge its scope; how it can become universally human in its interests without losing its concreteness, and without failing to keep in touch with the personal affections and the private concerns of the loyal person; how loyalty is a virtue for all men, however humble and however exalted they may be; how the loyal service of the tasks of a single possibly narrow life can be viewed as a service of the cause of universal loyalty, and so of the interests of all humanity; how all special duties of life can be stated in terms of a duly generalized spirit of loyalty; and how moral conflicts can be solved, and moral divisions made, in the light of the principle of loyalty; all this I have asserted, although here is indeed no time for adequate discussion. But hereupon I want to concentrate our whole attention, not upon the consequences and applications of the doctrine of loyalty, but upon the most central characteristic of the loyal spirit. This central characteristic of the loyal spirit consists in the fact that it conceives and values its cause as a reality, as an object that has a being of its own; while the type of reality which belongs to a cause is different from the type of reality which we ascribe either to a thing in the physical world or to a law of nature. A cause is never a mere mechanism. It is an essentially spiritual reality. If the loyal human being is right in the account which he gives of his cause, then the real world contains beings which are not mere natural objects, and is subject to laws which, without in the least running counter to the laws of outer nature, are the laws of an essentially spiritual realm, whose type of being is superior to that possessed by the order of nature which our industrial arts use. Either, then, loyalty is altogether a service of myths, or else the causes which the loyal serve belong to a realm of real being which is above the level of mere natural fact and natural law. In the latter case the real world is not indifferent to our human search for values. The modern naturalistic and mechanical views of reality are not, indeed, false within their own proper range, but they are inadequate to tell us the whole truth. And reality contains, further, and is characterized by, an essentially spiritual order of being.

I have been speaking to persons who, as I have trusted, well know, so far as they have yet had time to learn the lessons of life, something of what loyalty means. Come, then, let us consider what is the sort of object that you have present to your mind when you are loyal to a cause. If your cause is a reality, what kind of a being is it? If causes are realities, then in what sort of a real world do you live?

I have already indicated that, while loyalty always includes personal affections, while you can never be loyal to what you take to be a merely abstract principle, nevertheless, it is equally true that you can never be genuinely loyal merely to an individual human being, taken just as this detached creature. You can, indeed, love your friend, viewed just as this individual. But love for an individual is so far just a fondness for a fascinating human presence, and is essentially capricious, whether it lasts or is transient. You can be, and should be, loyal to your friendship, to the union of yourself and your friend, to that ideal comradeship which is neither of you alone, and which is not the mere doubleness that consists of you and your friend taken as two detached beings who happen to find one another's

presence agreeable. Loyalty to a friendship involves your willingness actively and practically to create and maintain a life which is to be the united life of yourself and your friend—not the life of your friend alone, nor the life of yourself and your friend as you exist apart, but the common life, the life above and inclusive of your distinctions, the one life that you are to live as friends. To the tie, to the unity, to the common life, to the union of friends, you can be loyal. Without such loyalty friendship consists only of its routine of more or less attractive private sentiments and mere meetings, each one of which is one more chance experience, heaped together with other chance experiences. But with such true loyalty your friendship becomes, at least in ideal, a new life—a life that neither of you could have alone; a life that is not a mere round of separate private amusements, but that belongs to a new type of dual yet unified personality. Nor are you loyal to your friendship merely as to an abstraction. You are loyal to it as to the common better self of both of you, a self that lives its own real life. Either such a loyalty to your friendship is a belief in myths, or else such a type of higher and unified dual personality actually possesses a reality of its own,—a reality that you cannot adequately describe by reporting, as to the taker of a census, that you and your friend are two creatures, with two distinct cases of a certain sort of fondness to be noted down, and with each a separate life into which, as an incident, some such fondness enters. No; were a census of true friendship possible, the census taker should be required to report: Here are indeed two friends; but here is also the ideal and yet, in some higher sense, real life of their united personality present,—a life which belongs to neither of them alone, and which also does not exist merely as a parcel of fragments, partly in one, partly in the other of them. It is the life of their common personality. It is a new spiritual person on a higher level.

Or again, you are loyal to some such union as a family or a fraternity represents. Or you are loyal to your class, your college, your community, your country, your church. In all these cases, with endless variety in the details, your loyalty has for its object each time, not merely a group of detached personalities, but some ideally significant common life; an union of many in one; a community which also has the value of a person, and which, nevertheless, cannot be found distributed about in a collection of fragments found inside the detached lives of the individual members of the family, the club, the class, the college, the country, the church. If this common life to which you are loyal is a reality, then the real human world does not consist of separate creatures alone, of the mere persons who flock in the streets and who live in the different houses. The human world, if the loyal are right, contains personality that is not merely shut up within the skin, now of this, now of that, human creature. It contains personalities that no organism confines within its bounds; that no single life, that no crowd of detached lives, comprises. Yet this higher sort of common personality, if the loyal are right, is as real as we separate creatures are real. It is no abstraction. It lives. It loves, and we love it. We enter into it. It is ours, and we belong to it. It works through us, the fellow servants of the common cause. Yet we get our worth through it,—the goal of our whole moral endeavor.

For those who are not merely loyal, but also enlightened, loyalty, never losing the definiteness and the concreteness of its devotion to some near and directly fascinating cause, sees itself to be in actual spiritual unity with the common cause of all the loyal, whoever they are. The great cause for all the loyal is in reality the cause of the spread and the furtherance of the cause of the universal loyalty of all mankind: a cause which nobody can serve except by choosing his own nearer and more appreciated cause—the private cause which is directly his own—his family, his community, his friendship, his calling, and the calling of those who serve with him. Yet such personal service—your special life cause, your task, your vocation—is your way of furthering the ends of universal humanity. And if you are enlightened, you know this fact. Through your loyalty you, then, know yourself to be kin to all the loyal. You hereupon conceive the loyal as one brotherhood, one invisible church for which and in which you live. The spirit dwells in this invisible church,—the holy spirit that wills the unity of all in fidelity and in service. Hidden from you by all the natural estrangements of the present life, this common life of all the loyal, this cause which is the one cause of all the loyal, is that for which you live. In spirit you are really sundered from none of those who themselves live in the spirit.

All this, I say, is what it is the faith of all the loyal to regard as the real life in which we live and move and have our being, precisely in so far as men come to understand what loyalty is. Thus, then, in general, to be loyal is to believe that there are real causes. And to be universally loyal is to believe that the one cause of loyalty itself, the invisible church of all the loyal, is a reality; something as real as we are. But causes are never detached human beings; nor are causes ever mere crowds, heaps, collections, aggregations of human beings. Causes are at once personal (if by person you mean the ordinary human individual in his natural character) and *super*-personal. Persons they are, because only where persons are found can causes be defined. Super-personal they are, because no mere individual human creature, and no mere pairs or groups or throngs of human beings, can ever constitute unified causes. You cannot be loyal to a crowd as a crowd. A crowd can shout, as at a game or a political convention. But only some sort of organized unity of social life can either do the work of an unit or hold the effective loyalty of the enlightened worker who does not merely shout with the throng. And so when you are really loyal to your country, your country does not mean to you merely the crowd, the mass of your

separate fellow citizens. Still less does it mean the mere organs, or the separate servants of the country,—the custom house, the War Department, the Speaker of the House, or any other office or official. When you sing "My country, 'tis of thee," you do not mean, "My post-office, 'tis of thee," nor yet, "My fellow citizens, 'tis of you, just as the creatures who crowd the street and who overfill the railway cars," that I sing. If the poet continues in his own song to celebrate the land, the "rocks and rills," the "woods and templed hills," he is still speaking only of symbols. What he means is the country as an invisible but, in his opinion, perfectly real spiritual unity. General Nogi, in a recent Japanese publication about Bushido, expressed his own national ideal beautifully in the words: "Here the sovereign and the people are of one family and have together endured the joys and sorrows of thousands of years." It is that sort of being whereof one speaks when one expresses true loyalty to the country. The country is the spiritual entity that is none of us and all of us—none of us because it is our unity; all of us because in it we all find our patriotic unity.

Such, then, is the idea that the loyal have of the real nature of the causes which they serve. I repeat, If the loyal are right, then the real world contains other beings than mechanisms and individual human and animal minds. It contains spiritual unities which are as real as we are, but which certainly do not belong to the realm of a mere nature mechanism. Does not all this put the problems of our philosophy of life in a new light?

But I have no doubt that you may at once reply: All this speech about causes is after all merely more or less pleasing metaphor. As a fact, human beings are just individual natural creatures. They throng and struggle for existence, and love and hate and enjoy and sorrow and die. These causes are, after all, mere dreams, or at best entities as we have just described. The friends like to talk of being one; but there are always two or more of them, and the unity is a pretty phrase. The country is, in the concrete, the collection of the countrymen, with names, formulas, songs, and so on, attached, by way of poetical license or of convenient abbreviation or of pretty fable. The poet really meant simply that he was fond of the landscape, and was not wholly averse to a good many of his countrymen, and was in any case fond of a good song. Loyalty, like the rest of human life, is an illusion. Nature is real. The unity of the spirit is a fancy.

This, I say, may be your objection. But herewith we indeed stand in the presence of a certain very deep philosophical problem concerning the true definition of what we mean by reality. Into this problem I have neither time nor wish to enter just now. But upon one matter I must, nevertheless, stoutly insist. It is a matter so simple, so significant, so neglected, that I at once need and fear to mention it to you,—need to mention it, because it puts our philosophy into a position that quite transforms the significance of that whole modern view of nature upon which I have been dwelling since the outset of this lecture; fear to mention it, because the fact that it is so commonly neglected shows how hard to be understood it has proved.

That disheartening view of the foreign and mechanical nature of the real world which our sciences and our industrial arts have impressed upon the minds of so many of us; that contempt for superstition; that denial of the supernatural, which seems to the typical modern man the beginning of wisdom;—to what is all this view of reality due? To the results, and, as I believe, to the really important results, of the modern study of natural science. But what is the study of natural science? Practically considered, viewed as one of the great moral activities of mankind, *the study of science is a very beautiful and humane expression of a certain exalted form of loyalty*. Science is, practically considered, the outcome of the absolutely devoted labors of countless seekers for natural truth. But how do we human beings get at what we call natural truth? By observation—so men say—and by experience. But by whose experience? By the united, by the synthesized, by the revised, corrected, rationally criticized, above all by the common, experience of many individuals. The possibility of science rests upon the fact that human experience may be progressively treated so as to become more and more an unity. The detached individual records the transit of a star, observes a precipitate in a test tube, stains a preparation and examines it under a microscope, collects in the field, takes notes in a hospital—and loyally contributes his little fragment of a report to the ideally unified and constantly growing totality called scientific human experience. In doing this he employs his memory, and so conceives his own personal life as an unity. But equally he aims—and herein consists his scientific loyalty—to bring his personal experience into unity with the whole course of human experience in so far as it bears upon his own science. The collection of mere data is never enough. It is in the unity of their interpretation that the achievements of science lie. This unity is conceived in the form of scientific theories; is verified by the comparative and critical conduct of experiments. But in all such work how manifold are the presuppositions which we make when we attempt such unification! Here is no place to enumerate these presuppositions. Some of them you find discussed in the textbooks of the logic of science. Some of them are instinctive, and almost never get discussed at all. But it is here enough to say that we all presuppose *that human experience has, or can by the loyal efforts of truth seekers be made to possess, a real unity, superior in its nature and significance to any detached observer's experience, more genuinely real than is the mere*

collection of the experiences of any set of detached observers, however large. The student of natural science is loyal to the cause of the enlargement of this organized and criticized realm of the common human experience. Unless this unity of human experience is a genuine reality, unless all the workers are living a really common life, unless each man is, potentially at least, in a live spiritual unity with his fellows, science itself is a mere metaphor, its truth is an illusion, its results are myths. For science is conceived as true only by conceiving the experiences of countless observers as the sharing of a common realm of experience. If, as we all believe, the natural sciences do throw a real, if indeed an inadequate, light upon the nature of things, then they do so because no one man's experience is disconnected from the real whole of human experience. They do so because the cause to which the loyal study of science is devoted, the cause of the enlargement of human experience, is a cause that has a supernatural, or, as Professor Münsterberg loves to say, an over-individual, type of reality. Mankind is not a mere collection of detached individuals, or man could possess no knowledge of any unity of scientific truth. If men are really only many, and if they have no such unity of conscious experience as loyalty everywhere presupposes, then the cause of science also is a vain illusion, and we have no unified knowledge of nature, only various private fancies about nature. If we know, however ill, nature's mechanism, we do so because human experience is not merely a collection of detached observations, but forms an actual spiritual unity, whose type is not that of a mechanism, whose connections are ideally significant, whose constitution is essentially that which the ideal of unified truth requires.

So, then, I insist, the dilemma is upon our hands. Either the sciences constitute a progressive, if imperfect, insight into real truth—and then the cause of the unity of human experience is a real cause that really can be served exactly as the lover means to be loyal to his friendship and the patriot to his country; and then also human life really possesses such unity as the loyal presuppose—or else none of this is so. But then loyalty and science alike deal with metaphors and with myths. In the first case the spiritual unity of the life that we lead is essentially vindicated. Causes such as the loyal serve are real. The cause of science also is real. But in that case an essentially spiritual realm, that of the rational unity of human experience, is real; and possesses a grade both of reality and of worth which is superior to the grade of reality that the phenomena of nature's mechanism exhibit to us. In the other case the sciences whose results are supposed to be discouraging and unspiritual vanish, with all their facts, into the realm of fable, together with the world that all the loyal, including the faithful followers of the sciences, believe to be real.

I have here no time to discuss the paradoxes of a totally skeptical philosophy. It is enough to say that such a total skepticism is, indeed, self-refuting. The only rational view of life depends upon maintaining that what the loyal always regard as a reality, namely, their cause, is, indeed, despite all special illusions of this or of that form of imperfect loyalty, essentially a type of reality which rationally survives all criticisms and underlies all doubts.

"They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me thy fly, I am the wings."

This is what the genuine object of loyalty, the unity of the spiritual life, always says to us when we examine it in the right spirit. But the one source of our deepest insight into this unity of the spirit which underlies all the varieties, and which leads us upward to itself past all the Sunderings and doubts of existence, is the loyal spirit itself. Loyalty asserts: "My cause is real. I know that my cause liveth." But the cause, however imperfectly interpreted, is always some sort of unity of the spiritual life in which we learn to share whenever we begin to be loyal. The more we grow in loyalty and in insight into the meaning of our loyalty, the more we learn to think of some vast range of the unity of spiritual life as the reality to which all the other realities accessible to us are in one way or another subordinate, so that they express this unity, and show more or less what it means. I believe that a sound critical philosophy justifies the view that the loyal, precisely in so far as they view their cause as real, as a personal, but also as an over-individual, realm of genuine spiritual life, are comprehending, as far as they go, the deepest nature of things.

Religion, in its higher sense, always involves a practical relation to a spiritual world which, in its significance, in its inclusiveness, in its unity, and in its close and comforting touch with our most intense personal concerns, fulfils in a supreme degree the requirements which loyalty makes when it seeks for a worthy cause. One may have a true religion without knowing the reason why it is true. One may also have false religious beliefs. But in any case the affiliation of the spirit of the higher religion with the spirit of loyalty has been manifest, I hope, from the outset of this discussion of loyalty. By religious insight one may very properly mean any significant and true view of an object of religious devotion which can be obtained by any reasonable means.

In speaking of loyalty and insight I have also given an indication of that source of religious insight which I believe to be, after all, the surest, the most accessible, the most universal, and, in its deepest

essence, the most rational. The problem of the modern philosophy of life is, we have said, the problem of keeping the spirit of religion, without falling a prey to superstition. At the outset of this lecture I told briefly why, in the modern world, we aim to avoid superstition. The true reason for this aim you now see better than at first I could state that reason. We have learned, and wisely learned, that the great cause of the study of nature by scientific methods is one of the principal special causes to which man can be devoted; for nothing serves more than the pursuit of the sciences serves to bind into unity the actual work of human civilization. To this cause of scientific study we have all learned to be, according to our lights, loyal. But the study of science makes us averse to the belief in magic arts, in supernatural interferences, in special providences. The scientific spirit turns from the legends and the superstitions that in the past have sundered men, have inflamed the religious wars, have filled the realm of imagination with good and evil spirits. Turns from these—to what? To a belief in a merely mechanical reality? To a doctrine that the real world is foreign to our ideals? To an assurance that life is vain?

No; so to view the mission of the study of science is to view that mission falsely. The one great lesson of the triumph of science is the lesson of the vast significance of loyalty to the cause of science. And this loyalty depends upon acknowledging the reality of a common, a rational, a significant unity of human experience, a genuine cause which men can serve. When the sciences teach us to get rid of superstition, they do this by virtue of a loyalty to the pursuit of truth which is, as a fact, loyalty to the cause of the spiritual unity of mankind: an unity which the students of science conceive in terms of an unity of our human experience of nature, but which, after all, they more or less unconsciously interpret just as all the other loyal souls interpret their causes; namely, as a genuine living reality, a life superior in type to the individual lives which we lead—worthy of devoted service, significant, and not merely an incidental play of a natural mechanism. This unity of human experience reveals to us nature's mechanisms, but is itself no part of the mechanism which it observes.

If, now, we do as our general philosophy of loyalty would require: if we take all our loyalties, in whatever forms they may appear, as more or less enlightened but always practical revelations that there is an unity of spiritual life which is above our present natural level, which is worthy of our devotion, which can give sense to life, and which consists of facts that are just as genuinely real as are the facts and the laws of outer nature—well, can we not thus see our way towards a religious insight which is free from superstition, which is indifferent to magic and to miracle, which accepts all the laws of nature just in so far as they are indeed known, but which nevertheless stoutly insists: "This world is no mere mechanism; it is full of a spiritual unity that transcends mere nature?"

I believe that we can do this. I believe that what I have merely hinted to you is capable of a much richer development than I have here given to these thoughts. I believe, in brief, that in our loyalties we find our best sources of a genuinely religious insight.

Men have often said, "The true source of religious insight is revelation; for these matters are above the powers of human reason." Now, I am not here to discuss or to criticize anybody's type of revelation. But this I know, and this the believers in various supposed revelations have often admitted—that unless the aid of some interior spiritual insight comes to be added to the merely external revelation, one can be left in doubt by all possible signs and wonders whereby the revelation undertakes to give us convincing external evidence. Religious faith, indeed, relates to that which is above us, but it must arise from that which is within us. And any faith which has indeed a worthy religious object is either merely a mystic ecstasy, which must then be judged, if at all, only by its fruits, or else it is a loyalty, which never exists without seeking to bear fruit in works. Now my thesis is that loyalty is essentially adoration with service, and that there is no true adoration without practical loyalty. If I am right, all of the loyal are grasping in their own ways, and according to their lights, some form and degree of religious truth. They have won religious insight; for they view something, at least, of the genuine spiritual world in its real unity, and they devote themselves to that unity, to its enlargement and enrichment. And therefore they approach more and more to the comprehension of that true spiritual life whereof, as I suppose, the real world essentially consists.

Therefore I find in the growth of the spirit of loyalty which normally belongs to any loyal life the deepest source of a genuinely significant religious insight which belongs to just that individual in just his stage of development.

In brief: Be loyal; grow in loyalty. Therein lies the source of a religious insight free from superstition. Therein also lies the solution of the problems of the philosophy of life.

FOOTNOTES:

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POETRY FOR POETRY'S SAKE[78]

A.C. BRADLEY

The words "Poetry for poetry's sake" recall the famous phrase "Art for Art." It is far from my purpose to examine the possible meanings of that phrase, or all the questions it involves. I propose to state briefly what I understand by "Poetry for poetry's sake," and then, after guarding against one or two misapprehensions of the formula, to consider more fully a single problem connected with it. And I must premise, without attempting to justify them, certain explanations. We are to consider poetry in its essence, and apart from the flaws which in most poems accompany their poetry. We are to include in the idea of poetry the metrical form, and not to regard this as a mere accident or a mere vehicle. And, finally, poetry being poems, we are to think of a poem as it actually exists; and, without aiming here at accuracy, we may say that an actual poem is the succession of experiences—sounds, images, thoughts, emotions—through which we pass when we are reading as poetically as we can. Of course this imaginative experience—if I may use the phrase for brevity—differs with every reader and every time of reading: a poem exists in innumerable degrees. But that insurmountable fact lies in the nature of things and does not concern us now.

What then does the formula "Poetry for poetry's sake" tell us about this experience? It says, as I understand it, these things. First, this experience is an end in itself, is worth having on its own account, has an intrinsic value. Next, its *poetic* value is this intrinsic worth alone. Poetry may have also an ulterior value as a means to culture or religion; because it conveys instruction, or softens the passions, or furthers a good cause; because it brings the poet fame or money or a quiet conscience. So much the better: let it be valued for these reasons too. But its ulterior worth neither is nor can directly determine its poetic worth as a satisfying imaginative experience; and this is to be judged entirely from within. And to these two positions the formula would add, though not of necessity, a third. The consideration of ulterior ends, whether by the poet in the act of composing or by the reader in the act of experiencing, tends to lower poetic value. It does so because it tends to change the nature of poetry by taking it out of its own atmosphere. For its nature is to be not a part, nor yet a copy, of the real world (as we commonly understand that phrase), but to be a world by itself, independent, complete, autonomous; and to possess it fully you must enter that world, conform to its laws, and ignore for the time the beliefs, aims, and particular conditions which belong to you in the other world of reality.

Of the more serious misapprehensions to which these statements may give rise I will glance only at one or two. The offensive consequences often drawn from the formula "Art for Art" will be found to attach not to the doctrine that Art is an end in itself, but to the doctrine that Art is the whole or supreme end of human life. And as this latter doctrine, which seems to me absurd, is in any case quite different from the former, its consequences fall outside my subject. The formula "Poetry is an end in itself" has nothing to say on the various questions of moral judgment which arise from the fact that poetry has its place in a many-sided life. For anything it says, the intrinsic value of poetry might be so small, and its ulterior effects so mischievous, that it had better not exist. The formula only tells us that we must not place in antithesis poetry and human good, for poetry is one kind of human good; and that we must not determine the intrinsic value of this kind of good by direct reference to another. If we do, we shall find ourselves maintaining what we did not expect. If poetic value lies in the stimulation of religious feelings, *Lead kindly Light* is no better poem than many a tasteless version of a Psalm: if in the excitement of patriotism, why is *Scots, wha hae* superior to *We don't want to fight*? if in the mitigation of the passions, the Odes of Sappho will win but little praise: if in instruction, Armstrong's *Art of preserving Health* should win much.

Again, our formula may be accused of cutting poetry away from its connection with life. And this accusation raises so huge a problem that I must ask leave to be dogmatic as well as brief. There is plenty of connection between life and poetry, but it is, so to say, a connection underground. The two may be called different forms of the same thing: one of them having (in the usual sense) reality, but seldom fully satisfying imagination; while the other offers something which satisfies imagination but has not full "reality." They are parallel developments which nowhere meet, or, if I may use loosely a word which will be serviceable later, they are analogues. Hence we understand one by help of the other, and even, in a sense, care for one because of the other; but hence also, poetry neither is life, nor, strictly speaking, a copy of it. They differ not only because one has more mass and the other a more perfect shape, but because they have different *kinds* of existence. The one touches us as beings occupying a given position in space and time, and having feelings, desires, and purposes due to that position: it appeals to imagination, but appeals to much besides. What meets us in poetry has not a position in the same series of time and space, or, if it has or had such a position, it is taken apart from much that belonged to it there; and therefore it makes no direct appeal to those feelings, desires, and

purposes, but speaks only to contemplative imagination—imagination the reverse of empty or emotionless, imagination saturated with the results of "real" experience, but still contemplative. Thus, no doubt, one main reason why poetry has poetic value for us is that it presents to us in its own way something which we meet in another form in nature or life; and yet the test of its poetic value for us lies simply in the question whether it satisfies our imagination; the rest of us, our knowledge or conscience, for example, judging it only so far as they appear transmuted in our imagination. So also Shakespeare's knowledge or his moral insight, Milton's greatness of soul, Shelley's "hate of hate" and "love of love", and that desire to help men or make them happier which may have influenced a poet in hours of meditation—all these have, as such, no poetical worth: they have that worth only when, passing through the unity of the poet's being, they reappear as qualities of imagination, and then are indeed mighty powers in the world of poetry.

I come to a third misapprehension, and so to my main subject. This formula, it is said, empties poetry of its meaning: it is really a doctrine of form for form's sake. "It is of no consequence what a poet says, so long as he says the thing well. The *what* is poetically indifferent: it is the *how* that counts. Matter, subject, content, substance, determines nothing; there is no subject with which poetry may not deal: the form, the treatment, is everything. Nay, more: not only is the matter indifferent, but it is the secret of Art to 'eradicate the matter by means of the form,'"—phrases and statements like these meet us everywhere in current criticism of literature and the other arts. They are the stock-in-trade of writers who understand of them little more than the fact that somehow or other they are not "bourgeois." But we find them also seriously used by writers whom we must respect, whether they are anonymous or not; something like one or another of them might be quoted, for example, from Professor Saintsbury, the late R.A.M. Stevenson, Schiller, Goethe himself; and they are the watchwords of a school in the one country where Aesthetics has flourished. They come, as a rule, from men who either practise one of the arts, or, from study of it, are interested in its methods. The general reader—a being so general that I may say what I will of him—is outraged by them. He feels that he is being robbed of almost all that he cares for in a work of art. "You are asking me," he says, "to look at the Dresden Madonna as if it were a Persian rug. You are telling me that the poetic value of *Hamlet* lies solely in its style and versification, and that my interest in the man and his fate is only an intellectual or moral interest. You allege that, if I want to enjoy the poetry of *Crossing the Bar*, I must not mind what Tennyson says there, but must consider solely his way of saying it. But in that case I can care no more for a poem than I do for a set of nonsense verses; and I do not believe that the authors of *Hamlet* and *Crossing the Bar* regarded their poems thus."

These antitheses of subject, matter, substance on the one side, form, treatment, handling on the other, are the field through which I especially want, in this lecture, to indicate a way. It is a field of battle; and the battle is waged for no trivial cause; but the cries of the combatants are terribly ambiguous. Those phrases of the so-called formalist may each mean five or six different things. Taken in one sense they seem to me chiefly true; taken as the general reader not unnaturally takes them, they seem to me false, and mischievous. It would be absurd to pretend that I can end in a few minutes a controversy which concerns the ultimate nature of Art, and leads perhaps to problems not yet soluble; but we can at least draw some plain distinctions which, in this controversy, are too often confused.

In the first place, then, let us take "subject" in one particular sense; let us understand by it that which we have in view when, looking at the title of an unread poem, we say that the poet has chosen this or that for his subject. The subject in this sense, so far as I can discover, is generally something real or imaginary, as it exists in the minds of fairly cultivated people. The subject of *Paradise Lost* would be the story of the Fall as that story exists in the general imagination of a Bible-reading people. The subject of Shelley's stanzas *To a Skylark* would be the ideas which arise in the mind of an educated person when, without knowing the poem, he hears the word "skylark." If the title of a poem conveys little or nothing to us, the "subject" appears to be either what we should gather by investigating the title in a dictionary or other book of the kind, or else such a brief suggestion as might be offered by a person who had read the poem, and who said, for example, that the subject of *The Ancient Mariner* was a sailor who killed an albatross and suffered for his deed.

Now the subject, in this sense (and I intend to use the word in no other), is not, as such, inside the poem, but outside it. The contents of the stanzas *To a Skylark* are not the ideas suggested by the word "skylark" to the average man; they belong to Shelley just as much as the language does. The subject, therefore, is not the matter *of* the poem at all; and its opposite is not the *form* of the poem, but the whole poem. The subject is one thing; the poem, matter and form alike, another thing. This being so, it is surely obvious that the poetic value cannot lie in that subject, but lies entirely in its opposite, the poem. How can the subject determine the value when on one and the same subject poems may be written of all degrees of merit and demerit; or when a perfect poem may be composed on a subject so slight as a pet sparrow, and, if Macaulay may be trusted, a nearly worthless poem on a subject so stupendous as the omnipresence of the Deity? The "formalist" is here perfectly right. Nor is he insisting

on something unimportant. He is fighting against our tendency to take the work of art as a mere copy or reminder of something already in our heads, or at the best as a suggestion of some idea as little removed as possible from the familiar. The sightseer who promenades a picture-gallery, remarking that this portrait is so like his cousin, or that landscape the very image of his birthplace, or who, after satisfying himself that one picture is about Elijah, passes on rejoicing to discover the subject, and nothing but the subject, of the next—what is he but an extreme example of this tendency? Well, but the very same tendency vitiates much of our criticism, much criticism of Shakespeare, for example, which, with all its cleverness and partial truth, still shows that the critic never passed from his own mind into Shakespeare's; and it may be traced even in so fine a critic as Coleridge, as when he dwarfs the sublime struggle of Hamlet into the image of his own unhappy weakness. Hazlitt by no means escaped its influence. Only the third of that great trio, Lamb, appears almost always to have rendered the conception of the composer.

Again, it is surely true that we cannot determine beforehand what subjects are fit for Art, or name any subject on which a good poem might not possibly be written. To divide subjects into two groups, the beautiful or elevating, and the ugly or vicious, and to judge poems according as their subjects belong to one of these groups or the other, is to fall into the same pit, to confuse with our pre-conceptions the meaning of the poet. What the thing is in the poem he is to be judged by, not by the thing as it was before he touched it; and how can we venture to say beforehand that he cannot make a true poem out of something which to us was merely alluring or dull or revolting? The question whether, having done so, he ought to publish his poem; whether the thing in the poet's work will not be still confused by the incompetent Puritan or the incompetent sensualist with the thing in *his* mind, does not touch this point; it is a further question, one of ethics, not of art. No doubt the upholders of "Art for art's sake" will generally be in favour of the courageous course, of refusing to sacrifice the better or stronger part of the public to the weaker or worse; but their maxim in no way binds them to this view. Rossetti suppressed one of the best of his sonnets, a sonnet chosen for admiration by Tennyson, himself extremely sensitive about the moral effect of poetry; suppressed it, I believe, because it was called fleshly. One may regret Rossetti's judgment and at the same time respect his scrupulousness; but in any case he judged in his capacity of citizen, not in his capacity of artist.

So far then the "formalist" appears to be right. But he goes too far, I think, if he maintains that the subject is indifferent and that all subjects are the same to poetry. And he does not prove his point by observing that a good poem might be written on a pin's head, and a bad one on the Fall of Man. That truth shows that the subject *settles* nothing, but not that it counts for nothing. The Fall of Man is really a more favourable subject than a pin's head. The Fall of Man, that is to say, offers opportunities of poetic effects wider in range and more penetrating in appeal. And the fact is that such a subject, as it exists in the general imagination, has some aesthetic value before the poet touches it. It is, as you may choose to call it, an inchoate poem or the débris of a poem. It is not an abstract idea or a bare isolated fact, but an assemblage of figures, scenes, actions, and events, which already appeal to emotional imagination; and it is already in some degree organized and formed. In spite of this a bad poet would make a bad poem on it; but then we should say he was unworthy of the subject. And we should not say this if he wrote a bad poem on a pin's head. Conversely, a good poem on a pin's head would almost certainly transform its subject far more than a good poem on the Fall of Man. It might revolutionize its subject so completely that we should say, "The subject may be a pin's head, but the substance of the poem has very little to do with it."

This brings us to another and a different antithesis. Those figures, scenes, events, that form part of the subject called the Fall of Man, are not the substance of *Paradise Lost*; but in *Paradise Lost* there are figures, scenes, and events resembling them in some degree. These, with much more of the same kind, may be described as its substance, and may then be contrasted with the measured language of the poem, which will be called its form. Subject is the opposite not of form but of the whole poem. Substance is within the poem, and its opposite, form, is also within the poem. I am not criticizing this antithesis at present, but evidently it is quite different from the other. It is practically the distinction used in the old-fashioned criticism of epic and drama, and it flows down, not unsullied, from Aristotle. Addison, for example, in examining *Paradise Lost* considers in order the fable, the characters, and the sentiments; these will be the substance: then he considers the language, that is, the style and numbers; this will be the form. In like manner, the substance or meaning of a lyric may be distinguished from the form.

Now I believe it will be found that a large part of the controversy we are dealing with arises from a confusion between these two distinctions of substance and form, and of subject and poem. The extreme formalist lays his whole weight on the form because he thinks its opposite is the mere subject. The general reader is angry, but makes the same mistake, and gives to the subject praises that rightly belong to the substance. I will read an example of what I mean. I can only explain the following words of a good critic by supposing that for the moment he has fallen into this confusion: "The mere matter of

all poetry—to wit, the appearances of nature and the thoughts and feelings of men—being unalterable, it follows that the difference between poet and poet will depend upon the manner of each in applying language, metre, rhyme, cadence, and what not, to this invariable material." What has become here of the substance of *Paradise Lost*—the story, scenery, characters, sentiments as they are in the poem? They have vanished clean away. Nothing is left but the form on one side, and on the other not even the subject, but a supposed invariable material, the appearances of nature and the thoughts and feelings of men. Is it surprising that the whole value should then be found in the form?

So far we have assumed that this antithesis of substance and form is valid, and that it always has one meaning. In reality it has several, but we will leave it in its present shape, and pass to the question of its validity. And this question we are compelled to raise, because we have to deal with the two contentions that the poetic value lies wholly or mainly in the substance, and that it lies wholly or mainly in the form. Now these contentions, whether false or true, may seem at least to be clear; but we shall find, I think, that they are both of them false, or both of them nonsense: false if they concern anything outside the poem, nonsense if they apply to something in it. For what do they evidently imply? They imply that there are in a poem two parts, factors, or components, a substance and a form; and that you can conceive them distinctly and separately, so that when you are speaking of the one you are not speaking of the other. Otherwise how can you ask the question, In which of them does the value lie? But really in a poem, apart from defects, there are no such factors or components; and therefore it is strictly nonsense to ask in which of them the value lies. And on the other hand, if the substance and the form referred to are not in the poem, then both the contentions are false, for its poetic value lies in itself.

What I mean is neither new nor mysterious; and it will be clear, I believe, to any one who reads poetry poetically and who closely examines his experience. When you are reading a poem, I would ask—not analysing it, and much less criticizing it, but allowing it, as it proceeds, to make its full impression on you through the exertion of your recreating imagination—do you then apprehend and enjoy as one thing a certain meaning or substance, and as another thing certain articulate sounds, and do you somehow compound these two? Surely you do not, any more than you apprehend apart, when you see some one smile, those lines in the face which express a feeling, and the feeling that the lines express. Just as there the lines and their meaning are to you one thing, not two, so in poetry the meaning and the sounds are one: there is, if I may put it so, a resonant meaning, or a meaning resonance. If you read the line, "The sun is warm, the sky is clear," you do not experience separately the image of a warm sun and clear sky, on the one side, and certain unintelligible rhythmical sounds on the other; nor yet do you experience them together, side by side; but you experience the one *in* the other. And in like manner when you are really reading *Hamlet*, the action and the characters are not something which you conceive apart from the words; you apprehend them from point to point *in* the words, and the words as expressions of them. Afterwards, no doubt, when you are out of the poetic experience but remember it, you may by analysis decompose this unity, and attend to a substance more or less isolated, and a form more or less isolated. But these are things in your analytic head, not in the poem, which is *poetic* experience. And if you want to have the poem again, you cannot find it by adding together these two products of decomposition; you can only find it by passing back into poetic experience. And then what you recover is no aggregate of factors, it is a unity in which you can no more separate a substance and a form than you can separate living blood and the life in the blood. This unity has, if you like, various "aspects" or "sides," but they are not factors or parts; if you try to examine one, you find it is also the other. Call them substance and form if you please, but these are not the reciprocally exclusive substance and form to which the two contentions *must* refer. They do not "agree," for they are not apart: they are one thing from different points of view, and in that sense identical. And this identity of content and form, you will say, is no accident; it is of the essence of poetry in so far as it is poetry, and of all art in so far as it is art. Just as there is in music not sound on one side and a meaning on the other, but expressive sound, and if you ask what is the meaning you can only answer by pointing to the sounds; just as in painting there is not a meaning *plus* paint, but a meaning *in* paint, or significant paint, and no man can really express the meaning in any other way than in paint and in *this* paint; so in a poem the true content and the true form neither exist nor can be imagined apart. When then you are asked whether the value of a poem lies in a substance got by decomposing the poem, and present, as such, only in reflective analysis, or whether the value lies in a form arrived at and existing in the same way, you will answer, "It lies neither in one, nor in the other, nor in any addition of them, but in the poem, where they are not."

We have then, first, an antithesis of subject and poem. This is clear and valid; and the question in which of them does the value lie is intelligible; and its answer is, In the poem. We have next a distinction of substance and form. If the substance means ideas, images, and the like taken alone, and the form means the measured language taken by itself, this is a possible distinction, but it is a distinction of things not in the poem, and the value lies in neither of them. If substance and form mean anything *in* the poem, then each is involved in the other, and the question in which of them the value

lies has no sense. No doubt you may say, speaking loosely, that in this poet or poem the aspect of substance is the more noticeable, and in that the aspect of form; and you may pursue interesting discussions on this basis, though no principle or ultimate question of value is touched by them. And apart from that question, of course, I am not denying the usefulness and necessity of the distinction. We cannot dispense with it. To consider separately the action or the characters of a play, and separately its style or versification, is both legitimate and valuable, so long as we remember what we are doing. But the true critic in speaking of these apart does not really think of them apart; the whole, the poetic experience, of which they are but aspects, is always in his mind; and he is always aiming at a richer, truer, more intense repetition of that experience. On the other hand, when the question of principle, of poetic value, is raised, these aspects *must* fall apart into components, separately conceivable; and then there arise two heresies, equally false, that the value lies in one of two things, both of which are outside the poem, and therefore where its value cannot lie.

On the heresy of the separable substance a few additional words will suffice. This heresy is seldom formulated, but perhaps some unconscious holder of it may object: "Surely the action and the characters of *Hamlet* are in the play; and surely I can retain these, though I have forgotten all the words. I admit that I do not possess the whole poem, but I possess a part, and the most important part." And I would answer: "If we are not concerned with any question of principle, I accept all that you say except the last words, which do raise such a question. Speaking loosely, I agree that the action and characters, as you perhaps conceive them, together with a great deal more, are in the poem. Even then, however, you must not claim to possess all of this kind that is in the poem; for in forgetting the words you must have lost innumerable details of the action and the characters. And, when the question of value is raised, I must insist that the action and characters, as you conceive them, are not in *Hamlet* at all. If they are, point them out. You cannot do it. What you find at any moment of that succession of experiences called Hamlet is words. In these words, to speak loosely again, the action and characters (more of them than you can conceive apart) are focussed; but your experience is not a combination of them, as ideas, on the one side, with certain sounds on the other; it is an experience of something in which the two are indissolubly fused. If you deny this, to be sure I can make no answer, or can only answer that I have reason to believe that you cannot read poetically, or else are misinterpreting your experience. But if you do not deny this, then you will admit that the action and characters of the poem, as you separately imagine them, are no part of it, but a product of it in your reflective imagination, a faint analogue of one aspect of it taken in detachment from the whole. Well, I do not dispute, I would even insist, that, in the case of so long a poem as *Hamlet*, it may be necessary from time to time to interrupt the poetic experience, in order to enrich it by forming such a product and dwelling on it. Nor, in a wide sense of 'poetic,' do I question the poetic value of this product, as you think of it apart from the poem. It resembles our recollections of the heroes of history or legend, who move about in our imaginations, 'forms more real than living man,' and are worth much to us though we do not remember anything they said. Our ideas and images of the 'substance' of a poem have this poetic value, and more, if they are at all adequate. But they cannot determine the poetic value of the poem, for (not to speak of the competing claims of the 'form') nothing that is outside the poem can do that, and they, as such, are outside it."

Let us turn to the so-called form—style and versification. There is no such thing as mere form in poetry. All form is expression. Style may have indeed a certain aesthetic worth in partial abstraction from the particular matter it conveys, as in a well-built sentence you may take pleasure in the build almost apart from the meaning. Even so style is expressive—presents to sense, for example, the order, ease, and rapidity with which ideas move in the writer's mind—but it is not expressive of the meaning of that particular sentence. And it is possible, interrupting poetic experience, to decompose it and abstract for comparatively separate consideration this nearly formal element of style. But the aesthetic value of style so taken is not considerable; you could not read with pleasure for an hour a composition which had no other merit. And in poetic experience you never apprehend this value by itself; the style is here expressive also of a particular meaning, or rather is one aspect of that unity whose other aspect is meaning. So that what you apprehend may be called indifferently an expressed meaning or a significant form. Perhaps on this point I may in Oxford appeal to authority, that of Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater, the latter at any rate an authority whom the formalist will not despise. What is the gist of Pater's teaching about style, if it is not that in the end the one virtue of style is truth or adequacy; that the word, phrase, sentence, should express perfectly the writer's perception, feeling, image, or thought; so that, as we read a descriptive phrase of Keats's, we exclaim, "That is the thing itself"; so that, to quote Arnold, the words are "symbols equivalent with the thing symbolized," or, in our technical language, a form identical with its content? Hence in true poetry it is, in strictness, impossible to express the meaning in any but its own words, or to change the words without changing the meaning. A translation of such poetry is not really the old meaning in a fresh dress; it is a new product, something like the poem, though, if one chooses to say so, more like it in the aspect of meaning than in the aspect of form.

No one who understands poetry, it seems to me, would dispute this, were it not that, falling away

from his experience, or misled by theory, he takes the word "meaning" in a sense almost ludicrously inapplicable to poetry. People say, for instance, "steed" and "horse" have the same meaning; and in bad poetry they have, but not in poetry that *is* poetry.

"Bring forth the horse!" The horse was brought:
In truth he was a noble steed!

says Byron in *Mazeppa*. If the two words mean the same here, transpose them:

"Bring forth the steed!" The steed was brought:
In truth he was a noble horse!

and ask again if they mean the same. Or let me take a line certainly very free from "poetic diction:"

To be or not to be, that is the question.

You may say that this means the same as "What is just now occupying my attention is the comparative disadvantages of continuing to live or putting an end to myself." And for practical purposes—the purpose, for example, of a coroner—it does. But as the second version altogether misrepresents the speaker at that moment of his existence, while the first does represent him, how can they for any but a practical or logical purpose be said to have the same sense? Hamlet was well able to "unpack his heart with words," but he will not unpack it with our paraphrases.

These considerations apply equally to versification. If I take the famous line which describes how the souls of the dead stood waiting by the river, imploring a passage from Charon:

Tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore,

and if I translate it, "and were stretching forth their hands in longing for the further bank," the charm of the original has fled. Why has it fled? Partly (but we have dealt with that) because I have substituted for five words, and those the words of Virgil, twelve words, and those my own. In some measure because I have turned into rhythmless prose a line of verse which, as mere sound, has unusual beauty. But much more because in doing so I have also changed the *meaning* of Virgil's line. What that meaning is I cannot say: Virgil has said it. But I can see this much, that the translation conveys a far less vivid picture of the outstretched hands and of their remaining outstretched, and a far less poignant sense of the distance of the shore and the longing of the souls. And it does so partly because this picture and this sense are conveyed not only by the obvious meaning of the words, but through the long-drawn sound of "tendebantque," through the time occupied by the five syllables and therefore by the idea of "ulterioris," and through the identity of the long sound "or" in the penultimate syllables of "ulterioris amore"—all this, and much more, apprehended not in this analytical fashion, nor as *added* to the beauty of mere sound and to the obvious meaning, but in unity with them and so as expressive of the poetic meaning of the whole.

It is always so in fine poetry. The value of versification, when it is indissolubly fused with meaning, can hardly be exaggerated. The gift for feeling it, even more perhaps than the gift for feeling the value of style, is the *specific* gift for poetry, as distinguished from other arts. But versification, taken, as far as possible, all by itself, has a very different worth. Some aesthetic worth it has; how much you may experience by reading poetry in a language of which you do not understand a syllable. The pleasure is quite appreciable, but it is not great; nor in actual poetic experience do you meet with it, as such, at all. For, I repeat, it is not *added* to the pleasure of the meaning when you read poetry that you do understand: by some mystery the music is then the music *of* the meaning, and the two are one. However fond of versification you might be, you would tire very soon of reading verses in Chinese; and before long of reading Virgil and Dante if you were ignorant of their languages. But take the music as it is *in* the poem, and there is a marvellous change. Now

It gives a very echo to the seat
Where Love is throned;

or "carries far into your heart," almost like music itself, the sound

Of old, unhappy, far-off things
And battles long ago.

What then is to be said of the following sentence of the critic quoted before: "But when any one who knows what poetry is reads—

Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence,

he sees that, quite independently of the meaning, ... there is one note added to the articulate music of the world—a note that never will leave off resounding till the eternal silence itself gulfs it?" I must think that the writer is deceiving himself. For I could quite understand his enthusiasm, if it were an enthusiasm for the music of the meaning; but as for the music, "quite independently of the meaning," so far as I can hear it thus (and I doubt if any one who knows English can quite do so), I find it gives some pleasure, but only a trifling pleasure. And indeed I venture to doubt whether, considered as mere sound, the words are at all exceptionally beautiful, as Virgil's line certainly is.

When poetry answers to its idea and is purely or almost purely poetic, we find the identity of form and content; and the degree of purity attained may be tested by the degree in which we feel it hopeless to convey the effect of a poem or passage in any form but its own. Where the notion of doing so is simply ludicrous, you have quintessential poetry. But a great part even of good poetry, especially in long works, is of a mixed nature; and so we find in it no more than a partial agreement of a form and substance which remain to some extent distinct. This is so in many passages of Shakespeare (the greatest of poets when he chose, but not always a conscientious poet); passages where something was wanted for the sake of the plot, but he did not care about it or was hurried. The conception of the passage is then distinct from the execution, and neither is inspired. This is so also, I think, wherever we can truly speak of merely decorative effect. We seem to perceive that the poet had a truth or fact—philosophical, agricultural, social—distinctly before him, and then, as we say, clothed it in metrical and coloured language. Most argumentative, didactic, or satiric poems are partly of this kind; and in imaginative poems anything which is really a mere "conceit" is mere decoration. We often deceive ourselves in this matter, for what we call decoration has often a new and genuinely poetic content of its own; but wherever there is mere decoration, we judge the poetry to be not wholly poetic. And so when Wordsworth inveighed against poetic diction, though he hurled his darts rather wildly, what he was rightly aiming at was a phraseology, not the living body of a new content, but the mere worn-out body of an old one.

In pure poetry it is otherwise. Pure poetry is not the decoration of a preconceived and clearly defined matter: it springs from the creative impulse of a vague imaginative mass pressing for development and definition. If the poet already knew exactly what he meant to say, why should he write the poem? The poem would in fact already be written. For only its completion can reveal, even to him, exactly what he wanted. When he began and while he was at work, he did not possess his meaning; it possessed him. It was not a fully formed soul asking for a body: it was an inchoate soul in the inchoate body of perhaps two or three vague ideas and a few scattered phrases. The growing of this body into its full stature and perfect shape was the same thing as the gradual self-definition of the meaning. And this is the reason why such poems strike us as creations, not manufactures, and have the magical effect which mere decoration cannot produce. This is also the reason why, if we insist on asking for the meaning of such a poem, we can only be answered "It means itself."

And so at last I may explain why I have troubled myself: and you with what may seem an arid controversy about mere words. It is not so. These heresies which would make poetry a compound of two factors—a matter common to it with the merest prose, *plus* a poetic form, as the one heresy says: a poetical substance *plus* a negligible form, as the other says—are not only untrue, they are injurious to the dignity of poetry. In an age already inclined to shrink from those higher realms where poetry touches religion and philosophy, the formalist heresy encourages men to taste poetry as they would a fine wine, which has indeed an aesthetic value, but a small one. And then the natural man, finding an empty form, hurls into it the matter of cheap pathos, rancid sentiment, vulgar humour, bare lust, ravenous vanity—everything which, in Schiller's phrase, the form should extirpate, but which no mere form can extirpate. And the other heresy—which is indeed rather a practice than a creed—encourages us in the habit so dear to us of putting our own thoughts or fancies into the place of the poet's creation. What he meant by *Hamlet*, or the *Ode to a Nightingale*, or *Abt Vogler*, we say, is this or that which we knew already; and so we lose what he had to tell us. But he meant what he said, and said what he meant.

Poetry in this matter is not, as good critics of painting and music often affirm, different from the other arts; in all of them the content is one thing with the form. What Beethoven meant by his symphony, or Turner by his picture, was not something which you can name, but the picture and the symphony. Meaning they have, but *what* meaning can be said in no language but their own: and we know this, though some strange delusion makes us think the meaning has less worth because we cannot put it into words. Well, it is just the same with poetry. But because poetry is words, we vainly fancy that some other words than its own will express its meaning. And they will do so no more—or, if you like to speak loosely, only a little more—than words will express the meaning of the Dresden Madonna. Something a little like it they may indeed express. And we may find analogues of the meaning of poetry outside it, which may help us to appropriate it. The other arts, the best ideas of philosophy or religion, much that nature and life offer us or force upon us, are akin to it. But they are

only akin. Nor is it the expression of them. Poetry does not present to imagination our highest knowledge or belief, and much less our dreams and opinions; but it, content and form in unity, embodies in its own irreplaceable way something which embodies itself also in other irreplaceable ways, such as philosophy or religion. And just as each of these gives a satisfaction which the other cannot possibly give, so we find in poetry, which cannot satisfy the needs they meet, that which by their natures they cannot afford us. But we shall not find it fully if we look for something else.

And now, when all is said, the question will still recur, though now in quite another sense, What does poetry mean? This unique expression, which cannot be replaced by any other, still seems to be trying to express something beyond itself. And this, we feel, is also what the other arts, and religion, and philosophy are trying to express: and that is what impels us to seek in vain to translate the one into the other. About the best poetry, and not only the best, there floats an atmosphere of infinite suggestion. The poet speaks to us of one thing, but in this one thing there seems to lurk the secret of all. He said what he meant, but his meaning seems to beckon away beyond itself, or rather to expand into something boundless, which is only focussed in it; something also which, we feel, would satisfy not only the imagination, but the whole of us; that something within us, and without, which everywhere

makes us seem

To patch up fragments of a dream,
Part of which comes true, and part
Beats and trembles in the heart.

Those who are susceptible to this effect of poetry find it not only, perhaps not most, in the ideals which she has sometimes described, but in a child's song by Christina Rossetti about a mere crown of wind-flowers, and in tragedies like *Lear*, where the sun seems to have set for ever. They hear this spirit murmuring its undertone through the *Aeneid*, and catch its voice in the song of Keats's nightingale, and its light upon the figures on the Urn, and it pierces them no less in Shelley's hopeless lament, *O world, O life, O time*, than in the rapturous ecstasy of his *Life of Life*. This all-embracing perfection cannot be expressed in poetic words or words of any kind, nor yet in music or in colour, but the suggestion of it is in much poetry, if not all, and poetry has in this suggestion, this "meaning," a great part of its value. We do it wrong, and we defeat our own purposes when we try to bend it to them:

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is as the air invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

It is a spirit. It comes we know not whence. It will not speak at our bidding, nor answer in our language. It is not our servant; it is our master.

FOOTNOTES:

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GREEK TRAGEDY[79]

G. LOWES DICKINSON

The character of Greek tragedy was determined from the very beginning by the fact of its connection with religion. The season at which it was performed was the festival of Dionysus; about his altar the chorus danced; and the object of the performance was the representation of scenes out of the lives of ancient heroes. The subject of the drama was thus strictly prescribed; it must be selected out of a cycle of legends familiar to the audience; and whatever freedom might be allowed to the poet in his treatment of the theme, whatever the reflections he might embroider upon it, the speculative or ethical views, the criticism of contemporary life, all must be subservient to the main object originally proposed, the setting forth, for edification as well as for delight, of some episodes in the lives of those heroes of the past who were considered not only to be greater than their descendants, but to be the sons of gods and worthy themselves of worship as divine.

By this fundamental condition the tragedy of the Greeks is distinguished sharply, on the one hand

from the Shakespearian drama, on the other from the classical drama of the French. The tragedies of Shakespeare are devoid, one might say, or at least comparatively devoid, of all preconceptions. He was free to choose what subject he liked and to treat it as he would; and no sense of obligation to religious or other points of view, no feeling for traditions descended from a sacred past and not lightly to be handled by those who were their trustees for the future, sobered or restrained for evil or for good his half-barbaric genius. He flung himself upon life with the irresponsible ardour of the discoverer of a new continent; shaped and re-shaped it as he chose; carved from it now the cynicism of *Measure for Measure*, now the despair of *Hamlet* and of *Lear*, now the radiant magnanimity of *The Tempest*, and departed leaving behind him not a map or chart, but a series of mutually incompatible landscapes.

What Shakespeare gave, in short, was a many-sided representation of life; what the Greek dramatist gave was an interpretation. But an interpretation not simply personal to himself, but representative of the national tradition and belief. The men whose deeds and passions he narrated were the patterns and examples on the one hand, on the other the warnings of his race; the gods who determined the fortunes they sang, were working still among men; the moral laws that ruled the past ruled the present too; and the history of the Hellenic race moved, under a visible providence, from its divine origin onward to an end that would be prosperous or the reverse according as later generations should continue to observe the worship and traditions of their fathers descended from heroes and gods.

And it is the fact that in this sense it was representative of the national consciousness, that distinguishes the Greek tragedy from the classical drama of the French. For the latter, though it imitated the ancients in outward form, was inspired with a totally different spirit. The kings and heroes whose fortunes it narrated were not the ancestors of the French race; they had no root in its affections, no connection with its religious beliefs, no relation to its ethical conceptions. The whole ideal set forth was not that which really inspired the nation, but at best that which was supposed to inspire the court; and the whole drama, like a tree transplanted to an alien soil, withers and dies for lack of the nourishment which the tragedy of the Greeks unconsciously imbibed from its encompassing air of national tradition.

Such then was the general character of the Greek tragedy—an interpretation of the national ideal. Let us now proceed to follow out some of the consequences involved in this conception.

In the first place, the theme represented is the life and fate of ancient heroes—of personages, that is to say, greater than ordinary men, both for good and for evil, in their qualities and in their achievements, pregnant with fateful issues, makers or marrers of the fortunes of the world. Tragic and terrible their destiny may be, but never contemptible or squalid. Behind all suffering, behind sin and crime, must lie redeeming magnanimity. A complete villain, says Aristotle, is not a tragic character, for he has no hold upon the sympathies; if he prosper, it is an outrage on common human feeling; if he fall into disaster, it is merely what he deserves. Neither is it admissible to represent the misfortunes of a thoroughly good man, for that is merely painful and distressing; and least of all is it tolerable gratuitously to introduce mere baseness, or madness, or other aberrations from human nature. The true tragic hero is a man of high place and birth who having a nature not ignoble has fallen into sin and pays in suffering the penalty of his act. Nothing could throw more light on the distinguishing characteristics of the Greek drama than these few remarks of Aristotle, and nothing could better indicate how close, in the Greek mind, was the connection between aesthetic and ethical judgments. The canon of Aristotle would exclude as proper themes for tragedy the character and fate, say, of Richard III—the absolutely bad man suffering his appropriate desert; or of Kent and Cordelia—the absolutely good, brought into unmerited affliction; and that not merely because such themes offend the moral sense, but because by so offending they destroy the proper pleasure of the tragic art. The whole aesthetic effect is limited by ethical presuppositions; and to outrage these is to defeat the very purpose of tragedy.

Specially interesting in this connection are the strictures passed on Euripides in the passage of the *Frogs* of Aristophanes to which allusion has already been made. Euripides is there accused of lowering the tragic art by introducing—what? Women in love! The central theme of modern tragedy! It is the boast of Aeschylus that there is not one of his plays which touches on this subject:

"I never allow'd of your lewd Sthenoboeas
Or filthy detestable Phaedras—not I!
Indeed I should doubt if my drama throughout
Exhibit an instance of woman in love!"[80]

And there can be little doubt that with a Greek audience this would count to him as a merit, and that the shifting of the centre of interest by Euripides from the sterner passions of heroes and of kings to this tenderer phase of human feeling would be felt even by those whom it charmed to be a declension from the height of the older tragedy.

And to this limitation of subject corresponds a limitation of treatment. The Greek tragedy is composed from a definite point of view, with the aim not merely to represent but also to interpret the theme. Underlying the whole construction of the plot, the dialogue, the reflections, the lyric interludes, is the intention to illustrate some general moral law, some common and typical problem, some fundamental truth. Of the elder dramatists at any rate, Aeschylus and Sophocles, one may even say that it was their purpose—however imperfectly achieved—to "justify the ways of God to man." To represent suffering as the punishment of sin is the constant bent of Aeschylus; to justify the law of God against the presumption of man is the central idea of Sophocles. In either case the whole tone is essentially religious. To choose such a theme as Lear, to treat it as Shakespeare has treated it, to leave it, as it were, bleeding from a thousand wounds, in mute and helpless entreaty for the healing that is never to be vouchsafed—this would have been repulsive, if not impossible, to a Greek tragedian. Without ever descending from concrete art to the abstractions of mere moralising, without ever attempting to substitute a verbal formula for the full and complex perception that grows out of a representation of life, the ancient dramatists were nevertheless, in the whole apprehension of their theme, determined by a more or less conscious speculative bias; the world to them was not merely a splendid chaos, it was a divine plan; and even in its darkest hollows, its passes most perilous and bleak, they have their hand, though doubtful perhaps and faltering, upon the clue that is to lead them up to the open sky.

It is consonant with this account of the nature of Greek tragedy that it should have laid more stress upon action than upon character. The interest was centred on the universal bearing of certain acts and situations, on the light which the experience represented threw on the whole tendency and course of human life, not on the sentiments and motives of the particular personages introduced. The characters are broad and simple, not developing for the most part, but fixed, and fitted therefore to be the mediums of direct action, of simple issues, and typical situations. In the Greek tragedy the general point of view predominates over the idiosyncrasies of particular persons. It is human nature that is represented in the broad, not this or that highly specialised variation; and what we have indicated as the general aim, the interpretation of life, is never obscured by the predominance of exceptional and so to speak, accidental characteristics. Man is the subject of the Greek drama; the subject of the modern novel is Tom and Dick.

Finally, to the realisation of this general aim, the whole form of the Greek drama was admirably adapted. It consisted very largely of conversations between two persons, representing two opposed points of view, and giving occasion for an almost scientific discussion of every problem of action raised in the play; and between these conversations were inserted lyric odes in which the chorus commented on the situation, bestowed advice or warning, praise or blame, and finally summed up the moral of the whole. Through the chorus, in fact, the poet could speak in his own person, and impose upon the whole tragedy any tone which he desired. Periodically he could drop the dramatist and assume the preacher; and thus ensure that his play should be, what we have seen was its recognised ideal, not merely a representation but an interpretation of life.

But this without ceasing to be a work of art. In attempting to analyse in abstract terms the general character of the Greek tragedy we have necessarily thrown into the shade what after all was its primary and most essential aspect; an aspect, however, of which a full appreciation could only be attained not by a mere perusal of the text, but by what is unfortunately for ever beyond our power, the witnessing of an actual representation as it was given on the Greek stage. For from a purely aesthetic point of view the Greek drama must be reckoned among the most perfect of art forms.

Taking place in the open air, on the sunny slope of a hill, valley and plain or islanded sea stretching away below to meet the blazing blue of a cloudless sky, the moving pageant, thus from the first set in tune with nature, brought to a focus of splendour the rays of every separate art. More akin to an opera than to a play it had, as its basis, music. For the drama had developed out of the lyric ode, and retained throughout what was at first its only element, the dance and song of a mimetic chorus. By this centre of rhythmic motion and pregnant melody the burden of the tale was caught up and echoed and echoed again, as the living globe divided into spheres of answering song, the clear and precise significance of the plot, never obscure to the head, being thus brought home in music to the passion of the heart, the idea embodied in lyric verse, the verse transfigured by song, and song and verse reflected as in a mirror to the eye by the swing and beat of the limbs they stirred to consonance of motion. And while such was the character of the odes that broke the action of the play, the action itself was an appeal not less to the ear and to the eye than to the passion and the intellect. The circumstances of the representation, the huge auditorium in the open air, lent themselves less to "acting" in our sense of the term, than to attitude and declamation. The actors raised on high boots above their natural height, their faces hidden in masks and their tones mechanically magnified, must have relied for their effects not upon facial play, or rapid and subtle variations of voice and gesture, but upon a certain statuesque beauty of pose, and a chanting intonation of that majestic iambic verse whose measure would have been obscured by a rapid and conversational delivery. The representation would thus become moving

sculpture to the eye, and to the ear, as it were, a sleep of music between the intenser interludes of the chorus; and the spectator without being drawn away by an imitative realism from the calm of impassioned contemplation into the fever and fret of a veritable actor on the scene, received an impression based throughout on that clear intellectual foundation, that almost prosaic lucidity of sentiment and plot, which is preserved to us in the written text, but raised by the accompanying appeal to the sense, made as it must have been made by such artists as the Greeks, by the grouping of forms and colours, the recitative, the dance and the song, to such a greatness and height of aesthetic significance as can hardly have been realised by any other form of art production.

The nearest modern analogy to what the ancient drama must have been is to be found probably in the operas of Wagner, who indeed was strongly influenced by the tragedy of the Greeks. It was his ideal like theirs, to combine the various branches of art, employing not only music but poetry, sculpture, painting and the dance, for the representation of his dramatic theme; and his conception also to make art the interpreter of life, reflecting in a national drama the national consciousness, the highest action and the deepest passion and thought of the German race. To consider how far in this attempt he falls short of or goes beyond the achievement of the Greeks, and to examine the wide dissimilarities that underlie the general identity of aim, would be to wander too far afield from our present theme. But the comparison may be recommended to those who are anxious to form a concrete idea of what the effect of a Greek tragedy may have been, and to clothe in imagination the dead bones of the literary text with the flesh and blood of a representation to the sense.

Meantime, to assist the reader to realise with somewhat greater precision the bearing of the foregoing remarks, it may be worth while to give an outline sketch of one of the most celebrated of the Greek tragedies, the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus.

The hero of the drama belongs to that heroic house whose tragic history was among the most terrible and the most familiar to a Greek audience. Tantalus, the founder of the family, for some offence against the gods, was suffering in Hades the punishment which is christened by his name. His son Pelops was stained with the blood of Myrtilus. Of the two sons of the next generation, Thyestes seduced the wife of his brother Atreus; and Atreus in return killed the sons of Thyestes, and made the father unwittingly eat the flesh of the murdered boys. Agamemnon, son of Atreus, to propitiate Artemis, sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia, and in revenge was murdered by Clytemnestra his wife. And Clytemnestra was killed by Orestes, her son, in atonement for the death of Agamemnon. For generations the race had been dogged by crime and punishment; and in choosing for his theme the murder of Agamemnon the dramatist could assume in his audience so close a familiarity with the past history of the House that he could call into existence by an allusive word that sombre background of woe to enhance the terrors of his actual presentation. The figures he brought into vivid relief joined hands with menacing forms that faded away into the night of the future and the past; while above them hung, intoning doom, the phantom host of Furies.

Yet at the outset of the drama all promises well. The watchman on the roof of the palace, in the tenth year of his watch, catches sight at last of the signal fire that announces the capture of Troy and the speedy return of Agamemnon. With joy he proclaims to the House the long-delayed and welcome news; yet even in the moment of exultation lets slip a doubtful phrase hinting at something behind, which he dares not name, something which may turn to despair the triumph of victory. Hereupon enter the chorus of Argive elders, chanting as they move to the measure of a stately march. They sing how ten years before Agamemnon and Menelaus had led forth the host of Greece, at the bidding of the Zeus who protects hospitality, to recover for Menelaus Helen his wife, treacherously stolen by Paris. Then, as they take their places and begin their rhythmic dance, in a strain of impassioned verse that is at once a narrative and a lyric hymn, they tell, or rather present in a series of vivid images, flashing as by illumination of lightning out of a night of veiled and sombre boding, the tale of the deed that darkened the starting of the host—the sacrifice of Iphigenia to the goddess whose wrath was delaying the fleet at Aulis. In verse, in music, in pantomime, the scene lives again—the struggle in the father's heart, the insistence of his brother chiefs, the piteous glance of the girl, and at last the unutterable end; while above and through it all rings like a knell of fate the refrain that is the motive of the whole drama:

"Sing woe, sing woe, but may the Good prevail."

At the conclusion of the ode enters Clytemnestra. She makes a formal announcement to the chorus of the fall of Troy; describes the course of the signal-fire from beacon to beacon as it sped, and pictures in imagination the scenes even then taking place in the doomed city. On her withdrawal the chorus break once more into song and dance. To the music of a solemn hymn they point the moral of the fall of Troy, the certain doom of violence and fraud descended upon Paris and his House. Once more the vivid pictures flash from the night of woe—Helen in her fatal beauty stepping lightly to her doom, the widower's nights of mourning haunted by the ghost of love, the horrors of the war that followed, the slain abroad and the mourners at home, the change of living flesh and blood for the dust and ashes of

the tomb. At last with a return to their original theme, the doom of insolence, the chorus close their ode and announce the arrival of a messenger from Troy. Talthybius, the herald, enters as spokesman of the army and king, describing the hardships they have suffered and the joy of the triumphant issue. To him Clytemnestra announces, in words of which the irony is patent to the audience, her sufferings in the absence of her husband and her delight at the prospect of his return. He will find her, she says, as he left her, a faithful watcher of the home, her loyalty sure, her honour undefiled. Then follows another choral ode, similar in theme to the last, dwelling on the woe brought by the act of Paris upon Troy, the change of the bridal song to the tramp of war and the dirge of death; contrasting, in a profusion of splendid tropes, the beauty of Helen with the curse to which it is bound; and insisting once more on the doom that attends insolence and pride. At the conclusion of this song the measure changes to a march, and the chorus turn to welcome the triumphant king. Agamemnon enters, and behind him the veiled and silent figure of a woman. After greeting the gods of his House, the King, in brief and stilted phrase, acknowledges the loyalty of the chorus, but hints at much that is amiss which it must be his first charge to set right. Hereupon enters Clytemnestra, and in a speech of rhetorical exaggeration tells of her anxious waiting for her lord and her inexpressible joy at his return. In conclusion she directs that purple cloth be spread upon his path that he may enter the house as befits a conqueror. After a show of resistance, Agamemnon yields the point, and the contrast at which the dramatist aims is achieved. With the pomp of an eastern monarch, always repellent to the Greek mind, the King steps across the threshold, steps, as the audience knows, to his death. The higher the reach of his power and pride the more terrible and swift is the nemesis; and Clytemnestra follows in triumph with the enigmatic cry upon her lips: "Zeus who art god of fulfilment, fulfil my prayers." As she withdraws the chorus begin a song of boding fear, the more terrible that it is still indefinite. Something is going to happen—the presentiment is sure. But what, but what? They search the night in vain. Meantime, motionless and silent waits the figure of the veiled woman. It is Cassandra, the prophetess, daughter of Priam of Troy, whom Agamemnon has carried home as his prize. Clytemnestra returns to urge her to enter the house; she makes no sign and utters no word. The queen changes her tone from courtesy to anger and rebuke; the figure neither stirs nor speaks; and Clytemnestra at last with an angry threat leaves her and returns to the palace. Then, and not till then, a cry breaks from the stranger's lips, a passionate cry to Apollo who gave her her fatal gift. All the sombre history of the House to which she has been brought, the woe that has been and the woe that is to come, passes in pictures across her inner sense. In a series of broken ejaculations, not sentences but lyric cries, she evokes the scenes of the past and of the future. Blood drips from the palace; in its chambers the Furies crouch; the murdered sons of Thyestes wail in its haunted courts; and ever among the visions of the past that one of the future floats and fades, clearly discerned, impossible to avert, the murder of a husband by a wife; and in the rear of that, most pitiful of all, the violent death of the seer who sees in vain and may not help. Between Cassandra and the Chorus it is a duet of anguish and fear; in the broken lyric phrases a phantom music wails; till at last, at what seems the breaking-point, the tension is relaxed, and dropping into the calmer iambic recitative, Cassandra tells her message in plainer speech and clearly proclaims the murder of the King. Then, with a last appeal to the avenger that is to come, she enters the palace alone to meet her death.—The stage is empty. Suddenly a cry is heard from within; again, and then again; while the chorus hesitate the deed is done; the doors are thrown open, and Clytemnestra is seen standing over the corpses of her victims. All disguise is now thrown off; the murderess avows and triumphs in her deed; she justifies it as vengeance for the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and sees in herself not a free human agent but the incarnate curse of the House of Tantalus. And now for the first time appears the adulterer Aegisthus, who has planned the whole behind the scenes. He too is an avenger, for he is the son of that Thyestes who was made to feed on his own children's flesh. The murder of Agamemnon is but one more link in the long chain of hereditary guilt; and with that exposition of the pitiless law of punishment and crime this chapter of the great drama comes to a close. But the *Agamemnon* is only the first of a series of three plays closely connected and meant to be performed in succession; and the problem raised in the first of them, the crime that cries for punishment and the punishment that is itself a new crime, is solved in the last by a reconciliation of the powers of heaven and hell, and the pardon of the last offender in the person of Orestes. To sketch, however, the plan of the other dramas of the trilogy would be to trespass too far upon our space and time. It is enough to have illustrated, by the example of the *Agamemnon*, the general character of a Greek tragedy; and those who care to pursue the subject further must be referred to the text of the plays themselves.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 79: From "The Greek View of Life," 1909 (sixth edition). By permission of Messrs. Doubleday, Page & Co.]

[Footnote 80: From Aristophanes' "Frogs," l. 1043. Translated by Frere.]

SHAKESPEARE[81]

THOMAS CARLYLE

As Dante, the Italian man, was sent into our world to embody musically the Religion of the Middle Ages, the Religion of our Modern Europe, its Inner Life; so Shakespeare, we may say, embodies for us the Outer Life of our Europe as developed then, its chivalries, courtesies, humours, ambitions, what practical way of thinking, acting, looking at the world, men then had. As in Homer we may still construe Old Greece; so in Shakespeare and Dante, after thousands of years, what our modern Europe was, in Faith and in Practice, will still be legible. Dante has given us the Faith or soul; Shakespeare, in a not less noble way, has given us the Practice or body. This latter also we were to have; a man was sent for it, the man Shakespeare. Just when that chivalry way of life had reached its last finish, and was on the point of breaking down into slow or swift dissolution, as we now see it everywhere, this other sovereign Poet, with his seeing eye, with his perennial singing voice, was sent to take note of it, to give long-enduring record of it. Two fit men: Dante, deep, fierce as the central fire of the world; Shakespeare, wide, placid, far-seeing, as the Sun, the upper light of the world. Italy produced the one world-voice; we English had the honour of producing the other.

Curious enough how, as it were by mere accident, this man came to us. I think always, so great, quiet, complete and self-sufficing is this Shakespeare, had the Warwickshire Squire not prosecuted him for deer-stealing, we had perhaps never heard of him as a Poet! The woods and skies, the rustic Life of Man in Stratford there, had been enough for this man! But indeed that strange outbudding of our whole English Existence, which we call the Elizabethan Era, did not it too come as of its own accord? The "Tree Igdrasil" buds and withers by its own laws,—too deep for our scanning. Yet it does bud and wither, and every bough and leaf of it is there, by fixed eternal laws; not a Sir Thomas Lucy but comes at the hour fit for him. Curious, I say, and not sufficiently considered: how everything does co-operate with all; not a leaf rotting on the highway but is indissoluble portion of solar and stellar systems; no thought, word or act of man but has sprung withal out of all men, and works sooner or later, recognisably or irrecongnisably, on all men! It is all a Tree: circulation of sap and influences, mutual communication of every minutest leaf with the lowest talon of a root, with every other greatest and minutest portion of the whole. The Tree Igdrasil, that has its roots down in the Kingdoms of Hela and Death, and whose boughs overspread the highest Heaven!

In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan Era with its Shakespeare, as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's Song, had produced this Practical Life which Shakespeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of Practice; the primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle-Age Catholicism was abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before Shakespeare, the noblest product of it, made his appearance. He did make his appearance nevertheless. Nature at her own time, with Catholicism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth; taking small thought of Acts of Parliament. King-Henrys, Queen-Elizabeths go their way; and Nature too goes hers. Acts of Parliament, on the whole, are small, notwithstanding the noise they make. What Act of Parliament, debate at St. Stephen's,[82] on the hustings or elsewhere, was it that brought this Shakespeare into being? No dining at Freemasons' Tavern, opening subscription-lists, selling of shares, and infinite other jangling and true or false endeavouring! This Elizabethan Era, and all its nobleness and blessedness, came without proclamation, preparation of ours. Priceless Shakespeare was the free gift of Nature; given altogether silently; received altogether silently, as if it had been a thing of little account. And yet, very literally, it is a priceless thing. One should look at that side of matters too.

Of this Shakespeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one; I think the best judgment not of this country only: but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakespeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. Such a calmness of depth; placid joyous strength; all things imaged in that great soul of his so true and clear, as in a tranquil unfathomable sea! It has been said, that in the constructing of Shakespeare's Dramas there is, apart from all other "faculties" as they are called, an understanding manifested, equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum*. That is true; and it is not a truth that strikes every one. It would become more apparent if we tried, any of us for himself, how, out of Shakespeare's dramatic materials, *we* could fashion such a result! The built house seems all so fit,—everyway as it should be, as if it came there by its own law and the nature of things,—we forget the rude disorderly quarry it was shaped from. The very perfection of the house, as if Nature herself had made it, hides the

builder's merit. Perfect, more perfect than any other man, we may call Shakespeare in this: he discerns, knows as by instinct, what condition he works under, what his materials are, what his own force and its relation to them is. It is not a transitory glance of insight that will suffice; it is deliberate illumination of the whole matter; it is a calmly *seeing* eye; a great intellect, in short. How a man, of some wide thing that he has witnessed, will construct a narrative, what kind of picture and delineation he will give of it—is the best measure you could get of what intellect is in the man. Which circumstance is vital and shall stand prominent; which unessential, fit to be suppressed; where is the true *beginning*, the true sequence and ending? To find out this, you task the whole force of insight that is in the man. He must *understand* the thing; according to the depth of his understanding, will the fitness of his answer be. You will try him so. Does like join itself to like; does the spirit of method stir in that confusion, so that its embroilment becomes order? Can the man say, *Fiat lux*, Let there be light; and out of chaos make a world? Precisely as there is *light* in himself, will he accomplish this.

Or indeed we may say again, it is in what I called Portrait-painting, delineating of men and things, especially of men, that Shakespeare is great. All the greatness of the man comes out decisively here. It is unexampled, I think, that calm creative perspicacity of Shakespeare. The thing he looks at reveals not this or that face of it, but its inmost heart, and generic secret: it dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it. Creative, we said: poetic creation, what is this too but *seeing* the thing sufficiently? The *word* that will describe the thing, follows of itself from such clear intense sight of the thing. And is not Shakespeare's *morality*, his valour, candour, tolerance, truthfulness; his whole victorious strength and greatness, which can triumph over such obstructions, visible there too? Great as the world! No *twisted*, poor convex-concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a perfectly *level* mirror—that is to say withal, if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man. It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes-in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus; sets them all forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all. *Novum Organum*, and all the intellect you will find in Bacon, is of a quite secondary order; earthy, material, poor in comparison with this. Among modern men, one finds, in strictness, almost nothing of the same rank. Goethe alone, since the days of Shakespeare, reminds me of it. Of him too you say that he *saw* the object; you may say what he himself says of Shakespeare: "His characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible."

The seeing eye! It is this that discloses the inner harmony of things; what Nature meant, what musical idea Nature has wrapped-up in these often rough embodiments. Something she did mean. To the seeing eye that something were discernible. Are they base, miserable things? You can laugh over them, you can weep over them; you can in some way or other genially relate yourself to them—you can, at lowest, hold your peace about them, turn away your own and others' face from them, till the hour come for practically exterminating and extinguishing them! At bottom, it is the Poet's first gift, as it is all men's, that he have intellect enough. He will be a Poet if he have: a Poet in word; or failing that, perhaps still better, a Poet in act. Whether he write at all, and if so, whether in prose or in verse, will depend on accidents: who knows on what extremely trivial accidents,—perhaps on his having had a singing-master, on his being taught to sing in his boyhood! But the faculty which enables him to discern the inner heart of things, and the harmony that dwells there (for whatsoever exists has a harmony in the heart of it, or it would not hold together and exist), is not the result of habits or accidents, but the gift of Nature herself; the primary outfit for a Heroic Man in what sort soever. To the Poet, as to every other, we say first of all *See*. If you cannot do that, it is of no use to keep stringing rhymes together, jingling sensibilities against each other, and *name* yourself a Poet; there is no hope for you. If you can, there is, in prose or verse, in action or speculation, all manner of hope. The crabbed old Schoolmaster used to ask, when they brought him a new pupil, "But are ye sure he's *not a dunce*?" Why, really one might ask the same thing, in regard to every man proposed for whatsoever function; and consider it as the one inquiry needful: Are ye sure he's not a dunce? There is, in this world, no other entirely fatal person.

For, in fact, I say the degree of vision that dwells in a man is a correct measure of the man. If called to define Shakespeare's faculty, I should say superiority of Intellect, and think I had included all under that. What indeed are faculties? We talk of faculties as if they were distinct, things separable; as if a man had intellect, imagination, fancy, etc., as he has hands, feet and arms. That is a capital error. Then again, we hear of a man's "intellectual nature," and of his "moral nature," as if these again were divisible, and existed apart. Necessities of language do perhaps prescribe such forms of utterance; we must speak, I am aware, in that way, if we are to speak at all. But words ought not to harden into things for us. It seems to me, our apprehension of this matter is, for most part, radically falsified thereby. We ought to know withal, and to keep forever in mind, that these divisions are at bottom but *names*; that man's spiritual nature, the vital Force which dwells in him, is essentially one and indivisible; that what we call imagination, fancy, understanding, and so forth, are but different figures of the same Power of

Insight, all indissolubly connected with each other, physiognomically related; that if we knew one of them, we might know all of them. Morality itself, what we call the moral quality of a man, what is this but another *side* of the one vital Force whereby he is and works? All that a man does is physiognomical of him. You may see how a man would fight, by the way in which he sings; his courage, or want of courage, is visible in the word he utters, in the opinion he has formed, no less than in the stroke he strikes. He is *one*; and preaches the same Self abroad in all these ways.

Without hands a man might have feet, and could still walk: but, consider it—without morality, intellect were impossible for him; a thoroughly immoral *man* could not know anything at all! To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathise with it: that is, be *virtuously* related to it. If he have not the justice to put down his own selfishness at every turn, the courage to stand by the dangerous true at every turn, how shall he know? His virtues, all of them, will lie recorded in his knowledge. Nature, with her truth, remains to the bad, to the selfish and the pusillanimous forever a sealed book: what such can know of Nature is mean, superficial, small; for the uses of the day merely. But does not the very Fox know something of Nature? Exactly so: it knows where the geese lodge! The human Reynard, very frequent everywhere in the world, what more does he know but this and the like of this? Nay, it should be considered too, that if the Fox had not a certain vulpine *morality*, he could not even know where the geese were, or get at the geese! If he spent his time in splenetic atrabiliar reflections on his own misery, his ill usage by Nature, Fortune and other Foxes, and so forth; and had not courage, promptitude, practicality, and other suitable vulpine gifts and graces, he would catch no geese. We may say of the Fox too, that his morality and insight are of the same dimensions; different faces of the same internal unity of vulpine life! These things are worth stating; for the contrary of them acts with manifold very baleful perversion, in this time: what limitations, modifications they require, your own candour will supply.

If I say, therefore, that Shakespeare is the greatest of Intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakespeare's intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect; there is more virtue in it than he himself is aware of. Novalis beautifully remarks of him, that those Dramas of his are Products of Nature too, deep as Nature herself. I find a great truth in this saying. Shakespeare's Art is not Artifice; the noblest worth of it is not there by plan or precontrivance. It grows-up from the deeps of Nature, through this noble sincere soul, who is a voice of Nature. The latest generations of men will find new meanings in Shakespeare, new elucidations of their own human being; "new harmonies with the infinite structure of the Universe; concurrences with later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and senses of man." This well deserves meditating. It is Nature's highest reward to a true simple great soul, that he get thus to be *a part of herself*. Such a man's works, whatsoever he with utmost conscious exertion and forethought shall accomplish, grow up withal unconsciously, from the unknown deeps in him;—as the oak-tree grows from the Earth's bosom, as the mountains and waters shape themselves; with a symmetry grounded on Nature's own laws, conformable to all Truth whatsoever. How much in Shakespeare lies hid; his sorrows, his silent struggles known to himself; much that was not known at all, not speakable at all: like *roots*, like sap and forces working underground! Speech is great; but Silence is greater.

Withal the joyful tranquillity of this man is notable. I will not blame Dante for his misery: it is a battle without victory; but true battle,—the first, indispensable thing. Yet I call Shakespeare greater than Dante, in that he fought truly, and did conquer. Doubt it not, he had his own sorrows: those *Sonnets* of his will even testify expressly in what deep waters he had waded, and swum struggling for his life—as what man like him ever failed to have to do? It seems to me a heedless notion, our common one, that he sat like a bird on the bough; and sang forth, free and offhand, never knowing the troubles of other men. Not so; with no man is it so. How could a man travel forward from rustic deer-poaching to such tragedy-writing, and not fall-in with sorrows by the way? Or, still better, how could a man delineate a Hamlet, a Coriolanus, a Macbeth, so many suffering heroic hearts, if his own heroic heart had never suffered?—And now, in contrast with all this, observe his mirthfulness, his genuine overflowing love of laughter! You would say, in no point does he *exaggerate* but only in laughter. Fiery objurgations, words that pierce and burn, are to be found in Shakespeare; yet he is always in measure here; never what Johnson would remark as a specially "good hater." But his laughter seems to pour from him in floods; he heaps all manner of ridiculous nicknames on the butt he is bantering, tumbles and tosses him in all sorts of horse-play; you would say, with his whole heart laughs. And then, if not always the finest, it is always a genial laughter. Not at mere weakness, at misery or poverty; never. No man who *can* laugh, what we call laughing, will laugh at these things. It is some poor character only *desiring* to laugh, and have the credit of wit, that does so. Laughter means sympathy; good laughter is not "the crackling of thorns under the pot." Even at stupidity and pretension this Shakespeare does not laugh otherwise than genially. Dogberry and Verges tickle our very hearts; and we dismiss them covered with explosions of laughter: but we like the poor fellows only the better for our laughing; and hope they will get on well there, and continue Presidents of the City-watch. Such laughter, like sunshine on the deep sea, is very beautiful to me.

We have no room to speak of Shakespeare's individual works; though perhaps there is much still waiting to be said on that head. Had we, for instance, all his plays reviewed as *Hamlet*, in *Wilhelm Meister*, is! A thing which might, one day, be done. August Wilhelm Schlegel has a remark on his Historical Plays, *Henry Fifth* and the others, which is worth remembering. He calls them a kind of National Epic. Marlborough, you recollect, said, he knew no English History but what he had learned from Shakespeare. There are really, if we look to it, few as memorable Histories. The great salient points are admirably seized; all rounds itself off, into a kind of rhythmic coherence; it is, as Schlegel says, *epic*;—as indeed all delineation by a great thinker will be. There are right beautiful things in those Pieces, which indeed together form one beautiful thing. That battle of Agincourt strikes me as one of the most perfect things, in its sort, we anywhere have of Shakespeare's. The description of the two hosts: the wornout, jaded English; the dread hour, big with destiny, when the battle shall begin; and then that deathless valour: "Ye good yeomen, whose limbs were made in England!" There is a noble Patriotism in it—far other than the "indifference" you sometimes hear ascribed to Shakespeare. A true English heart breathes, calm and strong, through the whole business; not boisterous, protrusive; all the better for that. There is a sound in it like the ring of steel. This man too had a right stroke in him, had it come to that!

But I will say, of Shakespeare's works generally, that we have no full impress of him there; even as full as we have of many men. His works are so many windows, through which we see a glimpse of the world that was in him. All his works seem, comparatively speaking, cursory, imperfect, written under cramping circumstances; giving only here and there a note of the full utterance of the man. Passages there are that come upon you like splendour out of Heaven; bursts of radiance, illuminating the very heart of the thing: you say, "That is *true*, spoken once and forever; wheresoever and whensoever there is an open human soul, that will be recognised as true!" Such bursts, however, make us feel that the surrounding matter is not radiant; that it is in part, temporary, conventional. Alas, Shakespeare had to write for the Globe Playhouse: his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould. It was with him, then, as it is with us all. No man works save under conditions. The sculptor, cannot set his own free Thought before us; but his Thought as he could translate it into the stone that was given, with the tools that were given. *Dissecta membra*[83] are all that we find of any Poet, or of any man.

Whoever looks intelligently at this Shakespeare may recognise that he too was a *Prophet*, in his way; of an insight analogous to the Prophetic, though he took it up in another strain. Nature seemed to this man also divine; *un_speakable*, deep as Tophet, high as Heaven: "We are such stuff as Dreams are made of!" That scroll in Westminster Abbey,[84] which few read with understanding, is of the depth of any seer. But the man sang; did not preach, except musically. We called Dante the melodious Priest of Middle-Age Catholicism. May we not call Shakespeare the still more melodious Priest of a *true* Catholicism, the "Universal Church" of the Future and of all times? No narrow superstition, harsh asceticism, intolerance, fanatical fierceness or perversion: a Revelation, so far as it goes, that such a thousandfold hidden beauty and divineness dwells in all Nature; which let all men worship as they can! We may say without offence, that there rises a kind of universal Psalm out of this Shakespeare too; not unfit to make itself heard among the still more sacred Psalms. Not in disharmony with these, if we understood them, but in harmony!—I cannot call this Shakespeare a "Sceptic," as some do; his indifference to the creeds and theological quarrels of his time misleading them. No: neither unpatriotic, though he says little about his Patriotism; nor sceptic, though he says little about his Faith. Such "indifference" was the fruit of his greatness withal: his whole heart was in his own grand sphere of worship (we may call it such); these other controversies, vitally important to other men, were not vital to him.

But call it worship, call it what you will, is it not a right glorious thing, and set of things, this that Shakespeare has brought us? For myself, I feel that there is actually a kind of sacredness in the fact of such a man being sent into this Earth. Is he not an eye to us all; a blessed heaven-sent Bringer of Light?—and, at bottom, was it not perhaps far better that this Shakespeare, everyway an unconscious man, was *conscious* of no Heavenly message? He did not feel, like Mahomet, because he saw into those internal Splendours, that he specially was the "Prophet of God:" and was he not greater than Mahomet in that? Greater; and also, if we compute strictly, as we did in Dante's case, more successful. It was intrinsically an error that notion of Mahomet's, of his supreme Prophethood; and has come down to us inextricably involved in error to this day; dragging along with it such a coil of fables, impurities, intolerances, as makes it a questionable step for me here and now to say, as I have done, that Mahomet was a true Speaker at all, and not rather an ambitious charlatan, perversity and simulacrum; no Speaker, but a Babbler! Even in Arabia, as I compute, Mahomet will have exhausted himself and become obsolete, while this Shakespeare, this Dante may still be young;—while this Shakespeare may still pretend to be a Priest of Mankind, of Arabia as of other places, for unlimited periods to come!

Compared with any speaker or singer one knows, even with Aeschylus or Homer, why should he not,

for veracity and universality, last like them? He is *sincere* as they; reaches deep down like them, to the universal and perennial. But as for Mahomet, I think it had been better for him *not* to be so conscious! Alas, poor Mahomet; all that he was *conscious* of was a mere error; a futility and triviality—as indeed such ever is. The truly great in him too was the unconscious: that he was a wild Arab lion of the desert, and did speak-out with that great thunder-voice of his, not by words which he *thought* to be great, but by actions, by feelings, by a history which *were* great! His Koran has become a stupid piece of prolix absurdity; we do not believe, like him that God wrote that! The Great Man here too, as always' is a Force of Nature: whatsoever is truly great in him springs-up from the in articulate deeps.

Well: this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant, who rose to be Manager of a Playhouse, so that he could live without begging; whom the Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on; whom Sir Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the Treadmill! We did not account him a god, like Odin, while he dwelt with us;—on which point there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat: In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakespeare has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of Englishmen, would we not give-up rather than the Stratford Peasant? There is no regiment of highest Dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honour among foreign nations, as an ornament to our English Household, what item is there that we would not surrender rather than him? Consider now, if they asked us, Will you give-up your Indian Empire or your Shakespeare, you English; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shakespeare? Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer: Indian Empire, or no Indian Empire; we cannot do without Shakespeare! Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day; but this Shakespeare does not go, he lasts forever with us; we cannot give-up our Shakespeare!

Nay, apart from spiritualities; and considering him merely as a real, marketable, tangibly-useful possession. England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland,[85] east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall-out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish: what is it that will accomplish this? Acts of Parliament, administrative prime-ministers cannot. America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it: Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone! This King Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs; in destructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another: "Yes, this Shakespeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him." The most common-sense politician, too, if he pleases, may think of that.

Yes, truly, it is a great thing for a Nation that it get an articulate voice; that it produce a man who will speak-forth melodiously what the heart of it means! Italy, for example, poor Italy lies dismembered, scattered asunder, not appearing in any protocol or treaty as a unity at all; yet the noble Italy is actually *one*: Italy produced its Dante; Italy can speak! The Czar of all the Russias, he is strong, with so many bayonets, Cossacks and cannons; and does a great feat in keeping such a tract of Earth politically together; but he cannot yet speak. Something great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius, to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb monster hitherto. His cannons and Cossacks will all have rusted into nonentity, while that Dante's voice is still audible. The Nation that has a Dante is bound together as no dumb Russia can be.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 81: From Lecture III, "The Hero as Poet," in "Heroes and Hero-Worship," 1841.]

[Footnote 82: St. Stephen's: House of Commons.]

[Footnote 83: Scattered pieces.]

[Footnote 84: The passage in Shakespeare's "Tempest" from which the words quoted in the preceding sentence are taken, is inscribed on the scroll in the hand of Shakespeare's statue in Westminster Abbey.]

CHARLES LAMB[86]

WALTER PATER

Those English critics who at the beginning of the present century introduced from Germany, together with some other subtleties of thought transplanted hither not without advantage, the distinction between the *Fancy* and the *Imagination*, made much also of the cognate distinction between *Wit* and *Humour*, between that unreal and transitory mirth, which is as the crackling of thorns under the pot, and the laughter which blends with tears and even with the sublimities of the imagination, and which, in its most exquisite motives, is one with pity—the laughter of the comedies of Shakespeare, hardly less expressive than his moods of seriousness or solemnity, of that deeply stirred soul of sympathy in him, as flowing from which both tears and laughter are alike genuine and contagious.

This distinction between wit and humour, Coleridge and other kindred critics applied, with much effect, in their studies of some of our older English writers. And as the distinction between imagination and fancy, made popular by Wordsworth, found its best justification in certain essential differences of stuff in Wordsworth's own writings, so this other critical distinction, between wit and humour, finds a sort of visible interpretation and instance in the character and writings of Charles Lamb;—one who lived more consistently than most writers among subtle literary theories, and whose remains are still full of curious interest for the student of literature as a fine art.

The author of the *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*, coming to the humourists of the nineteenth, would have found, as is true pre-eminently of Thackeray himself, the springs of pity in them deepened by the deeper subjectivity, the intenser and closer living with itself, which is characteristic of the temper of the later generation; and therewith, the mirth also, from the amalgam of which with pity humour proceeds, has become, in Charles Dickens, for example, freer and more boisterous.

To this more high-pitched feeling, since predominant in our literature, the writings of Charles Lamb, whose life occupies the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, are a transition; and such union of grave, of terrible even, with gay, we may note in the circumstances of his life, as reflected thence into his work. We catch the aroma of a singular, homely sweetness about his first years, spent on Thames' side, amid the red bricks and terraced gardens, with their rich historical memories of old-fashioned legal London. Just above the poorer class, deprived, as he says, of the "sweet food of academic institution," he is fortunate enough to be reared in the classical languages at an ancient school, where he becomes the companion of Coleridge, as at a later period he was his enthusiastic disciple. So far, the years go by with less than the usual share of boyish difficulties; protected, one fancies, seeing what he was afterwards, by some attraction of temper in the quaint child, small and delicate, with a certain Jewish expression in his clear, brown complexion, eyes not precisely of the same colour, and a slow walk adding to the staidness of his figure; and whose infirmity of speech, increased by agitation, is partly engaging.

And the cheerfulness of all this, of the mere aspect of Lamb's quiet subsequent life also, might make the more superficial reader think of him as in himself something slight, and of his mirth as cheaply bought. Yet we know that beneath this blithe surface there was something of the fateful domestic horror, of the beautiful heroism and devotedness too, of old Greek tragedy. His sister Mary, ten years his senior, in a sudden paroxysm of madness, caused the death of her mother, and was brought to trial for what an overstrained justice might have construed as the greatest of crimes. She was released on the brother's pledging himself to watch over her; and to this sister, from the age of twenty-one, Charles Lamb sacrificed himself, "seeking thenceforth," says his earliest biographer, "no connection which could interfere with her supremacy in his affections, or impair his ability to sustain and comfort her." The "feverish, romantic tie of love" he cast away in exchange for the "charities of home." Only, from time to time, the madness returned, affecting him too, once; and we see the brother and sister voluntarily yielding to restraint. In estimating the humour of *Elia*, we must no more forget the strong undercurrent of this great misfortune and pity, than one could forget it in his actual story. So he becomes the best critic, almost the discoverer, of Webster, a dramatist of genius so sombre, so heavily coloured, so *macabre*.^[87] *Rosamund Grey* written in his twenty-third year, a story with something bitter and exaggerated, an almost insane fixedness of gloom perceptible in it, strikes clearly this note in his work.

For himself, and from his own point of view, the exercise of his gift, of his literary art, came to gild or sweeten a life of monotonous labour, and seemed, as far as regarded others, no very important thing; availing to give them a little pleasure, and inform them a little, chiefly in a retrospective manner, but in no way concerned with the turning of the tides of the great world. And yet this very modesty, this unambitious way of conceiving his work, has impressed upon it a certain exceptional enduringness. For of the remarkable English writers contemporary with Lamb, many were greatly preoccupied with ideas of practice—religious, moral, political—ideas which have since, in some sense or other, entered permanently into the general consciousness; and, these having no longer any stimulus for a generation provided with a different stock of ideas, the writings of those who spent so much of themselves in their propagation have lost, with posterity, something of what they gained by them in immediate influence. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley even—sharing so largely in the unrest of their own age, and made personally more interesting thereby, yet, of their actual work, surrender more to the mere course of time than some of those who may have seemed to exercise themselves hardly at all in great matters, to have been little serious, or a little indifferent, regarding them.

Of this number of the disinterested servants of literature, smaller in England than in France, Charles Lamb is one. In the making of prose he realises the principle of art for its own sake, as completely as Keats in the making of verse. And, working ever close to the concrete, to the details, great or small, of actual things, books, persons, and with no part of them blurred to his vision by the intervention of mere abstract theories, he has reached an enduring moral effect also, in a sort of boundless sympathy. Unoccupied, as he might seem, with great matters, he is in immediate contact with what is real, especially in its caressing littleness, that littleness in which there is much of the whole woeful heart of things, and meets it more than half-way with a perfect understanding of it. What sudden, unexpected touches of pathos in him!—bearing witness how the sorrow of humanity, the *Weltschmerz*, the constant aching of its wounds, is ever present with him: but what a gift also for the enjoyment of life in its subtleties, of enjoyment actually refined by the need of some thoughtful economies and making the most of things! Little arts of happiness he is ready to teach to others. The quaint remarks of children which another would scarcely have heard, he preserves—little flies in the priceless amber of his Attic wit—and has his "Praise of chimney-sweepers" (as William Blake has written, with so much natural pathos, the Chimney-sweeper's Song), valuing carefully their white teeth, and fine enjoyment of white sheets in stolen sleep at Arundel Castle, as he tells the story, anticipating something of the mood of our deep humourists of the last generation. His simple mother-pity for those who suffer by accident, or unkindness of nature, blindness for instance, or fateful disease of mind like his sister's, has something primitive in its largeness; and on behalf of ill-used animals he is early in composing a *Pity's Gift*.

And if, in deeper or more superficial sense, the dead *do* care at all for their name and fame, then how must the souls of Shakespeare and Webster have been stirred, after so long converse with things that stopped their ears, whether above or below the soil, at his exquisite appreciations of them; the souls of Titian and of Hogarth too; for, what has not been observed so generally as the excellence of his literary criticism, Charles Lamb is a fine critic of painting also. It was as loyal, self-forgetful work for others, for Shakespeare's self first, for instance, and then for Shakespeare's readers, that that too was done: he has the true scholar's way of forgetting himself in his subject. For though "defrauded," as we saw, in his young years, "of the sweet food of academic institution," he is yet essentially a scholar, and all his work mainly retrospective, as I said; his own sorrows, affections, perceptions, being alone real to him of the present. "I cannot make these present times," he says once, "present to *me*."

Above all, he becomes not merely an expositor, permanently valuable, but for Englishmen almost the discoverer of the old English drama. "The book is such as I am glad there should be," he modestly says of the *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakespeare*; to which, however, he adds in a series of notes the very quintessence of criticism, the choicest savour and perfume of Elizabethan poetry being sorted, and stored here, with a sort of delicate intellectual epicureanism, which has had the effect of winning for these, then almost forgotten, poets, one generation after another of enthusiastic students. Could he but have known how fresh a source of culture he was evoking there for other generations, through all those years in which, a little wistfully, he would harp on the limitation of his time by business, and sigh for a better fortune in regard to literary opportunities!

To feel strongly the charm of an old poet or moralist, the literary charm of Burton, for instance, or Quarles, or The Duchess of Newcastle; and then to interpret that charm, to convey it to others—he seeming to himself but to hand on to others, in mere humble ministrations, that of which for them he is really the creator—this is the way of his criticism; cast off in a stray letter often, or passing note, or lightest essay or conversation. It is in such a letter, for instance, that we come upon a singularly penetrative estimate of the genius and writings of Defoe.

Tracking, with an attention always alert, the whole process of their production to its starting-point in the deep places of the mind, he seems to realise the but half-conscious intuitions of Hogarth or

Shakespeare, and develops the great ruling unities which have swayed their actual work; or "puts up," and takes, the one morsel of good stuff in an old, forgotten writer. Even in what he says casually there comes an aroma of old English; noticeable echoes, in chance turn and phrase, of the great masters of style, the old masters. Godwin, seeing in quotation a passage from *John Woodvil*, takes it for a choice fragment of an old dramatist, and goes to Lamb to assist him in finding the author. His power of delicate imitation in prose and verse reaches the length of a fine mimicry even, as in those last essays of Elia on Popular Fallacies, with their gentle reproduction or caricature of Sir Thomas Browne, showing, the more completely, his mastery, by disinterested study, of those elements of the man which were the real source of style in that great, solemn master of old English, who, ready to say what he has to say with fearless homeliness, yet continually overawes one with touches of a strange utterance from worlds afar. For it is with the delicacies of fine literature especially, its gradations of expression, its fine judgment, its pure sense of words, of vocabulary—things, alas! dying out in the English literature of the present, together with the appreciation of them in our literature of the past—that his literary mission is chiefly concerned. And yet, delicate, refining, daintily epicurean, as he may seem, when he writes of giants such as Hogarth or Shakespeare, though often but in a stray note, you catch the sense of veneration with which those great names in past literature and art brooded over his intelligence, his undiminished impressibility by the great effects in them. Reading, commenting on Shakespeare, he is like a man who walks alone under a grand stormy sky, and among unwonted tricks of light, when powerful spirits might seem to be abroad upon the air; and the grim humour of Hogarth, as he analyses it, rises into a kind of spectral grotesque; while he too knows the secret of fine, significant touches like theirs.

There are traits, customs, characteristics of houses and dress, surviving morsels of old life, such as Hogarth has transferred so vividly into *The Rake's Progress*, or *Marriage a la Mode*, concerning which we well understand how, common, uninteresting, or even worthless in themselves, they have come to please us at last as things picturesque, being set in relief against the modes of our different age. Customs, stiff to us, stiff dresses, stiff furniture—types of cast-off fashions, left by accident, and which no one ever meant to preserve—we contemplate with more than good-nature, as having in them the veritable accent of a time, not altogether to be replaced by its more solemn and self-conscious deposits; like those tricks of individuality which we find quite tolerable in persons, because they convey to us the secret of lifelike expression, and with regard to which we are all to some extent humourists. But it is part of the privilege of the genuine humourists to anticipate this pensive mood with regard to the ways and things of his own day; to look upon the tricks in manner of the life about him with that same refined, purged sort of vision, which will come naturally to those of a later generation, in observing whatever may have survived by chance of its mere external habit. Seeing things always by the light of an understanding more entire than is possible for ordinary minds, of the whole mechanism of humanity, and seeing also the manner, the outward mode or fashion, always in strict connection with the spiritual condition which determined it, a humourist such as Charles Lamb anticipates the enchantment of distance; and the characteristics of places, ranks, habits of life, are transfigured for him, even now and in advance of time, by poetic light; justifying what some might condemn as mere sentimentality, in the effort to hand on unbroken the tradition of such fashion or accent. "The praise of beggars," "the cries of London," the traits of actors just grown "old," the spots in "town" where the country, its fresh green and fresh water, still lingered on, one after another, amidst the bustle; the quaint, dimmed, just played-out farces, he had relished so much, coming partly through them to understand the earlier English theatre as a thing once really alive; those fountains and sundials of old gardens, of which he entertains such dainty discourse—he feels the poetry of these things, as the poetry of things old indeed, but surviving as an actual part of the life of the present, and as something quite different from the poetry of things flatly gone from us and antique, which come back to us, if at all, as entire strangers, like Scott's old Scotch-border personages, their oaths and armour. Such gift of appreciation depends, as I said, on the habitual apprehension of men's life as a whole—its organic wholeness, as extending even to the least things in it—of its outward manner in connection with its inward temper; and it involves a fine perception of the congruities, the musical accordance between humanity and its environment of custom, society, personal intercourse; as if all this, with its meetings, partings, ceremonies, gesture, tones of speech, were some delicate instrument on which an expert performer is playing.

These are some of the characteristics of Elia, one essentially an essayist, and of the true family of Montaigne, "never judging," as he says, "system-wise of things, but fastening on particulars;" saying all things as it were on chance occasion only, and by way of pastime, yet succeeding thus, "glimpse-wise," in catching and recording more frequently than others "the gayest, happiest attitude of things;" a casual writer for dreamy readers, yet always giving the reader so much more than he seemed to propose. There is something of the follower of George Fox about him, and the Quaker's belief in the inward light coming to one passive, to the mere wayfarer, who will be sure at all events to lose no light which falls by the way—glimpses, suggestions, delightful half-apprehensions, profound thoughts of old philosophers, hints of the innermost reason in things, the full knowledge of which is held in reserve; all the varied stuff, that is, of which genuine essays are made.

And with him, as with Montaigne, the desire of self-portraiture is, below all more superficial tendencies, the real motive in writing at all—a desire closely connected with that intimacy, that modern subjectivity, which may be called the *Montaignesque* element in literature. What he designs is to give you himself, to acquaint you with his likeness; but must do this, if at all, indirectly, being indeed always more or less reserved, for himself and his friends; friendship counting for so much in his life, that he is jealous of anything that might jar or disturb it, even to the length of a sort of insincerity, to which he assigns its quaint "praise;" this lover of stage plays significantly welcoming a little touch of the artificiality of play to sweeten the intercourse of actual life.

And, in effect, a very delicate and expressive portrait of him does put itself together for the duly meditative reader. In indirect touches of his own work, scraps of faded old letters, what others remembered of his talk, the man's likeness emerges; what he laughed and wept at, his sudden elevations, and longings after absent friends, his fine casuistries of affection and devices to jog sometimes, as he says, the lazy happiness of perfect love, his solemn moments of higher discourse with the young, as they came across him on occasion, and went along a little way with him, the sudden surprised apprehension of beauties in old literature, revealing anew the deep soul of poetry in things, and withal the pure spirit of fun, having its way again; laughter, that most short-lived of all things (some of Shakespeare's even being grown hollow) wearing well with him. Much of all this comes out through his letters, which may be regarded as a department of his essays. He is an old-fashioned letter-writer, the essence of the old fashion of letter-writing lying, as with true essay-writing, in the dexterous availing oneself of accident and circumstance, in the prosecution of deeper lines of observation; although, just as with the record of his conversation, one loses something, in losing the actual tones of the stammerer, still graceful in his halting, as he halted also in composition, composing slowly and by fits, "like a Flemish painter," as he tells us, so "it is to be regretted," says the editor of his letters, "that in the printed letters the reader will lose the curious varieties of writing with which the originals abound, and which are scrupulously adapted to the subject."

Also, he was a true "collector," delighting in the personal finding of a thing, in the colour an old book or print gets for him by the little accidents which attest previous ownership. Wither's *Emblems*, "that old book and quaint," long-desired, when he finds it at last, he values none the less because a child had coloured the plates with his paints. A lover of household warmth everywhere, of that tempered atmosphere which our various habitations get by men's living within them, he "sticks to his favourite books as he did to his friends," and loved the "town," with a jealous eye for all its characteristics, "old houses" coming to have souls for him. The yearning for mere warmth against him in another, makes him content, all through life, with pure brotherliness, "the most kindly and natural species of love," as he says, in place of the *passion* of love. Brother and sister, sitting thus side by side, have, of course, their anticipations how one of them must sit at last in the faint sun alone, and set us speculating, as we read, as to precisely what amount of melancholy really accompanied for him the approach of old age, so steadily foreseen; make us note also with pleasure, his successive wakings up to cheerful realities, out of a too curious musing over what is gone and what remains, of life. In his subtle capacity for enjoying the more refined points of earth, of human relationship, he could throw the gleam of poetry or humour on what seemed common or threadbare; has a care for the sighs, and the weary, humdrum preoccupations of very weak people, down to their little pathetic "gentilities," even; while, in the purely human temper, he can write of death, almost like Shakespeare.

And that care, through all his enthusiasm of discovery, for what is accustomed, in literature, connected thus with his close clinging to home and the earth, was congruous also with that love for the accustomed in religion, which we may notice in him. He is one of the last votaries of that old-world sentiment, based on the feelings of hope and awe, which may be described as the religion of men of letters (as Sir Thomas Browne has his *Religion of the Physician*), religion as understood by the soberer men of letters in the last century, Addison, Gray, and Johnson; by Jane Austen and Thackeray, later. A high way of feeling developed largely by constant intercourse with the great things of literature, and extended in its turn to those matters greater still, this religion lives, in the main retrospectively, in a system of received sentiments and beliefs; received, like those great things of literature and art, in the first instance, on the authority of a long tradition, in the course of which they have linked themselves in a thousand complex ways to the conditions of human life, and no more questioned now than the feeling one keeps by one of the greatness—say! of Shakespeare. For Charles Lamb, such form of religion becomes the solemn background on which the nearer and more exciting objects of his immediate experience relieve themselves, borrowing from it an expression of calm; its necessary atmosphere being indeed a profound quiet, that quiet which has in it a kind of sacramental efficacy, working, we might say, on the principle of the *opus operatum*,[88] almost without any co-operation of one's own, towards the assertion of the higher self. And, in truth, to men of Lamb's delicately attuned temperament mere physical stillness has its full value; such natures seeming to long for it sometimes, as for no merely negative thing, with a sort of mystical sensuality.

The writings of Charles Lamb are an excellent illustration of the value of reserve in literature. Below his quiet, his quaintness, his humour, and what may seem the slightness, the occasional or accidental character of his work, there lies, as I said at starting, as in his life, a genuinely tragic element. The gloom, reflected at its darkest in those hard shadows of *Rosamund Grey*, is always there, though not always realised either for himself or his readers, and restrained always in utterance. It gives to those lighter matters on the surface of life and literature among which he for the most part moved, a wonderful force of expression, as if at any moment these slight words and fancies might pierce very far into the deeper soul of things. In his writing, as in his life, that quiet is not the low-flying of one from the first drowsy by choice, and needing the prick of some strong passion or worldly ambition, to stimulate him into all the energy of which he is capable; but rather the reaction of nature, after an escape from fate, dark and insane as in old Greek tragedy, following upon which the sense of mere relief becomes a kind of passion, as with one who, having narrowly escaped earthquake or shipwreck, finds a thing for grateful tears in just sitting quiet at home, under the wall, till the end of days.

He felt the genius of places; and I sometimes think he resembles the places he knew and liked best, and where his lot fell—London, sixty-five years ago, with Covent Garden and the old theatres, and the Temple gardens still unspoiled, Thames gliding down, and beyond to north and south the fields at Enfield or Hampton, to which, "with their living trees," the thoughts wander "from the hard wood of the desk"—fields fresher, and coming nearer to town then, but in one of which the present writer remembers, on a brooding early summer's day, to have heard the cuckoo for the first time. Here, the surface of things is certainly humdrum, the streets dingy, the green places, where the child goes a-maying, tame enough. But nowhere are things more apt to respond to the brighter weather, nowhere is there so much difference between rain and sunshine, nowhere do the clouds roll together more grandly; those quaint suburban pastorals gather a certain quality of grandeur from the background of the great city, with its weighty atmosphere, and portent of storm in the rapid light on dome and bleached stone steeples.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 86: From "Appreciations," 1889.]

[Footnote 87: Macabre: very grim.]

[Footnote 88: Opus operatum (a phrase from Catholic theology): the work performed through the sacraments—baptism, confirmation, etc.—the efficacy of which is not dependent on the participants.]

DR. HEIDEGGER'S EXPERIMENT[89]

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

That very singular man, old Dr. Heidegger, once invited four venerable friends to meet him in his study. There were three white-bearded gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, and a withered gentlewoman, whose name was the Widow Wycherly. They were all melancholy old creatures, who had been unfortunate in life, and whose greatest misfortune it was, that they were not long ago in their graves. Mr. Medbourne, in the vigor of his age, had been a prosperous merchant, but had lost his all by a frantic speculation, and was now little better than a mendicant. Colonel Killigrew had wasted his best years, and his health and substance, in the pursuit of sinful pleasures, which had given birth to a brood of pains, such as the gout, and divers other torments of soul and body. Mr. Gascoigne was a ruined politician, a man of evil fame, or at least had been so, till time had buried him from the knowledge of the present generation, and made him obscure instead of infamous. As for the Widow Wycherly, tradition tells us that she was a great beauty in her day; but, for a long while past, she had lived in deep seclusion, on account of certain scandalous stories, which had prejudiced the gentry of the town against her. It is a circumstance worth mentioning, that each of these three old gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, were early lovers of the Widow Wycherly, and had once been on the point of cutting each others' throats for her sake. And, before proceeding further, I will merely hint, that Dr. Heidegger and all his four guests were sometimes thought to be a little beside themselves; as is not unfrequently the case with old people, when worried either by present troubles or woeful recollections.

"My dear old friends," said Dr. Heidegger, motioning them to be seated, "I am desirous of your assistance in one of those little experiments with which I amuse myself here in my study."

If all stories were true, Dr. Heidegger's study must have been a very curious place. It was a dim, old-fashioned chamber festooned with cobwebs, and besprinkled with antique dust. Around the walls stood several oaken bookcases, the lower shelves of which were filled with rows of gigantic folios, and black-letter quartos, and the upper with little parchment-covered duodecimos. Over the central bookcase was a bronze bust of Hippocrates, with which, according to some authorities, Dr. Heidegger was accustomed to hold consultations, in all difficult cases of his practice. In the obscurest corner of the room stood a tall and narrow oaken closet, with its door ajar, within which doubtfully appeared a skeleton. Between two of the bookcases hung a looking-glass, presenting its high and dusty plate within a tarnished gilt frame. Among many wonderful stories related of this mirror, it was fabled that the spirits of all the doctor's deceased patients dwelt within its verge, and would stare him in the face whenever he looked thitherward. The opposite side of the chamber was ornamented with the full-length portrait of a young lady, arrayed in the faded magnificence of silk, satin, and brocade, and with a visage as faded as her dress. Above half a century ago Dr. Heidegger had been on the point of marriage with this young lady; but, being affected with some slight disorder, she had swallowed one of her lover's prescriptions, and died on the bridal evening. The greatest curiosity of the study remains to be mentioned; it was a ponderous folio volume, bound in black leather, with massive silver clasps. There were no letters on the back, and nobody could tell the title of the book. But it was well known to be a book of magic; and once, when a chambermaid had lifted it, merely to brush away the dust, the skeleton had rattled in its closet, the picture of the young lady had stepped one foot upon the floor, and several ghastly faces had peeped forth from the mirror; while the brazen head of Hippocrates frowned, and said—"Forbear!"

Such was Dr. Heidegger's study. On the summer afternoon of our tale, a small round table, as black as ebony, stood in the center of the room sustaining a cut-glass vase of beautiful form and elaborate workmanship. The sunshine came through the window, between the heavy festoons of two faded damask curtains, and fell directly across this vase, so that a mild splendor was reflected from it on the ashen visages of the five old people who sat around. Four champagne glasses were also on the table.

"My dear old friends," repeated Dr. Heidegger, "may I reckon on your aid in performing an exceedingly curious experiment?"

Now Dr. Heidegger was a very strange old gentleman, whose eccentricity had become the nucleus for a thousand fantastic stories. Some of these fables, to my shame be it spoken, might possibly be traced back to mine own veracious self; and if any passage of the present tale should startle the reader's faith, I must be content to bear the stigma of a fiction monger.

When the doctor's four guests heard him talk of his proposed experiment, they anticipated nothing more wonderful than the murder of a mouse in an air pump, or the examination of a cobweb by the microscope, or some similar nonsense, with which he was constantly in the habit of pestering his intimates. But without waiting for a reply, Dr. Heidegger hobbled across the chamber, and returned with the same ponderous folio, bound in black leather, which common report affirmed to be a book of magic. Undoing the silver clasps, he opened the volume, and took from among its black-letter pages a rose, or what was once a rose, though now the green leaves and crimson petals had assumed one brownish hue, and the ancient flower seemed ready to crumble to dust in the doctor's hands.

"This rose," said Dr. Heidegger, with a sigh, "this same withered and crumbling flower, blossomed five and fifty years ago. It was given me by Sylvia Ward, whose portrait hangs yonder; and I meant to wear it in my bosom at our wedding. Five and fifty years it has been treasured between the leaves of this old volume. Now, would you deem it possible that this rose of half a century could ever bloom again?"

"Nonsense!" said the Widow Wycherly, with a peevish toss of her head. "You might as well ask whether an old woman's wrinkled face could ever bloom again."

"See!" answered Dr. Heidegger.

He uncovered the vase, and threw the faded rose into the water which it contained. At first, it lay lightly on the surface of the fluid, appearing to imbibe none of its moisture. Soon, however, a singular change began to be visible. The crushed and dried petals stirred, and assumed a deepening tinge of crimson, as if the flower were reviving from a death-like slumber; the slender stalk and twigs of foliage became green; and there was the rose of half a century, looking as fresh as when Sylvia Ward had first given it to her lover. It was scarcely full blown; for some of its delicate red leaves curled modestly around its moist bosom, within which two or three dewdrops were sparkling.

"That is certainly a very pretty deception," said the doctor's friends; carelessly, however, for they had witnessed greater miracles at a conjurer's show; "pray how was it effected?"

"Did you never hear of the 'Fountain of Youth'?" asked Dr. Heidegger, "which Ponce De Leon, the Spanish adventurer, went in search of two or three centuries ago?"

"But did Ponce De Leon ever find it?" said the Widow Wycherly.

"No," answered Dr. Heidegger, "for he never sought it in the right place. The famous Fountain of Youth, if I am rightly informed, is situated in the southern part of the Floridian peninsula, not far from Lake Macaco. Its source is overshadowed by several gigantic magnolias, which, though numberless centuries old, have been kept as fresh as violets, by the virtues of this wonderful water. An acquaintance of mine, knowing my curiosity in such matters, has sent me what you see in the vase."

"Ahem!" said Colonel Killigrew, who believed not a word of the doctor's story; "and what may be the effect of this fluid on the human frame?"

"You shall judge for yourself, my dear Colonel," replied Dr. Heidegger; "and all of you, my respected friends, are welcome to so much of this admirable fluid, as may restore to you the bloom of youth. For my own part, having had much trouble in growing old, I am in no hurry to grow young again. With your permission, therefore, I will merely watch the progress of the experiment."

While he spoke, Dr. Heidegger had been filling the four champagne glasses with the water of the Fountain of Youth. It was apparently impregnated with an effervescent gas, for little bubbles were continually ascending from the depths of the glasses, and bursting in silvery spray at the surface. As the liquor diffused a pleasant perfume, the old people doubted not that it possessed cordial and comfortable properties; and, though utter sceptics as to its rejuvenescent power, they were inclined to swallow it at once. But Dr. Heidegger besought them to stay a moment.

"Before you drink, my respectable old friends," said he, "it would be well that, with the experience of a lifetime to direct you, you should draw up a few general rules for your guidance, in passing a second time through the perils of youth. Think what a sin and shame it would be, if, with your peculiar advantages, you should not become patterns of virtue and wisdom to all the young people of the age!"

The doctor's four venerable friends made him no answer, except by a feeble and tremulous laugh; so very ridiculous was the idea, that, knowing how closely repentance treads behind the steps of error, they should ever go astray again.

"Drink, then," said the doctor, bowing; "I rejoice that I have so well selected the subjects of my experiment."

With palsied hands, they raised the glasses to their lips. The liquor, if it really possessed such virtues as Dr. Heidegger imputed to it, could not have been bestowed on four human beings who needed it more wofully. They looked as if they had never known what youth or pleasure was, but had been the offspring of Nature's dotage, and always the gray, decrepit, sapless, miserable creatures, who now sat stooping round the doctor's table, without life enough in their souls or bodies to be animated even by the prospect of growing young again. They drank off the water, and replaced their glasses on the table.

Assuredly there was an almost immediate improvement in the aspect of the party, not unlike what might have been produced by a glass of generous wine, together with a sudden glow of cheerful sunshine, brightening over all their visages at once. There was a healthful suffusion on their cheeks, instead of the ashen hue that had made them look so corpse-like. They gazed at one another, and fancied that some magic power had really begun to smooth away the deep and sad inscriptions which Father Time had been so long engraving on their brows. The Widow Wycherly adjusted her cap, for she felt almost like a woman again.

"Give us more of this wondrous water!" cried they, eagerly. "We are younger—but we are still too old! Quick—give us more!"

"Patience, patience!" quoth Dr. Heidegger, who sat watching the experiment, with philosophic coolness. "You have been a long time growing old. Surely, you might be content to grow young in half an hour! But the water is at your service."

Again he filled their glasses with the liquor of youth, enough of which still remained in the vase to turn half the old people in the city to the age of their own grandchildren. While the bubbles were yet sparkling on the brim, the doctor's four guests snatched their glasses from the table, and swallowed the contents at a single gulp. Was it delusion? Even while the draught was passing down their throats, it seemed to have wrought a change on their whole systems. Their eyes grew clear and bright; a dark shade deepened among their silvery locks; they sat around the table, three gentlemen, of middle age, and a woman, hardly beyond her buxom prime.

"My dear widow, you are charming!" cried Colonel Killigrew, whose eyes had been fixed upon her face, while the shadows of age were flitting from it like darkness from the crimson daybreak.

The fair widow knew, of old, that Colonel Killigrew's compliments were not always measured by sober truth; so she started up and ran to the mirror, still dreading that the ugly visage of an old woman would meet her gaze. Meanwhile, the three gentlemen behaved in such a manner as proved that the water of the Fountain of Youth possessed some intoxicating qualities; unless, indeed, their exhilaration of spirits were merely a lightsome dizziness, caused by the sudden removal of the weight of years. Mr. Gascoigne's mind seemed to run on political topics, but whether relating to the past, present, or future, could not easily be determined, since the same ideas and phrases have been in vogue these fifty years. Now he rattled forth full-throated sentences about patriotism, national glory, and the people's right; now he muttered some perilous stuff or other, in a sly and doubtful whisper, so cautiously that even his own conscience could scarcely catch the secret; and now, again, he spoke in measured accents, and a deeply deferential tone, as if a royal ear were listening to his well-turned periods. Colonel Killigrew all this time had been trolling forth a jolly bottle song, and ringing his glass in symphony with the chorus, while his eyes wandered toward the buxom figure of the Widow Wycherly. On the other side of the table, Mr. Medbourne was involved in a calculation of dollars and cents, with which was strangely intermingled a project for supplying the East Indies with ice, by harnessing a team of whales to the polar icebergs.

As for the Widow Wycherly, she stood before the mirror courtesying and simpering to her own image, and greeting it as the friend whom she loved better than all the world beside. She thrust her face close to the glass, to see whether some long-remembered wrinkle or crow's-foot had indeed vanished. She examined whether the snow had so entirely melted from her hair, that the venerable cap could be safely thrown aside. At last, turning briskly away, she came with a sort of dancing step to the table.

"My dear old doctor," cried she, "pray favor me with another glass!"

"Certainly, my dear madam, certainly!" replied the complaisant doctor; "see! I have already filled the glasses."

There, in fact, stood the four glasses, brimful of this wonderful water, the delicate spray of which, as it effervesced from the surface, resembled the tremulous glitter of diamonds. It was now so nearly sunset, that the chamber had grown duskier than ever; but a mild and moonlight splendor gleamed from within the vase, and rested alike on the four guests and on the doctor's venerable figure. He sat in a high-backed, elaborately-carved, oaken arm-chair, with a gray dignity of aspect that might have well befitted that very Father Time, whose power had never been disputed, save by this fortunate company. Even while quaffing the third draught of the Fountain of Youth, they were almost awed by the expression of his mysterious visage.

But, the next moment, the exhilarating gush of young life shot through their veins. They were now in the happy prime of youth. Age, with its miserable train of cares, and sorrows, and diseases, was remembered only as the trouble of a dream, from which they had joyously awoke. The fresh gloss of the soul, so early lost, and without which the world's successive scenes had been but a gallery of faded pictures, again threw its enchantment over all their prospects. They felt like new-created beings, in a new-created universe.

"We are young! We are young!" they cried exultingly.

Youth, like the extremity of age, had effaced the strongly-marked characteristics of middle life, and mutually assimilated them all. They were a group of merry youngsters, almost maddened with the exuberant frolicsomeness of their years. The most singular effect of their gayety was an impulse to mock the infirmity and decrepitude of which they had so lately been the victims. They laughed loudly at their old-fashioned attire, the wide-skirted coats and flapped waistcoats of the young men, and the ancient cap and gown of the blooming girl. One limped across the floor, like a gouty grandfather; one set a pair of spectacles astride of his nose, and pretended to pore over the black-letter pages of the book of magic; a third seated himself in an arm-chair, and strove to imitate the venerable dignity of Dr. Heidegger. Then all shouted mirthfully, and leaped about the room. The Widow Wycherly—if so fresh a damsel could be called a widow—tripped up to the doctor's chair, with a mischievous merriment in her rosy face.

"Doctor, you dear old soul," cried she, "get up and dance with me!" And then the four young people laughed louder than ever to think what a queer figure the poor old doctor would cut.

"Pray excuse me," answered the doctor, quietly. "I am old and rheumatic, and my dancing days were over long ago. But either of these gay young gentlemen will be glad of so pretty a partner."

"Dance with me, Clara!" cried Colonel Killigrew.

"No, no, I will be her partner!" shouted Mr. Gascoigne.

"She promised me her hand fifty years ago!" exclaimed Mr. Medbourne.

They all gathered round her. One caught both her hands in his passionate grasp—another threw his arm about her waist—the third buried his hand among the glossy curls that clustered beneath the widow's cap. Blushing, panting, struggling, chiding, laughing, her warm breath fanning each of their faces by turns, she strove to disengage herself, yet still remained in their triple embrace. Never was there a livelier picture of youthful rivalry, with bewitching beauty for the prize. Yet, by a strange deception, owing to the duskiness of the chamber, and the antique dresses which they still wore, the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old, gray, withered grand-sires, ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shrivelled grandam.

But they were young; their burning passions proved them so. Inflamed to madness by the coquetry of the girl-widow, who neither granted nor quite withheld her favors, the three rivals began to interchange threatening glances. Still keeping hold of the fair prize, they grappled fiercely at one another's throats. As they struggled to and fro, the table was overturned, and the vase dashed into a thousand fragments. The precious Water of Youth flowed in a bright stream across the floor, moistening the wings of a butterfly, which, grown old in the decline of summer, had alighted there to die. The insect fluttered lightly through the chamber, and settled on the snowy head of Dr. Heidegger.

"Come, come gentlemen!—come, Madame Wycherly," exclaimed the doctor, "I really must protest against this riot."

They stood still, and shivered; for it seemed as if gray Time were calling them back from their sunny youth, far down into the chill and darksome vale of years. They looked at old Dr. Heidegger, who sat in his carved arm-chair, holding the rose of half a century, which he had rescued from among the fragments of the shattered vase. At the motion of his hand, the four rioters resumed their seats; the more readily because their violent exertions had wearied them, youthful though they were.

"My poor Sylvia's rose!" ejaculated Dr. Heidegger, holding it in the light of the sunset clouds; "it appears to be fading again."

And so it was. Even while the party were looking at it, the flower continued to shrivel up, till it became as dry and fragile as when the doctor had first thrown it into the vase. He shook off the few drops of moisture which clung to its petals.

"I love it as well thus, as in its dewy freshness," observed he, pressing the withered rose to his withered lips. While he spoke, the butterfly fluttered down from the doctor's snowy head, and fell upon the floor.

His guests shivered again. A strange dullness, whether of the body or spirit they could not tell, was creeping gradually over them all. They gazed at one another, and fancied that each fleeting moment snatched away a charm, and left a deepening furrow where none had been before. Was it an illusion? Had the changes of a lifetime been crowded into so brief a space, and were they now four aged people, sitting with their old friend, Dr. Heidegger?

"Are we grown old again, so soon?" cried they, dolefully.

In truth they had. The Water of Youth possessed merely a virtue more transient than that of wine. The delirium which it created had effervesced away. Yes! they were old again. With a shuddering impulse, that showed her a woman still, the widow clasped her skinny hands before her face, and wished that the coffin lid were over it, since it could no longer be beautiful.

"Yes, friends, we are old again," said Dr. Heidegger; "and lo! the Water of Youth is all lavished on the ground. Well—I bemoan it not; for if the fountain gushed at my very doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it—no, though its delirium were for years instead of moments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me!"

But the doctor's four friends had taught no such lesson to themselves. They resolved forthwith to make a pilgrimage to Florida, and quaff at morning, noon, and night, from the Fountain of Youth.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 89: From "Twice Told Tales" 1837.]

MARKHEIM[90]

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

"Yes," said the dealer, "our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest," and here he held up the candle, so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, "and in that case," he continued, "I profit by my virtue."

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets, and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

The dealer chuckled. "You come to me on Christmas Day," he resumed, "when you know that I am alone in my house, put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business. Well, you will have to pay for that; you will have to pay for my loss of time, when I should be balancing my books; you will have to pay, besides, for a kind of manner that I remark in you to-day very strongly. I am the essence of discretion, and ask no awkward questions; but when a customer cannot look me in the eye, he has to pay for it." The dealer once more chuckled; and then, changing to his usual business voice, though still with a note of irony, "You can give, as usual, a clear account of how you came into the possession of the object?" he continued. "Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir!"

And the little pale, round-shouldered dealer stood almost on tip-toe, looking over the top of his gold spectacles, and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief. Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity, and a touch of horror.

"This time," said he, "you are in error. I have not come to sell, but to buy. I have no curios to dispose of; my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot; even were it still intact, I have done well on the Stock Exchange, and should more likely add to it than otherwise, and my errand to-day is simplicity itself. I seek a Christmas present for a lady," he continued, waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared; "and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the thing was neglected yesterday; I must produce my little compliment at dinner; and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected."

There followed a pause, during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously. The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence.

"Well, sir," said the dealer, "be it so. You are an old customer after all; and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage, far be it from me to be an obstacle. Here is a nice thing for a lady now," he went on, "this hand glass—fifteenth century, warranted; comes from a good collection, too, but I reserve the name, in the interests of my customer, who was just like yourself, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector."

The dealer, while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to take the object from its place; and, as he had done so, a shock had passed through Markheim, a start both of hand and foot, a sudden leap of many tumultuous passions to the face. It passed as swiftly as it came, and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass.

"A glass," he said hoarsely, and then paused, and repeated it more clearly. "A glass? For Christmas? Surely not?"

"And why not?" cried the dealer. "Why not a glass?"

Markheim was looking upon him with an indefinable expression. "You ask me why not?" he said. "Why, look here—look in it—look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor I—nor any man."

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror; but now, perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he chuckled. "Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favored," said he.

"I ask you," said Markheim, "for a Christmas present, and you give me this—this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies—this hand-conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. It will be better for you if you do. Come, tell me about yourself. I hazard a guess now, that you are in secret a very charitable man?"

The dealer looked closely at his companion. It was very odd, Markheim did not appear to be laughing;

there was something in his face like an eager sparkle of hope, but nothing of mirth.

"What are you driving at?" the dealer asked.

"Not charitable?" returned the other, gloomily. "Not charitable; not pious; not scrupulous; unloving, unbeloved; a hand to get money, a safe to keep it. Is that all? Dear God, man, is that all?"

"I will tell you what it is," began the dealer, with some sharpness, and then broke off again into a chuckle. "But I see this is a love match of yours, and you have been drinking the lady's health."

"Ah!" cried Markheim, with a strange curiosity. "Ah, have you been in love? Tell me about that."

"I," cried the dealer. "I in love! I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for all this nonsense. Will you take the glass?"

"Where is the hurry?" returned Markheim. "It is very pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure—no, not even from so mild a one as this. We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff, if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Hence it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other; why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential. Who knows, we might become friends?"

"I have just one word to say to you," said the dealer. "Either make your purchase, or walk out of my shop."

"True, true," said Markheim. "Enough fooling. To business. Show me something else."

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf, his thin blond hair falling over his eyes as he did so. Markheim moved a little nearer, with one hand in the pocket of his greatcoat; he drew himself up and filled his lungs; at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face—terror, horror, and resolve, fascination and a physical repulsion; and through a haggard lift of his upper lip, his teeth looked out.

"This, perhaps, may suit," observed the dealer; and then, as he began to rearise, Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewerlike dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea: the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken roving, Markheim's eyes returned to the body of his victim, where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life. In these poor, miserly clothes, in that ungainly attitude, the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it, and, lo! it was nothing. And yet, as he gazed, this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find eloquent voices. There it must lie; there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion—there it must lie till it was found. Found! ay, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England, and fill the world with the echoes of pursuit. Ay, dead or not, this was still the enemy. "Time was that when the brains were out," he thought; and the first word struck into his mind. Time, now that the deed was accomplished—time, which had closed for the victim, had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind, when, first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice—one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz—the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows, and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home designs, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet. And still as he continued to fill his pockets, his mind accused him, with a sickening iteration, of the thousand faults of

his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour; he should have prepared an alibi; he should not have used a knife; he should have been more cautious, and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him; he should have been more bold, and killed the servant also; he should have done all things otherwise; poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past. Meanwhile, and behind all this activity, brute terrors, like the scurrying of rats in a deserted attic, filled the more remote chambers of his brain with riot; the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder, and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish; or he beheld, in galloping defile, the dock, the prison, the gallows, and the black coffin.

Terror of the people in the street sat down before his mind like a besieging army. It was impossible, he thought, but that some rumour of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity; and now, in all the neighbouring houses, he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear—solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startlingly recalled from that tender exercise; happy family parties, struck into silence round the table, the mother still with raised finger: every degree and age and humour, but all, by their own hearths, prying and hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him. Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly; the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell; and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks. And then, again, with a swift transition of his terrors, the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril, and a thing to strike and freeze the passer-by; and he would step more boldly, and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop, and imitate, with elaborate bravado, the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house.

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that, while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning, another trembled on the brink of lunacy. One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity. The neighbour hearkening with white face beside his window, the passer-by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement—these could at worst suspect, they could not know; through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate. But here, within the house, was he alone? He knew he was; he had watched the servant set forth sweethearting, in her poor best, "out for the day" written in every ribbon and smile. Yes, he was alone, of course; and yet, in the bulk of empty house above him, he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing—he was surely conscious, inexplicably conscious of some presence. Ay, surely; to every room and corner of the house his imagination followed it; and now it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with; and again it was a shadow of himself; and yet again beheld the image of the dead dealer, reinspired with cunning and hatred.

At times, with a strong effort, he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes. The house was tall, the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog; and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint, and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop. And yet, in that strip of doubtful brightness, did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly, from the street outside, a very jovial gentleman began to beat with a staff on the shop-door, accompanying his blows with shouts and railleries in which the dealer was continually called upon by name. Markheim, smitten into ice, glanced at the dead man. But no! he lay quite still; he was fled away far beyond earshot of these blows and shoutings; he was sunk beneath seas of silence; and his name, which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm, had become an empty sound. And presently the jovial gentleman desisted from his knocking and departed.

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth from this accusing neighbourhood, to plunge into a bath of London multitudes, and to reach, on the other side of day, that haven of safety and apparent innocence—his bed. One visitor had come: at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate. To have done the deed, and yet not to reap the profit, would be too abhorrent a failure. The money, that was now Markheim's concern; and as a means to that, the keys.

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim. The human character had quite departed. Like a suit half-stuffed with bran, the limbs lay scattered, the trunk doubled, on the floor; and yet the thing repelled him. Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye, he feared it might have more significance to the touch. He took the body by the shoulders; and turned it on its back. It was strangely light and supple, and the limbs, as if they had been broken, fell into the oddest postures. The face was robbed of all expression; but it was as pale as wax, and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple. That was, for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance. It carried him back, upon the instant, to a certain fair day in a fishers' village: a gray day, a piping wind, a crowd upon the street, the blare of brasses, the booming of drums, the nasal voice of a ballad singer; and a boy going to and fro, buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear, until, coming out upon the chief place of concourse, he beheld a booth and a

great screen with pictures, dismally designed, garishly coloured: Brownrigg with her apprentice; the Mannings with their murdered guest; Weare in the death-grip of Thurtell; and a score besides of famous crimes. The thing was as clear as an illusion: he was once again that little boy; he was looking once again, and with the same sense of physical revolt, at these vile pictures; he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums. A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory; and at that, for the first time, a qualm came over him, a breath of nausea, a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer.

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations; looking the more hardily in the dead face, bending his mind to realise the nature and greatness of his crime. So little a while ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies; and now, and by his act, that piece of life had been arrested, as the horologist, with interjected finger, arrests the beating of the clock. So he reasoned in vain; he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness; the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime, looked on its reality unmoved. At best, he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment, one who had never lived and who was now dead. But of penitence, no, not a tremor.

With that, shaking himself clear of these considerations, he found the keys and advanced towards the open door of the shop. Outside, it had begun to rain smartly; and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence. Like some dripping cavern, the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing, which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks. And, as Markheim approached the door, he seemed to hear, in answer to his own cautious tread, the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair. The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold. He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles, and drew back the door.

The faint, foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floor and stairs; on the bright suit of armour posted, halbert in hand, upon the landing; and on the dark wood-carvings, and framed pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot. So loud was the beating of the rain through all the house that, in Markheim's ears, it began to be distinguished into many different sounds. Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance, the chink of money in the counting, and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar, appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes. The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness. On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences. He heard them moving in the upper chambers; from the shop, he heard the dead man getting to his legs; and as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs, feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind. If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquilly he would possess his soul! And then again, and hearkening with ever fresh attention, he blessed himself for that unresting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life. His head turned continually on his neck; his eyes, which seemed starting from their orbits, scouted on every side, and on every side were half-rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing. The four-and-twenty steps to the first floor were four-and-twenty agonies.

On that first storey, the doors stood ajar, three of them like three ambushes, shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon. He could never again, he felt, be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes; he longed to be home, girt in by walls, buried among bedclothes, and invisible to all but God. And at that thought he wondered a little, recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers. It was not so, at least, with him. He feared the laws of nature, lest, in their callous and immutable procedure, they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime. He feared tenfold more, with a slavish, superstitious terror, some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some wilful illegality of nature. He played a game of skill, depending on the rules, calculating consequence from cause; and what if nature, as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chess-board, should break the mould of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim: the solid walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; the stout planks might yield under his feet like quicksands and detain him in their clutch; ay, and there were soberer accidents that might destroy him: if, for instance, the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim; or the house next door should fly on fire, and the firemen invade him from all sides. These things he feared; and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice.

When he had got safe into the drawing-room, and shut the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms. The room was quite dismantled, uncarpeted besides, and strewn with packing cases and incongruous furniture; several great pier-glasses, in which he beheld himself at various angles, like an actor on a stage; many pictures, framed and unframed, standing, with their faces to the

wall; a fine Sheraton sideboard, a cabinet of marquetry, and a great old bed, with tapestry hangings. The windows opened to the floor; but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed, and this concealed him from the neighbours. Here, then, Markheim drew in a packing case before the cabinet, and began to search among the keys. It was a long business, for there were many; and it was irksome, besides; for, after all, there might be nothing in the cabinet, and time was on the wing. But the closeness of the occupation sobered him. With the tail of his eye he saw the door—even glanced at it from time to time directly like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defences. But in truth he was at peace. The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleasant. Presently, on the other side, the notes of a piano were wakened to the music of a hymn, and the voices of many children took up the air and words. How stately, how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly, as he sorted out the keys; and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images; church-going children and the pealing of the high organ; children afield, bathers by the brookside, ramblers on the brambly common, kite-flyers in the windy and cloud-navigated sky; and then, at another cadence of the hymn, back again to church, and the somnolence of summer Sundays, and the high genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall) and the painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel.

And as he sat thus, at once busy and absent, he was startled to his feet. A flash of ice, a flash of fire, a bursting gush of blood, went over him, and then he stood transfixed and thrilling. A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily, and presently a hand was laid upon the knob, and the lock clicked, and the door opened.

Fear held Markheim in a vice. What to expect he knew not, whether the dead man walking, or the official ministers of human justice, or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition, and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

"Did you call me?" he asked pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the newcomer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candle-light of the shop; and at times he thought he knew him; and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself; and always like a lump of living terror, there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the commonplace, as he stood looking on Markheim with a smile; and when he added, "You are looking for the money, I believe?" it was in the tones of everyday politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

"I should warn you," resumed the other, "that the maid has left her sweetheart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences."

"You know me?" cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. "You have long been a favourite of mine," he said; "and I have long observed and often sought to help you."

"What are you?" cried Markheim; "the devil?"

"What I may be," returned the other, "cannot affect the service I propose to render you."

"It can," cried Markheim; "it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!"

"I know you," replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness. "I know you to the soul."

"Know me!" cried Markheim. "Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do; all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each dragged away by life, like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control—if you could see their faces, they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most; myself is more overlaid; my excuse is known to

me and God. But, had I the time, I could disclose myself."

"To me?" inquired the visitant.

"To you before all," returned the murderer. "I supposed you were intelligent. I thought—since you exist—you would prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it; my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstance. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any wilful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity—the unwilling sinner?"

"All this is very feelingly expressed," was the reply, "but it regards me not. These points of consistency are beyond my province, and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away, so as you are but carried in the right direction. But time flies; the servant delays, looking in the faces of the crowd and at the pictures on the hoardings, but still she keeps moving nearer; and remember, it is as if the gallows itself was striding towards you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you; I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?"

"For what price?" asked Markheim.

"I offer you the service for a Christmas gift," returned the other.

Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. "No," said he, "I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst, and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips, I should find the courage to refuse. It may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil."

"I have no objection to a death-bed repentance," observed the visitant.

"Because you disbelieve their efficacy!" Markheim cried.

"I do not say so," returned the other; "but I look on these things from a different side, and when the life is done my interest falls. The man has lived to serve me, to spread black looks under colour of religion, or to sow tares in the wheat-field, as you do, in a course of weak compliance with desire. Now that he draws so near to his deliverance, he can add but one act of service—to repent, to die smiling, and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers. I am not so hard a master. Try me. Accept my help. Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto; please yourself more amply, spread your elbows at the board; and when the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn, I tell you, for your greater comfort, that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience, and to make a truckling peace with God. I came but now from such a death-bed, and the room was full of sincere mourners, listening to the man's last words: and when I looked into that face, which had been set as a flint against mercy, I found it smiling with hope."

"And do you, then, suppose me such a creature?" asked Markheim. "Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin, and sin, and sin, and, at last, sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this, then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you presume such baseness? and is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?"

"Murder is to me no special category," replied the other. "All sins are murder, even as all life is war. I behold your race, like starving mariners on a raft, plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other's lives. I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting; I find in all that the last consequence is death; and to my eyes, the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of a ball, drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself. Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also; they differ not by the thickness of a nail, they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death. Evil, for which I live, consists not in action, but in character. The bad man is dear to me; not the bad act, whose fruits, if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cataract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim, that I offered to forward your escape."

"I will lay my heart open to you," answered Markheim. "This crime on which you find me is my last. On my way to it I have learned many lessons; itself is a lesson, a momentous lesson. Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not; I was a bond-slave to poverty, driven and scourged. There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations; mine was not so: I had a thirst of pleasure. But to-day, and out of this deed, I pluck both warning and riches—both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself. I become in all things a free actor in the world; I begin to see myself all changed, these hands

the agents of good, this heart at peace. Something comes over me out of the past; something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ, of what I forecast when I shed tears over noble books, or talked, an innocent child, with my mother. There lies my life; I have wandered a few years, but now I see once more my city of destination."

"You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange, I think?" remarked the visitor; "and there, if I mistake not, you have already lost some thousands?"

"Ah," said Markheim, "but this time I have a sure thing."

"This time, again, you will lose," replied the visitor, quietly.

"Ah, but I keep back the half!" cried Markheim.

"That also you will lose," said the other.

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow. "Well, then, what matter?" he exclaimed. "Say it be lost, say I am plunged again in poverty, shall one part of me, and that the worse, continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me, haling me both ways. I do not love the one thing, I love all. I can conceive great deeds, renunciations, martyrdoms; and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder, pity is no stranger to my thoughts. I pity the poor; who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them; I prize love, I love honest laughter; there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart. And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues to lie without effect, like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so; good, also, is a spring of acts."

But the visitant raised his finger. "For six-and-thirty years that you have been in this world," said he, "through many changes of fortune and varieties of humour, I have watched you steadily fall. Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years back you would have blenched at the name of murder. Is there any crime, is there any cruelty or meanness, from which you still recoil?—five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Downward, downward, lies your way; nor can anything but death avail to stop you."

"It is true," Markheim said huskily, "I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all: the very saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty, and take on the tone of their surroundings."

"I will propound to you one simple question," said the other; "and as you answer, I shall read to you your moral horoscope. You have grown in many things more lax; possibly you do right to be so; and at any account, it is the same with all men. But granting that, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct, or do you go in all things with a looser rein?"

"In any one?" repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration. "No," he added, with despair, "in none! I have gone down in all."

"Then," said, the visitor, "content yourself with what you are, for you will never change; and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down."

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence. "That being so," he said, "shall I show you the money?"

"And grace?" cried Markheim.

"Have you not tried it?" returned the other. "Two or three years ago, did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings, and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn?"

"It is true," said Markheim; "and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul; my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am."

At this moment, the sharp note of the door-bell rang through the house; and the visitant, as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting, changed at once in his demeanour.

"The maid!" he cried. "She has returned, as I forewarned you, and there is now before you one more difficult passage. Her master, you must say, is ill; you must let her in, with an assured but rather serious countenance—no smiles, no overacting, and I promise you success! Once the girl within, and the door closed, the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last danger in your path. Thenceforward you have the whole evening—the whole night, if needful—to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety. This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger. Up!" he cried; "up, friend; your life hangs trembling in the scales; up, and act!"

Markheim steadily regarded his counsellor. "If I be condemned to evil acts," he said, "there is still one

door of freedom open—I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to barrenness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your galling disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage."

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change: they brightened and softened with a tender triumph; and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned. But Markheim did not pause to watch or understand the transformation. He opened the door and went downstairs very slowly, thinking to himself. His past went soberly before him; he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance-medley—a scene of defeat. Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer; but on the further side he perceived a quiet haven for his bark. He paused in the passage, and looked into the shop, where the candle still burned by the dead body. It was strangely silent. Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind, as he stood gazing. And then the bell once more broke out into impatient clamour.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile.

"You had better go for the police," said he; "I have killed your master."

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 90: First published in 1885.]

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

WITH SOME TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND FOR COMPOSITION

(Note.—The selections named below are as a rule short; and, since they are contained in standard works of modern prose, they are accessible in the average library. Page numbers in parentheses refer to the present volume.)

I. THE PERSONAL LIFE

(a) William Hazlitt, *On Personal Character*, in "The Plain Speaker": How the main thesis differs from that in Emerson's *Self-Reliance* (page 1). (b) Walter Pater, *Diaphaneité*, in "Miscellaneous Studies": The substance of the ideal personality here delineated, and how it differs from the type suggested by Emerson. (c) Matthew Arnold, *Doing as One Likes*, or *Hebraism and Hellenism*, in "Culture and Anarchy": The main principles of personal endeavor suggested in either of these essays. (d) Plutarch, *Marcus Cato*, in "Lives," Vol. II of Clough's translation: 1. Cato's Self-Reliance. 2. Cato's type of character in American public life. (e) Walter Scott, fragment of *Autobiography*, in Lockhart's "Life of Scott:" A comparison of Scott's early training with Ruskin's. See also the early chapters of (f) Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay" and (g) Froude's "Life of Carlyle." (h) Charles Darwin, *Autobiography*, in "Life and Letters:" 1. The change which came over Darwin's attitude toward literature. 2. The contrast between Darwin's type of mind and Lamb's as revealed in *Old China* (page 40) and Pater's essay (page 437).

II. EDUCATION

(a) R.W. Emerson, *The American Scholar*, in "Nature, Addresses, Lectures:" The main points in the view here given of education. 2. Certain considerations, somewhat neglected by Emerson, but developed by Newman (page 52). (b) Woodrow Wilson, *The Training of Intellect* (an address to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale University): How far your own course of study is fulfilling the requirements here set forth, (c) William Hazlitt, *On Application to Study*, in "The Plain Speaker:" 1. Hazlitt's view of the study of composition. 2. How the principles of application which he advocates may be applied to some other study in which you are interested. (d) T.H. Huxley, *Science and Culture*, in "Science and Education:" 1. How far the principles here set forth bear out Huxley's definition of education (page 47). 2. The main point at issue between Huxley and Arnold (Arnold's essay, page 75, is a reply to Huxley), and your own view of the matter drawn from your own experience. (e) J.S. Mill, *Inaugural Address at St. Andrew's*, in "Dissertations," Vol. IV: Mill's main contentions as to the exact purpose and value of the study of

language and literature in universities. (f) H.D. Thoreau, *Reading*, in "Walden:" The author's views in regard to reading not done in connection with school work. (g) A.G. Balfour, *Pleasures of Reading*, in "Essays and Addresses" (written as a reply to Harrison's claims, page 97): The main points at issue between Harrison and Balfour, and your own view of the matter. (h) John Lubbock, *The Choice of Books*, in "The Pleasures of Life:" Whether this essay goes to support Harrison's or Balfour's view, and how. (i) Woodrow Wilson, essays in "Mere Literature." (j) John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*. (k) Consult several biographies of great men—for example, Morley's *Gladstone*, Froude's *Carlyle*, Darwin's *Life*, Huxley's *Life*—and make a comparative study of their early reading.

III. RECREATION AND TRAVELS

(a) George Santayana, on *Work and Play*, sections 3 and following, in "The Sense of Beauty," Part I: 1. The distinction between working and playing. 2. The relation between the sense of beauty and the sense of pleasure. (b) William Hazlitt, *On Living to One's Self*, in "Table Talk:" 1. The general method of enjoying life, which is developed here and illustrated further in *On Going a Journey* (page 116). (c) R.L. Stevenson, *Walking Tours*, in "Virginibus Puerisque;" and *Roads*, in "Essays of Travel:" 1. The several ways in which these essays reflect Hazlitt's views; the points which are peculiar to Stevenson. 2. How far your own methods of securing outdoor enjoyment are in accord with Hazlitt's and Stevenson's. (d) W.H. Hudson, *Idle Days*, in "Idle Days in Patagonia:" What the author's so-called idleness consisted in. (e) Francis Parkman, *Hunting Indians*, in "The Oregon Trail:" The mental experiences of the writer himself in the course of the exploit he describes.

IV. SOCIAL LIFE AND MANNERS

(a) R.W. Emerson, *Culture*, in "The Conduct of Life:" The relation which the central thought bears to that of Behavior (page 154). (b) Matthew Arnold, *Sweetness and Light*, in "Culture and Anarchy:" 1. The chief motives and characteristics of culture. 2. The relation between culture and bodily vigor. 3. The "Social Idea." 4. A comparison of Emerson's and Arnold's attitude toward culture. (c) R.W. Emerson, *Manners*, in "Essays, Second Series." How Emerson's view of the relation between manners and fashion supplements Spencer's contention (page 172). (d) Henri Bergson, *the first part of Chapter I* in "Laughter:" The function of laughter in social life. (g) William Hazlitt, *On the Spirit of Obligations*, in "The Plain Dealer:" The relation between good sense and good nature. (f) R.L. Stevenson, *The Truth of Intercourse*, in "Virginibus Puerisque:" The complex meaning of truthfulness in social life. (g) W.M. Thackeray, *George II*, in "The Four Georges:" The chief characteristics of Georgian society.

V. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

(a) Plato, *The Apology*, in the "Dialogues," translated by Jowett, and by others: 1. The part played by Socrates in the public life of Athens. 2. What function Socrates could fulfil in American public life. (b) J.S. Mill, *Civilization*, in "Dissertations and Discussions," Vol. I: The ill effects of civilization, and how they may be overcome. (c) Henry George, *The Persistence of Poverty amid Advancing Wealth*, in Book V of "Progress and Poverty:" George's exposition of the problem tested by your own experience. (d) J.S. Mill, *Of the Dangers to which Representative Government is Liable*, in "Considerations on Representative Government:" The extent to which Mill's contentions apply to the United States. (e) Josiah Royce, *Some American Problems*, in "The Philosophy of Loyalty:" 1. The general solution proposed. 2. How this solution might be applied to some public or college problem you know of.

VI. SCIENCE

(a) Herbert Spencer, *The Genesis of Science*, in "Illustrations of Universal Progress:" The essential nature of science. (b) T.H. Huxley, *The Method of Scientific Investigation*, in "Man's Place in Nature:" The relation between scientific and everyday modes of thinking. (c) John Tyndall, *On the nature and function of the sun*, in Chapter XIV of "Heat as a Mode of Motion:" The general relation between the facts presented by Tyndall and those presented in *The Physical Basis of Life* (page 240). (d) A.R. Wallace, *Darwinism as Applied to Man*, in "Darwinism": A comparison of this piece, in respect to aim and method, with Darwin's *Mental Powers of Men and Animals* (page 263). (e) Charles Darwin, *On the flower of the ladies' slipper*, in Chapter VIII of "Fertilization of Orchids by Insects." (f) T.H. Huxley, *On the Formation of Coal*, in "Discourses Biological."

VII. NATURE

(a) R.W. Emerson, *Nature*, in "Essays, Second Series:" The effect of nature on the human mind. (b) H.D. Thoreau, *Spring*, in "Walden:" 1. The formative principle in nature. 2. A comparison of Thoreau's

attitude toward nature, as revealed here and in "Walden Pond" (page 306), with that of Emerson. (c) John Burroughs, *The Pastoral Bees* in "Locusts and Wild Honey:" The communal life of the bees. (d) W.H. Hudson, *The Perfume of an Evening Primrose*, in "Idle Days in Patagonia:" The association of phenomena of nature with events in one's life. (e) Leslie Stephen, *Sunset on Mont Blanc*, in "The Playground of Europe:" An analysis of the circumstances which combined to give this sunset its peculiar interest. (f) John Ruskin, descriptions of *water, sky, clouds, and foliage* in "Modern Painters," Vol. I (look up passages other than those selected for the present volume, page 325): in each case, distinguish the *chief* beautiful effect which the author wishes to bring out.

VIII. CONDUCT AND INNER LIFE

(a) William James, *The Will to Believe*, in "The Will to Believe, and other Essays:" The bearing of religious conviction on volition and conduct. (b) Josiah Royce, *Loyalty to Loyalty*, in "The Philosophy of Loyalty:" 1. The exact meaning of the title. 2. How the main thesis is fundamental for *Loyalty and Insight* (page 365). (c) R.W. Emerson, *The Over-Soul*, in "Essays, First Series:" 1. How the conception here developed appears again in other essays of Emerson which you have read. 2. How Emerson's attitude toward spiritual truth differs from that of James; see (a), above. (d) Josiah Royce, *What is Vital* in Christianity? in "William James and Other Essays:" The central thought as compared with Seeley's (page 351). (e) George Santayana, *The Poetry of Christian Dogma*, in "Poetry and Religion:" The full significance of the title. (f) J.R. Seeley, *Christ's Royalty*, in "Ecce Homo:" The significance of the term "King" as applied to Christ. (g) G.L. Dickinson, *The Greek View of Religion*, in "The Greek View of Life:" 1. How the Greek differs from the Christian view. 2. The most admirable features of the Greek view. (h) Walter Pater, *A Study of Dionysus*, in "Greek Studies:" What Dionysus was symbolic of. (i) William James, *Habit*, in "Psychology," Vol. I: The significance of habits, tested by your own experience. (j) W.E.H. Lecky, *The Management of Character*, in "The Map of Life:" Specific methods by which one may mold one's own character.

IX. LITERATURE AND ART

(a) George Santayana, *Art and Happiness*, in "The Life of Reason," Vol. IV: 1. What is Art? 2. The position of literature among the arts. 3. What art needs at the present day. (b) Walter Bagehot, *On Wordsworth*, in "Essay on Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning:" The nature of pure art. (c) Matthew Arnold, *Wordsworth*, in "Essays in Criticism:" A comparison of Arnold's main thesis in regard to Wordsworth with Bagehot's; see (b) above. (d) G.H. Lewes, *The Principle of Sincerity*, in "The Principles of Success in Literature:" The relation between sincerity and success in literature. (e) Thomas Carlyle, *Dante*, in "On Heroes and Hero-Worship:" 1. The chief differences between Dante and Shakespeare (see page 423). 2. How the principle of sincerity (see (d) above) is illustrated in the case of Dante. (f) P.B. Shelley, *Defence of Poetry*: A comparison of Shelley's attitude toward poetry with Bradley's (page 389). (g) G.L. Dickinson, *Chapter IV* in the "Greek View of Life" (the part preceding the section reprinted in the present volume): How the principles determining the nature of Greek tragedy appear also in the other Greek arts. (h) S.H. Butcher, *What we Owe to Greece*, in "Some Aspects of Greek Genius:" Ideals we have inherited from the Greeks. (i) A.C. Bradley, *The Substance of Shakespearean Tragedy*, in "Shakespearean Tragedy:" The conception of the relations between good and evil which appears in Shakespeare's tragedies. (j) Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* (translated by Gilbert Murray): A comparison of the theme of this tragedy with the theme of Shakespeare's *Richard III, Macbeth, or Lear*.

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