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SOCIETY IN AMERICA

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU,

AUTHOR OF "ILLUSTRATIONS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW YORK
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CHAPTER II.
TRANSPORT AND MARKETS.

"Science and Art urge on the useful toil;
New mould a climate, and create the soil.
On yielding Nature urge their new demands,
And ask not gifts, but tribute, at her hands."
Barbauld.

Nature has done so much for the United States in this article of their economy, and has indicated so clearly what remained for human hands to do, that it is very comprehensible to the traveller why this new country so far transcends others of the same age in markets and means of transport. The ports of the United States are, singularly enough, scattered round the whole of their boundaries. Besides those on the seaboard, there are many in the interior; on the northern [Pg 2] lakes, and on thousands of miles of deep rivers. No nook in the country is at a despairing distance from a market; and where the usual incentives to enterprise exist, the means of transport are sure to be provided, in the proportion in which they are wanted.

Even in the south, where, the element of wages being lost, and the will of the labourer being lost with them, there are no adequate means of executing even the best-conceived enterprises,[1] more has been done than could have been expected under the circumstances. The mail roads are still extremely bad. I found, in travelling through the Carolinas and Georgia, that the drivers consider themselves entitled to get on by any means they can devise: that nobody helps and nobody hinders them. It was constantly happening that the stage came to a stop on the brink of a wide and a deep puddle, extending all across the road. The driver helped himself, without scruple, to as many rails of the nearest fence as might serve to fill up the bottom of the hole, or break our descent into it. On inquiry, I found it was not probable that either road or fence would be mended till both had gone to absolute destruction.

The traffic on these roads is so small, that the stranger feels himself almost lost in the wilderness. In the course of several days' journey, we saw, (with the exception of the wagons of a few encampments,) only one vehicle besides our own. It was a stage returning from Charleston. [Pg 3] Our meeting in the forest was like the meeting of ships at sea. We asked the passengers from the south for news from Charleston and Europe; and they questioned us about the state of politics at Washington. The eager vociferation of drivers and passengers was such as is very unusual, out of exile. We were desired to give up all thoughts of going by the eastern road to Charleston. The road might be called impassable; and there was nothing to eat by the way. So we described a circuit, by Camden and Columbia.

An account of an actual day's journey will give the best idea of what travelling is in such places. We had travelled from Richmond, Virginia, the day before, (March 2nd, 1835,) and had not had any rest, when, at midnight, we came to a river which had no bridge. The "scow" had gone over with another stage, and we stood under the stars for a long time; hardly less than an hour. The scow was only just large enough to hold the coach and ourselves; so that it was thought safest for the passengers to alight, and go on board on foot. In this process, I found myself over the ankles in mud. A few minutes after we had driven on again, on the opposite side of the river, we had to get out to change coaches; after which we proceeded, without accident, though very slowly, till daylight. Then the stage sank down into a deep rut, and the horses struggled in vain. We were informed that we were "mired," and must all get out. I stood for some time to witness what is very pretty for once; but wearisome when it occurs ten times a day. The driver carries an axe, as a part of the stage apparatus. He cuts down a young tree, for a lever, which is introduced under the nave of the sunken wheel; a log serving for a block. The gentleman passengers all help; [Pg 4] shouting to the horses, which tug and scramble as vigorously as the gentlemen. We ladies sometimes gave our humble assistance by blowing the driver's horn. Sometimes a cluster of negroes would assemble from a neighbouring plantation; and in extreme cases, they would bring a horse, to add to our team. The rescue from the rut was effected in any time from a quarter of an hour to two hours. This particular 3rd of March, two hours were lost by this first mishap. It was very cold, and I walked on alone, sure of not missing my road in a region where there was no other. When I had proceeded two miles, I stopped and looked around me. I was on a rising ground, with no object whatever visible but the wild, black forest, extending on all sides as far as I could see, and the red road cut through it, as straight as an arrow, till it was lost behind a rising ground at either extremity. I know nothing like it, except a Salvator Rosa I once saw. The stage soon after took me up, and we proceeded fourteen miles to breakfast. We were faint with hunger; but there was no refreshment for us. The family breakfast had been long over, and there was not a scrap of food in the house. We proceeded, till at one o'clock we reached a private dwelling,

where the good woman was kind enough to provide dinner for us, though the family had dined. She gave us a comfortable meal, and charged only a quarter dollar each. She stands in all the party's books as a hospitable dame.

We had no sooner left her house than we had to get out to pass on foot a bridge too crazy for us to venture over it in the carriage. Half a mile before reaching the place where we were to have tea, the thorough-brace broke, and we had to walk through a snow shower to the inn. We had not proceeded above a quarter of a mile from this place when the traces broke. After this, we were [Pg 5] allowed to sit still in the carriage till near seven in the morning, when we were approaching Raleigh, North Carolina. We then saw a carriage "mired" and deserted by driver and horses, but tenanted by some travellers who had been waiting there since eight the evening before. While we were pitying their fate, our vehicle once more sank into a rut. It was, however, extricated in a short time, and we reached Raleigh in safety.

It was worth undergoing a few travelling disasters to witness the skill and temper of the drivers, and the inexhaustible good-nature of the passengers. Men of business in any other part of the world would be visibly annoyed by such delays as I have described; but in America I never saw any gentleman's temper give way under these accidents. Every one jumps out in a moment, and sets to work to help the driver; every one has his joke, and, when it is over, the ladies are sure to have the whole represented to them in its most amusing light. One driver on this journey seemed to be a novice, or in some way inferior in confidence to the rest. A gentleman of our party chose to sit beside him on the box; and he declared that the driver shut his eyes when we were coming to a hole; and that when he called piteously on the passengers for help, it was because we were taking aim at a deep rut. Usually, the confidence and skill of the drivers were equally remarkable. If they thought the stage more full than was convenient, they would sometimes try to alarm the passengers, so as to induce some of them to remain for the next stage; and it happened two or three times that a fat passenger or two fell into the trap, and declined proceeding; but it was easy for the experienced to see that the alarm was feigned. In such cases, after a splash into water, in the dark, news would be heard from the box that we were in the middle of a creek, and could not [Pg 6] go a step, back or forward, without being overturned into the water. Though the assertion was disproved the next minute, it produced its effect. Again, when the moon was going down early, and the lamps were found to be, of course, out of order, and the gentlemen insisted on buying candles by the road-side, and walking on in bad places, each with a tallow light in his hand, the driver would let drop that, as we had to be overturned before dawn, it did not much matter whether it was now or later. After this, the stoutest of the company were naturally left behind at the next stopping-place, and the driver chuckled at the lightening of his load.

At the close of a troublesome journey in the south, we drew up, with some noise, before a hotel, at three in the morning. The driver blew a blast upon an execrable horn. Nobody seemed stirring. Slaves are the most slow-moving people in the world, except upon occasion.

"What sleepy folks they are here!" exclaimed the driver.

Another blast on the horn, long and screeching.

"Never saw such people for sleeping. Music has no effect on 'em at all. I shall have to try fire-arms."

Another blast.

"We've waked the watchman, however. That's something done."

Another blast.

"Never knew such people. Why, Lazarus was far easier to raise."

The best testimony that I can bear to the skill with which travelling is conducted on such roads as these, and also in steam-boats, is the fact that I travelled upwards of ten thousand miles in the [Pg 7] United States, by land and water, without accident. I was twice nearly overturned; but never quite.

It has been seen what the mail routes are like in the south; and I have mentioned that greater progress has been made in other means of transport than might have been expected. I referred to the new rail-roads which are being opened in various directions. I saw few circumstances in the south with which I was so well pleased. By the free communication which will thus be opened, much sectional prejudice will be dispelled: the inferiority of slave to free labour will be the more speedily brought home to every man's convictions; and new settlers, abhorring slavery, will come in and mix with the present population; be the laws regarding labour what they may.

The only rail-roads completed in the south, when I was there, were the Charleston and Augusta one, two short ones in the States of Alabama and Mississippi, and one of five miles from Lake Pontchartrain to New Orleans. There is likely to be soon a magnificent line from Charleston to Cincinnati; and the line from Norfolk, Virginia, to New York, is now almost uninterrupted.

The quarter of an hour employed in reaching New Orleans from Lake Pontchartrain was one of the most delightful seasons in all my travels. My notion of a swamp was corrected for ever. It was the end of April; and the flowering reeds and tropical shrubs made the whole scene one gay garden. It was odd to be passing through a gay garden on a rail-road. Green cypress grew out of the clear water everywhere; and there were acres of blue and white iris; and a thousand rich, unknown blossoms waving over the pools. A negro here and there emerged from a flowery

thicket, pushing himself on a raft, or in a canoe, through the reeds. The sluggish bayou was on one side; and here and there, a group of old French houses on the other. It was like skimming, as one does in dreams, over the meadows of Sicily, or the plains of Ceylon. [Pg 8]

That which may be seen on either hand of the Charleston and Augusta rail-road is scarcely less beautiful; but my journeys on it were by far the most fatiguing of any I underwent in the country. The motion and the noise are distracting. Whether this is owing to its being built on piles, in many places; whether the fault is in the ground or the construction, I do not know. Almost all the rail-road travelling in America is very fatiguing and noisy. I was told that this was chiefly owing to the roads being put to use as soon as finished, instead of the work being left to settle for some months. How far this is true, I do not pretend to say. The rail-roads which I saw in progress were laid on wood instead of stone. The patentee discovered that wood settles after frost more evenly than stone. The original cost, in the State of New York, is about two thousand dollars per mile.

One great inconvenience of the American rail-roads is that, from wood being used for fuel, there is an incessant shower of large sparks, destructive to dress and comfort, unless all the windows are shut; which is impossible in warm weather. Some serious accidents from fire have happened in this way; and, during my last trip on the Columbia and Philadelphia rail-road, a lady in the car had a shawl burned to destruction on her shoulders; and I found that my own gown had thirteen holes in it; and my veil, with which I saved my eyes, more than could be counted.

My first trip on the Charleston rail-road was more amusing than prosperous. The arrangements were scarcely completed, and the apparatus was then in a raw state. Our party left Columbia at seven in the evening of the 9th of March, by stage, hoping to meet the rail-road train at Branchville, sixty miles from Columbia, at eleven the next morning, and to reach Charleston, sixty-two more, to dinner. Towards morning, when the moon had set, the stage bumped against something; and the driver declared that he must wait for the day-spring, before he could proceed another step. When the dawn brightened, we found that we had, as we supposed, missed our passage by the train, for the sake of a stump about two inches above the ground. We hastened breakfast at Orangeburg; and when we got to Branchville, found we need have been in no hurry. The train had not arrived; and, some little accident having happened, we waited for it till near two o'clock. [Pg 9]

I never saw an economical work of art harmonise so well with the vastness of a natural scene, as here. From the piazza of the house at Branchville, the forest fills the whole scene, with the rail-road stretching through it, in a perfectly straight line, to the vanishing point. The approaching train cannot be seen so far off as this. When it appears, a black dot, marked by its wreath of smoke, it is impossible to avoid watching it, growing and self-moving, till it stops before the door. I cannot draw; but I could not help trying to make a sketch of this, the largest and longest perspective I ever saw. We were well employed for two hours in basking in the sun, noting the mock-orange-trees before the house, the turkeys strutting, the robins (twice as large as the English) hopping and flitting; and the house, apparently just piled up of wood just cut from the forest. Everything was as new as the rail-road. As it turned out, we should have been better employed in dining; but we had no other idea than of reaching Charleston in three or four hours. [Pg 10]

For the first thirty-five miles, which we accomplished by half-past four, we called it the most interesting rail-road we had ever been on. The whole sixty-two miles was almost a dead level, the descent being only two feet. Where pools, creeks, and gullies had to be passed, the road was elevated on piles, and thence the look down on an expanse of evergreens was beautiful. This is, probably, the reason why three gentlemen went, a few days afterwards, to walk, of all places, on the rail-road. When they were in the middle of one of these elevated portions, where there is a width of only about three inches on either side the tracks, they heard a shout, and looking back, saw a train coming upon them with such speed as to leave no hope that it could be stopped before it reached them. There was no alternative; all three leaped down, upwards of twenty feet, into the swamp, and escaped with a wetting, and with looking exceedingly foolish in their own eyes.

At half-past four, our boiler sprang a leak, and there was an end of our prosperity. In two hours, we hungry passengers were consoled with the news that it was mended. But the same thing happened, again and again; and always in the middle of a swamp, where we could do nothing but sit still. The gentlemen tried to amuse themselves with frog-hunting: but it was a poor resource. Once we stopped before a comfortable-looking house, where a hot supper was actually on the table; but we were not allowed to stop, even so long as to get out. The gentlemen made a rush into the house to see what they could get. One carried off a chicken entire, for his party; another seized part of a turkey. Our gentlemen were not alert enough. The old lady's table was cleared too quickly for them, and quite to her own consternation. All that we, a party of five, had to support us, was some strips of ham, pieces of dry bread, and three sweet potatoes, all jumbled together in a handkerchief. Our thoughts wandered back to this supper-table, an hour after, when we were again sticking in the middle of a swamp. I had fallen asleep, (for it was now the middle of a second night of travelling,) and was awakened by such a din as I had never heard. I could not recollect where I was; I looked out of the window, and saw, by the light of the moon, white houses on the bank of the swamp, and the waving shrubs of the forest; but the distracting din was like nothing earthly. It presently struck me that we were being treated with a frog-concert. It is worth hearing, for once, anything so unparalleled as the knocking, ticking, creaking, and rattling, in every variety of key. The swamp was as thick of noises as the forest is of leaves: but, five minutes of the concert are enough; while a hundred years are not enough of the forest. After many times stopping and proceeding, we arrived at Charleston between four and five in the [Pg 11]

morning; and, it being too early to disturb our friends, crept cold and weary to bed, at the Planters' Hotel. It was well that all this happened in the month of March. Three months later, such detention in the swamps by night might have been the death of three-fourths of the passengers. I have not heard of any mismanagement since the concern has been put fairly in operation.

There are many rail-roads in Virginia, and a line to New York, through Maryland and Delaware. There is in Kentucky a line from Louisville to Lexington. But it is in Pennsylvania, New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, that they abound. All have succeeded so admirably, that there [Pg 12] is no doubt of the establishment of this means of communication over nearly the whole of the United States, within a few years, as by-ways to the great high-ways which Nature has made to run through this vast country. The evil of a superabundance of land in proportion to labour will thus be lessened so far, that there will be an economy of time, and a facility of intercourse, which will improve the intelligence of the country population. There will, also, be a facility of finding out where new supplies of labour are most wanted, and of supplying them. By advantageous employment for small capitals being thus offered within bounds, it may also be hoped that many will be prevented from straying into the wilderness. The best friends of the moral as well as economical interests of the Americans, will afford all possible encouragement to wise schemes for the promotion of intercourse, especially between the north and south.

I believe the best-constructed rail-road in the States is the Boston and Lowell, Massachusetts: length, twenty-five miles. Its importance, from the amount of traffic upon it, may be estimated from the fact that some thousands of dollars were spent, the winter after it was opened, in clearing away a fall of snow from it. It was again covered, the next night.

Another line from Boston is to Providence, Rhode Island, forty-three miles long. This opens a very speedy communication with New York; the distance, two hundred and twenty-seven miles, being performed in twenty hours, by rail-road and steam-boat.

There is a good line from Boston to Worcester; forty-five miles in length. Its estimated cost is 883,904 dollars. This road is to be carried on across the entire State, to the Connecticut; from whence a line is now in course of construction to the Hudson, to issue opposite Albany. There are [Pg 13] proposals for a tunnel under the Hudson at Albany; and from Albany, there is already canal and rail-road communication to Lake Erie. There is now an uninterrupted communication from the Atlantic to the far end of Lake Michigan. It only remains to extend a line thence to the Mississippi, and the circle is complete.

The great Erie canal, intersecting the whole State of New York, is too celebrated to need much notice here. Its entire length is three hundred and sixty-three miles. It is forty feet wide at top, twenty-eight at bottom, and four feet deep. There are eighty-four locks on the main canal. The total rise and fall is six hundred and ninety-two feet. The cost was 9,500,000 dollars. Though this canal has been opened only since 1825, it is found already insufficient for the immense commerce carried on between the European world and the great West, through the eastern ports. There is a rail-road now running across the entire State, which is expected to exhibit much more traffic than the canal, without at all interfering with its business.

I traversed the valley of the Mohawk twice; the first time by the canal, the next by stage, which I much preferred, both on account of the views being better from the high-road, and from the discomfort of the canal-boats. I had also the opportunity of observing the courses of the canal and the new rail-road throughout.

I was amused, the first time, at hearing some gentlemen plan how the bed of the shoaly Mohawk might be deepened, so as to admit the passage of steam-boats. It would be nearly as easy to dig a river at once for the purpose, and pump it full; in other words, to make another canal, twice as wonderful as the present. The rail-road is a better scheme by far. In winter the traffic is continued by sleighs on the canal ice: and a pretty sight it must be. [Pg 14]

The aspect of the valley was really beautiful last June. It must have made the Mohawk Indians heart-sore to part with it in its former quiet state; but now there is more beauty, as well as more life. There are farms, in every stage of advancement, with all the stir of life about them; and the still, green graveyard belonging to each, showing its white palings and tombstones on the hill-side, near at hand. Sometimes a small space in the orchard is railed in for this purpose. In a shallow reach of the river there was a line of cows wading through, to bury themselves in the luxuriant pasture of the islands in the midst of the Mohawk. In a deeper part, the chain ferry-boat slowly conveyed its passengers across. The soil of the valley is remarkably rich, and the trees and verdure unusually fine. The hanging oak-woods on the ridge were beautiful; and the knolls, tilled or untilled; and the little waterfalls trickling or leaping down, to join the rushing river. Little knots of houses were clustered about the locks and bridges of the canal; and here and there a village, with its white church conspicuous, spread away into the middle of the narrow valley. The green and white canal boats might be seen stealing along under the opposite ridge, or issuing from behind a clump of elms or birches, or gliding along a graceful aqueduct, with the diminished figures of the walking passengers seen moving along the bank. On the other hand, the rail-road skirted the base of the ridge, and the shanties of the Irish labourers, roofed with turf, and the smoke issuing from a barrel at one corner, were so grouped as to look picturesque, however little comfortable. In some of the narrowest passes of the valley, the high road, the rail-road, the canal, and the river, are all brought close together, and look as if they were trying which could escape [Pg 15] first into a larger space. The scene at Little Falls is magnificent, viewed from the road, in the light of a summers' morning. The carrying the canal and rail-road through this pass was a grand

idea; and the solidity and beauty of the works are worthy of it.

The canal was commenced in 1817; and the first boat from the inland lakes arrived at New York on the 4th of November 1825. The first year's revenue amounted to 566,221 dollars. In 1836, the tolls amounted to 1,294,649 dollars.

The incorporated rail-road companies in the State of New York in 1836 were fifty; their capitals varying from fifteen thousand to ten million dollars.

When I first crossed the Alleghanies, in November 1834, I caught a glimpse of the stupendous Portage rail-road, running between the two canals which reach the opposite bases of the mountains. The stage in which I travelled was on one side of a deep ravine, bristling with pines; while on the other side was the lofty embankment, such a wall as I had never imagined could be built, on the summit of which ran the rail-road, its line traceable for some miles, with frequent stations and trains of baggage-cars. One track of this road had not long been opened; and the work was a splendid novelty. I had afterwards the pleasure of travelling on it, from end to end.

This road is upwards of thirty-six miles in length, and at one point reaches an elevation of 2,491 feet above the sea. It consists of eleven levels, and ten inclined planes. About three hundred feet of the road, at the head and foot of each plane, is made exactly level. The embankments were made twenty-five feet wide at the top, and the bed of the road in excavations is twenty-five feet, with wide side ditches. Much care in drainage was necessary, as the road passes chiefly along [Pg 16] the steep slopes of hills, of clayey soil, and over innumerable small streams. Sixty-eight culverts of masonry pass under the road, and eighty-five drains. There are four viaducts of hammer-dressed sandstone, to carry the line over streams. The most splendid of these is over the Conemaugh, eight miles from Johnstown. It has a semi-circular arch of eighty feet span; the top of whose masonry is seventy feet above the water. There is a tunnel through a spur of the Alleghany, nine hundred and one feet long, by twenty feet wide, and nineteen high. The foundations of this road are partly stone and partly wood. Each station has two steam-engines; one being used at a time, and the other provided to prevent delay, in case of accident. Four cars, each loaded with 7000 lbs. can be drawn up, and four such let down at a time; and from six to ten such trips can be accomplished in an hour. A safety-car is attached to the train, both in ascending and descending; and though not an absolute safeguard, it much increases the security. This little machine, when pressed upon from behind, grounds its point, and materially checks the velocity of the otherwise flying train. The iron rails, and some other of the metal portions of the work, were imported from Great Britain.

The cost of constructing this rail-road at the contract prices was 1,634,357 dollars; but this does not include office expenses, or engineering, or accidental extra allowances to contractors. During the first year of the two tracks being opened, fifty thousand tons of freight, and twenty thousand passengers, passed over the road.

Five years before, this line of passage was an untrodden wilderness. The act authorising the [Pg 17] commencement of the work passed the Pennsylvania legislature on the 21st of March, 1831. On the 12th of the next month, the tents of the first working party were pitched at the head of the mountain-branch of the Conemaugh. The party consisted of two engineers, a surveyor, twelve assistants and axemen, and a cook. A track, one hundred and twenty feet wide, overgrown with heavy spruce and hemlock timber, had to be cleared, for a distance of thirty miles. The amount of labour was increased as the work proceeded; and, at one time, as many as two thousand men were employed upon the road. On the 26th of November, 1833, the first car traversed the whole length on the single track that was finished. The canals were then closed for the season; but, during the next March the road was opened for a public highway. In another year the enterprise was completed; and in May 1835, the State furnished the whole motive power. The stupendous work was then in full operation.

Our party (of four, one a child) traversed the entire State from Pittsburg to Philadelphia by canal and rail-road, in four days, at an expense of only forty-two dollars, not including provisions. There was then great competition between the lines of canal-boats. We went by the new line, whose boats were extraordinarily clean, and the table really luxurious. An omnibus, sent from the canal, conveyed us from our hotel at Pittsburg to the boat, at nine in the evening; and we immediately set off. Berths were put up for the ladies of the party in the ladies' dressing-room, and removed during the day. We were called early, and breakfast dispatched before the heat grew oppressive; but, though it was now the middle of July, I could not remain in the shade of the cabin: the scenery, during our whole course, was so beautiful. Umbrella and fan made the heat endurable [Pg 18] on deck, except for the two hours nearest to noon. The only great inconvenience was the having to remember perpetually to avoid the low bridges, which we passed, on an average, every quarter of an hour. When we were all together, this was little of an annoyance; for one or another was sure to remember to give warning; but a solitary person, reading or in reverie, is really in danger. We heard of two cases of young ladies, reading, who had been crushed to death: and we prohibited books upon deck. Charley thought the commotion caused on our approach to a bridge the best part of our amusement; and he was heard to complain sometimes that it was very long since we had had any bridges, or when one chanced to be so lofty that we might pass under it without stooping. The best of all in his eyes were the horizontal ones, which compelled us to lie down flat.

The valley of the Kiskiminites is like one noble, fruitful park. Here and there were harvest fields of small grain, and of the tasselled Indian corn: and a few coal and salt works, some forsaken, some busy, showed themselves on reaches of the river; but we were usually enclosed by a circle

of wooded hills, reposing in the brightest lights and shadows. The canal commonly ran along the base of one of these hills; but it often let us slip into the broad lucid stream of the river itself.

After having left the Kiskiminites behind us, we crossed the Conemaugh by a fine aqueduct, which continued its course through a long dark tunnel, piercing the heart of the mountain. The reflection of the blue light behind us on the straight line of water in this cavern made a beautiful picture. The paths which human hands have piled upon one another here form a singular combination: the river below, the aqueduct over it; and higher still, the mountain road, winding [Pg 19] steeper and steeper to the summit. A settler lives on this mountain, the bottom of whose well was dug out in making the tunnel. In the evening there was every combination of rock, hill, wood, river, and luxuriant vegetation that could furnish forth a succession of noble pictures. Charley was as well amused as the rest of us. He understood the construction and management of the locks, and was never tired of our rising and falling in them; and they afforded, besides, an opportunity of stepping ashore with his father, to get us flowers, and run along the bank to the next lock. Of these locks there are a hundred and ninety-two between Pittsburg and Philadelphia, averaging eight feet in depth.

We were called up before four on the second morning, and had barely time to dress, step ashore, and take our places in the car, before the train set off. We understood that the utmost possible advantage is taken of the daylight, as the trains do not travel after dark; it being made a point of, that the ropes should be examined before each trip. After having breakfasted by the way, we reached the summit of the Portage rail-road between nine and ten. There were fine views all the way; the mountains opening and receding, and disclosing the distant clearings and nestling villages. All around us were plots of wild flowers, of many hues.

We were carried on chiefly by steam power, partly by horse, partly by descending weight, and, at the last, down a long reach, of the slightest possible inclination, by our own weight. The motion was then tremendously rapid, and it subsided only on our reaching the canal at the foot of the mountains.

There was again so much hurry—there being danger of either of two rival boats getting first possession of the next locks, that we of the last car had scarcely time to step on board before the [Pg 20] team of three horses began cantering and raising a dust on the towing path, and tugging us through the water at such a rate as to make the waves lash the canal bank. Our boat won the race, and we bolted with a victorious force into the chamber of the first lock.

We had occasionally to cross broad rivers. To-day we crossed the Juniatta by a rope ferry, moved by water-power; and afterwards we crossed the Susquehanna (at the junction of two branches of the Juniatta, the Susquehanna, and two canals) by means of the towing-path being carried along the outside of the great covered bridge which spans the river at Duncan's Island.

The next morning we had to leave the broad, clear, but shallow Susquehanna,—the "river of rocks," as its name imports. I had before travelled almost its whole length along its banks; and, like every one who has done so, loved its tranquil beauty.

The last stage of this remarkable journey was from Columbia to Philadelphia, by rail-road, eighty-one miles, which we were seven hours in performing, as the stoppages were frequent and long. This work, which was opened in 1834, includes thirty-one viaducts, seventy-three stone culverts, five hundred stone drains, and eighteen bridges. Its cost was about 1,600,000 dollars.—The length of this passage from Philadelphia to Pittsburg is 394 miles.

Where, I again ask, would have been these great works, but for the immigration so seriously complained of by some?

The number of considerable canals, varying in length from fourteen to three hundred and sixty-three miles, was, in 1835, twenty-five. Of rail-roads, from fifteen to a hundred and thirty-two [Pg 21] miles long, there were fourteen. The cost of these canals was 64,573,099 dollars. The cost of these rail-roads was nearly thirty millions of dollars.

The Dutch are the best people to apply to for capital when any canal work is projected. I heard it said that the word "canal" was enough for them.

The steam-boats of the United States are renowned, as they deserve to be. There is no occasion to describe their size and beauty here; but their number is astonishing. I understand that three hundred were navigating the great western rivers some time ago: and the number is probably much increased.

Among so many, and where the navigation is so dangerous as on the Mississippi, it is no wonder that the accidents are numerous. I was rather surprised at the cautions I received throughout the south about choosing wisely among the Mississippi steam-boats; and at the question gravely asked, as I was going on board, whether I had a life-preserver with me. I found that all my acquaintances on board had furnished themselves with life-preservers; and my surprise ceased when we passed boat after boat on the river, delayed or deserted on account of some accident. We were on board the "Henry Clay," a noble boat, of high reputation; the present being the ninety-seventh trip accomplished without accident. Our yawl was snagged one day; and we encountered a squall and hail storm, one night, which blew both the pilots away from the helm, and made them look "to see the hurricane deck blown clear off;" but no mischief ensued.

Notwithstanding the increase of steam-boats in the Mississippi, flat boats are still much in use.

These are large boats, of rude construction, made just strong enough to hold together, and keep their cargo of flour, or other articles, dry, from some high point on the great rivers, to New Orleans. They are furnished with two enormous oars, fixed on what is, I suppose, called their deck; to be used where the current is sluggish, or when it is desirable to change the direction of the boat. The cumbrous machine is propelled by the stream; her proprietors only occasionally helping her progress, now by pulling at the branches of overhanging trees, now by turning her into the more rapid of two currents. She is seen sometimes floating down the very middle of the river; sometimes gliding under the banks. At noon, a bower of green leaves is waving on her deck, for shade to her masters; at night, a pine brand is waved, flaming, to give warning to the steam-boats not to run her down. The voyage from the upper parts of the Ohio to New Orleans, is thus performed in from three to five weeks. The cargo being disposed of at New Orleans, the boat is broken up, and the materials sold; and her masters work their way home again, as deck passengers on board a steam-boat, by bringing in wood at all the wooding places. The "Henry Clay" had a larger company of this kind of passengers than the captain liked. He declared that the deck was giving way under their number. It was a pretty sight to see them twice a day,—very early in the morning, and about sunset,—pour from the boat, when she drew under the shore, form two lines between the boat and the wood pile, and bring in their loads. Most of them were tall Kentuckians, who really do look unlike all other people. I felt a strong inclination for a flat-boat voyage down the vast and beautiful Mississippi; beautiful with islands and bluffs, and the eternal forest; but I have lost the opportunity. If I should ever visit that beloved country again, this picturesque kind of craft will have disappeared, as the yet more barbarous raft is now disappearing; and one more characteristic feature of western scenery will be effaced.

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It seems probable that there will be a more rapid increase of ships and schooners than of steam-boats on the northern lakes. These lakes are so subject to gusts and storms that steam-boats cannot be considered safe, and ought to make no promises of punctuality. The captains declare their office to be too anxious a one. A squall comes from any quarter, without notice; and the boat no sooner seems to be proceeding prosperously on her way, than she has to run in somewhere for safety from a sudden storm.

Of all the water-craft I ever saw, I know none so graceful as the sloops on the Hudson; unless it be the New York pilot-boats. The North-River sloops are an altogether peculiar race of boats. They are low, and can carry a great press of sail, from the smoothness of the water on which they perform their voyages. A sloop of a hundred and fifty tons will carry a mast of ninety feet high. I could watch these boats on the Hudson, a whole summer through; moored beside a pebbly strand, in a recess of the shore; or lying dark in a trail of glittering sunshine; or turning the whitest of sails to the sun, startling the fish-hawk with the sudden gleam, so that he quits his prey, and makes for the hanging woods. I saw their graceful forms disclosed by lightning, while I was watching, from the piazza of the West Point Hotel, the progress of a tremendous storm. I saw them as suddenly disclosed at another time; and still more strikingly. From the terrace of Pine Orchard House, on the summit of the Catskill Mountain, I watched, one July morning, at four o'clock, the breaking of the dawn over the entire valley of the Hudson. The difference between mountain, forest, and meadow, first appeared. Then the grey river seemed to grow into sight, for the whole length of its windings. It was twelve miles off, and looked little more than a thread. The sun came up, like a golden star resting on the mountain-top; and, on the instant, the river was seen to be peopled with these sloops. Their white sails came in one instant into view, together with the churches in the hamlets, and the bright gables of the farm-houses in the meadows. The whole scene was made alive by one ray.

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There will be no want of markets for produce of all kinds, in the United States, within any time that can be foreseen. If slavery were to be abolished to-morrow, and, in consequence, more corn grown and cattle reared in the slave States, the demand for both from the north-western States would still go on to increase; so vast and progressive would be the improvement in the south. The great cities are even yet ill supplied from the country. Provisions are very dear; and the butcher's meat throughout the country is far inferior to what it will be when an increased amount of labour, and means of transport, shall encourage improvement in the pasturage and care of stock. While, as we have seen, fowls, butter, and eggs, are still sent from Vermont into Boston, there is no such thing to be had there as a joint of tender meat. In one house at Boston, where a very numerous family lives in handsome style, and where I several times met large dinner parties, I never saw an ounce of meat, except ham. The table was covered with birds, in great variety, and well cooked; but all winged creatures. The only tender, juicy meat I saw in the country, was a sirloin of beef at Charleston, and the whole provision of a gentleman's table in Kentucky. At one country place, there was nothing but veal on the table for a month; in a town where I staid ten days, nothing was to be had but beef: and throughout the south the traveller meets little else than pork, under all manner of disguises, and fowls.

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Much is said in England about the cheapness of living in the United States, without its being understood what need there is of equalising, (or what appears so to the inhabitants of an old country,) by means of markets. In places where beef and veal are twopence per pound, and venison a penny, (English,) tea may be twenty shillings per pound, and gloves seven shillings a pair. At Charlottesville University, fowls were provided to the professors' families at a dollar a dozen. In the towns of Kentucky, meat is fourpence per pound; in the rural parts of Pennsylvania a penny or twopence; and butter sixpence. At Ebensburg, on the top of the Alleghanies, we staid twenty-five hours. Two of us were well taken care of, had attendance, good beds, two dinners each, supper, breakfast, and a supply of buns to carry away with us; and all for one dollar; the dollar at that time being four shillings and twopence English. The next week, I paid six dollars for

the making of a gown at Philadelphia; and all the ladies of a country town, not very far off, were wearing gloves too bad to be mended, or none at all, because none had come up by the canal for many weeks.

At Washington, I wanted some ribbon for my straw bonnet; and, in the whole place, in the season, I could find only six pieces of ribbon to choose from.

Throughout the entire country, (out of the cities,) I was struck with the discomfort of broken windows which appeared on every side. Large farm-houses, flourishing in every other respect, had dismal-looking windows. I was possessed with the idea that the business of a travelling [Pg 26] glazier would be a highly profitable one. Persons who happen to live near a canal, or other quiet watery road, have baskets of glass of various sizes sent to them from the towns, and glaze their own windows. But there is no bringing glass over a corduroy, or mud, or rough limestone road; and those who have no other highways must "get along" with such windows as it may please the weather and the children to leave them.

The following laconic dialogue shows, not unfairly, even if it be a mere jest, how acceptable means of transport would be to western settlers.

"Whose land was this that you bought?"

"Mogg's."

"What's the soil?"

"Bogs."

"What's the climate?"

"Fogs."

"What do you get to eat?"

"Hogs."

"What did you build your house of?"

"Logs."

"Have you any neighbours?"

"Frogs."

There are only two methods (besides rare accidents) by which dwellers in such places can get their wants supplied. When a few other neighbours besides frogs, gather round the settler, some one opens a grocery store. I went shopping near the Falls of Niagara; about a quarter of a mile from which place, there is a store on the borders of the forest. I saw there glass and bacon; stay-laces, prints, drugs, rugs, and crockery; bombazeens and tin cans; books, boots, and moist sugar, &c. &c.

Pedlars are the other agents of supply. It has been mentioned how bibles and other books are [Pg 27] sold by youths who adopt this method of speedily raising money. The Yankee pedlars, with their wooden clocks, are renowned. One of these gentry lately retired with a fortune of a hundred thousand dollars, made by the sale of wooden clocks alone. These men are great benefactors to society: for, be their clocks what they may, they make the country people as well off as the inhabitants of towns, in the matter of knowing the time; and what more would they have? One would think there was no sun in the United States, so very imaginative are most of the population in respect of the hour. Even in New York I found a wide difference between the upper and lower parts of the city: and between Canandaigua and Buffalo there was the slight variation of half an hour. In some parts of the south, we were at the mercy of whatever clock the last pedlar might have happened to bring, for the appearance of meals: but it appeared as if the clocks themselves had something of the Yankee spirit in them; for, while they were usually too fast, I rarely knew one too slow.

The perplexity about time took a curious form in one instance, in the south. The lady of the governor of the State had never had sufficient energy to learn the clock. With both clock and watch in the house, she was incessantly sending her slave Venus, (lazy, ignorant, awkward, and ugly,) into a neighbour's house to ask the hour. Three times in one morning did Venus loll against the drawing-room door, her chin in her hands, drawling,

"What's the time?"

"Nine, Venus."

Venus went home, and told her mistress it was one. Dinner was hastened; but it soon appearing from some symptom that it could not be so late, Venus appeared again, with her chin reposing as before.

"What's the time?" [Pg 28]

"Between ten and eleven, Venus."

Venus carries word that it is eight. And so on.

The race of pedlars will decrease, year by year. There will be fewer carts, nicely packed with boxes and baskets. There will be fewer youths in homespun, with grave faces and somewhat prim deportment, in well-laden gigs. There will be fewer horsemen, with saddle-bags, and compact wooden cases. There will be fewer pedestrians, with pouches strung before and behind, an umbrella in one hand, and an open book in the other. The same men, or their sons, will gain in fortune, and lose perhaps somewhat in mind and manners, by being stationary, or the frequenters of some established market.

The conveying of vast quantities of cotton and other produce towards the southern ports is already a matter of pride to the residents, who boast that they employ the industry of persons a thousand miles off to provide food for themselves and their dependents. The bustle of the great northern markets is also very striking to the stranger who sees to what distance in the interior, the produce of Europe and Asia is to be conveyed. But, a few years hence, the spread of comfort and luxury will be as great as that of industry is now. By a vast augmentation of the means of transport, markets will be opened wherever the soil is peculiarly rich, the mines remarkably productive, or the locality especially inviting.

The object is an all-important one. As it is too late to restrict the territory on which the American people are dispersed, it is most serviceable that they should be brought together again, for purposes of intercourse, mutual education and discipline, and wise co-operation in the work of self-government, by such means as exist for practically annihilating time and space. The certain [Pg 29] increase of wealth by these means is a good. The certain increase of people is an incalculably greater. The certain increase of knowledge and civilisation is the greatest of all.

SECTION I.
INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

One of the most important constitutional questions that has arisen in the United States is one, regarding Internal Improvements, which has grown out of a failure of foresight in the makers of the constitution. No set of men could be expected to foresee every great question which must arise during the advancement of a young country; and there is no evidence of its having occurred to any one, in the early days of the republic, to inquire whether the general government should have power to institute and carry on public works, all over the States; and under what limitations. Many inconsistent and contradictory proceedings have taken place in Congress, since the question was first raised; and it remains unsettled.

For some years after the Revolution, the treasury had enough to do to pay the debts of the war, and defray the expenses attendant upon the organisation of the new system. As soon as a surplus was found to be in hand, suggestions were heard about improving the country. In 1796, Mr. Madison proposed a resolution to cause a survey to be made for a road from north to south, through all the Atlantic States. No appropriation was made for the purpose: but no objection was [Pg 30] offered on the ground of the general government not having power to make such appropriation. The difficulty of access to the great western wilderness was represented to Congress under Mr. Jefferson's administration, in 1802; and a law was passed, making appropriations for opening roads in the north-west territory. This was the first appropriation made by Congress for purposes of internal improvement. Many similar acts followed; and road-making and surveying the coast went on expeditiously, and to a great extent. In 1807, Mr. Gallatin prepared the celebrated Report to the Senate, which contains a systematic plan for the improvement of the whole country. In 1812, during Mr. Madison's administration, a survey was authorised of the main post road from Maine to Georgia. Improvement under the sanction of Congress went on with increased activity into the administration of Mr. Monroe, by whom the first check was given. Mr. Monroe vetoed the bill authorising the collection of tolls for the repair of the Cumberland road. The reason assigned for the veto was, that it was one thing to make appropriations for public works, and another thing to assume jurisdiction and sovereignty over the soil on which such works were erected; and President Monroe did not believe that Congress could assume power to levy toll.[2] By his adoption of a subsequent act, involving the same principles, however, it seemed that he had changed his opinion, or resolved to yield the question.

Mr. J. Q. Adams's advocacy of internal improvements removed some lingering difficulties; and, [Pg 31] while he was President, the public works were carried on with great activity. The southern members of Congress, however, were generally opposed to the exercise of this power by the general government: and it has ever since been a strongly-debated question.

President Jackson's course on the subject has not been very consistent. Before his election, he always voted for internal improvements, going so far as to advocate subscriptions by government to the stock of private canal companies, and the formation of roads beginning and ending within the limits of particular States. In his message at the opening of the first Congress after his accession, he proposed the division of the surplus revenue among the States, as a substitute for the promotion of internal improvements by the general government. He attempted a limitation and distinction too difficult and important to be settled and acted upon on the judgment and knowledge of one man;—a distinction between general and local objects. It is manifestly impossible to draw the line with any precision. The whole Union is benefited by the Erie canal, though it lies wholly within the limits of the State of New York; and a thousand positions of circumstances may be imagined by which local advantages may become general, and general

local, so as to confound the limitation altogether. At any rate, the judgment and knowledge of any individual, or any cabinet, are obviously unequal to the maintenance of such a distinction.

In 1829 and 1830, the President advocated such an amendment of the constitution as would authorise Congress to apply the surplus revenue to certain specified objects, involving the general good; and he strongly objected to the general government exercising a power, considered by him unconstitutional, merely because there was a quantity of money in the [Pg 32] treasury which must be disposed of. He has since changed his opinion, and believes that less evil would be incurred by even suddenly reducing the revenue to the amount of the wants of the government, than by conferring on the general government immense means of patronage, and opportunity for corrupt and wasteful expenditure.

These changes of opinion in President Jackson prove nothing so clearly as the great difficulty of the subject. It is, however, so pressing and so important that, notwithstanding its difficulty, it must be settled before long.

The opposing arguments seem to me to be these.

The advocates of a concession to Congress of the power of conducting internal improvements plead, with regard to the constitutionality of the power, that it is conferred by the clauses which authorise Congress to make post-roads: to regulate commerce between the States: to make and carry on war; (and therefore to have roads by which to transport troops;) to lay taxes, to pay the debts, and provide for the general welfare of the United States: and to pass all laws necessary to carry into effect its constitutional powers.

The answer is, that to derive from these clauses any countenance of the practice of spending without limit the public funds, for objects which any present government may declare to be for the general welfare, is an obvious straining of the instrument: that, by such methods, the constitution may be made to authorise the spending of any amount whatever, for any purpose whatever: that it is the characteristic of the constitution to specify the powers given to Congress with a nicety which is wholly inconsistent with such a boundless conveyance of power as is here [Pg 33] presumed: and that, accordingly, the permission to lay taxes, to pay the debts, and provide for the general welfare of the United States, is limited as to its objects by the preceding specifications: and that, finally, the powers allotted to the State governments exclude the supposition that Congress is authorised to assume such territorial jurisdiction as it has been allowed to practise within the limits of the several States.

This last set of opinions appears to disinterested observers so obviously reasonable, that the wonder is how so weak a stand on the provisions of the constitution can have been maintained for any length of time. The reason is, that the pleas of expediency are so strong as to counterbalance the weakness of the constitutional argument. But, this being the case, the truly honest and patriotic mode of proceeding would be to add to the constitution by the means therein provided; instead of straining the instrument to accomplish an object which was not present to the minds of its framers.

The pleas of the advocates of Internal Improvements are these: that very extensive public works, designed for the benefit of the whole Union, and carried through vast portions of its area, must be accomplished: that an object so essential ought not to be left at the mercy of such an accident as the cordial agreement of the requisite number of States, to carry such works forward to their completion; that the surplus funds accruing from the whole nation cannot be so well employed as in promoting works by which the whole nation will be benefited: and that, as the interests of the majority have hitherto upheld Congress in the use of this power, it may be assumed to be the will of the majority that Congress should continue to exercise it.

The answer is, that it is inexpedient to put a vast and increasing patronage into the hands of the [Pg 34] general government: that only a very superficial knowledge can be looked for in members of Congress as to the necessity or value of works proposed to be instituted in any parts of the States but those in which they are respectively interested: that endless jealousies would arise between the various States,[3] from the impossibility or undesirableness of equalising the amount of appropriation made to each: that useless works would be proposed from the spirit of competition, or individual interest:[4] and that corruption, co-extensive with the increase of power, would deprave the functions of the general government.

There is much truth on both sides here. In the first set of pleas there is so much force that they have ceased to be, what they were once supposed, the distinctive doctrines of the federal party. Mr. Webster is still considered the head of the Internal Improvements party; and Mr. Calhoun was for some time the leader of its opponents. Jefferson's latest opinions were strong against the power claimed and exercised by Congress. Yet large numbers of the democratic party are as strenuous for internal improvements as Adams and Webster themselves; the interests of the [Pg 35] majority being clearly on that side.

To an impartial observer it appears that Congress has no constitutional right to devote the public funds to internal improvements, at its own unrestricted will and pleasure: that the permitted usurpation of the power for so long a time indicates that some degree of such power in the hands of the general government is desirable and necessary: that such power should be granted through an amendment of the constitution, by the methods therein provided: that, in the mean time, it is perilous that the instrument should be strained for the support of any function, however desirable its exercise may be.

In case of the proposed addition being made to the constitution, arrangements will, of course, be entered into for determining the principles by which general are to be distinguished from local objects, or whether such distinction can, on any principle, be fixed; for testing the utility of proposed objects; for checking extravagant expenditure, jobbing, and corrupt patronage: in short, the powers of Congress will be specified, here, as in other matters, by express permission and prohibition. These details, difficult or unmanageable amidst the questionable exercise of a great power, will, doubtless, be arranged so as to work with precision, when the will of the majority is brought to bear directly upon them.

It is time that this great question should be settled. Congress goes on making appropriations for a road here, a canal there, a harbour or a light-house somewhere else. All these may or may not be necessary. Meantime, those who have law on their side, exclaim against extravagance, jobbing, and encroachment on popular rights. Those who have expediency on their side plead [Pg 36] necessity, the popular will, and the increasing surplus revenue.

If the constitution provides means by which law, expediency, and the prevention of abuse, can be reconciled to the satisfaction of all, surely the sooner it is done the better. Thus the matter appears to a passing stranger.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] "The income of the public works of the State" (South Carolina) "is very small, not exceeding 15,000 dollars per annum, over the cost of management, although the State has incurred a debt of 2,000,000 in constructing them. In many parts of the State, canals have been constructed, which do not yield sufficient to pay their current expenses; and, with the exception of the State road, and the Columbia canal, there is hardly a public work in the State, which, put up at public auction, would find a purchaser."

1833. *American Annual Register*, p. 285.

[2] President Jackson is of opinion that no toll should be levied on ways provided by the public revenue. It should be a complete and final outlay, and none of the people compelled to pay for works effected by the people's money. This seems clearly right.

[3] South Carolina was in favour of Internal Improvements, till it was found how much larger a share of the benefit would be appropriated by the active and prosperous northern States than by those which are depressed by slavery. Since that discovery, South Carolina's sectional jealousy has been unbounded, and her opposition to the exercise of the power very fierce. In her periodical publications, as well as through other channels, she has declared herself neglected, or likely to be neglected, on account of her being southern. The enterprise of the North and depression of the South are, as usual, looked upon as favour and neglect, shown by the general government.

[4] When I was ascending the Mississippi, I observed a light-house perched on a bluff, in a ridiculous situation. On asking the meaning of the phenomenon, I was told that a senator from the State of Mississippi, wishing to make a flourish about his zeal for the improvement of his State, had obtained an appropriation from Congress to build this light-house, which is of no earthly use.

CHAPTER III. [Pg 37]
MANUFACTURES.

> "The crude treasures, perpetually exposed before our eyes, contain within them other and more valuable principles. All these, likewise, in their numberless combinations, which ages of labour and research can never exhaust, may be destined to furnish, in perpetual succession, new sources of our wealth and of our happiness."
>
> BABBAGE.

The whole American people suffered, during the revolutionary war, from the want of the comforts and some of the necessaries of life, now so called. Their commerce with the world abroad being almost wholly intercepted, they had nothing wherewith to console themselves but the stocks which might be left in their warehouses, and the produce of their soil. It is amazing, at this day, to hear of the wants of the commonest articles of clothing and domestic use, undergone in those days by some of the first families in the republic.

The experience of these troubles suggested to many persons the expediency of establishing manufactures in the United States: but there was an almost universal prejudice against this mode of employment. It is amusing now to read Hamilton's celebrated Report on Manufactures, presented in 1790, and to see how elaborately the popular objections to manufactures are [Pg 38] answered. The persuasion of the nation was that America was designed to be an agricultural country; that agriculture was wholly productive, and manufactures not productive at all; and that agriculture was the more honourable occupation. The two former prejudices have been put to flight by happy experience. The last still lingers. It is not five years since the President's message

declared that "the wealth and strength of a country are its population; and the best part of that population are the cultivators of the soil."

Such prepossessions may be left to die out. They arise mainly from a very good notion, not very clearly defined;—that the more intercourse men have with Nature, the better for the men. This is true; but Nature is present in all places where the hands of men work, if the workmen can but see her. If Nature is supposed present only where there is a blue sky overhead, and grass and trees around, this shows only the narrowness of mind of him who thus supposes. Her forces are at work wherever there is mechanism; and man only directs them to his particular purpose. In America, it may be said that her beauty is present wherever her forces are at work; for men have there set up their mechanism in some of the choicest spots in the land. There is a good and an evil aspect belonging to all things. If tourists are exasperated at fine scenery being deformed by the erection of mills, (which in many instances are more of an ornament than a deformity,) let others be awake to the advantage that it is to the work-people to have their dwellings and their occupation fixed in spots where the hills are heaped together, and the waters leap and whirl among rocks, rather than in dull suburbs where they and their employments may not annoy the eye of the lover of the picturesque. It always gave me pleasure to see the artisans at work about [Pg 39] such places as Glen's Falls, the Falls of the Genessee, and on the banks of some of the whirling streams in the New England valleys. I felt that they caught, or might catch, as beautiful glimpses of Nature's face as the western settler. If the internal circumstances were favourable, there was little in the outward to choose between. If they had the open mind's eye to see beauty, and the soul to feel wonder, it mattered little whether it was the forest or the waterfall (even though it were called the "water-privilege") that they had to look upon; whether it was by the agency of vegetation or of steam that they had to work. It is deplorable enough, in this view, to be a poor artisan in the heart of our English Manchester: but to be a thriving one in the most beautiful outskirts of Sheffield is, perhaps, as favourable a lot for the lover of nature as to be a labourer on any soil: and the privileges of the American artisans are like this.

As to the old objection to American manufactures, that America was designed to be an agricultural country,—it seems to me, as I said before, that America was meant to be everything. Her group of republics is merged in one, in the eyes of the world; and, for some purposes, in reality: but this involves no obligation to make them all alike in their produce and occupations; but rather the contrary. Here, as everywhere else, let the laws of nature be followed, and the procedure will be wise. Nature has nothing to do with artificial boundaries and arbitrary inclosures. There are many soils and many climates included within the boundary line of the United States; many *countries*; and one rule cannot be laid down for all. If there be any one or more of these where the requisites for manufactures are present, and those for agriculture [Pg 40] deficient, there let manufactures arise. If there is poor land, and good mill-seats; abundant material, animal and mineral, on the spot, and vegetable easily to be procured; a sufficiency of hands, and talent for the construction and use of machinery, there should manufactures spring up. This is eminently the case with New England, and some other parts of the United States. It was perceived to be so, even in the days when the growth of cotton in the south was spoken of as a small experiment, not likely to produce great consequences.

New England formerly depended chiefly on the carrying trade. When that resource was diminished, after the war, it is difficult to see how her people were to be prevented setting up manufactures, or why they needed any particular exhortation or assistance to do it. They had the opportunity of obtaining foreign capital; their previous foreign intercourses having pointed out to them where it had accumulated, and might therefore be obtained with advantage. They had a vast material, left from their fisheries, of skins, oil, and the bones of marine animals; they had bark, hides, wood, flax, hemp, iron, and clay. They had also the requisite skill; as may be seen by the following list of domestic manufactures, carried on in private houses only, in 1790. "Great quantities of coarse cloths, coatings, serges and flannels, linsey-woolseys, hosiery of wool, cotton, and thread, coarse fustians, jeans, and muslins, coverlets and counterpanes, tow linens, coarse shirtings, sheetings, towellings, and table-linen, and various mixtures of wool and cotton, and of cotton and flax, are made in the household way; and, in many instances, to an extent not only sufficient for the supply of the family in which they are made, but for sale, and even in some cases for exportation. It is computed, in a number of districts, that two-thirds, three-fourths, and [Pg 41] even four-fifths of all the clothing of the inhabitants, are made by themselves."[5] If all this was done without the advantage of division of labour, of masses of capital, or of other machinery than might be set up in a farm-house parlour, it is clear that this region was fully prepared, five-and-forty years ago, for the introduction of manufactures on a large scale; and there appears every reason to believe that they might have been left to their natural growth.

The same Report mentions seventeen classes of manufacture going on as distinct trades, at the same time, in the northern States.

The only plausible objection to the establishment of manufactures was the scarcity and dearness of labour, in comparison with that of the old countries of Europe. But, if the exportation of some articles actually took place, while the labour which produced them was scattered about in farm-houses, what might not be expected if the same labour could be called forth and concentrated, and aided by the introduction of machinery? A great immigration of artisans might also be looked for, when once any temptation was held out to the poor of Europe to come over to a young and thriving country. Moreover, improvements in machinery are the invariable consequence of a deficiency of manufacturing labour; for the obvious reason that men's wits are urged to supply the want under which their interests suffer. Again: manufactures can, to a considerable degree,

be carried on by the labour of women; and there is a great number of unemployed women in New England, from the circumstance that the young men of that region wander away in search of a settlement on the land; and, after being settled, find wives in the south and west.

Thus much of the case might have been, and was by some, foreseen. What has been the event? [Pg 42]

In 1825, the amount of manufactures exported from the United States, was 5,729,797 dollars. Of these about one-fourth were cotton-piece goods, in the sale of which the American merchants were now able to compete with the English, in some foreign markets. The manufacture of cottons in the United States afforded a market for one hundred and seventy-five thousand bales of cotton annually; and the printed cottons manufactured at home amounted annually to fourteen millions of yards. The importation of cotton goods into the country in 1825 was in value between twelve and thirteen millions of dollars; and in 1826, between nine and ten millions. The woollen manufacture has never flourished like the cotton; the bad effects of the tariff being more immediately visible in regard to articles of manufacture whose raw material must be chiefly derived from abroad.

In 1828, the legislature of Massachusetts passed resolutions deploring the increasing depression of the woollen manufacture, and praying for increased protection from Congress. The exportation of cotton goods that year amounted to upwards of a million of dollars; and the next year to nearly a million and a half. The importation of cotton goods was all but prohibited by the tariff of 1824: and the consequence was an immense investment of capital in the cotton manufacture, almost on the instant; and some perilous fluctuations since, too nearly resembling the agitations of older countries, where the pernicious policy of ages has accumulated difficulties on the present generation.

At Lowell, in Massachusetts, there was in 1818, a small satinet mill, employing about twenty hands; the place itself containing two hundred inhabitants. In 1825, the Merrimack Manufacturing Company was formed; it was joined by others; and in 1832, the capital invested [Pg 43] was above six millions of dollars. The whole number of operatives employed was five thousand; of whom three thousand eight hundred were women and girls. The quantity of raw cotton used was upwards of twenty thousand bales. The quantity of pure cotton goods manufactured was twenty-five millions of yards. The woollen fabric manufactured in these establishments was, at the same time, one hundred and fifty thousand yards. Sixty-eight carpet-looms were at work also. The workmen employed in all these operations received for wages about 1,200,000 dollars per annum. About two hundred mechanics, of a high order of ability, are constantly employed. The fuel consumed in a year is five thousand tons of anthracite coal, besides charcoal and wood.

The same protective system which caused the sudden growth of such an establishment as this, tempted numerous capitalists to seek their share of the supposed benefits of the tariff. The manufacturing interest was well nigh ruined by the protection it had asked for. The competition and consequent over-manufacture were tremendous. Failure after failure took place, till forty-five thousand spindles were standing idle, and thousands of operatives were thrown into a state of poverty unnatural enough in such a country as theirs. A cry was raised by many for a repeal of the tariff: this created a panic among those who, on the strength of the tariff, had withdrawn their capital from commerce, and invested it in manufactures. The stock of all the manufacturing companies was offered in vain, at prices ruinously low. Thus stood matters in 1829.

The history of the quarrel between the north and south about the tariff, and the nature of the Compromise Bill, is already known. The mischief done will be repaired, as far as reparation is [Pg 44] possible, by the reduction of the import duties, year by year, till 1842. If the demands of the country and of foreign customers should not rise to the limit of the over-manufacture which has taken place, time is thus allowed for the gradual withdrawing of the capital and industry which have been seduced into this method of employment. Meantime, the manufactures of the northern States are permanently established, though not in the wisest way. If they had been left to themselves, they would have been an unmixed good to the community. As it is, society has suffered the inevitable consequences of an irrational policy,—a policy indefensible in a republic. It is well that the experiment wrought out its consequences so speedily and so plainly that any repetition is unlikely,—little as the natural laws which regulate commerce are yet understood.

In 1831, the total number of looms employed in the cotton manufacture of the United States was 33,433. Of these, 21,336 were in New England; 3,653 in New York State; 6,301 in Pennsylvania; and the rest in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and Virginia.

Next to the cotton and woollen manufactures, the most valuable are manufactures from flax and hemp; from tobacco and grain; sugar, soap, and candles, gunpowder, gold and silver coin, iron, copper and brass, hats, medicinal drugs, and shoes.

The shoe manufacture is one of the most remarkable in the States, from the suddenness and extent of its spread. It has been mentioned that the shoe trade of New York State is more valuable than the total commerce of Georgia. The extent to which the manufacture is carried on in one village in Massachusetts, with which I am acquainted, shows the prosperity of the business.

In order to shoemaking, there must be tanning. There are many and large tanneries in Danvers [Pg 45] and the outskirts of Salem, for the supply of the Lynn shoe-manufacture. The largest tannery in the United States is at Salem. The hides are partly imported. The bark is brought from Maine. These tanneries were in a state of temporary adversity when I saw them. Some kinds of skins are

two or three years in tanning; and capital is thus locked up in such amounts as render fluctuation dangerous. It had lately been discovered that oak bark could be had cheaper, and tanning consequently carried on to a greater advantage up the Hudson than on the Massachusetts coast: so that the tanners and curriers of Salem and Danvers were descending somewhat from their high prosperity. But nothing could exceed the nourishing aspect of Lynn, the sanctum of St. Crispin.

In 1831, the value of boots and shoes, (very few boots, and chiefly ladies' shoes,) made at Lynn was nearly a million of dollars a year. The total number made was above a million and a half pairs: the number of people employed, three thousand five hundred; being about seven-eighths of the population of the place, partially employed; and some hundreds from other places, wholly employed. Last year, the place was much on the increase. A green, with a piece of water in the middle, and trees, was being laid out in the centre of the town. New houses were rising in all directions, and fresh hands were welcomed from any quarter; for the orders sent could not be executed. Besides the domestic supply, two million pairs of ladies' shoes a-year were sent off to the remotest corners of the States; and, as they have once penetrated there, it seems difficult to imagine where the demand will stop; for those remote corners are all being more thickly peopled every day. Their united demand will be enough to make the fortune of a whole State.

It seems probable that a few more manufactures may be added to those which are sure to [Pg 46] flourish in the United States: as silk and wine. If the government firmly refuses to interfere again in the way of protection, it will be easily and safely discoverable what resources the country really possesses; and what direction her improving industry may naturally and profitably take.

SECTION I.

THE TARIFF.

If I were to go into anything like a detailed account of what I heard about the tariff, during my travels, no room would be left for more interesting affairs. The recrimination on the subject is endless. With all this we have nothing to do, now that it is over. The philosophy and fact of the transaction, and not the changes of opinion and inconsistency of conduct of public men, are now of importance. It would be well now to leave the persons, and look at the thing.

Almost the only fact in relation to the tariff that I never heard disputed is that it was, under one aspect, a measure of retaliation. Rendering evil for evil answers no better in economical than in moral affairs; even if it take the name of self-defence. Because the British are foolish and wrong in refusing to admit American corn, the Americans excluded British cottons and woollens. More was said, and I believe sincerely, about self-defence than about retaliation: but it is very [Pg 47] remarkable that men so clear-headed, inquiring, and sagacious as the authors of the American system, should not have seen further into the condition of their own country, and learned more from the unhappy experience of Europe, than to imagine that they could neutralise the effects of the bad policy of England by adopting the same bad policy themselves. It is strange that they did not see that if British cottons and woollens found easy entrance into their country, it must have been in exchange for something, though that something was not corn. It was strange that they did not see that if the apparent facilities for manufactures in the northern States were really great enough to justify manufactures, individual enterprise would be sure to find it out; and all the more readily for the deficiency in the resources of New England, which is assigned as the reason for offering her legislative protection. There was not even the excuse for interference which exists in old countries; that by intricate complexities of mismanagement, economical affairs have been perverted from their natural course. Here, in America, a new branch of industry was to be instituted. The skill was ready; the material was ready; the capital was procurable, if the object was good; and ought not to be, if the object was unsound. The interests of the people might have been trusted in their own hands. They would of themselves have taken less of British cotton goods, and more of something else which they could not get at home, if cotton goods could be made better and cheaper at home than in England; which it is proved that, for the most part, they can be. It is anticipated that when the Compromise method expires, the home manufacture of some kinds of fine cotton goods will diminish; but that the bulk of the manufacture is beyond the reach of accident. The effect of the tariff has been to over-stimulate a natural process, and [Pg 48] thus to cause over-manufacture, panic, and ruin to many. It is said, and with truth, that America can afford to try experiments; that America is the very country that should learn by experience; and so forth. But it should be remembered that those who suffer are not always those who should be the learners. In New England, there is a large class of very poor women,—ladies; some working; some unable to work. I knew many of these; and was struck with the great number of them who assigned as the cause of their poverty the depreciation of factory stock, or the failure in other ways of factory schemes, in which their parents or other friends had, beguiled by the promises of the tariff, invested what should have been their maintenance.

No more need be said on the policy of the tariff. The truth is now very extensively acknowledged; and though some of those who are answerable for the American system continue to assume that manufactures could not have been instituted without its assistance, I believe it is pretty generally understood that no more infant manufactures will be burdened with this cruel kind of protection.

A far more important question than that of the policy is that of the principle of a protective system in the United States.

It is known that the strongest resistance was made to the American system on the ground of its being unconstitutional. Its advocates relied, for the necessary sanction, on the clauses which provide that "Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, and duties, imposts, and excises;"——and "to regulate commerce with foreign nations." With regard to the first of these clauses, both parties seem, more or less, in the right. By the tariff, Congress proposed "to lay and collect duties and imposts," as the constitution gives it express leave to do. Yet it is clear to those [Pg 49] who view the constitution in the light of the sun of the revolution, that, such permission was given solely with a view to the collection of the revenue. No one of the framers of the constitution could have foreseen that any proposal would be made to lay duties for the protection of the productive interests of a section of the Union. Such a use of the clause is forbidden in spirit, though not in the letter, by the clause which ordains, "but all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States." This clause is, in its spirit, wholly condemnatory of partial legislation by Congress.

Remarks somewhat analogous may be made respecting the other clause, which empowers Congress "to regulate commerce with foreign nations." By the letter of this clause, Congress may appear to a superficial observer authorised so to regulate its commerce with Great Britain as to cause an arbitrary distribution of property and industry within her own boundaries; but such a double action could never have been in contemplation of the framers of the instrument. What they had in view was obviously the guardianship of the national commercial rights, and the promotion of the national commercial, not sectional manufacturing, interests.

Where the letter and the spirit of the constitution are made, by lapse of time and change of circumstance, to bear out opposite modes of conduct, there is an appeal which every man must make, for his individual satisfaction and conviction. He must appeal to the fundamental republican principles, out of which grew both the spirit and the letter of the constitution.

By these the tariff is hopelessly condemned. It is contrary to all sound republican principle that the general government of a nation, widely spread over regions, and separated into sections [Pg 50] diversified in their productions, occupations, and interests, should use its power of legislating for the whole to provide for the particular interests of a part. The principle of perfect political and social equality is violated when the general government takes cognisance of local objects so far as to do a deed which must materially affect the distribution of private property; so far as to lay a tax on the whole of the nation for the avowed object of benefiting a part. The government of a republic has no business with distinctions among its subjects. It is to have no respect of classes, more than of individuals. Its functions are to be discharged for the common interest; and it is to entertain no fancies as to what new institutions or arrangements will be beneficial or the contrary to the nation.

All such institutions and arrangements must be made within the several States, or by an agreement of States; subject, of course, to the permissions and prohibitions of the constitution. If one State, or several States, should be pleased to decree bounties on their own manufactures, let them do so. Whether the measure were wise or unwise, no one out of the limits of such State or States would have a right to complain. This could not be said under the tariff. It was a just complaint which was urged by many States, that the federal representation was made useless to the minority, from the moment that the federal government applied itself to favour local and particular interests. The case is not altered by the possible result being highly beneficial to the whole country; which is the plea industriously advanced by the advocates of the tariff. Whatever direction and application of industry and capital may be ultimately most beneficial, Congress has, on principle, no more business with it than with the support of what may prove in the end to be the purest religious doctrine.

If America had been as free, from the beginning, in all respects, as a young country ought to be, [Pg 51] —free to run her natural course of prosperity, subject only to the faithful laws which regulate the economy of society as beneficially as another set of laws regulates the seasons, we might never have heard of the American system. The poisonous anomaly which has caused almost all the diseases that have afflicted the republic, appears to be the original infection here also. If labour in the southern States had been free long ago, the deterioration of southern property would not have caused the southern planters to clamour for legislative protection. The arbitrary tenure of labour made them desire an arbitrary distribution of capital. They desired it for the north, as eagerly as for themselves, expecting the result to be that the cotton-growers would be protected by heavy import duties on cotton; and that the prosperity of the north, depending, as they supposed, wholly on its commerce, would be crippled by the same means; and thus, something like an equality between north and south be restored. The effect was different from what had been anticipated. The deterioration of the south went on; and manufactures first replaced, and then renovated, the commerce of the north. The next consequence was natural enough. The south became infuriated against the tariff, not only on the reasonable ground of its badness of principle, but on the allegation that it was the cause of all the woes of the south,[6] and all the [Pg 52] prosperity, diversified with woes, of the north. It has always been the method of slaveholders to lay the blame of their sufferings upon everything but the real cause. Any one who reads the history of slavery in the book of events, will find slave-holders of every country complaining bitterly and incessantly of the want of legislative protection to themselves, or of its being granted to others. In the present instance, it was a device of the slave-holders, to renovate their falling fortunes, turned against themselves.

The true dignity of America would have been, had circumstances allowed of it, to have followed out her own republican principles, instead of adopting the false principles and injurious policy of

older and less favoured nations. If she had left labour and commerce, and capital free; disdaining [Pg 53] interference at home and retaliation abroad; showing her faith in the natural laws of social economy by calmly committing to them the external interests of her people, she would by this time have been the pattern and instructress of the civilised world, in the philosophy of production and commerce. But she had not the knowledge nor the requisite faith; nor was it to be reasonably expected that she should. Her doctrine was, and I fear still is, that she need not study political economy while she is so prosperous as at present: that political economy is for those who are under adversity. If in other cases she allows that prevention is better than cure, avoidance than reparation, why not in this? It may not yet be too late for her to be in the van of all the world in economical as in political philosophy. The old world will still be long in getting above its bad institutions. If America would free her servile class by the time the provisions of the Compromise Bill expire, and start afresh in pure economical freedom, she might yet be the first to show, by her transcendent peace and prosperity, that democratic principles are the true foundation of economical, as well as political, welfare.

SECTION II.
MANUFACTURING LABOUR.

So much is said in Europe of the scarcity of agricultural labour in the United States, that it is a matter of surprise that manufactures should have succeeded as they have done. It is even supposed by some that the tariff was rendered necessary by a deficiency of labour: that by [Pg 54] offering a premium on manufacturing industry, the requisite amount was sought to be drawn away from other employments, and concentrated upon this. This is a mistake. There is every reason to suppose that the requisite amount of labour would have been forthcoming, if affairs had been left to take their natural course.

It has been shown that domestic manufactures were carried on to a great extent, so far back as 1790. From that time to this, they have never altogether ceased in the farm-houses, as the homespun, still so frequently to be seen all over the country, and the agricultural meetings of New England, (where there is usually a display of domestic manufactures,) will testify. The hands by which these products are wrought come to the factories, when the demand for labour renders it worth while; and drop back into the farm-houses when the demand slackens.

It is not the custom in America for women (except slaves) to work out of doors. It has been mentioned that the young men of New England migrate in large numbers to the west, leaving an over-proportion of female population, the amount of which I could never learn. Statements were made to me; but so incredible that I withhold them. Suffice it that there are many more women than men in from six to nine States of the Union. There is reason to believe that there was much silent suffering from poverty before the institution of factories; that they afford a most welcome resource to some thousands of young women, unwilling to give themselves to domestic service, and precluded, by the customs of the country, from rural labour. We have seen how large a proportion of the labour in the Lowell factories is supplied by women.

Much of the rest is furnished by immigrants. I saw English, Irish, and Scotch operatives. I heard [Pg 55] but a poor character of the English operatives; and the Scotch were pronounced "ten times better." The English are jealous of their 'bargain,' and on the watch lest they should be asked to do more than they stipulated for: their habits are not so sober as those of the Scotch, and they are incapable of going beyond the single operation they profess. Such is the testimony of their employers.

The demand for labour is, however, sufficiently imperious in all the mechanical departments to make it surprising that prison labour is regarded with such jealousy as I have witnessed. When it is considered how small a class the convicts of the United States are, and are likely to remain, how essential labour is to their reformation, how few are the kinds of manufacture which they can practise, and that it is of some importance that prison establishments should maintain themselves, it seems wholly unworthy of the intelligent mechanics of America that they should be so afraid of convict labour as actually to obtain pledges from some candidates for office, to propose the abolition of prison manufactures. I believe that the Sing-Sing and Auburn prisons, in the State of New York, turn out a greater variety and amount of products than any others; and they have yet done very little more than maintain themselves. The Sing-Sing convicts quarry and dress granite: the Auburn prisoners make clocks, combs, shoes, carpets, and machinery. They are cabinet and chair-makers, weavers, and tailors. There were 650 prisoners when I was there; and of these many were inexperienced workmen; and all were not employed in manufactures. Jealousy of such a set of craftsmen is absurd, in the present state of the American labour-market.

I saw specimens of each of these kinds of labour. A few days after I entered the country, I was [Pg 56] taken to an agricultural meeting, held annually at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. We were too late to see the best part of it,—the dispensing of prizes for the best agricultural skill, and for the choicest domestic manufactures. But there were specimens left which surprised me by the excellence of their quality;—table and bed-linen, diapers, blankets, and knitted wares. There was an ingenious model of a bed for invalids, combining many sorts of facilities for change of posture. There were nearly as many women as men at this meeting; all were well dressed, and going to and fro in the household vehicle, the country-wagon, with the invariable bear-skin covering the seat, and peeping out on all sides. A comfortable display, from the remains of the dinner, was set

out for us by smart mulatto girls, with snow-berries in their hair. The mechanics' houses in this beautiful village would be enough, if they could be exhibited in England, to tempt over half her operatives to the new world.

The first cotton-mill that I saw was at Paterson, New Jersey. It was set up at first with nine hundred spindles, which were afterwards increased to fifteen hundred; then to six thousand. Building was still going on when I was there. The girls were all well-dressed. Their hair was arranged according to the latest fashions which had arrived, viâ New York, and they wore calashes in going to and fro between their dwellings and the mill. I saw some of the children barefooted, but carrying umbrellas, under a slight sprinkling of rain. I asked whether those who could afford umbrellas went barefoot for coolness, or other convenience. The proprietor told me that there had probably been an economical calculation in the case. Stockings and shoes would defend only the feet; while the umbrella would preserve the gloss of the whole of the rest of the costume. There seems, however, to be a strong predilection for umbrellas in the United States. A [Pg 57] convict, in solitary confinement in the Philadelphia prison, gave me the history of all his burglaries. The proximate cause of his capture after the last was an umbrella. He had broken into a good-looking house, and traversed it in vain in search of something worth the risk of carrying away. On leaving the house, he found it rained. He went back, and took a new cotton umbrella. It dawned as he entered the city, and he was afraid of being seen with the umbrella; but thought suspicion would be excited if he "heaved it away." He met an acquaintance who was further from home than himself, and insisted on his accepting the loan of the umbrella. The acquaintance, of course, was caught, and told from whom he had had the umbrella; and the burglar was, in consequence, lodged in jail. What English burglar would have thought of minding rain? If, however, there ever was a case of amateur burglary, this was one.

I visited the corporate factory-establishment at Waltham, within a few miles of Boston. The Waltham Mills were at work before those of Lowell were set up. The establishment is for the spinning and weaving of cotton alone, and the construction of the requisite machinery. Five hundred persons were employed at the time of my visit. The girls earn two, and some three, dollars a-week, besides their board. The little children earn one dollar a-week. Most of the girls live in the houses provided by the corporation, which accommodate from six to eight each. When sisters come to the mill, it is a common practice for them to bring their mother to keep house for them and some of their companions, in a dwelling built by their own earnings. In this case, they save enough out of their board to clothe themselves, and have their two or three dollars a-week [Pg 58] to spare. Some have thus cleared off mortgages from their fathers' farms; others have educated the hope of the family at college; and many are rapidly accumulating an independence. I saw a whole street of houses built with the earnings of the girls; some with piazzas, and green venetian blinds and all neat and sufficiently spacious.

The factory people built the church, which stands conspicuous on the green in the midst of the place. The minister's salary (eight hundred dollars last year) is raised by a tax on the pews. The corporation gave them a building for a lyceum, which they have furnished with a good library, and where they have lectures every winter,—the best that money can procure. The girls have, in many instances, private libraries of some merit and value.

The managers of the various factory establishments keep the wages as nearly equal as possible, and then let the girls freely shift about from one to another. When a girl comes to the overseer to inform him of her intention of working at the mill, he welcomes her, and asks how long she means to stay. It may be six months, or a year, or five years, or for life. She declares what she considers herself fit for, and sets to work accordingly. If she finds that she cannot work so as to keep up with the companion appointed to her, or to please her employer or herself, she comes to the overseer, and volunteers to pick cotton, or sweep the rooms, or undertake some other service that she can perform.

The people work about seventy hours per week, on the average. The time of work varies with the length of the days, the wages continuing the same. All look like well-dressed young ladies. The health is good; or rather, (as this is too much to be said about health any where in the United States,) it is no worse than it is elsewhere.

These facts speak for themselves. There is no need to enlarge on the pleasure of an acquaintance [Pg 59] with the operative classes of the United States.

The shoe-making at Lynn is carried on almost entirely in private dwellings, from the circumstance that the people who do it are almost all farmers or fishermen likewise. A stranger who has not been enlightened upon the ways of the place would be astonished at the number of small square erections, like miniature school-houses, standing each as an appendage to a dwelling-house. These are the "shoe shops," where the father of the family and his boys work, while the women within are employed in binding and trimming. Thirty or more of these shoe-shops may be counted in a walk of half-a-mile. When a Lynn shoe manufacturer receives an order, he issues the tidings. The leather is cut out by men on his premises; and then the work is given to those who apply for it; if possible, in small quantities, for the sake of dispatch. The shoes are brought home on Friday night, packed off on Saturday, and in a fortnight or three weeks are on the feet of dwellers in all parts of the Union. The whole family works upon shoes during the winter; and in the summer, the father and sons turn out into the fields, or go fishing. I knew of an instance where a little boy and girl maintained the whole family, while the earnings of the rest went to build a house. I saw very few shabby houses. Quakers are numerous in Lynn. The place is unboundedly prosperous, through the temperance and industry of the people. The deposits in the

Lynn Savings' Bank in 1834, were about 34,000 dollars, the population of the town being then 4,000. Since that time, both the population and the prosperity have much increased. It must be remembered, too, that the mechanics of America have more uses for their money than are open to the operatives of England. They build houses, buy land, and educate their sons and daughters. [7] [Pg 60]

It is probably true that the pleasures and pains of life are pretty equally distributed among its various vocations and positions: but it is difficult to keep clear of the impression which outward circumstances occasion, that some are eminently desirable. The mechanics of these northern States appear to me the most favoured class I have ever known. In England, I believe the highest order of mechanics to be, as a class, the wisest and best men of the community. They have the fewest base and narrow interests: they are brought into sufficient contact with the realities of existence, without being hardened by excess of toil and care; and the knowledge they have the opportunity of gaining is of the best kind for the health of the mind. To them, if to any, we may look for public and private virtue. The mechanics of America have nearly all the same advantages, and some others. They have better means of living: their labours are perhaps more honoured; and they are republicans, enjoying the powers and prospects of perfectly equal citizenship. The only respect in which their condition falls below that of English artisans of the highest order is that the knowledge which they have commonly the means of obtaining is not of equal value. The facilities are great: schools, lyceums, libraries, are open to them: but the instruction imparted there is not so good as they deserve. Whenever they have this, it will be difficult to imagine a mode of life more favourable to virtue and happiness than theirs.

There seems to be no doubt among those who know both England and America, that the mechanics of the New World work harder than those of the Old. They have much to do besides their daily handicraft business. They are up and at work early about this; and when it is done, they read till late, or attend lectures; or perhaps have their houses to build or repair, or other care to take of their property. They live in a state and period of society where every man is answerable for his own fortunes; and where there is therefore stimulus to the exercise of every power. [Pg 61]

What a state of society it is when a dozen artisans of one town,—Salem,—are seen rearing each a comfortable one-story (or, as the Americans would say, two-story) house, in the place with which they have grown up! when a man who began with laying bricks criticises, and sometimes corrects, his lawyer's composition; when a poor errand-boy becomes the proprietor of a flourishing store, before he is thirty; pays off the capital advanced by his friends at the rate of 2,000 dollars per month; and bids fair to be one of the most substantial citizens of the place!

Such are the outward fortunes of the mechanics of America. Of their welfare in more important respects, to which these are but a part of the means, I shall have to speak in another connexion.

There are troubles between employers and their workmen in the United States, as elsewhere: but the case of the men is so much more in their own hands there than where labour superabounds, that strikes are of a very short duration. The only remedy the employers have, the only safeguard against encroachments from their men, is their power of obtaining the services of foreigners, for a short time. The difficulty of stopping business there is very great; the injury of delay very heavy: but the wages of labour are so good that there is less cause for discontent on the part of the workmen than elsewhere. All the strikes I heard of were on the question of hours, not of wages. [Pg 62]

The employers are, of course, casting about to see how they can help themselves; and, as all are not wise and experienced, it is natural that some should talk of laws to prohibit Trades Unions. There is no harm in their talking of such; for the matter will never get beyond talk;—unless, indeed, the combinations of operatives should assume any forms, or comprehend any principles inconsistent with the republican spirit. The majority will not vote for any law which shall restrain any number of artisans from agreeing for what price they will sell their labour; though I heard several learned gentlemen agreeing, at dinner one day, that there ought to be such laws. On my objecting that the interest of the parties concerned would, especially in a free and rising country, settle all questions between labour and capital with more precision, fairness, and peace, than any law, it was pleaded that intimidation and outrage were practised by those who combined against those who would not join them. I found, on inquiry, that there is an ample provision of laws against intimidation and outrage; but that it is difficult to get them executed. If so, it would be also difficult to execute laws against combinations of workmen, supposing them obtained: and the grievance does not lie in the combination complained of, but somewhere else. The remedy is, (if there be indeed intimidation and outrage,) not in passing more laws, to be in like manner defied, while sufficient already exist; but in enlightening the parties on the subjects of law and social obligation.

One day, in going down Broadway, New York, the carriage in which I was, stopped for some time, in consequence of an immense procession on the side-walk having attracted the attention of all the drivers within sight. The marching gentlemen proceeded on their way, with an easy air of gentility. Banners were interposed at intervals; and, on examining these, I could scarcely believe my eyes. They told me that this was a procession of the journeymen mechanics of New York. Surely never were such dandy mechanics seen; with sleek coats, glossy hats, gay watch-guards, and doe-skin gloves! [Pg 63]

I rejoice to have seen this sight. I had other opportunities of witnessing the prosperity of their employers; so that I could be fairly pleased at theirs. There need be no fear for the interests of

either, while the natural laws of demand and supply must protect each from any serious encroachment by the other. If they will only respect the law, their temporary disagreement, and apparent opposition of interests will end in being mere readjustments of the terms on which they are to pursue their common welfare.

FOOTNOTES:

[5] Hamilton's Report on Manufactures. 1790.

[6] The following sketch of the aspect of the south-eastern States is a very faithful one. The error of the writer is in supposing that such a condition could be brought about by the tariff, rather than by the necessary operation of the slavery system, by which the children of the third and fourth generations are always reduced to sigh for the comparative prosperity of their fathers.

"These views of the degradation of the southern States receive a melancholy and impressive confirmation from the general aspect and condition of the country, viewed in contrast with its former prosperity. If the ancestors of this generation could rise from the grave, and revisit the scenes of their former usefulness, they would not hesitate to pronounce that the hand of oppression had fallen heavily upon the inheritance of their children. They would be utterly at a loss to account for the change everywhere exhibited, upon any other supposition.

"With natural advantages more bountiful than were ever dispensed by a kind Providence to any other people upon the face of the globe, they would behold, from the mountains of the sea-coast, one unbroken scene of cheerless stagnation and premature decay. With one of the most valuable staples that ever blessed the labours of the husbandman, and swelled the sails of a prosperous and enriching commerce, they would find that our estates are, with a steady and fatal proclivity, depreciating in value, our fields becoming waste, and our cities desolate. With habits of industry and economy which have no example in our former history, they would find the heirs of the largest inheritances generally involved in embarrassments, and many of them irretrievably ruined. Wherever they might cast their eyes, they would find melancholy evidences that the withering blasts of an unsparing despotism had passed over the land, blighting the choicest bounties of Providence, and leaving scarcely a solitary memorial of our former prosperity. They would look in vain for the animating scenes of successful industry, for the wealth and comforts of a thriving population, and for those mansions of hospitality which were once the seats of elegance, and the abodes of cheerfulness."—*Southern Review, Nov. 1828.* p. 613.

[7] The deposits in the Lowell Savings' Bank for 1834, were upwards of 114,000 dollars.

CHAPTER IV.
COMMERCE.

[Pg 64]

> "He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies: I understand moreover upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England: and other ventures he hath."
>
> *Merchant of Venice.*

There is no need to say much about the extent of the Commerce of the United States, since it is already the admiration of Europe, and its history is before every one in the shape of figures. The returns of exports and imports annually published are sufficiently eloquent.

			Dollars.
The Imports,	for the year 1825,	were in value,	96,340,075
	1830,	were in value,	70,876,920
	1835,	were in value,	126,521,332
The Exports	of domestic produce,	for 1825 were,	66,944,745
	of foreign produce	for 1825 were,	32,590,643
		Total	99,535,388
The Exports	of domestic produce,	for 1830 were,	59,462,029
	of foreign produce	for 1830 were,	14,387,479
			73,849,508

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The Exports	of domestic produce	for 1835, were,	81,024,162
	of foreign produce	for 1835, were,	23,312,811
			104,336,973

It will be seen, from these returns, how great a reduction in the commerce of the United States

was occasioned by the tariff, which attracted a large amount of capital from commerce, to be invested in manufactures. The balance has been nearly restored by the prospect of the expiration of the protective system; and both commerce and manufactures are again rapidly on the increase. The foreign tonnage of Massachusetts has increased fifty-three per cent. within the last five years, though, owing to a new mode of ship-construction, twice the quantity is stowed in the same nominal tonnage.

The commerce of the south-west was in high prosperity when I was there. When I was at Mobile, in April 1835, I was informed that 183,000 bales of cotton had been brought down into Mobile since the beginning of the year.[8] A friend of mine, engaged in commerce there, told me of the [Pg 66] enormous interest on money then obtainable. Eight per cent. is the legal interest; but double is easily to be had. Another, a wealthy gentleman of New Orleans, speculates largely every season, for the sake of something to do, and makes a fortune each time, by lending out at high interest. He declares that he never loses, and never fails to gain largely; the commerce is so flourishing, and the demand for capital so intense. This is the region in which to witness the full absurdity of usury laws. They are evaded, as often as convenient, and serve no other purpose than to annex a kind of disgrace to a deed which must of necessity be done,—loaning out money at higher than the legal interest. The same evasion takes place in Massachusetts, where the legal interest is six per cent. The interest there, as elsewhere, rises just as high as the demand for money must naturally bring it.

I was acquainted with a gentleman who had lost seventy-five thousand dollars in an unfortunate speculation, and who expected to retrieve the whole the next season. The price of everything was rising. For my own share, I had to pay twelve dollars for my passage from Mobile to New Orleans: and twenty-five per cent. higher for my voyage up the Mississippi than if I had gone the preceding year. The fare I paid was fifty dollars. These two fares were the only exceptions to the remarkable cheapness of travelling in the United States and these would not be considered high anywhere else.

The Cumberland river, on which stands Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, and which empties itself into the Ohio, has scarcely been heard of in England; yet, of all the tobacco consumed in the world, one-seventh goes down this river. I ascended it in a very small steam-boat, one of twelve, [Pg 67] six large and six small, then perpetually navigating it, and carrying cotton, tobacco, and passengers. Of these boats, one had carried, the preceding year, three hundred and sixty bales of cotton, of the value of three hundred and sixty thousand dollars.

When we look at the northern ports, and observe the variety, as well as the extent of their commerce, there seems good ground for the expectation expressed to me by many American merchants, that the English language will finally become familiar, not only over all the east, but over all the globe.

Salem, Massachusetts, is a remarkable place. This "city of peace" will be better known hereafter for its commerce than for its witch-tragedy. It has a population of 14,000; and more wealth in proportion to its population than perhaps any town in the world. Its commerce is speculative, but vast and successful. It is a frequent circumstance that a ship goes out without a cargo, for a voyage round the world. In such a case, the captain puts his elder children to school, takes his wife and younger children, and starts for some semi-barbarous place, where he procures some odd kind of cargo, which he exchanges with advantage for another, somewhere else; and so goes trafficking round the world, bringing home a freight of the highest value.

The enterprising merchants of Salem are hoping to appropriate a large share of the whale fishery; and their ships are penetrating the northern ice. They are favourite customers in the Russian ports, and are familiar with the Swedish and Norwegian coasts. They have nearly as much commerce with Bremen as with Liverpool. They speak of Fayal and the other Azores as if they were close at hand. The fruits of the Mediterranean countries are on every table. They have [Pg 68] a large acquaintance at Cairo. They know Napoleon's grave at St. Helena, and have wild tales to tell of Mosambique and Madagasca, and store of ivory to show from thence. They speak of the power of the king of Muscat, and are sensible of the riches of the south-east coast of Arabia. It entered some wise person's head, a few seasons ago, to export ice to India. The loss, by melting, of the first cargo, was one fourth. The rest was sold at six cents per lb. When the value of this new import became known, it was in great request; and the latter sales have been almost instantaneous, at ten cents per pound: so that it is now a good speculation to send ice 12,000 miles to supersede salt-petre in cooling sherbet. The young ladies of America have rare shells from Ceylon in their cabinets; and their drawing-rooms are decked with Chinese copies of English prints. I was amused with two: the scene of Hero swooning in the church, from 'Much Ado about Nothing;' and Shakspeare between Tragedy and Comedy. The faces of Comedy and of Beatrice from the hands of Chinese! I should not have found out the place of their second birth but for a piece of unfortunate foreshortening in each. I observed to a friend, one day, upon the beauty of all the new cordage that met my eye, silky and bright. He told me that it was made of Manilla hemp, of the value of which the British seem to be unaware; though it has been introduced into England. He mentioned that he had been the first importer of it. Eight years before, 600 bales per annum were imported: now, 20,000. The merchants doubt whether Australia will be able to surmount the disadvantage of a deficiency of navigable rivers. They have hopes of Van Diemen's Land, think well of Singapore, and acknowledge great expectations from New Zealand. Any body will give you anecdotes from Canton, and descriptions of the Society and [Pg 69] Sandwich Islands. They often slip up the western coasts of their two continents; bring furs from the back regions of their own wide land; glance up at the Andes on their return; double Cape

Horn; touch at the ports of Brazil and Guiana; look about them in the West Indies, feeling there almost at home; and land, some fair morning, at Salem, and walk home as if they had done nothing very remarkable.

Such is the commerce of Salem, in its most meagre outline. Some illustration of it may be seen in the famous Salem Museum. In regard to this institution, a very harmless kind of monopoly exists. No one is admitted of the museum proprietary body who has not doubled the Capes Horn and Good Hope. Everybody is freely admitted to visit the institution; and any one may contribute, either curiosities or the means of procuring them; but the doubling of the Capes is an unalterable condition of the honour of being a member. This has the effect of preserving a salutary interest among the members of the society, and respect among those who cannot be admitted. The society have laid by 20,000 dollars, after having built a handsome hall for the reception of their curiosities; but a far more important benefit is that it has now become discreditable to return from a long voyage without some novel contribution to the Museum. This sets people inquiring what is already there, and ensures a perpetual and valuable accretion. I am glad to have seen there some Oriental curiosities, which might never otherwise have blessed my sight: especially some wonderful figures, made of an unknown mixed metal, dug up in Java, being caricatures of the old Dutch soldiers sent to guard the first colonies. A reasonably grave person might stand laughing before these for half a day. I had no idea there had been so much humour in the Java [Pg 70] people.

The stability of the commercial interest in the United States was put to the test by the great fire at New York. All the circumstances regarding this fire were remarkable; no one more so than that not a single failure took place in consequence.

For many days preceding this fire, the weather had been intensely cold, the thermometer standing at Boston 17 degrees below zero. On the Sunday before, (13th of December 1835,) I went to hear the Seamen's friend, Father Taylor, as he is called, preach at the Sailors' Chapel, in Boston. His eloquence is of a peculiar kind, especially in his prayers, which are absolutely importunate with regard to even external objects of desire. Part of his prayer this day was, "Give us water, water! The brooks refuse to murmur, and the streams are dead. Break up the fountains: open the secret springs that thy hand knoweth, and give us water, water! Let us not perish by a famine of water, or a deluge of conflagration; for we dread the careless wandering spark." I was never before aware of the fear of fire entertained during these intense frosts. It is a reasonable fear. A gentleman, bent upon daily bathing, was seen one morning disconsolately returning from the river side; he had employed three men to break the ice, and they could not get at a drop of water. What hope was there in case of fire?

The New York fire broke out at eight in the evening of Wednesday, the 16th of December. Every one knows the leading facts, that 52 or 54 acres were laid waste; many public buildings destroyed, and property to the amount of 18,000,000 of dollars.

Several particulars were given to me on the spot, three months afterwards, by some observers [Pg 71] and some sufferers. At a boarding-house in Broadway, where some friends of mine were residing, there were several merchants, some with their wives, who dined that day in good spirits, and, as they afterwards believed, perfectly content with their worldly condition and prospects. At eight o'clock there was an alarm of fire. It was thought nothing of; alarms of fire being as frequent as day and night in New York. After a while, a merchant of the company was sent for, and some little anxiety was expressed. Two or three persons looked out of the upper windows, but it was a night of such still, deep frost, that the reflection in the atmosphere was much less glaring than might have been expected. Another and then another gentleman was sent for. News came of the absolute lack of water, and that there was no gunpowder in the city—none nearer than Brooklyn. The gentlemen all rushed out; the anxious ladies went from the windows to the fire-side; from the fire-side to the windows. One gentleman and lady in the house, a young German couple, just arrived, and knowing scarcely a word of English, were unaware of all this. None of their chattels, not even the lady's clothes, had been removed from their store in Pearl Street, where lay her books, music, wardrobe, and property of every sort. Pretty early in the morning the poor gentleman was roused from his slumbers, could not comprehend the cause, went down to Pearl Street, and, amidst the amazement and desolation, just contrived to save his account-books, and nothing else. In the morning, the lady was destitute of even a change of raiment, in a foreign country, of whose language she could not speak one word. There were kind hearts all around her, however, and she was quite cheerful when I saw her, a few weeks afterwards.

The lady of the house was so worn, weary, and cold, by three in the morning, that she retired to [Pg 72] her room; desiring her domestics to call her if the fire should catch Broad Street; in which case, it would be time to be packing up plate, and moving furniture. In a little while, there was a tap at her door. Broad Street was not on fire, however; but some of the gentlemen had come home, smoked and frost-bitten, and eager for help and warm water. One gentleman, who had nothing more at stake than three chests of Scotch linen, (valuable because home-woven,) of which he saved one, losing a superb Spanish cloak in the process, was desirous that his wife should see the spectacle of the conflagration. She walked down to the scene of the fire with him, after midnight. They took their stand in a square, in the centre of which an immense quantity of costly goods was heaped up. It was strange and vexatious to see the havoc that was made among beautiful things; —cachemere shawls strewing the ground; horses' feet swathed in lace veils; French silks getting entangled and torn in the wheels of the carts. The lady picked up shawls and veils; and when her husband asked her where she proposed to put them, could only throw them down again. After she had left the place, the houses caught fire, all round the square, fell in, and burned the costly

goods in one grand bonfire.

There had been occasional quarrels between the merchants and the carmen. The carmen conceived themselves injured by certain merchants. Whether they had reason for this belief or not, I cannot pretend to say. They thought this a time for revenge. Some crossed their arms, as they leaned against their carts, and refused to stir a step, unless twenty dollars a load were paid them on the spot. Some few refused to help at all. This must have been a far more deadly sorrow to the sufferers than the ruin the fire was working. One carman was very provoking when a [Pg 73] French gentleman had not a moment to lose in saving his stock. The gentleman said coolly at last, taking out his money, "For what sum will you sell your horse and cart?" The temptation was irresistible to the carman. He named 500 dollars for his sorry hack and small vehicle, and was paid on the instant. The French gentleman saved goods to the amount of 100,000 dollars. It was a good bargain for both.

At six in the morning, when the necessary explosions had checked the fire, the gentlemen of the household I have mentioned, being completely ruined, for anything they knew to the contrary, came home; and the ladies went to bed. Some of the least interested consulted what should be done at dinner-time; whether the company in general could bear the subject; whether it was best to talk or be silent. It was a languid, sorrowful meal: the gentlemen looking haggard; their ladies anxious. The next day, they were able to talk,—to describe, to relate anecdotes, and speculate on consequences. The third day, all were nearly as cheerful as if nothing had happened: though some had lost all, and others, they knew not how much.

The report of the fire spread as news through the upper part of the city, the next morning. Some friends of mine had walked home from a visit, upwards of a mile, at eleven o'clock, and neither heard nor seen anything of the fire.

The larger proportion of the New York merchants were thus deprived at a stroke of their buildings, stocks, in many cases of all books and papers, and, lastly, of the benefit of insurance. The insurance companies were plunged in almost a general insolvency. The only relief proposed, or that could be offered, was an extension of time, without interest, to the debtors of the [Pg 74] government for payment of bonds given to secure the duties upon goods recently imported: and this small relief could not be obtained till too late to be of much use.

Happily, the fire occurred at one of the least busy seasons of the year. The merchants could concert together for the saving of their credit: and they did it to some purpose. Their credit sustained the shock of all this confusion, uncertainty, and dismay. The conduct of the merchants who had not directly suffered, and of the banks, was admirable. They threw aside all their usual caution, and dispensed help and accommodation with the last degree of liberality. The consequence was, that not one house failed. It seems now as if the commercial credit of New York could stand any shock short of an earthquake, like that of Lisbon.

Some merchants had the unexpected pleasure of finding themselves richer than they were before. One was travelling in Europe with his lady, when the news overtook him that the hundred and fifty stores in which he had property were all burned down. He wrote that he and his lady were hastening to Havre, on their way home, where they must live in the most economical and laborious manner, to repair their fortunes. With such intentions they crossed the Atlantic; and on landing were met by the intelligence that they had become very wealthy, from their ground lots having sold for more than ground, stores, and stock, were worth before.

I saw the fifty-two acres of ruins in the following April. We traversed what had been streets, and climbed the ruins of the Exchange. The pedestal of Hamilton's statue was standing, strewed round with fragments of burnt calicoes, which people were disinterring. There was a litter of stone pannels, broken columns, and cornices. Bushels of coffee paved our way. A boy presented [Pg 75] me with a half-fused watch-key from the cellar of what had been a jeweller's store. The blackened ruins of a church frowned over all. The most singular spectacle was a store, standing alone and unharmed, amidst the desolation. It belonged to a Jew, was fire-proof, and contained hay, not a blade of which was singed. This square-fronted, elongated, ugly building, standing obliquely, and as clean as if smoke had never touched it, had a most saucy appearance: and so it might, so many erections, equally called fire-proof, having disappeared, while it alone remained.

By the next July, the entire area was covered with new erections; and long before this, doubtless, all is to the outward eye, as if no fire had happened.

But for the testimony afforded by this event, of the substantial credit in New York, the enormous prices given for land,—the above-mentioned ground lots, for instance,—might cause a suspicion that there was much wild speculation. I trust it is not so. The eagerness for land is, however, extraordinary. A lady sold an estate in the neighbourhood of New York, for what she and her friends considered a large sum; and a few weeks after she had concluded the bargain, and soon after the destruction of eighteen millions of the wealth of the city, she found she might have obtained three times the amount for which she had sold her estate. The whole south end of the city is being rapidly turned into stores; and it is obvious that the mercantile princes of this emporium have no idea of their conquests being bounded by any circumstance short of the limits of the globe.

Is there anything to be learned here, as well as to admire? any inference to be drawn for the [Pg 76] benefit of other nations?

An English member of parliament wrote to a friend residing in one of the American ports,

inquiring whether this friend could suggest any course of parliamentary action by which the commerce of England, or of both countries, could be benefited. The American replied by urging his friend to work incessantly at a repeal of the corn laws, and in any way which may keep the United States continually before the eyes of the commercial rulers of Great Britain. "You talk," said he, "of your commercial arrangements with Portugal. Well and good! but what is Portugal? She has two millions of priests and beggars; and at the end of the century she will have two millions of priests and beggars still. What will the wealth and productions of the United States be then?" If the United States have now 18,000,000 of people, and their population is increasing at an unexampled rate,—a free and an opulent population,—the interest of Great Britain is plain;—to have a primary regard to the United States in the arrangement of her commercial policy.

SECTION I.
THE CURRENCY.

The fundamental difficulty of this great question, now one of the most prominent in the United States, is indicated by the fact that, while the practice of banking is essential to a manufacturing and commercial nation, a perfect system of banking remains to be discovered. [Pg 77]

When it is remembered that the question of the Currency has never yet been practically mastered in the countries of the Old World; that in America it has fallen into the hands of a young and inexperienced people; that it is implicated with constitutional questions, and has to be reconciled with democratic principles, it will not be expected that a passing stranger will be able to present a very clear view of its present aspect, or any decided opinion upon difficulties which perplex the wisest heads in the country. The mere history of banking in the United States would fill more than a volume: and the speculations which arise out of it, a library.

It is well known that there was an early split into parties on the subject of the constitutionality of a national bank. Washington requested the opinions of his cabinet upon it in writing; and Hamilton gave his in favour of the constitutionality of a national bank: Edmund Randolph and Jefferson against it. The question has been stirred from time to time since; while Hamilton's opinions have been acted upon.

The ground of objection is a very strong one. It lies in the provision that "all powers not delegated to the United States by the constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people." No power to establish corporations is, in any case, delegated by the constitution to the United States; nor does it appear to be countenanced by any fair construction of the permissions under which its transaction of the general business is carried on.

The answer to this is, that the supreme law of the country may give a legal or artificial capacity, (distinct from the natural,) to one or more persons, in relation to the objects committed to the management of the government: in other words, that the government has sovereign power with regard to the objects confided to it; all the limitations of the constitution having relation to the number of those objects. This was Hamilton's ground; and this is, I believe, the ground which has been taken since by those who shared his opinions on the main question. To me it appears as unsatisfactory as any other mode of begging the question. If the power of making corporations is to be assumed by the general government, on the ground of its being implied, the whole country might be covered with corporations, to which should be entrusted the discharge of any function exercised by the general government. [Pg 78]

In countries differently governed from the United States, it appears as if it would be most reasonable either to have the currency made a national affair, transacted wholly by the government, on determined principles, or to leave banking entirely free. In neither case, probably, would the evils be so great as those which have happened under the mixture of the two systems. But in the United States, the committing the management of the currency to the general government is now wholly out of the question. Free banking will be the method, some time or other; but not yet. There is not yet knowledge enough; nor freedom enough of production and commerce to render such a policy safe. Meantime, various doctrines are afloat. Some persons are for no banking whatsoever: but mere money-lending by individuals. Some are for the abolition of paper-money, and the establishment of one public bank of deposit and transfer in each State. Some are for private banking only, with or without paper money. Some are for State incorporations, with no central bank. Others are for restoring the United States Bank. [Pg 79]

No objections against banking and paper-money altogether will avail anything, while commerce is conducted on its present principles. It answers no practical purpose to object to any useful thing on the ground of its abuse: and while the commerce of the United States is daily on the increase, and the only check on its prosperity is the want of capital, there is no possibility of a return to the use of private money-lending and rouleaus.

The use of small notes may well and easily be discontinued. The experiment has been tried with success in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The prohibition might, perhaps, be carried as high as to notes of twenty dollars. There seems no adequate reason for the public being, further than this, deprived of the convenience of a representative of cash; a convenience so great that there is much more probability that the ingenious Americans will devise some method of practically insuring its convertibility, than that they will surrender its use. It has often occurred

to me that out of the currency troubles of the United States, might arise such a discovery of the true principle (which yet lies hidden) of insuring the convertibility, or other limitation, of a paper currency, as may be a blessing to the whole commercial world. This is an enterprise worthy of their ingenuity; and one which seems of probable achievement, when we remember how the American merchants are pressed for capital, and how all-important to them is the soundness of their credit. The principle lies somewhere, if it could but be found: and none are more likely to discover it than they.

Private banking is, in the present state of affairs, necessary and inevitable; so that there is little use in arguments for or against it. Capital is grievously wanted, in all the commercial cities. [Pg 80] There must be some place of resort for small amounts, and for foreign capital, whence money may issue to supply the need of commercial men. There must, in other words, be money stores; and, in the absence of others, private banks must serve the purpose. The amount of good or harm which, in the present state of things, they are able to do, depends mainly on the discretion or indiscretion of their customers; who, in common prudence, must look well whom they trust.

As for State incorporations, it cannot be said that they are absolutely necessary; though the arguments in favour of their expediency are very strong. More and more money is perpetually required for the transaction of commercial business; and in a different ratio from that required by the affairs of farmers and planters; since the latter receive their returns quickly; while the merchants of the sea-board have theirs delayed for long periods, and consequently require a much larger amount of capital. These larger amounts must come mainly from abroad, whence money can be had at four and five per cent. interest; while at home, from six to twelve per cent. is paid, even while foreign capital is flowing in. It is obvious that this foreign capital will enter much more abundantly through the credit of a State bank than through private banks. Small amounts of capital, dispersed and comparatively unproductive, will also be more readily brought together, to be applied where most needed, in a State bank, than among many small firms. The States of New York and Pennsylvania have carried on their improvements, their canals and rail-roads, as well as much of their commerce, by means of foreign capital; and the surpassing prosperity of those States may be considered owing, in a great degree, to this practice. [Pg 81] The incorporation of a bank is not always to be considered in the light of a monopoly; it may be the reverse. It may enable a number of individuals, by no means the most wealthy in the community, to compete, by an union of forces, with the most wealthy. Corporations may be multiplied, as occasion arises, and, by competition, give the public the benefit of the greatest possible amount of service done at the least cost.

Such are the leading arguments in favour of State Banks. The objections to them are in part applicable to faulty methods of incorporation, and not to the principle itself. The special exemption from liabilities to which individuals are subject; the imposing of such inhibitions elsewhere as render the affair a monopoly; the making responsibility a mere abstraction, are great, but perhaps avoidable evils. So are the methods by which charters have been obtained and renewed; the method of "log-rolling" bills through the legislature; and other such corruption.[9]

An objection less easily disposed of is, that by the creation of any great moneyed power, means are afforded of controlling the fortunes of individuals, and of influencing the press and the political constituency. If these objections cannot be obviated, they are fatal to banking corporations. If, however, any means can be devised, either by causing a sufficient publicity of proceedings, or by granting charters for a short term, renewable on strict conditions, or by any other plan for establishing a true responsibility, of uniting the benefits of incorporated banks [Pg 82] with republican principles, it seems as if it would be a great benefit to all parties in the community.

The difference of opinion which has made the most noise in the world, is about a National Bank.

It appears to have been contemplated, in the first instance, to place the currency of the United States under the control of the general government; according to the spirit of the provisions of the constitution, that Congress should have power "to coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin:" but without affording to Congress any power to control the fortunes of individuals, as may be done by certain banking operations. The state of the colonial currency had been deplorable.[10] The object now was to substitute a uniform and substantial currency, instead of the false representatives which had been in use: and to put it out of the power of the States to alter the terms of contracts by taking advantage of the faults of the currency. Nobody would take the continental bills; and gold and silver were deficient. A national bank was the [Pg 83] resource; and the old United States Bank was chartered in 1791; it being ascertained that its issues were based on real capital, and a strict watch being kept over its operations.

This bank was believed to be wanted for another purpose;—to watch over and control the State Banks. It was not the first institution of the kind in the United States. The Bank of North America had been chartered in 1781, under the authority of the Continental Congress: but by soon accepting a charter from the Legislature of Pennsylvania, it ceased to be a national, and afforded the precedent of a State Bank. New York and Massachusetts had soon State Banks also. They were prudently conducted; and their notes presently banished the coin. The power of Congress over the currency was gone. All that could be done now was for the National Bank to control the State Banks, and keep their issues within bounds, as well as it could.

Occasional disorders happened from the misconduct of country banks, prior to 1811. The renewal of the charter of the United States Bank was then refused. The government was pressed by the

evils of war; and the check of the superintendence of the Bank being withdrawn, the local banks, out of New England, came to the agreement, (too senseless to be ever repeated,) to suspend specie payments. All issued what kind and quantity of paper pleased themselves, till above twice the amount of money needed was abroad; and the notes were in some States five, in others ten, in others twenty, below par. The New England people, meantime, used convertible paper only; and under the law which provides that all duties, imposts, and excises should be uniform [Pg 84] throughout the States, were thus compelled to pay one tenth more to the revenue officers than the people of New York, who used the depreciated currency: and one-fifth more than the Baltimore merchants.

This state of things could not last. A national bank was again established, in 1816, for the purpose of controlling the local banks. Its charter was for twenty years, with a capital of 35,000,000 dollars, to which the federal government subscribed one fifth. Its notes were made receivable for any debt due to the United States.

Its purpose was presently answered. The local banks had, in three years, resumed cash payments. The management of the United States Bank, during the rest of its term, has been, upon the whole, prudent and moderate. That a power has not been abused is not, however, a reason for its continued exercise, if it be really unconstitutional. President Jackson thinks, and the majority thinks with him, that it is contrary to the spirit of the constitution, (as it is certainly unauthorised by its letter,) that any institution should have the power, unchecked for a long term of years, of affecting the affairs of individuals, from the further corners of Maine or Missouri, down to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico; of influencing elections; of biassing the press; and of acting strongly either with or against the administration. The majority considers, that if the United States Bank has great power for good, it has also great power for harm; and that the general government cannot be secure of working naturally in its limited functions, while this great power subsists, to be either its enemy or its ally.

This seems to be proved by the charges brought against the late Bank by President Jackson. Whether they are true or false, (and the gravest of them do not appear to have been substantiated,) they indicate that power is in the hands of a central institution, which no federal [Pg 85] establishment ought to have, otherwise than by the express permission of the constitution.

As for President Jackson's mode of proceeding against the Bank,—it is an affair of merely temporary interest, unless he should be found to have exceeded the authority conferred on him by his office. He does seem to have done so, in one particular, at least. His first declaration against the renewal of the charter, was honest and manly. His re-election, after having made this avowal, was a sufficient evidence of the desire of the majority to extinguish the Bank. It was, no doubt, in reliance on the will of the majority, thus indicated, that the President removed the deposits in a peculiarly high-handed manner; and also exercised the veto, when the two Houses had passed a bill to renew the charter of the United States Bank.

With the last of these measures, no one has any right to quarrel. He exercised a constitutional power, according to his long-declared convictions. His sudden removal of the deposits is not to be so easily justified.

The President has the power of removing his Secretaries from office, and of appointing others, whose appointment must be sanctioned by the Senate. The Secretaries of State are enjoined by law to execute such orders as shall be imposed on them by the President of the United States:—all the Secretaries but the Secretary of the Treasury. In his case, no such specification is made; obviously because it would not be wise to put the whole power of the Treasury into the hands of the President. President Jackson, however, contrived to obtain this power by using with adroitness his other power of removal from office. Mr. Duane was appointed Secretary of the Treasury on the 29th of May, 1833; his predecessor having been offered a higher office. It is [Pg 86] known that the predecessor had given his opinion in the cabinet against removing the Treasury deposits from the Bank; and that Mr. Duane was an acknowledged enemy of the Bank. On the 3rd of June, the President opened to the new Secretary his scheme of removing the deposits. Mr. Duane was opposed to the act, as being a violation of the government contract with the Bank. He refused to sign the necessary order. While he was still in office, on the 20th of September, the intended removal of the deposits was announced in the government newspaper. On the 23rd, Mr. Duane was dismissed from office; and Mr. Taney, who had previously promised to sign the order, was installed in the office. On the 26th, the official order for the removal of the deposits was given. No plea of impending danger to the national funds, if such could have been substantiated, could justify so high-handed a deed as this. No such plea has been substantiated; and the act remains open to strong censure.

Just before the expiration of its charter, the United States Bank accepted a charter from the Legislature of Pennsylvania. It remains to be seen what effects will arise from the operation of the most powerful State Bank which has yet existed.

The problem now is to keep a sound currency, in the absence of an institution, believed to be unconstitutional, but hitherto found the only means of establishing order and safety in this most important branch of economy. Here is a deficiency, which cannot but be the cause of much evil and perplexity. It must be supplied, either by increased knowledge and improved philosophy and practice among the people, or by an amendment of the Constitution. Meanwhile, it is only time [Pg 87] and energy lost to insist upon the return to a mere metallic currency. Society cannot be set back to a condition which could dispense with so great an improvement as paper-money, with all its abuses, undoubtedly is.

The singular order which last year emanated from the Treasury, compelling the payments for the public lands to be made in specie, will not have the effect of making the people in love with a metallic currency. If this measure is intended to be an obstacle to the purchase of large quantities of land, or virtually to raise the price,—these are affairs with which the Treasury has nothing to do. If it is intended merely to compel cash payments, as far as the administration has power to do so, it seems a pity that those who undertake to meddle with the currency should not know better what they are about. The scarcity of money in the eastern States has been well nigh ruinous, while large amounts of specie have been accumulated in the west, where they are not wanted.

The mischief thus caused has been much increased by the injudicious method in which the deposits have been distributed among the States, according to the Deposit Bill of the session of 1836. The details of the extraordinary state of the money-market in America, last year, are too well known on both sides of the water, to need to be repeated here.

One principle stands out conspicuously from the history of the last few years: that no President or Secretary should be allowed the opportunity of "taking the responsibility" of meddling with the currency of the country: in other words, the taxation should be reduced, as soon as in equity and convenience it can be done, so as to bring down the revenue to a proportion with the wants of the government. If the general government is to have anything to do with the currency at all, it [Pg 88] should be by such business being made a separate constitutional function. To let the Treasury overflow,—and leave its overflowings to be managed at the discretion of one public servant, removable by one other, is a policy as absurd as dangerous. The most obvious security lies, not in multiplying checks upon the officers, but in reducing the overflowings of the Treasury to the smallest possible amount. This is President Jackson's last recorded opinion on the subject. It appears worthy to be kept on record.

SECTION II.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

There is less to be said on this head than would be possible in any other country. When it is known that the United States are troubled with the large surplus revenue accruing from the sale of the public lands, the whole story is told. The stranger will hear much lamentation in the Senate about the increase of the public expenses, and will see Hon. Members looking as solemn as if the nation were sinking into a gulf of debt: but the fear and complaint are, not of the expenditure of money, but of the increase of executive patronage.

The Customs are the chief source of the revenue of the general government. They are in course of reduction, year by year. The next great resource is the sale of the public lands. This may be called inexhaustible; so large is the area yet unoccupied, and so increasing the influx of settlers.

This happy country is free from the infliction of an excise system; an exemption which goes far [Pg 89] towards making it the most desirable of all places of residence for manufacturers who value practical freedom in the management of their private concerns, and honesty among their work-people. The brewer and glass-manufacturer see the tax-gatherer's face no oftener than other men. The Post-Office establishment in America is for the advantage of the people, and not for purposes of taxation; and every one is satisfied if it pays its own expenses. A small sum is yielded by patent fees; and also by the mint. Lighthouse-tolls constitute another item. But all these united are trifling in comparison with the revenue yielded from the two great sources, the Customs and the Public Lands.[11]

The expenditures of the general government are for salaries, pensions, (three or four hundred pounds,) territorial governments, the mint, surveys, and improvements, the census and other public documents, and the military and naval establishments.

The largest item in the civil list is the payment to Members of Congress, who receive eight dollars per day, for the session, and their travelling expenses. The President's salary is 25,000 dollars. The Vice-president's 5,000. Each of the Secretaries of State, and the Postmaster-general's, 6,000. The Attorney-general's, 4,000.

The seven Judges of the Supreme Court are salaried with the same moderation as other members of the federal government. The Chief Justice has 5,000 dollars; the six Associate Judges 4,500 each.

The Commissioned Officers of the United States army were, in 1835, 674. Non-commissioned Officers and Privates, 7,547. Total of the United States army, 8,221. [Pg 90]

In the navy, there were, in 1835, 37 Captains, and 40 Masters-commandant. The navy consisted of 12 ships of the line; 14 first-class frigates; 3 second-class; 15 sloops of war; 8 schooners and other small vessels of war.

The revenue and expenditure of most of the States are so small as to make the annual financial statement resemble the account-books of a private family. The land tax, the proportion of which varies in every State, is the chief source of revenue. Licenses, fines, and tolls, yield other sums. In South Carolina, there is a tax on free people of colour!

The highest salary that I find paid to the government of a State is 4,000 dollars, (New York and Pennsylvania;) the lowest, 400 dollars, (Rhode Island.) The other expenses, besides those of government, are for the defence of the State, (in Pennsylvania, about forty pounds!) for education, (two thousand pounds, in Pennsylvania, the same year,) prisons, pensions, and state improvements.[12]

Such is the financial condition of a people of whom few are individually very wealthy or very poor; who all work; and who govern themselves, appointing one another to manage their common affairs. They have had every advantage that nature and circumstances could give them; and nothing to combat but their own necessary inexperience. As long as the State expenditure for defence bears the proportion to education of 40*l.* to 2,000*l.*, and on to 80,000*l.*, (the amount of the school-tax, now, in Massachusetts,) all is safe and promising. There is great virtue in figures, dull as they are to all but the few who love statistics for the sake of what they indicate. Those which are cited above disclose a condition and a prospect in the presence of which all fears for the peace and virtue of the States are shamed. Men who govern themselves and each other with such moderate means, and for such unimpeachable objects, are no more likely to lapse into disorder than to submit to despotism. [Pg 91]

FOOTNOTES:

[8] The value of the cargoes which arrived at Mobile in 1830, was,

	Dollars.
By American vessels	69,700
By British	74,435
	144,135
In 1834, by American vessels	314,072
In 1834, by British	74,739
	388,811
The value of the cargoes which departed from Mobile	
in 1830, was, by American vessels	1,517,663
in 1830, was, by British	476,702
	1,994,365
In 1834, by American vessels	4,684,326
In 1834, by British	1,585,871
	6,270,197

[9] "Log-rolling" means co-operation for a point which must be carried: on a new settlement in the wilds, by neighbours devoting a day to fell, roll, and build logs, to make a house before night: in a legislature, by a coterie of members urging on a bill in which they are interested, and getting it passed in defiance of inquiry and delay.

[10] I have before me a collection of specimens of the colonial, and early west continental paper currency; such as brought ruin to all who trusted it. The colonial notes are such as any common printer might forge. For instance, here is one, on common paper, with a border of stars, and within it,

> "Georgia, 1776.
>
> "These are to certify, That the sum of SIXPENCE sterling, is due from this Province to the bearer hereof, the same being part of Twelve Thousand Five Hundred and Seventy-two Pounds Nineteen Shillings Sterling, voted by Provincial Congress, for taking up and sinking that Sum already issued.
>
> 6*d.*"

Those of the early days of the war have on the back emblems, varying with the promissory amount, exhibiting bows, arrows, leaves of the oak, orange, &c.

It would be absurd to argue against all use of a paper currency from such specimens as these.

[11] See Appendix B.

[12] See Appendix B.

CHAPTER V. [Pg 92]

MORALS OF ECONOMY.

> "And yet of your strength there is and can be no clear feeling, save by what you have prospered in, by what you have done. Between vague, wavering capability, and fixed, indubitable performance, what a difference! A certain inarticulate self-consciousness dwells dimly in us; which only our works can render articulate, and decisively discernible. Our works are the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments. Hence, too, the folly of that impossible precept 'know thyself,' till it be translated into this partially possible one, 'know what thou canst work at.'"
>
> *Sartor Resartus*, p. 166. *Boston Edition.*

The glory of the world passeth away. One kind of worldly glory passes away, and another comes. Like a series of clouds sailing by the moon, and growing dim and dimmer as they go down the sky, are the transitory glories which are only brightened for an age by man's smile: dark vapours, which carry no light within themselves. How many such have floated across the expanse of history, and melted away! It was once a glory to have a power of life and death over a patriarchal family: and how mean does this now appear, in comparison with the power of life and death which every man has over his own intellect! It was once a glory to be feared: how much better is [Pg 93] it now esteemed to be loved! It was once a glory to lay down life to escape from one's personal woes: how far higher is it now seen to be to accept those woes as a boon, and to lay down life only for truth;—for God and not for self! The heroes of mankind were once its kings and warriors: we look again now, and find its truest heroes its martyrs, its poets, its artisans; men not buried under pyramids or in cathedrals, but whose sepulchre no man knoweth unto this day. To them the Lord showed the land of promise, and then buried them on the confines. There are two aspects under which every individual man may be regarded: as a solitary being, with inherent powers, and an omnipotent will; a creator, a king, an inscrutable mystery: and again, as a being infinitely connected with all other beings, with none but derived powers, with a heavenly-directed will; a creature, a subject, a transparent medium through which the workings of principles are to be eternally revealed. Both these aspects are true, and therefore reconcilable. The Old World dwelt almost exclusively on the first and meaner aspect: as men rise to inhabit the new heavens and the new earth, they will more and more contemplate the other and sublimer. The old glory of a self-originating power and will is passing away: and it is becoming more and more plain that a man's highest honour lies in becoming as clear a medium as possible for the revelations which are to be made through him: in wiping out every stain, in correcting every flaw by which the light that is in him may be made dimness or deception. It was once a glory to defy or evade the laws of man's physical and moral being; and, in so doing, to encroach upon the rights of others: it is now beginning to be shown that there is a higher honour in recognising and obeying the laws of outward and inward life, and in reverencing instead of appropriating the privileges of other [Pg 94] wards of Providence.

In other words, it was once a glory to be idle, and a shame to work,—at least with any member or organ but one,—the brain. Yet it is a law of every man's physical nature that he should work with the limbs: of every man's moral nature, that he should know: and knowledge is to be had only by one method; by bringing the ideal and the actual world into contact, and proving each by the other, with one's own brain and hands for instruments, and not another's. There is no actual knowledge even of one's own life, to be had in any other way. Yet this is the way which men have perversely refused to acknowledge, while every one is more or less compelled to practise it. Those who have been able to get through life with the least possible work have been treated as the happiest: those who have had the largest share imposed upon them have been passively pitied as the most miserable. If the experience of the two could have been visibly or tangibly brought into comparison, the false estimate would have been long ago banished for ever from human calculations. If princes and nobles, who have not worked either in war or in council, men sunk in satiety; if women, shut out of the world of reality, and compelled by usage to endure the corrosion of unoccupied thought, and the decay of unemployed powers, were able to speak fully and truly as they sink into their unearned graves, it would be found that their lives had been one hollow misery, redeemed solely by that degree of action that had been permitted to them, in order that they might, in any wise, live. If the half-starved artisan, if the negro slave, could, when lying down at length to rest, see and exhibit the full vision of their own lives, they would complain far less of too much work than of too little freedom, too little knowledge, too many wounds [Pg 95] through their affections to their children, their brethren, their race. They would complain that their work had been of too exclusive a kind; too much in the actual, while it had been attempted to close the ideal from them. Nor are their cases alike. The artisan works too much in one way, while too little in another. The negro slave suffers too much by infliction, and yet more by privation; but he rarely or never works too much, even with the limbs. He knows the evil of toil, the reluctance, the lassitude; but with it he knows also the evil of idleness; the vacuity, the hopelessness. He has neither the privilege of the brute, to exercise himself vigorously upon instinct, for an immediate object, to be gained and forgotten; nor the privilege of the man, to toil, by moral necessity, with some pain, for results which yield an evergrowing pleasure. It is not work which is the curse of the slave: he is rarely so blessed as to know what it is.

If, again, the happiest man who has ever lived on earth, (excepting the Man of Sorrows, whose depth of peace no one will attempt to fathom,) could, in passing into the busier life to come, (to which the present is only the nursery mimicking of human affairs,) communicate to us what has been the true blessedness of his brief passage, it would be found to lie in what he had been enabled to do: not so much blessed in regard to others as to himself; not so much because he had

made inventions, (even such a one as printing:) not so much because through him countries will be better governed, men better educated, and some light from the upper world let down into the lower; (for great things as these are, they are sure to be done, if not by him, by another;) but because his actual doing, his joint head and hand-work have revealed to him the truth which lies about him; and so far, and by the only appointed method, invested him with heaven while he was [Pg 96] upon earth. Such a one might not be conscious of this as the chief blessedness of his life, (as men are ever least conscious of what is highest and best in themselves:) he might put it in another form, saying that mankind were growing wiser and happier, or that goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life, or that he had found that all evil is only an aspect of ultimate good: in some such words of faith or hope he would communicate his inward peace: but the real meaning of the true workman, if spoken for him by a divine voice, (as spoken by the divine voice of his life,) is, as has been said, that his complete toil has enriched him with truth which can be no otherwise obtained, and which neither the world, nor any one in it, except himself, could give, nor any power in heaven or earth could take away.

Mankind becomes more clear-sighted to this fact about honour and blessedness, as time unfolds the sequence of his hieroglyphic scroll; and a transition in the morals and manners of nations is an inevitable consequence, slow as men are in deciphering the picture-writing of the old teacher; unapt as men are in connecting picture with picture, so as to draw thence a truth, and in the truth, a prophecy. We must look to new or renovated communities to see how much has been really learned.

The savage chief, who has never heard the saying "he that would be chief among you, let him be your servant," feels himself covered with glory when he paces along in his saddle, gorgeous with wampum and feathers, while his squaw follows in the dust, bending under the weight of his shelter, his food, and his children. Wise men look upon him with all pity and no envy. Higher and [Pg 97] higher in society, the right of the strongest is supposed to involve honour: and physical is placed above moral strength. The work of the limbs, wholly repulsive when separated from that of the head, is devolved upon the weaker, who cannot resist; and hence arises the disgrace of work, and the honour of being able to keep soul and body together, more or less luxuriously, without it. The barbaric conqueror makes his captives work for him. His descendants, who have no prisoners of war to make slaves of, carry off captives of a helpless nation, inferior even to themselves in civilisation. The servile class rises, by almost imperceptible degrees, as the dawn of reason brightens towards day. The classes by whom the hand-work of society is done, arrive at being cared for by those who do the head-work, or no work at all: then they are legislated for, but still as a common or inferior class, favoured, out of pure bounty, with laws, as with soup, which are pronounced "excellent for the poor:" then they begin to open their minds upon legislation for themselves; and a certain lip-honour is paid them, which would be rejected as insult if offered to those who nevertheless think themselves highly meritorious in vouchsafing it.

This is the critical period out of which must arise a new organisation of society. When it comes to this, a new promise blossoms under the feet of the lovers of truth. There are many of the hand-workers now who are on the very borders of the domain of head-work: and, as the encroachments of those who work not at all have, by this time, become seriously injurious to the rights of others, there are many thinkers and persons of learning who are driven over the line, and become hand-workers; for which they, as they usually afterwards declare, can never be sufficiently thankful. [Pg 98] There is no drowning the epithalamium with which these two classes celebrate the union of thought and handicraft. Multitudes press in, or are carried in to the marriage feast, and a new era of society has begun. The temporary glory of ease and disgrace of labour pass away like mountain mists, and the clear sublimity of toil grows upon men's sight.

If, in such an era, a new nation begins its career, what should be expected from it?

If the organisation of its society were a matter of will; if it had a disposable moral force, applicable to controllable circumstances, it is probable that the new nation would take after all old nations, and not dare to make, perhaps not dream of making, the explicit avowal, that that which had ever hitherto been a disgrace, except in the eyes of a very few prophets, had now come out to be a clear honour. This would be more, perhaps, than even a company of ten or fifteen millions of men and women would venture to declare, while such words as Quixotic, Revolutionary, Utopian, remain on the tongues which wag the most industriously in the old world. But, it so happens it is never in the power of a whole nation to meet in convention, and agree what their moral condition shall be. They may agree upon laws for the furtherance of what is settled to be honourable, and for the exclusion of some of the law-bred disgraces of the old world: but it is not in their power to dispense at will the subtle radiance of moral glory, any more than to dye their scenery with rainbow hues because they have got hold of a prism. Moral persuasions grow out of preceding circumstances, as institutions do; and conviction is not communicable where the evidence is not of a communicable kind. The advantage of the new nation over the old will be no more than that its individual members are more open to conviction, from being more accessible to evidence, less burdened with antique forms and institutions, and [Pg 99] partial privileges, so called. The result will probably be that some members of the new society will follow the ancient fashion of considering work a humiliation; while, upon the whole, labour will be more honoured than it has ever been before.

America is in the singular position of being nearly equally divided between a low degree of the ancient barbarism in relation to labour, and a high degree of the modern enlightenment. Wherever there is a servile class, work is considered a disgrace, unless it bears some other name, and is of an exclusive character. In the free States, labour is more really and heartily honoured

than, perhaps, in any other part of the civilised world. The most extraordinary, and least pleasant circumstance in the case is that, while the south ridicules and despises the north for what is its very highest honour, the north feels somewhat uneasy and sore under the contempt. It is true that it is from necessity that every man there works; but, whatever be the cause, the fact is a noble one, worthy of all rejoicing: and it were to be wished that the north could readily and serenely, at all times, and in disregard of all jibes, admit the fact, as matter for thankfulness, that there every man works for his bread with his own head and hands.

How do the two parties in reality spend their days?

In the north, the children all go to school, and work there, more or less. As they grow up, they part off into the greatest variety of employments. The youths must, without exception, work hard; or they had better drown themselves. Whether they are to be lawyers, or otherwise professional; or merchants, manufacturers, farmers, or citizens, they have everything to do for themselves. A [Pg 100] very large proportion of them have, while learning their future business, to earn the means of learning. There is much manual labour in the country colleges; much teaching in the vacations done by students. Many a great man in Congress was seen in his boyhood leading his father's horses to water; and, in his youth, guiding the plough in his father's field. There is probably hardly a man in New England who cannot ride, drive, and tend his own horse; scarcely a clergyman, lawyer, or physician, who, if deprived of his profession, could not support himself by manual labour. Nor, on the other hand, is there any farmer or citizen who is not, more or less, a student and thinker. Not only are all capable of discharging their political duty of self-government; but all have somewhat idealised their life. All have looked abroad, at least so far as to understand the foreign relations of their own country: most, I believe, have gone further, and can contemplate the foreign relations of their own being. Some one great mind, at least, has almost every individual entered into sympathy with; some divine, or politician, or poet, who has carried the spirit out beyond the circle of home, State, and country, into the ideal world. It is even possible to trace, in the conversation of some who have the least leisure for reading, the influence of some one of the rich sayings, the diamonds and pearls which have dropped from the lips of genius, to shine in the hearts of all humanity. Some one such saying may be perceived to have moulded the thoughts, and shaped the aims, and become the under-current of the whole life of a thinking and labouring man. Such sayings being hackneyed signifies nothing, while the individuals blessed by them do not know it, and hold them in their inmost hearts, unvexed by [Pg 101] hearing them echoed by careless tongues. "Am I not a man and a brother?" "Happy the man whose wish and care," &c. "The breaking waves dashed high," &c. (Mrs. Hemans's Landing of the Pilgrims,) "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue," (Burke)—these are some of the words which, sinking deep into the hearts of busy men, spring up in a harvest of thoughts and acts.

There are a few young men, esteemed the least happy members of the community, who inherit wealth. The time will come, when the society is somewhat older, when it will be understood that wealth need not preclude work: but at present, there are no individuals so forlorn, in the northern States, as young men of fortune. Men who have shown energy and skill in working their way in society are preferred for political representatives: there is no scientific or literary class, for such individuals to fall into: all the world is busy around them, and they are reduced to the predicament, unhappily the most dreaded of all in the United States, of standing alone. Their method, therefore, is to spend their money as fast as possible, and begin the world like other men. I am stating this as matter of fact; not as being reasonable and right.

As for the women of the northern States, most have the blessing of work, though not of the extent and variety which will hereafter be seen to be necessary for the happiness of their lives. All married women, except the ladies of rich merchants and others, are liable to have their hands full of household occupation, from the uncertainty of domestic service; a topic to be referred to hereafter. Women who do not marry have, in many instances, to work for their support; and, as will be shown in another connexion, under peculiar disadvantages. Work, on the whole, may be [Pg 102] considered the rule, and vacuity the exception.[13]

What is life in the slave States, in respect of work?

There are two classes, the servile and the imperious, between whom there is a great gulf fixed. The servile class has not even the benefit of hearty toil. No solemn truths sink down into them, to cheer their hearts, stimulate their minds, and nerve their hands. Their wretched lives are passed between an utter debasement of the will, and a conflict of the will with external force.

The other class is in circumstances as unfavourable as the least happy order of persons in the old world. The means of educating children are so meagre[14] that young people begin life under [Pg 103] great disadvantages. The vicious fundamental principle of morals in a slave country, that labour is disgraceful, taints the infant mind with a stain which is as fatal in the world of spirits as the negro tinge is at present in the world of society. It made my heart ache to hear the little children unconsciously uttering thoughts with which no true religion, no true philosophy can coexist. "Do you think *I* shall work?" "O, you must not touch the poker here." "You must not do this or that for yourself: the negroes will be offended, and it won't do for a lady to do so." "Poor thing! she has to teach: if she had come here, she might have married a rich man, perhaps." "Mamma has so much a-year now, so we have not to do our work at home, or any trouble. 'Tis such a comfort!"—When children at school call everything that pleases them "gentlemanly," and pity all (but slaves) who have to work, and talk of marrying early for an establishment, it is all over with them. A more hopeless state of degradation can hardly be conceived of, however they may ride, and play the

harp, and sing Italian, and teach their slaves what they call religion.

"Poor things!" may be said of such, in return. They know little, with their horror of work, of what awaits them. Theirs is destined to be, if their wish of an establishment is fulfilled, a life of toil, irksome and unhonoured. They escape the name; but they are doomed to undergo the worst of the reality. Their husbands are not to be envied, though they do ride on white horses, (the slave's highest conception of bliss,) lie down to repose in hot weather, and spend their hours between the discharge of hospitality and the superintendence of their estates; and the highly honourable and laborious charge of public affairs. But the wives of slave-holders are, as they and their [Pg 104] husbands declare, as much slaves as their negroes. If they will not have everything go to rack and ruin around them, they must superintend every household operation, from the cellar to the garrets: for there is nothing that slaves can do well. While the slaves are perpetually at one's heels, lolling against the bed-posts before one rises in the morning, standing behind the chairs, leaning on the sofa, officiously undertaking, and invariably spoiling everything that one had rather do for one's-self, the smallest possible amount of real service is performed. The lady of the house carries her huge bunch of keys, (for every consumable thing must be locked up,) and has to give out, on incessant requests, whatever is wanted for the household. She is for ever superintending, and trying to keep things straight, without the slightest hope of attaining anything like leisure and comfort. What is there in retinue, in the reputation of ease and luxury, which can compensate for toils and cares of this nature? How much happier must be the lot of a village milliner, or of the artisan's wife who sweeps her own floors, and cooks her husband's dinner, than that of the planter's lady with twenty slaves to wait upon her; her sons migrating because work is out of the question, and they have not the means to buy estates; and her daughters with no better prospect than marrying, as she has done, to toil as she does!

Some few of these ladies are among the strongest-minded and most remarkable women I have ever known. There are great draw-backs, (as will be seen hereafter,) but their mental vigour is occasionally proportioned to their responsibility. Women who have to rule over a barbarous society, (small though it be,) to make and enforce laws, provide for all the physical wants, and [Pg 105] regulate the entire habits of a number of persons who can in no respect take care of themselves, must be strong and strongly disciplined, if they in any degree discharge this duty. Those who shrink from it become perhaps the weakest women I have anywhere seen: selfishly timid, humblingly dependent, languid in body, and with minds of no reach at all. These two extremes are found in the slave States, in the most striking opposition. It is worthy of note, that I never found there a woman strong enough voluntarily to brave the woes of life in the presence of slavery; nor any woman weak enough to extenuate the vices of the system; each knowing, prior to experience, what those woes and vices are.

There are a few unhappy persons in the slave States, too few, I believe, to be called a class, who strongly exemplify the consequences of such a principle of morals as that work is a disgrace. There are a few, called by the slaves "mean whites;" signifying whites who work with the hands. Where there is a coloured servile class, whose colour has become a disgrace through their servitude, two results are inevitable: that those who have the colour without the servitude are disgraced among the whites; and those who have the servitude without the colour are as deeply disgraced among the coloured. More intensely than white work-people are looked down upon at Port-au-Prince, are the "mean whites" despised by the slaves of the Carolinas. They make the most, of course, of the only opportunity they can ever have of doing what they see their superiors do,—despising their fellow-creatures. No inducement would be sufficient to bring honest, independent men into the constant presence of double-distilled hatred and contempt like this; and the general character of the "mean whites" may therefore be anticipated. They are usually [Pg 106] men who have no prospect, no chance elsewhere; the lowest of the low.

When I say that no inducement would be sufficient, I mean no politic inducement. There are inducements of the same force as those which drew martyrs of old into the presence of savage beasts in the amphitheatre, which guided Howard through the gloom of prisons, and strengthened Guyon of Marseilles to offer himself a certain victim to the plague,—there are inducements of such force as this which carry down families to dwell in the midst of contempt and danger, where everything is lost but,—the one object which carries them there. "Mean whites" these friends of the oppressed fugitive may be in the eyes of all around them; but how they stand in the eye of One whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, may some day be revealed. To themselves it is enough that their object is gained. They do not want praise; they are above it: and they have shown that they can do without sympathy. It is enough to commend them to their own peace of heart.

SECTION I.

MORALS OF SLAVERY.

This title is not written down in a spirit of mockery; though there appears to be a mockery somewhere, when we contrast slavery with the principles and the rule which are the test of all American institutions:—the principles that all men are born free and equal; that rulers derive [Pg 107] their just powers from the consent of the governed; and the rule of reciprocal justice. This discrepancy between principles and practice needs no more words. But the institution of slavery exists; and what we have to see is what the morals are of the society which is subject to it.

What social virtues are possible in a society of which injustice is the primary characteristic? in a society which is divided into two classes, the servile and the imperious?

The most obvious is Mercy. Nowhere, perhaps, can more touching exercises of mercy be seen than here. It must be remembered that the greater number of slave-holders have no other idea than of holding slaves. Their fathers did it: they themselves have never known the coloured race treated otherwise than as inferior beings, born to work for and to teaze the whites; helpless, improvident, open to no higher inducements than indulgence and praise; capable of nothing but entire dependence. The good affections of slave-holders like these show themselves in the form of mercy; which is as beautiful to witness as mercy, made a substitute for justice, can ever be. I saw endless manifestations of mercy, as well as of its opposite. The thoughtfulness of masters, mistresses, and their children about, not only the comforts, but the indulgences of their slaves, was a frequent subject of admiration with me. Kind masters are liberal in the expenditure of money, and (what is better) of thought, in gratifying the whims and fancies of their negroes. They make large sacrifices occasionally for the social or domestic advantage of their people; and use great forbearance in the exercise of the power conferred upon them by law and custom.

At the time when the cholera was ravaging South Carolina, a wealthy slave-holder there refused [Pg 108] to leave the State, as most of his neighbours were doing. He would not consent to take any further care of himself than riding to a distance from his plantation (then overrun by the disease) to sleep. All day he was among his slaves: nursing them with his own hands; putting them into the bath, giving them medicine himself, and cheering their spirits by his presence and his care. He saved them almost all. No one will suppose this one of the ordinary cases where a master has his slaves taken care of as property, not as men. Sordid considerations of that kind must have given way before the terrors of the plague. A far higher strength than that of self-interest was necessary to carry this gentleman through such a work as this; and it was no other than mercy.

Again:—a young man, full of the southern pride, one of whose aims is to have as great a display of negroes as possible, married a young lady who, soon after her marriage, showed an imperious and cruel temper towards her slaves. Her husband gently remonstrated. She did not mend. He warned her, that he would not allow beings, for whose comfort he was responsible, to be oppressed; and that, if she compelled him to it, he would deprive her of the power she misused. Still she did not mend. He one day came and told her that he had sold all his domestic slaves, for their own sakes. He told her that he would always give her money enough to hire free service, when it was to be had; and that when it was not, he would cheerfully bear, and help her to bear, the domestic inconveniences which must arise from their having no servants. He kept his word. It rarely happens that free service can be hired; and this proud gentleman assists his wife's labours [Pg 109] with his own hands; and (what is more) endures with all cheerfulness the ignominy of having no slaves.

Nothing struck me more than the patience of slave-owners. In this virtue they probably surpass the whole Christian world;—I mean in their patience with their slaves; for one cannot much praise their patience with the abolitionists, or with the tariff; or in some other cases of political vexation. When I considered how they love to be called "fiery southerners," I could not but marvel at their mild forbearance under the hourly provocations to which they are liable in their homes. [15] It is found that such a degree of this virtue can be obtained only by long habit. Persons from New England, France, or England, becoming slave-holders, are found to be the most severe masters and mistresses, however good their tempers may always have appeared previously. They cannot, like the native proprietor, sit waiting half an hour for the second course, or see everything done in the worst possible manner; their rooms dirty, their property wasted, their plans frustrated, their infants slighted, themselves deluded by artifices,—they cannot, like the native proprietor, endure all this unruffled. It seems to me that every slave-holder's temper is subjected to a discipline which must either ruin or perfect it. While we know that many tempers are thus ruined, and must mourn for the unhappy creatures who cannot escape from their tyranny, it is evident, on the other hand, that many tempers are to be met with which should [Pg 110] shame down and silence for ever the irritability of some whose daily life is passed under circumstances of comparative ease.

This mercy, indulgence, patience, was often pleaded to me in defence of the system, or in aggravation of the faults of intractable slaves. The fallacy of this is so gross as not to need exposure anywhere but on the spot. I was heart-sick of being told of the ingratitude of slaves, and weary of explaining that indulgence can never atone for injury: that the extremest pampering, for a life-time, is no equivalent for rights withheld, no reparation for irreparable injustice. What are the greatest possible amounts of finery, sweetmeats, dances, gratuities, and kind words and looks, in exchange for political, social, and domestic existence? for body and spirit? Is it not true that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment?

This fallacious plea was urged upon me by three different persons, esteemed enlightened and religious, in relation to one case. The case was this. A lady of fortune carried into her husband's establishment, when she married, several slaves, and among them a girl two years younger than herself, who had been brought up under her, and who was employed as her own maid. The little slaves are accustomed to play freely with the children of the family—a practice which was lauded to me, but which never had any beauty in my eyes, seeing, as I did, the injury to the white children from unrestricted intercourse with the degraded race, and looking forward as I did to the time when they must separate into the servile and imperious. Mrs. —— had been unusually indulgent to this girl, having allowed her time and opportunity for religious and other instruction, and favoured her in every way. One night, when the girl was undressing her, the lady expressed [Pg 111]

her fondness for her, and said, among other things: "When I die you shall be free;"—a dangerous thing to say to a slave only two years younger than herself. In a short time the lady was taken ill,—with a strange, mysterious illness, which no doctor could alleviate. One of her friends, who suspected foul play, took the sufferer entirely under her own charge, when she seemed to be dying. She revived; and as soon as she was well enough to have a will of her own again, would be waited on by no one but her favourite slave. She grew worse. She alternated thus, for some time, according as she was under the care of this slave or of her friend. At last, the friend excluded from her chamber every one but the physicians: took in the medicines at the room door from the hands of the slave, and locked them up. They were all analysed by a physician, and arsenic found in every one of them. The lady partially recovered; but I was shocked at the traces of suffering in her whole appearance. The girl's guilt was brought clearly home to her. There never was a case of more cruel, deliberate intention to murder. If ever slave deserved the gallows, (which ought to be questionable to the most decided minds,) this girl did. What was done? The lady was tenderhearted, and could not bear to have her hanged. This was natural enough; but what did she therefore do? keep her under her own eye, that she might at least poison nobody else, and perhaps be touched and reclaimed by the clemency of the person she would have murdered? No. The lady sold her.

I was actually called upon to admire the lady's conduct; and was asked whether the ingratitude of the girl was not inconceivable, and her hypocrisy too; for she used to lecture her mistress and her [Pg 112] mistress's friends for being so irreligious as to go to parties on Saturday nights, when they should have been preparing their minds for Sunday. Was not the hypocrisy of the girl inconceivable? and her ingratitude for her mistress's favours? No. The girl had no other idea of religion,—could have no other than that it consists in observances, and, wicked as she was, her wickedness could not be called ingratitude, for she was more injured than favoured, after all. All indulgences that could be heaped upon her were still less than her due, and her mistress remained infinitely her debtor.

Little can be said of the purity of manners of the whites of the south; but there is purity. Some few examples of domestic fidelity may be found: few enough, by the confession of residents on the spot; but those individuals who have resisted the contagion of the vice amidst which they dwell are pure. Every man who resides on his plantation may have his harem, and has every inducement of custom, and of pecuniary gain,[16] to tempt him to the common practice. Those who, notwithstanding, keep their homes undefiled may be considered as of incorruptible purity.

Here, alas! ends my catalogue of the virtues which are of possible exercise by slave-holders towards their labourers. The inherent injustice of the system extinguishes all others, and nourishes a whole harvest of false morals towards the rest of society.

The personal oppression of the negroes is the grossest vice which strikes a stranger in the country. It can never be otherwise when human beings are wholly subjected to the will of other human beings, who are under no other external control than the law which forbids killing and [Pg 113] maiming;—a law which it is difficult to enforce in individual cases. A fine slave was walking about in Columbia, South Carolina, when I was there, nearly helpless and useless from the following causes. His master was fond of him, and the slave enjoyed the rare distinction of never having been flogged. One day, his master's child, supposed to be under his care at the time, fell down and hurt itself. The master flew into a passion, ordered the slave to be instantly flogged, and would not hear a single word the man had to say. As soon as the flogging was over, the slave went into the back yard, where there was an axe and a block, and struck off the upper half of his right hand. He went and held up the bleeding hand before his master, saying, "You have mortified me, so I have made myself useless. Now you must maintain me as long as I live." It came out that the child had been under the charge of another person.

There are, as is well known throughout the country, houses in the free States which are open to fugitive slaves, and where they are concealed till the search for them is over. I know some of the secrets of such places; and can mention two cases, among many, of runaways, which show how horrible is the tyranny which the slave system authorises men to inflict on each other. A negro had found his way to one of these friendly houses; and had been so skilfully concealed, that repeated searches by his master, (who had followed for the purpose of recovering him,) and by constables, had been in vain. After three weeks of this seclusion, the negro became weary, and entreated of his host to be permitted to look out of the window. His host strongly advised him to keep quiet, as it was pretty certain that his master had not given him up. When the host had left him, however, the negro came out of his hiding-place, and went to the window. He met the eye of [Pg 114] his master, who was looking up from the street. The poor slave was obliged to return to his bondage.

A young negress had escaped in like manner; was in like manner concealed; and was alarmed by constables, under the direction of her master, entering the house in pursuit of her, when she had had reason to believe that the search was over. She flew up stairs to her chamber in the third story, and drove a heavy article of furniture against the door. The constables pushed in, notwithstanding, and the girl leaped from the window into the paved street. Her master looked at her as she lay, declared she would never be good for anything again, and went back into the south. The poor creature, her body bruised, and her limbs fractured, was taken up, and kindly nursed; and she is now maintained in Boston, in her maimed condition, by the charity of some ladies there.

The following story has found its way into the northern States (as few such stories do) from the circumstance that a New Hampshire family are concerned in it. It has excited due horror

wherever it is known; and it is to be hoped that it will lead to the exposure of more facts of the same kind, since it is but too certain that they are common.

A New Hampshire gentleman went down into Louisiana, many years ago, to take a plantation. He pursued the usual method; borrowing money largely to begin with, paying high interest, and clearing off his debt, year by year, as his crops were sold. He followed another custom there; taking a Quadroon wife: a mistress, in the eye of the law, since there can be no legal marriage between whites and persons of any degree of colour: but, in nature and in reason, the woman he took home was his wife. She was a well-principled, amiable, well-educated woman; and they lived [Pg 115] happily together for twenty years. She had only the slightest possible tinge of colour. Knowing the law that the children of slaves are to follow the fortunes of the mother, she warned her husband that she was not free, an ancestress having been a slave, and the legal act of manumission having never been performed. The husband promised to look to it: but neglected it. At the end of twenty years, one died, and the other shortly followed, leaving daughters; whether two or three, I have not been able to ascertain with positive certainty; but I have reason to believe three, of the ages of fifteen, seventeen, and eighteen: beautiful girls, with no perceptible mulatto tinge. The brother of their father came down from New Hampshire to settle the affairs; and he supposed, as every one else did, that the deceased had been wealthy. He was pleased with his nieces, and promised to carry them back with him into New Hampshire, and (as they were to all appearance perfectly white) to introduce them into the society which by education they were fitted for. It appeared, however, that their father had died insolvent. The deficiency was very small: but it was necessary to make an inventory of the effects, to deliver to the creditors. This was done by the brother,—the executor. Some of the creditors called on him, and complained that he had not delivered in a faithful inventory. He declared he had. No: the number of slaves was not accurately set down: he had omitted the daughters. The executor was overwhelmed with horror, and asked time for thought. He went round among the creditors, appealing to their mercy: but they answered that these young ladies were "a first-rate article," too valuable to be relinquished. He next offered, (though he had himself six children, and very little money,) all he [Pg 116] had for the redemption of his nieces; alleging that it was more than they would bring in the market for house or field labour. This was refused with scorn. It was said that there were other purposes for which the girls would bring more than for field or house labour. The uncle was in despair, and felt strongly tempted to wish their death rather than their surrender to such a fate as was before them. He told them, abruptly, what was their prospect. He declares that he never before beheld human grief; never before heard the voice of anguish. They never ate, nor slept, nor separated from each other, till the day when they were taken into the New Orleans slave-market. There they were sold, separately, at high prices, for the vilest of purposes: and where each is gone, no one knows. They are, for the present, lost. But they will arise to the light in the day of retribution.

It is a common boast in the south that there is less vice in their cities than in those of the north. This can never, as a matter of fact, have been ascertained; as the proceedings of slave households are, or may be, a secret: and in the north, what licentiousness there is may be detected. But such comparisons are bad. Let any one look at the positive licentiousness of the south, and declare if, in such a state of society, there can be any security for domestic purity and peace. The Quadroon connexions in New Orleans are all but universal, as I was assured on the spot by ladies who cannot be mistaken. The history of such connexions is a melancholy one: but it ought to be made known while there are any who boast of the superior morals of New Orleans, on account of the decent quietness of the streets and theatres.

The Quadroon girls of New Orleans are brought up by their mothers to be what they have been; [Pg 117] the mistresses of white gentlemen. The boys are some of them sent to France; some placed on land in the back of the State; and some are sold in the slave-market. They marry women of a somewhat darker colour than their own; the women of their own colour objecting to them, "ils sont si dégoutants!" The girls are highly educated, externally, and are, probably, as beautiful and accomplished a set of women as can be found. Every young man early selects one, and establishes her in one of those pretty and peculiar houses, whole rows of which may be seen in the Remparts. The connexion now and then lasts for life: usually for several years. In the latter case, when the time comes for the gentleman to take a white wife, the dreadful news reaches his Quadroon partner, either by a letter entitling her to call the house and furniture her own, or by the newspaper which announces his marriage. The Quadroon ladies are rarely or never known to form a second connexion. Many commit suicide: more die brokenhearted. Some men continue the connexion after marriage. Every Quadroon woman believes that her partner will prove an exception to the rule of desertion. Every white lady believes that her husband has been an exception to the rule of seduction.

What security for domestic purity and peace there can be where every man has had two connexions, one of which must be concealed; and two families, whose existence must not be known to each other; where the conjugal relation begins in treachery, and must be carried on with a heavy secret in the husband's breast, no words are needed to explain. If this is the system which is boasted of as a purer than ordinary state of morals, what is to be thought of the ordinary state? It can only be hoped that the boast is an empty one.

There is no occasion to explain the management of the female slaves on estates where the object [Pg 118] is to rear as many as possible, like stock, for the southern market: nor to point out the boundless licentiousness caused by the practice: a practice which wrung from the wife of a planter, in the bitterness of her heart, the declaration that a planter's wife was only "the chief slave of the

harem." Mr. Madison avowed that the licentiousness of Virginian plantations stopped just short of destruction; and that it was understood that the female slaves were to become mothers at fifteen.

A gentleman of the highest character, a southern planter, observed, in conversation with a friend, that little was known, out of bounds, of the reasons of the new laws by which emancipation was made so difficult as it is. He said that the very general connexion of white gentlemen with their female slaves introduced a mulatto race whose numbers would become dangerous, if the affections of their white parents were permitted to render them free. The liberty of emancipating them was therefore abolished, while that of selling them remained. There are persons who weakly trust to the force of the parental affection for putting an end to slavery, when the amalgamation of the races shall have gone so far as to involve a sufficient number! I actually heard this from the lips of a clergyman in the south. Yet these planters, who sell their own offspring to fill their purses, who have such offspring for the sake of filling their purses, dare to raise the cry of "amalgamation" against the abolitionists of the north, not one of whom has, as far as evidence can show, conceived the idea of a mixture of the races. It is from the south, where this mixture is hourly encouraged, that the canting and groundless reproach has come. I met with no candid southerner who was not full of shame at the monstrous hypocrisy.

It is well known that the most savage violences that are now heard of in the world take place in [Pg 119] the southern and western States of America. Burning alive, cutting the heart out, and sticking it on the point of a knife, and other such diabolical deeds, the result of the deepest hatred of which the human heart is capable, are heard of only there. The frequency of such deeds is a matter of dispute, which time will settle.[17] The existence of such deeds is a matter of no dispute. Whether two or twenty such deeds take place in a year, their perpetration testifies to the existence of such hatred as alone could prompt them. There is no doubt in my mind as to the immediate causes of such outrages. They arise out of the licentiousness of manners. The negro is exasperated by being deprived of his wife,—by being sent out of the way that his master may take possession of his home. He stabs his master; or, if he cannot fulfil his desire of vengeance, he is a dangerous person, an object of vengeance in return, and destined to some cruel fate. If the negro attempts to retaliate, and defile the master's home, the faggots are set alight about him. Much that is dreadful ensues from the negro being subject to toil and the lash: but I am confident that the licentiousness of the masters is the proximate cause of society in the south and south-west being in such a state that nothing else is to be looked for than its being dissolved into its elements, if man does not soon cease to be called the property of man. This dissolution will never take place through the insurrection of the negroes; but by the natural operation of vice. But the process of demoralisation will be stopped, I have no doubt, before it reaches that point. There is [Pg 120] no reason to apprehend serious insurrection; for the negroes are too degraded to act in concert, or to stand firm before the terrible face of the white man. Like all deeply-injured classes of persons, they are desperate and cruel, on occasion, kindly as their nature is; but as a class, they have no courage. The voice of a white, even of a lady, if it were authoritative, would make a whole regiment of rebellious slaves throw down their arms and flee. Poison is the weapon that suits them best: then the knife, in moments of exasperation. They will never take the field, unless led on by free blacks. Desperate as the state of society is, it will be rectified, probably, without bloodshed.

It may be said that it is doing an injustice to cite extreme cases of vice as indications of the state of society. I do not think so, as long as such cases are so common as to strike the observation of a mere passing stranger; to say nothing of their incompatibility with a decent and orderly fulfilment of the social relations. Let us, however, see what is the very best state of things. Let us take the words and deeds of some of the most religious, refined, and amiable members of society. It was this aspect of affairs which grieved me more, if possible, than the stormier one which I have presented. The coarsening and hardening of mind and manners among the best; the blunting of the moral sense among the most conscientious, gave me more pain than the stabbing, poisoning, and burning. A few examples which will need no comment, will suffice.

Two ladies, the distinguishing ornaments of a very superior society in the south, are truly unhappy about slavery, and opened their hearts freely to me upon the grief which it caused them, —the perfect curse which they found it. They need no enlightening on this, nor any stimulus to acquit themselves as well as their unhappy circumstances allow. They one day pressed me for a [Pg 121] declaration of what I should do in their situation. I replied that I would give up everything, go away with my slaves, settle them, and stay by them in some free place. I had said, among other things, that I dare not stay there,—on my own account,—from moral considerations. "What, not if you had no slaves?" "No." "Why?" "I could not trust myself to live where I must constantly witness the exercise of irresponsible power." They made no reply at the moment: but each found occasion to tell me, some days afterwards, that she had been struck to the heart by these words: the consideration I mentioned having never occurred to her before!

Madame Lalaurie, the person who was mobbed at New Orleans, on account of her fiendish cruelty to her slaves,—a cruelty so excessive as to compel the belief that she was mentally deranged, though her derangement could have taken such a direction nowhere but in a slave country;—this person was described to me as having been "very pleasant to whites."

A common question put to me by amiable ladies was, "Do not you find the slaves generally very happy?" They never seemed to have been asked, or to have asked themselves, the question with which I replied:—"Would you be happy with their means?"

One sultry morning, I was sitting with a friend, who was giving me all manner of information

about her husband's slaves, both in the field and house; how she fed and clothed them; what indulgences they were allowed; what their respective capabilities were; and so forth. While we were talking, one of the house-slaves passed us. I observed that she appeared superior to all the rest; to which my friend assented. "She is A.'s wife?" said I. "We call her A.'s wife, but she has [Pg 122] never been married to him. A. and she came to my husband, five years ago, and asked him to let them marry: but he could not allow it, because he had not made up his mind whether to sell A.; and he hates parting husband and wife." "How many children have they?" "Four." "And they are not married yet?" "No; my husband has never been able to let them marry. He certainly will not sell her: and he has not determined yet whether he shall sell A."

Another friend told me the following story. B. was the best slave in her husband's possession. B. fell in love with C., a pretty girl, on a neighbouring estate, who was purchased to be B.'s wife. C.'s temper was jealous and violent; and she was always fancying that B. showed attention to other girls. Her master warned her to keep her temper, or she should be sent away. One day, when the master was dining out, B. came to him, trembling, and related that C. had, in a fit of jealousy, aimed a blow at his head with an axe, and nearly struck him. The master went home, and told C. that her temper could no longer be borne with, and she must go. He offered her the choice of being sold to a trader, and carried to New Orleans, or of being sent to field labour on a distant plantation. She preferred being sold to the trader; who broke his promise of taking her to New Orleans, and disposed of her to a neighbouring proprietor. C. kept watch over her husband, declaring that she would be the death of any girl whom B. might take to wife. "And so," said my informant, "poor B. was obliged to walk about in single blessedness for some time; till, last summer, happily, C. died."—"Is it possible," said I, "that you pair and part these people like brutes?"—The lady looked surprised, and asked what else could be done.

One day at dinner, when two slaves were standing behind our chairs, the lady of the house was [Pg 123] telling me a ludicrous story, in which a former slave of hers was one of the personages, serving as a butt on the question of complexion. She seemed to recollect that slaves were listening; for she put in, "D. was an excellent boy," (the term for male slaves of every age.) "We respected him very highly as an excellent boy. We respected him almost as much as if he had been a white. But, &c.——"

A southern lady, of fair reputation for refinement and cultivation, told the following story in the hearing of a company, among whom were some friends of mine. She spoke with obvious unconsciousness that she was saying anything remarkable: indeed such unconsciousness was proved by her telling the story at all. She had possessed a very pretty mulatto girl, of whom she declared herself fond. A young man came to stay at her house, and fell in love with the girl. "She came to me," said the lady, "for protection; which I gave her." The young man went away, but after some weeks, returned, saying he was so much in love with the girl that he could not live without her. "I pitied the young man," concluded the lady; "so I sold the girl to him for 1,500 dollars."

I repeatedly heard the preaching of a remarkably liberal man, of a free and kindly spirit, in the south. His last sermon, extempore, was from the text "Cast all your care upon him, for He careth for you." The preacher told us, among other things, that God cares for all,—for the meanest as well as the mightiest. "He cares for that coloured person," said he, pointing to the gallery where the people of colour sit,—"he cares for that coloured person as well as for the wisest and best of you whites." This was the most wanton insult I had ever seen offered to a human being; and it was with difficulty that I refrained from walking out of the church. Yet no one present to whom I [Pg 124] afterwards spoke of it seemed able to comprehend the wrong. "Well!" said they: "does not God care for the coloured people?"

Of course, in a society where things like these are said and done by its choicest members, there is a prevalent unconsciousness of the existing wrong. The daily and hourly plea is of good intentions towards the slaves; of innocence under the aspersions of foreigners. They are as sincere in the belief that they are injured as their visitors are cordial in their detestation of the morals of slavery. Such unconsciousness of the milder degrees of impurity and injustice as enables ladies and clergymen of the highest character to speak and act as I have related, is a sufficient evidence of the prevalent grossness of morals. One remarkable indication of such blindness was the almost universal mention of the state of the Irish to me, as a worse case than American slavery. I never attempted, of course, to vindicate the state of Ireland: but I was surprised to find no one able, till put in the way, to see the distinction between political misgovernment and personal slavery: between exasperating a people by political insult, and possessing them, like brutes, for pecuniary profit. The unconsciousness of guilt is the worst of symptoms, where there are means of light to be had. I shall have to speak hereafter of the state of religion throughout the country. It is enough here to say that if, with the law of liberty and the gospel of peace and purity within their hands, the inhabitants of the south are unconscious of the low state of the morals of society, such blindness proves nothing so much as how far that which is highest and purest may be confounded with what is lowest and foulest, when once the fatal attempt has been entered upon to make them co-exist. From their co-existence, one further step may be taken; and in the south has been taken; the making the high and pure a sanction for the [Pg 125] low and foul. Of this, more hereafter.

The degradation of the women is so obvious a consequence of the evils disclosed above, that the painful subject need not be enlarged on. By the degradation of women, I do not mean to imply any doubt of the purity of their manners. There are reasons, plain enough to the observer, why their manners should be even peculiarly pure. They are all married young, from their being out-

numbered by the other sex: and there is ever present an unfortunate servile class of their own sex to serve the purposes of licentiousness, so as to leave them untempted. Their degradation arises, not from their own conduct, but from that of all other parties about them. Where the generality of men carry secrets which their wives must be the last to know; where the busiest and more engrossing concerns of life must wear one aspect to the one sex, and another to the other, there is an end to all wholesome confidence and sympathy, and woman sinks to be the ornament of her husband's house, the domestic manager of his establishment, instead of being his all-sufficient friend. I am speaking not only of what I suppose must necessarily be; but of what I have actually seen. I have seen, with heart-sorrow, the kind politeness, the gallantry, so insufficient to the loving heart, with which the wives of the south are treated by their husbands. I have seen the horror of a woman's having to work,—to exert the faculties which her Maker gave her;—the eagerness to ensure her unearned ease and rest; the deepest insult which can be offered to an intelligent and conscientious woman. I know the tone of conversation which is adopted towards women; different in its topics and its style from that which any man would dream of offering to any other man. I have heard the boast of the chivalrous consideration in [Pg 126] which women are held throughout their woman's paradise; and seen something of the anguish of crushed pride, of the conflict of bitter feelings with which such boasts have been listened to by those whose aspirations teach them the hollowness of the system. The gentlemen are all the while unaware that women are not treated in the best possible manner among them: and they will remain thus blind as long as licentious intercourse with the lowest of the sex unfits them for appreciating the highest. Whenever their society shall take rank according to moral rather than physical considerations; whenever they shall rise to crave sympathy in the real objects of existence; whenever they shall begin to inquire what human life is, and wherefore, and to reverence it accordingly, they will humble themselves in shame for their abuse of the right of the strongest; for those very arrangements and observances which now constitute their boast. A lady who, brought up elsewhere to use her own faculties, and employ them on such objects as she thinks proper, and who has more knowledge and more wisdom than perhaps any gentleman of her acquaintance, told me of the disgust with which she submits to the conversation which is addressed to her, under the idea of being fit for her; and how she solaces herself at home, after such provocation, with the silent sympathy of books. A father of promising young daughters, whom he sees likely to be crushed by the system, told me, in a tone of voice which I shall never forget, that women there might as well be turned into the street, for anything they are fit for. There are reasonable hopes that his children may prove an exception. One gentleman who declares himself much interested in the whole subject, expresses his horror of the employment of women in the northern States, for useful purposes. He told me that the same force of [Pg 127] circumstances which, in the region he inhabits, makes men independent, increases the dependence of women, and will go on to increase it. Society is there, he declared, "always advancing towards orientalism." "There are but two ways in which woman can be exercised to the extent of her powers; by genius and by calamity, either of which may strengthen her to burst her conventional restraints. The first is too rare a circumstance to afford any basis for speculation: and may Heaven avert the last!" O, may Heaven hasten it! would be the cry of many hearts, if these be indeed the conditions of woman's fulfilling the purposes of her being. There are, I believe, some who would scarcely tremble to see their houses in flames, to hear the coming tornado, to feel the threatening earthquake, if these be indeed the messengers who must open their prison doors, and give their heaven-born spirits the range of the universe. God has given to them the universe, as to others: man has caged them in one corner of it, and dreads their escape from their cage, while man does that which he would not have woman hear of. He puts genius out of sight, and deprecates calamity. He has not, however, calculated all the forces in nature. If he had, he would hardly venture to hold either negroes or women as property, or to trust to the absence of genius and calamity.

One remarkable warning has been vouchsafed to him. A woman of strong mind, whose strenuous endeavours to soften the woes of slavery to her own dependents, failed to satisfy her conscience and relieve her human affections, her shaken the blood-slaked dust from her feet, and gone to live where every man can call himself his own: and not only to live, but to work there, and to pledge herself to death, if necessary, for the overthrow of the system which she abhors in proportion to her familiarity with it. Whether we are to call her Genius or Calamity, or by her own [Pg 128] honoured name of Angelina Grimke, certain it is that she is rousing into life and energy many women who were unconscious of genius, and unvisited by calamity, but who carry honest and strong human hearts. This lady may ere long be found to have materially checked the "advance towards orientalism."

Of course, the children suffer, perhaps the most fatally of all, under the slave system. What can be expected from little boys who are brought up to consider physical courage the highest attribute of manhood; pride of section and of caste its loftiest grace; the slavery of a part of society essential to the freedom of the rest; justice of less account than generosity; and humiliation in the eyes of men the most intolerable of evils? What is to be expected of little girls who boast of having got a negro flogged for being impertinent to them, and who are surprised at the "ungentlemanly" conduct of a master who maims his slave? Such lessons are not always taught expressly. Sometimes the reverse is expressly taught. But this is what the children in a slave country necessarily learn from what passes around them; just as the plainest girls in a school grow up to think personal beauty the most important of all endowments, in spite of daily assurances that the charms of the mind are all that are worth regarding.

The children of slave countries learn more and worse still. It is nearly impossible to keep them from close intercourse with the slaves; and the attempt is rarely made. The generality of slaves

are as gross as the total absence of domestic sanctity might be expected to render them. They do not dream of any reserves with children. The consequences are inevitable. The woes of mothers [Pg 129] from this cause are such that, if this "peculiar domestic institution" were confided to their charge, I believe they would accomplish its overthrow with an energy and wisdom that would look more like inspiration than orientalism. Among the incalculable forces in nature is the grief of mothers weeping for the corruption of their children.

One of the absolutely inevitable results of slavery is a disregard of human rights; an inability even to comprehend them. Probably the southern gentry, who declare that the presence of slavery enhances the love of freedom; that freedom can be duly estimated only where a particular class can appropriate all social privileges; that, to use the words of one of them, "they know too much of slavery to be slaves themselves," are sincere enough in such declarations; and if so, it follows that they do not know what freedom is. They may have the benefit of the alternative,—of not knowing what freedom is, and being sincere; or of knowing what freedom is, and not being sincere. I am disposed to think that the first is the more common case.

One reason for my thinking so is, that I usually found in conversation in the south, that the idea of human rights was—sufficient subsistence in return for labour. This was assumed as the definition of human rights on which we were to argue the case of the slave. When I tried the definition by the golden rule, I found that even that straight, simple rule had become singularly bent in the hands of those who profess to acknowledge and apply it. A clergyman preached from the pulpit the following application of it, which is echoed unhesitatingly by the most religious of the slave-holders:—"Treat your slaves as you would wish to be treated if you were a slave yourself." I verily believe that hundreds, or thousands, do not see that this is not an honest application of the rule; so blinded are they by custom to the fact that the negro is a man and a [Pg 130] brother.

Another of my reasons for supposing that the gentry of the south do not know what freedom is, is that many seem unconscious of the state of coercion in which they themselves are living; coercion, not only from the incessant fear of which I have before spoken,—a fear which haunts their homes, their business, and their recreations; coercion, not only from their fear, and from their being dependent for their hourly comforts upon the extinguished or estranged will of those whom they have injured; but coercion also from their own laws. The laws against the press are as peremptory as in the most despotic countries of Europe:[18] as may be seen in the small number and size, and poor quality, of the newspapers of the south. I never saw, in the rawest villages of the youngest States, newspapers so empty and poor as those of New Orleans. It is curious that, while the subject of the abolition of slavery in the British colonies was necessarily a very interesting one throughout the southern States, I met with planters who did not know that any compensation had been paid by the British nation to the West Indian proprietors. The miserable quality of the southern newspapers, and the omission from them of the subjects on which the people most require information, will go far to account for the people's delusions on their own affairs, as compared with those of the rest of the world, and for their boasts of freedom, which [Pg 131] probably arise from their knowing of none which is superior. They see how much more free they are than their own slaves; but are not generally aware what liberty is where all are free. In 1834, the number of newspapers was, in the State of New York, 267; in Louisiana, 31; in Massachusetts, 108; in South Carolina, 19; in Pennsylvania, 220; in Georgia, 29.

What is to be thought of the freedom of gentlemen subject to the following law? "Any person or persons who shall attempt to teach any free person of colour, or slave, to spell, read, or write, shall, upon conviction thereof by indictment, be fined in a sum not less than two hundred and fifty dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars."[19]

What is to be thought of the freedom of gentlemen who cannot emancipate their own slaves, except by the consent of the legislature; and then only under very strict conditions, which make the deed almost impracticable? It has been mentioned that during a temporary suspension of the laws against emancipation in Virginia, 10,000 slaves were freed in nine years; and that, as the institution seemed in peril, the masters were again coerced. It is pleaded that the masters themselves were the repealers and re-enactors of these laws. True: and thus it appears that they thought it necessary to deprive each other of a liberty which a great number seem to have made use of themselves, while they could. No high degree of liberty, or of the love of it, is to be seen [Pg 132] here. The laws which forbid emancipation are felt to be cruelly galling, throughout the south. I heard frequent bitter complaints of them. They are the invariable plea urged by individuals to excuse their continuing to hold slaves. Such individuals are either sincere in these complaints, or they are not. If they are not, they must be under some deplorable coercion which compels so large a multitude to hypocrisy. If they are sincere, they possess the common republican means of getting tyrannical laws repealed: and why do they not use them? If these laws are felt to be oppressive, why is no voice heard denouncing them in the legislatures? If men complainingly, but voluntarily, submit to laws which bind the conscience, little can be said of their love of liberty. If they submit involuntarily, nothing can be said for their possession of it.

What, again, is to be thought of the freedom of citizens who are liable to lose caste because they follow conscience in a case where the perversity of the laws places interest on the side of conscience, and public opinion against it? I will explain. In a southern city, I saw a gentleman who appeared to have all the outward requisites for commanding respect. He was very wealthy, had been governor of the State, and was an eminent and peculiar benefactor to the city. I found he did not stand well. As some pains were taken to impress me with this, I inquired the cause. His character was declared to be generally good. I soon got at the particular exception, which I was

anxious to do only because I saw that it was somehow of public concern. While this gentleman was governor, there was an insurrection of slaves. His own slaves were accused. He did not believe them guilty, and refused to hang them. This was imputed to an unwillingness to sacrifice [Pg 133] his property. He was thus in a predicament which no one can be placed in, except where man is held as property. He must either hang his slaves, believing them innocent, and keep his character; or he must, by saving their lives, lose his own character. How the case stood with this gentleman, is fully known only to his own heart. His conduct claims the most candid construction. But, this being accorded as his due, what can be thought of the freedom of a republican thus circumstanced?

Passing over the perils, physical and moral, in which those are involved who live in a society where recklessness of life is treated with leniency, and physical courage stands high in the list of virtues and graces,—perils which abridge a man's liberty of action and of speech in a way which would be felt to be intolerable if the restraint were not adorned by the false name of Honour,—it is only necessary to look at the treatment of the abolitionists by the south, by both legislatures and individuals, to see that no practical understanding of liberty exists there.

Upon a mere vague report, or bare suspicion, persons travelling through the south have been arrested, imprisoned, and, in some cases, flogged or otherwise tortured, on pretence that such persons desired to cause insurrection among the slaves. More than one innocent person has been hanged; and the device of terrorism has been so practised as to deprive the total number of persons who avowedly hold a certain set of opinions, of their constitutional liberty of traversing the whole country. It was declared by some liberal-minded gentlemen of South Carolina, after the publication of Dr. Channing's work on Slavery, that if Dr. Channing were to enter South Carolina with a body-guard of 20,000 men, he could not come out alive. I have seen the lithographic [Pg 134] prints, transmitted in letters to abolitionists, representing the individual to whom the letter was sent hanging on a gallows. I have seen the hand-bills, purporting to be issued by Committees of Vigilance, offering enormous rewards for the heads, or for the ears, of prominent abolitionists.

If it be said that these acts are attributable to the ignorant wrath of individuals only, it may be asked whence arose the Committees of Vigilance, which were last year sitting throughout the south and west, on the watch for any incautious person who might venture near them, with anti-slavery opinions in his mind? How came it that high official persons sat on these committees? How is it that some governors of southern States made formal application to governors of the northern States to procure the dispersion of anti-slavery societies, the repression of discussion, and the punishment of the promulgators of abolition opinions? How is it that the governor of South Carolina last year recommended the summary execution, without benefit of clergy, of all persons caught within the limits of the State, holding avowed anti-slavery opinions; and that every sentiment of the governor's was endorsed by a select committee of the legislature?

All this proceeds from an ignorance of the first principles of liberty. It cannot be from a mere hypocritical disregard of such principles; for proud men, who boast a peculiar love of liberty and aptitude for it, would not voluntarily make themselves so ridiculous as they appear by these outrageous proceedings. Such blustering is so hopeless, and, if not sincere, so purposeless, that no other supposition is left than that they have lost sight of the fundamental principles of both their federal and State constitutions, and do now actually suppose that their own freedom lies in [Pg 135] crushing all opposition to their own will. No pretence of evidence has been offered of any further offence against them than the expression of obnoxious opinions. There is no plea that any of their laws have been violated, except those recently enacted to annihilate freedom of speech and the press: laws which can in no case be binding upon persons out of the limits of the States for which these new laws are made.

The amended constitution of Virginia, of 1830, provides that the legislature shall not pass "any law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press." North and South Carolina and Georgia decree that the freedom of the press shall be preserved inviolate; the press being the grand bulwark of liberty. The constitution of Louisiana declares that "the free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the invaluable rights of man; and every citizen may freely speak, write, and print, on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty." The Declaration of Rights of Mississippi declares that "no law shall ever be passed to curtail or restrain the liberty of speech, and of the press." The constitutions of all the slave States contain declarations and provisions like these. How fearfully have the descendants of those who framed them degenerated in their comprehension and practice of liberty, violating both the spirit and the letter of their original Bill of Rights! They are not yet fully aware of this. In the calmer times which are to come, they will perceive it, and look back with amazement upon the period of desperation, when not a voice was heard, even in the legislatures, to plead for human rights; when, for the sake of one doomed institution, they forgot what their fathers had done, fettered their own presses, tied their own hands, robbed their fellow-citizens of their right of free travelling, and did all they could to [Pg 136] deprive those same fellow-citizens of liberty and life, for the avowal and promulgation of opinions.

Meantime, it would be but decent to forbear all boasts of a superior knowledge and love of freedom.

Here I gladly break off my dark chapter on the Morals of Slavery.

SECTION II.
MORALS OF MANUFACTURES.

One remarkable effect of democratic institutions is the excellence of the work turned out by those who live under them. In a country where the whole course is open to every one; where, in theory, everything may be obtained by merit, men have the strongest stimulus to exert their powers, and try what they can achieve. I found master-workmen, who employ operatives of various nations, very sensible of this. Elsewhere, no artisan can possibly rise higher than to a certain point of dexterity, and amount of wages. In America, an artisan may attain to be governor of the State; member of Congress; even President. Instead of this possibility having the effect of turning his head, and making him unfit for business, (as some suppose, who seem to consider these opportunities as resembling the chances of a lottery,) it attaches him to his business and his master, to sober habits, and to intellectual cultivation.

[Pg 137] The only apparent excess to which it leads is ill-considered enterprise. This is an evil sometimes to the individual, but not to society. A man who makes haste to be famous or rich by means of new inventions, may injure his own fortune or credit, but is usually a benefactor to society, by furnishing a new idea on which another may work with more success. Some of the most important improvements in the manufactures of the United States have been made by men who afterwards became insolvent. Where there is hasty enterprise, there is usually much conceit. The very haste seems to show that the man is thinking more of himself than of the subject on which he is employed. It naturally happens that the conceited originator breaks down in the middle of his scheme; and that some more patient, modest thinker takes it up where he leaves off, and completes the invention. I was shown, at the Paterson mills, an invention completed by two men on the spot, whose discovery has been extensively adopted in England. A workman fancied he had discovered a method by which he could twist rovings, fastened at both ends, quicker than had ever been done before. As a more thoughtful person would have foreseen, half the twisting came undone, as soon as the ends were unfastened. The projector threw his work aside; but a quiet observer among his brother workmen offered him a partnership and a new idea, in return for the primary suggestion. The quiet man saw how quickly the thread might be prepared, if the rovings could be condensed fast enough for the twisting. He added his discovery to what the first had really achieved; and the success was complete.

[Pg 138] The factories are found to afford a safe and useful employment for much energy which would otherwise be wasted and misdirected. I found that in some places very bad morals had prevailed before the introduction of manufactures; while now the same society is eminently orderly. The great evil still is drunkenness: but of this there is less than there used to be; and other disorders have almost entirely disappeared. A steady employer has it in his power to do more for the morals of the society about him than the clergy themselves. The experiment has been tried, with entire success, of dismissing from the mills any who have been guilty of open vice. This is submitted to, because it is obviously reasonable that the sober workmen who remain should be protected from association with vicious persons who must be offensive or dangerous to them. If any employer has the firmness to dismiss unquestionable offenders, however valuable their services may be to him, he may confidently look for a cessation of such offences, and for a great purification of the society in which they have occurred.

The morals of the female factory population may be expected to be good when it is considered of what class it is composed. Many of the girls are in the factories because they have too much pride for domestic service. Girls who are too proud for domestic service as it is in America, can hardly be low enough for any gross immorality; or to need watching; or not to be trusted to avoid the contagion of evil example. To a stranger, their pride seems to take a mistaken direction, and they appear to deprive themselves of a respectable home and station, and many benefits, by their dislike of service: but this is altogether their own affair. They must choose for themselves their way of life. But the reasons of their choice indicate a state of mind superior to the grossest dangers of their position.

[Pg 139] I saw a bill fixed up in the Waltham mill which bore a warning that no young lady who attended dancing-school that winter should be employed: and that the corporation had given directions to the overseer to dismiss any one who should be found to dance at the school. I asked the meaning of this; and the overseer's answer was, "Why, we had some trouble last winter about the dancing-school. It must, of course, be held in the evening, as the young folks are in the mill all day. They are very young, many of them; and they forget the time, and everything but the amusement, and dance away till two or three in the morning. Then they are unfit for their work the next day; or, if they get properly through their work, it is at the expense of their health. So we have forbidden the dancing-school; but, to make up for it, I have promised them that, as soon as the great new room at the hotel is finished, we will have a dance once a-fortnight. We shall meet and break up early; and my wife and I will dance; and we will all dance together."

I was sorry to see one bad and very unnecessary arrangement, in all the manufacturing establishments. In England, the best friends of the poor are accustomed to think it the crowning hardship of their condition that solitude is wholly forbidden to them. It is impossible that any human being should pass his life as well as he might do who is never alone,—who is not frequently alone. This is a weighty truth which can never be explained away. The silence, freedom and collectedness of solitude are absolutely essential to the health of the mind; and no substitute for this repose (or change of activity) is possible. In the dwellings of the English poor, parents and children are crowded into one room, for want of space and of furniture. All wise

parents above the rank of poor, make it a primary consideration so to arrange their families as that each member may, at some hour, have some place where he may enter in, and shut his door, and feel himself alone. If possible, the sleeping places are so ordered. In America, where space is of far less consequence, where the houses are large, where the factory girls can build churches, and buy libraries, and educate brothers for learned professions, these same girls have no private apartments, and sometimes sleep six or eight in a room, and even three in a bed. This is very bad. It shows a want of inclination for solitude; an absence of that need of it which every healthy mind must feel, in a greater or less degree. [Pg 140]

Now are the days when these gregarious habits should be broken through. New houses are being daily built: more parents are bringing their children to the factories. If the practice be now adopted, by the corporations, or by the parents who preside over separate establishments, of partitioning off the large sleeping apartments into small ones which shall hold each one occupant, the expense of partitions and windows and trouble will not be worth a moment's consideration in comparison with the improvement in intelligence, morals, and manners, which will be found to result from such an arrangement. If the change be not soon made, the American factory population, with all its advantages of education and of pecuniary sufficiency, will be found, as its numbers increase, to have been irreparably injured by its subjection to a grievance which is considered the very heaviest to which poverty exposes artisans in old countries. Man's own silent thoughts are his best safeguard and highest privilege. Of the full advantage of this safeguard, of the full enjoyment of this privilege, the innocent and industrious youth of a new country ought, by no mismanagement, to be deprived.

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SECTION III.
MORALS OF COMMERCE.

It is said in the United States that Commerce and the Navy are patronised by the federal party; as agriculture is, and the army would be, if there was one, by the democratic party. This is true enough. The greater necessity for co-operation, and therefore for the partial sacrifice of independence, imposed by commercial pursuits, is more agreeable to the aristocratic portion of society than to its opposite. Yet, while commerce has been spreading and improving, federalism has dwindled away; and most remarkably where commerce is carried on in its utmost activity: in Massachusetts. The democracy are probably finding out that more is gained by the concentration of the popular will than is lost in the way of individual independence, by men being brought together for objects which require concession and mutual subordination. However this may be, the spirit of commerce in the United States is, on the whole, honourable to the people.

I shall have to speak hereafter of the regard to wealth, as the most important object in life, which extensively corrupts Americans as it does all other society. Here, I have to speak only of the spirit in which one method of procuring wealth is prosecuted.

The activity of the commercial spirit in America is represented abroad, and too often at home, as indicative of nothing but sordid love of gain: a making haste to be rich, a directly selfish desire of aggrandisement. This view of the case seems to me narrow and injurious. I believe that many [Pg 142] desires, various energies, some nobler and some meaner, find in commerce a centre for their activity. I have studied with some care the minds and manners of a variety of merchants, and other persons engaged in commerce, and have certainly found a regard to money a more superficial and intermitting influence than various others.

The spirit of enterprise is very remarkable in the American merchants. Beginning life, as all Americans do, with the world all open before them, and only a head and a pair of hands wherewith to gain it, a passionate desire to overcome difficulties arises in them. Being, (as I have before declared my opinion,) the most imaginative people in the world, the whole world rises fair before them, and they, not believing in impossibilities, long to conquer it.

Then, there is the meaner love of distinction; meaner than the love of enterprise, but higher than the desire of gain. The distinction sought is not always that which attends on superior wealth only; but on world-wide intercourses, on extensive affairs, on hospitality to a large variety of foreigners.

Again; there is the love of Art. Weak, immature, ignorant, perhaps, as this taste at present is, it exists: and indications of it which merit all respect, are to be found in many abodes. There are other, though not perhaps such lofty ways of pursuing art, than by embodying conceptions in pictures, statues, operas, and buildings. The love of Beauty and of the ways of Humanity may indicate and gratify itself by other and simpler methods than those which the high artists of the old world have sanctified. If any one can witness the meeting of one kind of American merchant with his supercargo, after a long, distant voyage, hear the questioning and answering, and witness the delight with which new curiosities are examined, and new theories of beauty and [Pg 143] civilisation are put forth upon the impulse of the moment, and still doubt the existence of a love of art, still suppose the desire of gain the moving spring of that man's mind,—may Heaven preserve the community from being pronounced upon by such an observer! The critic with the stop-watch is magnanimous in comparison.

Again; there is the human eagerness after an object once adopted. In this case, it may be money,

as in other cases it may be Queen Anne's farthings, the knockers of doors, ancient books, (for their editions and not their contents,) pet animals, autographs, or any other merely outward object whose charm lies in the pursuit. Several men of business, whose activity has made them very wealthy, have told me that, though they would not openly declare what would look like a boast, and would not be believed, the truth was that they should not care if they lost every dollar they had. They knew themselves well enough to perceive that the pleasure was in the pursuit, and not in the dollars: and I thought I knew some of them well enough to perceive that it would be rather a relief to have their money swept away, that they might again be as busy as ever in a mode which had become pleasant to them by habit and success. Of course, I am not speaking of such as of a very high and happy order; as to be for a moment compared with the few whose pursuits are of an unfailing but perpetually satisfying kind; with those whose recompense is incessant, but never fulfilled. I am only declaring that the eager pursuit of wealth does not necessarily indicate a love of wealth for its own sake.

What are the facts? What are the manifestations of the character of the American merchants? After their eager money-getting, how do they spend it? How much do they prize it? [Pg 144]

Their benevolence is known throughout the world: not only that benevolence which founds and endows charities, and repairs to sufferers the mischief of accidents; but that which establishes schools of a higher order than common, and brings forward in life the most meritorious of those who are educated there; the benevolence which watches over the condition of seamen on the ocean, and their safety at home; the benevolence which busies itself, with much expense of dollars and trouble, to provide for the improved civilisation of the whole of society. If the most liberal institutions in the northern States were examined into, it would be found how active the merchant class has been, beyond all others, in their establishment.

Again: their eager money-getting is not for purposes of accumulation. Some—many, are deplorably ostentatious; but it seemed to me that the ostentation was an after-thought; though it might lead to renewed money-getting. Money was first gained. What was to be done with it? One might as well outshine one's neighbours, especially as this would be a fresh stimulus to get more still. This is bad; but it is not sordidness. Instances of accumulation are extremely rare. The miser is with them an antique, classical kind of personage, pictured forth as having on a high cap, a long gown, and sitting in a vaulted chamber, amidst money-chests. It would, I believe, be difficult there to find a pair of eyes that have looked upon a real living and breathing miser. My account of the doings of a miser whom I used wondering to watch in the days of my childhood never failed to excite amazement, very like incredulity, in those I was conversing with. The best proof that the money-getting of the eminently successful merchants of America is not for money's sake, lies in [Pg 145] the fact, that in New England, peopled by more than 2,000,000 of inhabitants, there are not more than 500, probably not more than 400 individuals, who can be called affluent men; possessing, that is, 100,000 dollars and upwards. A prosperous community, in which a sordid pursuit of wealth was common, would be in a very different state from this.

The bankruptcies in the United States are remarkably frequent and disgraceful,—disgraceful in their nature, though not sufficiently so in the eyes of society. A clergyman in a commercial city declares that almost every head of a family in his congregation has been a bankrupt since his settlement. In Philadelphia, from six to eight hundred persons annually take the benefit of the insolvent laws; and numerous compromises take place which are not heard of further than the parties concerned in them. On seeing the fine house of a man who was a bankrupt four years before, and who was then worth 100,000 dollars, I asked whether such cases were common, and was grieved to find they were. Some insolvents pay their old debts when they rise again; but the greater number do not. This laxity of morals is favoured by the circumstances of the community, which require the industry of all its members, and can employ the resources of all,—first, of men of character, and then of speculators. But, few things are more disgraceful to American society than the carelessness with which speculators are allowed to game with other people's funds, and, after ruining those who put trust in them, to lift up their heads in all places, just as if they had, during their whole lives, rendered unto all their dues. Whatever may be the causes or the palliations of speculation; whatever may be pleaded about currency mistakes, and the temptations to young men to make fortunes by the public lands, one thing is clear; that no man, [Pg 146] who, having failed, and afterwards having the means to pay his debts in full, does not pay them, can be regarded as an honest man, and ought to be received upon the same footing with honest men, whatever may be his accomplishments, or his subsequent fortune. What would be thought of any society which should cherish an escaped (not reformed) thief, because a large legacy had enabled him to set up his carriage? Yet how much difference is there in the two cases? It is very rarely a duty,—more rarely than is generally supposed, to mark and shun the guilty. It is usually more right to seek and help him. But, in the case of a spreading vice, which is viewed with increasing levity, the reprobation of the honest portion of society ought to be very distinct and emphatic. Those who would not associate with escaped thieves should avoid prosperous bankrupts who are not thinking of paying their debts.

The gravest sin chargeable upon the merchants of the United States is their conduct on the abolition question. This charge is by no means general. There are instances of a manly declaration of opinion on the side of freedom, and also of a spirit of self-sacrifice in the cause, which can hardly be surpassed for nobleness. There are merchants who have thrown up their commerce with the south when there was reason to believe that its gains were wrung from the slave; and there are many who have freely poured out their money, and risked their reputation, in defence of the abolition cause, and of liberty of speech and the press. But the reproach of the

persecution of the abolitionists, and of tampering with the fundamental liberties of the people, rests mainly with the merchants of the northern States.

It is worthy of remembrance that the Abolition movement originated from the sordid act of a merchant. While Garrison was at Baltimore, studying the Colonisation scheme, a ship belonging to a merchant of Newburyport, Massachusetts, arrived at Baltimore to take freight for New Orleans. There was some difficulty about the expected cargo. The captain was offered a freight of slaves, wrote to the merchant for leave, and received orders to carry these slaves to New Orleans. Garrison poured out, in a libel, (so called,) his indignation against this deed, committed by a man who, as a citizen of Massachusetts, thanks God every Thanksgiving Day that the soil of his State is untrod by the foot of a slave. Garrison was fined and imprisoned; and after his release, was warmly received in New York, where he lectured upon Abolition; from which time, the cause has gained strength so as to have now become unconquerable. [Pg 147]

The spirit of this Newburyport merchant has dwelt in too many of the same vocation. The Faneuil Hall meeting was convened chiefly by merchants; and they have been conspicuous in all the mobs. They have kept the clergy dumb: they have overawed the colleges, given their cue to the newspapers, and shown a spirit of contempt and violence, equalling even that of the slave-holders, towards those who, in acting upon their honest convictions, have appeared likely to affect their sources of profit. At Cincinnati, they were chiefly merchants who met to destroy the right of discussion; and passed a resolution directly recommendatory of violence for this purpose. They were merchants who waited in deputation on the editor of the anti-slavery newspaper there, to intimidate him from the use of his constitutional liberty, and who made themselves by these acts answerable for the violences which followed. This was so clear, that they were actually taunted by their slave-holding neighbours, on the other side of the river, with their sordidness in attempting to extinguish the liberties of the republic for the sake of their own pecuniary gains. [Pg 148]

The day will come when their eyes will be cleansed from the gold-dust which blinds them. Meanwhile, as long as they continue active against the most precious rights of the community; as long as they may be fairly considered more guilty on this tremendous question of Human Wrongs than even the slave-holders of the south,—more guilty than any class whatever, except the clergy, —let them not boast of their liberality and their benevolence. Generosity loses half its grace when it does not co-exist with justice. Those can ill be esteemed benefactors to the community in one direction, who are unfaithful to their citizenship in another. Till such can be roused from their delusion, and can see their conduct as others see it, the esteem of the world must rest on those of their class who, to the graces of enterprise, liberality, and taste, add the higher merit of intrepid, self-sacrificing fidelity to the cause of Human Rights.

FOOTNOTES:

[13] In testimony of the fact that the working people of this region are thinkers too, I subjoin a note written by the wife of a village mechanic, who is a fair specimen of her class.

"SIR,—Nothing but a consciousness of my own incompetency to form a just opinion on a question of such magnitude, and one too which involves consequences as remote from my personal observation, as the immediate, or gradual emancipation of the slaves, has, for some time, prevented my being an acknowledged abolitionist. With the Divine precepts before me, which require us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and 'whatsoever we would that others should do to us,' etc. etc., instructed and admonished too by the feelings of common humanity, I cannot hesitate to pronounce the system of slavery an outrageous violation of the requirements of God, and a lawless and cruel invasion of the rights of our fellow men. In this view of it, I am not able to understand how it can be persisted in, without setting at defiance the dictates of reason and conscience, and what is of more importance, the uncompromising authority of Scripture, the arguments of wise and talented men to the contrary, notwithstanding. The most superficial observer cannot fail to discern, in the universal interest and agitation, which prevail on this subject, a prelude to some mighty revolution. If this 'war of words' is the *worst* that will precede or accompany it, I shall be happily disappointed. With these feelings, sir, you will readily believe the assurance, that I have been greatly interested, and instructed, in reading the mild, comprehensive, intelligent 'lecture,' of your lamented brother."

[14] See Appendix C: an admirable sketch by a resident of Charleston, of the interior of a planter's family. It unconsciously bears out all that can be said of the educational evils of the existing state of society in the south.

[15] I went with a lady in whose house I was staying to dine, one Sunday, on a neighbouring estate. Her husband happened not to be with us, as he had to ride in another direction. The carriage was ordered for eight in the evening. It drew up to the door at six; and the driver, a slave, said his master had sent him, and begged we would go home directly. We did so, and found my host very much surprised to see us home so early. The message was a fiction of the slave's, who wanted to get his horses put up, that he might enjoy his Sunday evening. His master and mistress laughed, and took no further notice.

[16] The law declares that the children of slaves are to follow the fortunes of the mother. Hence the practice of planters selling and bequeathing their own children.

[17] I knew of the death of four men by summary burning alive, within thirteen months of my residence in the United States.

[18] No notice is taken of any occurrence, however remarkable, in which a person of colour, free or enslaved, has any share, for fear of the Acts which denounce death or imprisonment for life against those who shall write, print, publish, or distribute anything having a tendency to excite discontent or insubordination, &c.; or which doom to heavy fines those who shall use or issue language which may disturb "the security of masters with their slaves, or diminish that respect which is commanded to free people of colour for the whites."

[19] Alabama Digest. In the same section occurs the following: "That no cruel or unusual punishment shall be inflicted on any slave within this territory. And any owner of slaves authorising or permitting the same, shall, on conviction thereof, before any court having cognizance, be fined according to the nature of the offence, and at the discretion of the court, in any sum not exceeding two hundred dollars."

Two hundred dollars' fine for torturing a slave: and five hundred for teaching him to read!

PART III.
CIVILISATION.

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> "This country, which has given to the world the example of physical liberty, owes to it that of moral emancipation also; for as yet it is but nominal with us. The inquisition of public opinion overwhelms, in practice, the freedom asserted by the laws in theory."
>
> *Jefferson.*

The degree of civilisation of any people corresponds with the exaltation of the idea which is the most prevalent among that people. The prominent idea of savages is the necessity of providing for the supply of the commonest bodily wants. The first steps in civilisation, therefore, are somewhat refined methods of treating the body. When, by combination of labour and other exercises of ingenuity, the wants of the body are supplied with regularity and comparative ease, the love of pleasure, the love of idleness, succeeds. Then comes the desire of wealth; and next, the regard to opinion. Further than this no nation has yet attained. Individuals there have been, probably in every nation under heaven, who have lived for a higher idea than any of these; and insulated customs and partial legislation have, among all communities, shown a tendency towards something loftier than the prevalent morality. The majesty of higher ideas is besides so irresistible, that an involuntary homage, purely inefficacious, has been offered to them from of old by the leaders of society.

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> "Earth is sick,
> And Heaven is weary of the hollow words
> Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk
> Of truth and justice."

Though, as yet, "profession mocks performance," the profession, from age to age, of the same lofty something not yet attained, may be taken as a clear prophecy of ultimate performance. It shows a perception, however dim, a regard, however feeble, from which endeavour and attainment cannot but follow, in course of time. But the time is not yet. In the old world, the transition is, in its most enlightened parts, only beginning to be made, from the few governing the many avowedly for the good of the few, to governing the many professedly for the good of the many. The truth and justice under whose dominion every man would reverence all other men, would renounce himself for the sake of others, and feel it to be the highest destiny "not to be ministered unto, but to minister," are still "hollow words." The civilisation of the old world still corresponds with the low idea, that man lives in and for the outward, in and for what is around him rather than what is within him. It is still supposed, that whatever a few individuals say and do, the generality of men live for wealth, outward ease and dignity, and, at the highest, lofty reputation. The degree of civilisation corresponds with this. There is scarcely an institution or a custom which supposes anything higher. What educational arrangements there are, are new, and (however praiseworthy as being an actual advance) are so narrow and meagre as to show how unaccustomed is the effort to consider the man as nobler than the unit of society. The phrase is still the commonest of phrases in which parents, guardians, schoolmasters and statesmen embody their ambition for their wards—that any such ward "may become a useful and respectable member of society." The greater number of guardians would be terrified at the idea of their wards becoming anything else; anything higher than "useful and respectable members of society," while it is as clear as noon-day that room ought to be left,—that facilities ought to be afforded for every one becoming whatsoever his Maker has fitted him to be, so long as it appears that the noblest men by whom the earth has been graced, have been considered in their own time the very reverse of "useful and respectable members of society." The most godlike of the race have been esteemed "pestilent fellows" in their day and generation. No student of the ways of Providence will repine at this order of affairs, or expect that any arrangement of society can be made by which the convictions and sympathies of the less gifted should be enabled suddenly to overtake those of the more gifted. He will not desire to change the great and good laws by which the chosen of his race are "made perfect through sufferings," and by which the light of reason is ordained to brighten very gradually from dawn into day. He will only take note of the fact, that it

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is a low state of civilisation which presupposes specified and outward aims, and relies with such confidence on the mechanical means of attaining them as to be shocked, or anything but gratified, at the pursuit of singular objects by unusual methods. The observer will rightly judge such to be a low state of civilisation, whatever lamentations or exultations he may daily hear about the very high point civilisation has reached, when the schoolmaster is abroad, when people [Pg 152] can travel at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and eminent cooks are paid 1,200*l.* a-year. While truth and justice remain "hollow words," so far as that men cannot live for them, to the detriment of their fortunes, without being called mischievous and disreputable members of society, no one can reasonably speak of the high civilisation of the country to which they belong.

The old world naturally looks with interest to the new, to see what point of civilisation it reaches under fresh circumstances. The interest may be undefined, and partly unconscious; but it is very eager. The many, who conceive of no other objects of general pursuit than the old ones of wealth, ease, and honour, look only to see under what forms these are pursued. The few, who lay the blame of the grovelling at home upon outward restrictions alone, look to America with extravagant expectations of a perfect reign of virtue and happiness, because the Americans live in outward freedom. What is the truth?

While the republics of North America are new, the ideas of the people are old. While these republics were colonies, they contained an old people, living under old institutions, in a new country. Now they are a mixed people, infant as a nation, with a constant accession of minds from old countries, living in a new country, under institutions newly combined out of old elements. It is a case so singular, that the old world may well have patience for some time, to see what will arise. The old world must have patience; for the Americans have no national character yet; nor can have, for a length of years. It matters not that they think they have: or it matters only so far as it shows to what they tend. Their veneration of Washington has led them to suppose that he is the type of their nation. Their patriotic feelings are so far associated with him that they [Pg 153] conclude the nation is growing up in his likeness. If any American were trusted by his countrymen to delineate what they call their national character, it would infallibly come out a perfect likeness of Washington. But there is a mistake here. There were influences prior to Washington, and there are circumstances which have survived him, that cause some images to lie deeper down in the hearts of Americans than Washington himself. His character is a grand and very prevalent idea among them: but there are others which take the precedence, from being more general still. Wealth and opinion were practically worshipped before Washington opened his eyes on the sun which was to light him to his deeds; and the worship of Opinion is, at this day, the established religion of the United States.

If the prevalent idea of society did not arise out of circumstances over which the mutations of outward events exercise but a small immediate influence, it is clear that, in this case, the idea should arise out of the characters of the benefactors who achieved the revolution, and must be consistent with the solemn words in which they conveyed their united Declaration. The principles of truth, and the rule of justice, according to which that Declaration was framed, and that revolutionary struggle undertaken and conducted, should, but for prior influences, have been the spirit inspiring the whole civilisation of the American people. There should then have been the utmost social as well as political freedom. The pursuit of wealth might then have been subordinated at pleasure: fear of injury, alike from opinion and from violence, should have been banished; and as noble facilities afforded for the progression of the inward, as for the enjoyment of the outward, man. But this was not given. Instead of it there was ordained a mingling of old [Pg 154] and new influences, from which a somewhat new kind of civilisation has arisen.

The old-world estimation of wealth has remained among them, though, I believe and trust, somewhat diminished in strength. Though every man works for it in America, and not quite every man does so in England, it seems to me that it is not so absolutely the foreground object in all views of life, the one subject of care, speculation, inquiry, and supposition, that it is in England. It is in America clearly subordinate to another idea, still an idol, but of a higher order than the former. The worship of Opinion certainly takes precedence of that of wealth.

In a country where the will of the majority decides all political affairs, there is a temptation to belong to the majority, except where strong interests, or probabilities of the speedy supremacy of the minority, countervail. The minority, in such a case, must be possessed of a strong will, to be a minority. A strong will is dreaded by the weaker, who have so little faith as to believe that such a will endangers the political equality which is the fundamental principle of their institutions. This dread occasions persecution, or at least opprobrium: opprobrium becomes a real danger; and, like all dangers, is much more feared than it deserves, the longer it lasts, and the more it is dwelt upon. Thus, from a want of faith in the infallible operation of the principles of truth and the rule of justice, these last become "hollow words" in the States of the new, as in the kingdoms of the old world; and the infant nation, which was expected to begin a fresh and higher social life, is acting out in its civilisation an idea but little more exalted than those which have operated among nations far less favoured than herself in regard to political freedom.

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CHAPTER I.
IDEA OF HONOUR.

"Talent and worth are the only eternal grounds of distinction. To these the Almighty has affixed his everlasting patent of nobility; and these it is which make the bright, 'the immortal names,' to which our children may aspire, as well as others. It will be our own fault if, in our own land, society as well as government is not organised upon a new foundation."

Miss Sedgwick.

It is true that it is better to live for honour than for wealth: but how much better, depends upon the idea of honour. Where truth and justice are more than hollow words, the idea of honour is such as to exclude all fear, except of wrong-doing. Where the honour is to be derived from present human opinion, there must be fear, ever present, and perpetually exciting to or withholding from action. In such a case, as painful a bondage is incurred as in the pursuit of wealth. If riches take to themselves wings, and fly away, so does popularity. If rich freights are in danger afar off from storms, and harvests at home from blights, so is reputation, from differences of opinion, and varieties of views and tempers. If all that moralists have written, and wise men have testified, about the vanity and misery of depending on human applause be true, there can be no true freedom in communities, any more than for individuals, who live to opinion. The time will [Pg 156] come when the Americans also will testify to this, as a nation, as many individual members of their society have done already. The time will come when they will be astonished to discover how they mar their own privileges by allowing themselves less liberty of speech and action than is enjoyed by the inhabitants of countries whose political servitude the Americans justly compassionate and despise.

This regard to opinion shows itself under various forms in different parts of the country, and under dissimilar social arrangements. In the south, where the labour itself is capital, and labour cannot therefore be regarded with due respect, there is much vanity of retinue, much extravagance, from fear of the imputation of poverty which would follow upon retrenchment; and great recklessness of life, from fear of the imputation of cowardice which might follow upon forgiveness of injuries. Fear of imputation is here the panic, under which men relinquish their freedom of action and speech. In the north, society has been enabled, chiefly by the religious influence which has descended from the fathers, to surmount, in some degree, this low kind of fear, so far as it shows itself in recklessness of life: but not altogether. I was amazed to hear a gentleman of New England declare, while complaining of the insolence of the southern members of Congress to the northern, under shelter of the northern men not being duellists, that, if he went to Congress, he would give out that he would fight. I do not believe that he would actually have proved himself so far behind the society to which he belonged as to have adopted a bad practice which it had outgrown,—adopted it from that very fear of imputation which he despised in the south; but the impulse under which he spoke testified to the danger of a fear of opinion [Pg 157] taking any form, however low, when it exists under any other.

When I was at Philadelphia, a shocking incident happened in a family with which I was acquainted. The only son, a fine youth of nineteen, was insulted by a fellow-student. His father and uncle consulted what must be done; and actually sent the young man out to fight the person who had insulted him: the mother being aware of it, and praying that if either fell, it might be her son. She no doubt felt in her true heart, that it would be better to die than to murder another from the selfish fear of imputation. The first aggressor lost a finger; and there, it was said, the matter ended. But the matter has not ended yet, nor will end; for the young man has had a lesson of low selfishness, of moral cowardice impressed upon him by the guardians of his youth, with a force which he is not likely to surmount: and the society in which he lives has seen the strongest testimony to false principles borne by two of its most respected members.

Not by any means as a fair specimen of society, but as an example of what kind of honour may be enjoyed where the fear of imputation is at its height, I give the description, as it was given me by a resident, of what a man may do in an eminently duelling portion of the southern country. "A man may kill another, and be no worse. He may be shabby in his money transactions, but may not steal. He may game, but not keep a gaming-house." It will not do for the duellists of the south to drop in conversation, as they do, that good manners can exist only where vengeance is the penalty of bad. The fear of imputation and the dread of vengeance are at least as contemptible as bad manners; and unquestionably lower than the fear of opinion prevalent in the north.

In the north there can be little vanity of retinue, as retinue is not to be had: but there is, instead [Pg 158] of it, much ostentation of wealth, in the commercial cities. It is here that the aristocracy form and collect; and, as has been before said, the aristocratic is universally the fearing, while the democratic is the hoping, party. The fear of opinion takes many forms. There is fear of vulgarity, fear of responsibility; and above all, fear of singularity. There is something more displeasing, at the first view, in the caution of the Yankees than in the recklessness of the cavalier race of the south. Till the individual exceptions come out from the mass; till the domestic frankness and generosity of the whole people are apparent, there is something little short of disgusting to the stranger who has been unused to witness such want of social confidence, in the caution which presents probably the strongest aspect of selfishness that he has ever seen.

The Americans of the northern States are, from education and habit, so accustomed to the caution of which I speak, as to be unaware of its extent and singularity. They think themselves injured by the remarks which strangers make upon it, and by the ridicule with which it is treated by their own countrymen who have travelled abroad. But the singularity is in themselves. They may travel over the world, and find no society but their own which will submit to the restraint of

perpetual caution, and reference to the opinions of others. They may travel over the whole world, and find no country but their own where the very children beware of getting into scrapes, and talk of the effect of actions upon people's minds; where the youth of society determine in silence what opinions they shall bring forward, and what avow only in the family circle; where women write miserable letters, almost universally, because it is a settled matter that it is unsafe to [Pg 159] commit oneself on paper; and where elderly people seem to lack almost universally that faith in principles which inspires a free expression of them at any time, and under all circumstances.

"Mrs. B.," said a child of eleven to a friend of mine, "what church do you go to?"—"To Mr. ——'s." "O, Mrs. B. are you a Unitarian?"—"No." "Then why do you go to that church?"—"Because I can worship best there." "O, but Mrs. B., think of the example,—the example, Mrs. B.!"

When I had been in the country some time, I remarked to one who knew well the society in which he lived, that I had not seen a good lady's letter since I landed; though the conversation of some of the writers was of a very superior kind. The letters were uniformly poor and guarded in expression, confined to common-places, and overloaded with flattery. "There are," replied he, "no good letters written in America. The force of public opinion is so strong, and the danger of publicity so great, that men do not write what they think, for fear of getting into bad hands: and this acts again upon the women, and makes their style artificial." It is not quite true that there are no good letters written in America: among my own circle of correspondents there, there are ladies and gentlemen whose letters would stand a comparison with any for frankness, grace, and epistolary beauty of every kind. But I am not aware of any medium between this excellence and the boarding-school insignificance which characterises the rest.

When the stranger has recovered a little from the first disagreeable impression of all this caution, he naturally asks what there can be to render it worth while. To this question, I never could discover a satisfactory answer. What harm the "force of public opinion," or "publicity," can do to any individual; what injury "bad hands" can inflict upon a good man or woman, which can be [Pg 160] compared with the evil of living in perpetual caution, I cannot imagine. If men and women cannot bear blame, they had better hew out a space for themselves in the forest, and live there, as the only safe place. If they are afraid of observation and comment, they should withdraw from society altogether: for the interest which human beings take in each other is so deep and universal, that observation and comment are unavoidable wherever there are eyes to see, and hearts and minds to yearn and speculate. An honest man will not naturally fear this investigation. If he is not sure of his opinions on any matter, he will say so, and endeavour to gain light. If he is sure, he will speak them, and be ready to avow the grounds of them, as occasion arises. That there should be some who think his opinions false and dangerous is not pleasant; but it is an evil too trifling to be mentioned in comparison with the bondage of concealment, and the torment of fear. This bondage, this torment is worse than the worst that the "force of public opinion" can inflict, even if such force should close the prospect of political advancement, of professional eminence, and of the best of social privileges. There are some members of society in America who have found persecution, excommunication, and violence, more endurable than the concealment of their convictions.

Few persons really doubt this when the plain case is set down before them. They agree to it in church on Sundays, and in conversation by the fireside: and the reason why they are so backward as they are to act upon it in the world, is that habit and education are too strong for them. They have worn their chains so long that they feel them less than might be supposed. I doubt whether they can even conceive of a state of society, of its ease and comfort, where no man fears his [Pg 161] neighbour, and it is no evil to be responsible for one's opinions: where men, knowing how undiscernible consequences are, and how harmless they must be to the upright, abide them without fear, and do not perplex themselves with calculating what is incalculable. Whenever the time shall come for the Americans to discover all this, to perceive how miserable a restraint they have imposed upon themselves by this servitude to opinion, they will see how it is that, while outwardly blessed beyond all parallel, they have been no happier than the rest of the world. I doubt whether, among the large "uneasy classes" of the Old World, there is so much heart-eating care, so much nervous anxiety, as among the dwellers in the towns of the northern States of America, from this cause alone. If I had to choose, I would rather endure the involuntary uneasiness of the Old World sufferers, than the self-imposed anxiety of those of the New: except that the self-imposed suffering may be shaken off at any moment. There are instances, few, but striking, of strong-minded persons who have discovered and are practising the true philosophy of ease; who have openly taken their stand upon principles, and are prepared for all consequences, meekly and cheerfully defying all possible inflictions of opinion. Though it does not enter into their calculations, such may possibly find that they are enjoying more, and suffering less from opinion, than those who most daintily court it.

There would be something amusing in observing the operation of this habit of caution, if it were not too serious a misfortune. When Dr. Channing's work on Slavery came out, the following conversation passed between a lady of Boston and myself. She began it with—

"Have you seen Dr. Channing's book?"

"Yes. Have you?" [Pg 162]

"O no. Do not you think it very ill-timed?"

"No; I think it well-timed; as it did not come out sooner."

"But is it not wrong to increase the public excitement at such a time?"

"That depends upon the nature of the excitement. But this book seems to have a tranquillising effect: as the exhibition of true principles generally has."

"But Dr. Channing is not a practical man. He is only a retired student. He has no real interest in the matter."

"No worldly interest; and this, and his seclusion, enable him to see more clearly than others, in a case where principles enlighten men, and practice seems only to blind them."

"Well: I shall certainly read the book, as you like it so much."

"Pray don't, if that is your reason."

A reply to Dr. Channing's book soon appeared;—a pamphlet which savoured only of fear, dollars, and, consequently, insult. A gentleman of Boston, who had, on some important occasions, shown that he could exercise a high moral courage, made no mention of this reply for some time after it appeared. At length, on hearing another person speak of it as it deserved, he said, "Now people are so openly speaking of that reply, I have no objection to say what I think of it. I have held my tongue about it hitherto; but yesterday I heard —— speak of it as you do; and I no longer hesitate to declare that I think it an infamous production."

It may be said that such are remarkable cases. Be it so: they still testify to the habit of society, by the direction which the caution takes. Elsewhere, the parties might be quite as much afraid of [Pg 163] something else; but they would not dream of refraining from a good book, or holding their tongues about the badness of a vicious pamphlet, till supported by the opinions of others.

How strong a contrast to all this the domestic life of the Americans presents will appear when I come to speak of the spirit of intercourse. It is an individual, though prevalent, selfishness that I have now been lamenting.

The traveller should go into the west when he desires to see universal freedom of manners. The people of the west have a comfortable self-complacency, equally different from the arrogance of the south, and the timidity of the north. They seem to unite with this the hospitality which distinguishes the whole country: so that they are, on the whole, a very bewitching people. Their self-confidence probably arises from their being really remarkably energetic, and having testified this by the conquests over nature which their mere settlement in the west evinces. They are the freest people I saw in America: and accordingly one enjoys among them a delightful exemption from the sorrow and indignation which worldly caution always inspires; and from flattery. If the stranger finds himself flattered in the west, he may pretty safely conclude that the person he is talking with comes from New England. "We are apt to think," said a westerner to me, "that however great and good another person may be, we are just as great and good." Accordingly, intercourse goes on without any reference whatever to the merits of the respective parties. In the sunshine of complacency, their free thoughts ripen into free deeds, and the world gains largely. There are, naturally, instances of extreme conceit, here and there: but I do not hesitate to avow that, prevalent as mock-modesty and moral cowardice are in the present condition of society, that [Pg 164] degree of self-confidence which is commonly called conceit grows in favour with me perpetually. An over-estimate of self appears to me a far less hurtful and disagreeable mistake than the idolatry of opinion. It is a mistake which is sure to be rectified, sooner or later; and very often, it proves to be no mistake where small critics feel the most confident that they may safely ridicule it. The event decides this matter of self-estimate, beyond all question; and while the event remains undisclosed, it is easy and pleasant to give men credit for as much as they believe themselves to be capable of:—more easy and pleasant than to see men restricting their own powers by such calculation of consequences as implies an equal want of faith in others and in themselves. If John Milton were now here to avow his hope that he should produce that which "the world would not willingly let die," what a shout there would be of "the conceited fellow!" while, the declaration having been made venerable by the event, it is now cited as an instance of the noble self-confidence of genius.

The people of the west have a right to so much self-confidence as arises from an ascertainment of what they can actually achieve. They come from afar, with some qualities which have force enough to guide them into a new region. They subdue this region to their own purposes; and, if they do often forget that the world elsewhere is progressing; if they do suppose themselves as relatively great in present society as they were formerly in the wilderness, it should be remembered, on their behalf, that they have effectually asserted their manhood in the conquest of circumstances.

If we are not yet to see, except in individual instances, the exquisite union of fearlessness with modesty, of self-confidence with meekness;—if there must be either the love of being grand in [Pg 165] one's own eyes, or the fear of being little in other people's,—the friends of the Americans would wish that their error should be that which is allied to too much, rather than too little freedom.

As for the anxiety about foreign opinions of America, I found it less striking than I expected. In the south, there is the keenest sensibility to the opinion of the world about slavery; and in New England, the veneration for England is greater than I think any one people ought to feel for any other. The love of the mother country, the filial pride in her ancient sages, are natural and honourable: and so, perhaps, is a somewhat exalted degree of deference for the existing dwellers upon the soil of that mother country, and on the spot where those sages lived and thought and

spoke. But, as long as no civilised nation is, or can be ascertained to be, far superior or inferior to any other; as the human heart and human life are generally alike and equal, on this side barbarism, the excessive reverence with which England is regarded by the Americans seems to imply a deficiency of self-respect. This is an immeasurably higher and more healthy state of feeling than that which has been exhibited by a small portion of the English towards the Americans;—the contempt which, again, a sprinkling of Americans have striven to reciprocate. But the despisers in each nation, though so noisy as to produce some effect, are so few as to need no more than a passing allusion. If any English person can really see and know the Americans on their own ground, and fail to honour them as a nation, and love them as personal friends, he is no fair sample of the people whose name he bears; and is probably incapable of unperverted reverence: and if any American, having really seen and known the English on their own ground, does not reverence his own home exactly in proportion as he loves what is best in the English, he [Pg 166] is unworthy of his home.

When I was on my voyage out, the Americans on board amused themselves with describing to me how incessantly I should be met by the question how I liked America. When we arrived within a few miles of New York, a steam-boat met us, bringing the friends of some of the passengers. On board this steam-boat, the passengers went up to the city. It happened to be the smallest, dirtiest, and most clumsy steamer belonging to the port. A splashing rain drove us down into the cabin, where there was barely standing room for our company. We saw each other's faces by the dim light of a single shabby lamp. "Now, Miss M." said some of the American passengers, "how do you like America?" This was the first time of my being asked the question which I have had to answer almost daily since. Yet I do not believe that many of my interrogators seriously cared any more for my answer than those who first put the question in the dirty cabin; or than my little friend Charley, who soon caught the joke, and with grave face, asked me, every now and then, "How do you like this country?" I learned to regard it as a method of beginning conversation, like our meteorological observations in England; which are equally amusing to foreigners. My own impression is, that while the Americans have too exalted a notion of England, and too little self-respect as a nation, they are far less anxious about foreign opinions of themselves than the behaviour of American travellers in England would lead the English to suppose. The anxiety arises on English ground. At home, the generality of Americans seem to see clearly enough that it is yet truer with regard to nations than individuals that, though it is very pleasant to have the favourable opinion of one's neighbours, yet, if one is good and happy within oneself, the rest does [Pg 167] not much matter. I met with a few who spoke with a disgusting affectation of candour, (some, as if they expected to please me thereby, and others under the influence of sectional prejudice,) of what they called the fairness of the gross slanders with which they have been insulted through the English press: but I was thankful to meet with more who did not acknowledge the jurisdiction of observers disqualified by prejudice, or by something worse, for passing judgment on a nation. The irritability of their vanity has been much exaggerated, partly to serve paltry purposes of authorship; and yet more from the ridiculous exhibitions of some Americans in England, who are no more to be taken as specimens of the nation to which they belong than a young Englishman who, when I was at New York, went up the Hudson in a drizzling rain, pronounced that West Point was not so pretty as Richmond; descended the river in the dark, and declared on his return that the Americans were wonderfully proud of scenery that was nothing particular in any way.

It will be well for the Americans, particularly those of the east and south, when their idea of honour becomes as exalted as that which inspired their revolutionary ancestors. Whenever they possess themselves of the idea of their democracy, as it was possessed by their statesmen of 1801, they will moderate their homage of human opinion, and enhance their worship of humanity. Not till then will they live up to their institutions, and enjoy that internal freedom and peace to which the external are but a part of the means. In such improvement, they will be much assisted by the increasing intercourse between Britain and America; for, however fascinating to Americans may be the luxury, conversational freedom, and high intellectual cultivation of some [Pg 168] portions of English society, they cannot fail to be disgusted with the aristocratic insolence which is the vice of the whole. The puerile and barbaric spirit of contempt is scarcely known in America: the English insolence of class to class, of individuals towards each other, is not even conceived of, except in the one highly disgraceful instance of the treatment of the people of colour. Nothing in American civilisation struck me so forcibly and so pleasurably as the invariable respect paid to man, as man. Nothing since my return to England has given me so much pain as the contrast there. Perhaps no Englishman can become fully aware, without going to America, of the atmosphere of insolence in which he dwells; of the taint of contempt which infects all the intercourses of his world. He cannot imagine how all that he can say that is truest and best about the treatment of people of colour in America is neutralised on the spot, by its being understood how the same contempt is spread over the whole of society here, which is there concentrated upon the blacks.

SECTION I.

CASTE.

This word, at least its meaning, is no more likely to become obsolete in a republic than among the Hindoos themselves. The distinctive characteristics may vary; but there will be rank, and tenacity of rank, wherever there is society. As this is natural, inevitable, it is of course right. The question [Pg 169]

must be what is to entitle to rank.

As the feudal qualifications for rank are absolutely non-existent in America, (except in the slave States, where there are two classes, without any minor distinctions,) it seems absurd that the feudal remains of rank in Europe should be imitated in America. Wherever the appearance of a conventional aristocracy exists in America, it must arise from wealth, as it cannot from birth. An aristocracy of mere wealth is vulgar everywhere. In a republic, it is vulgar in the extreme.

This is the only kind of vulgarity I saw in the United States. I imagine that the English who have complained the most copiously of the vulgarity of American manners, have done so from two causes: from using their own conventional notions as a standard of manners, (which is a vulgarism in themselves;) and also from their intercourses with the Americans having been confined to those who consider themselves the aristocracy of the United States; the wealthy and showy citizens of the Atlantic ports. Foreign travellers are most hospitably received by this class of society; introduced to "the first people in Boston,"—"in New York,"—"in Philadelphia;" and taught to view the country with the eyes of their hosts. No harm is intended here: it is very natural: but it is not the way for strangers to obtain an understanding of the country and the people. The traveller who chooses industriously to see for himself, not with European or aristocratic merely, but with human eyes, will find the real aristocracy of the country, not only in ball-rooms and bank-parlours, but also in fishing-boats, in stores, in college chambers, and behind the plough. Till he has seen all this, and studied the natural manners of the natural aristocracy, he is no more justified in applying the word "vulgar" to more than a class, than an [Pg 170] American would be who should call all the English vulgar, when he had seen only the London alderman class.

I had the opportunity of perceiving what errors might arise from this cause. I was told a great deal about "the first people in Boston:" which is perhaps as aristocratic, vain, and vulgar a city, as described by its own "first people," as any in the world. Happily, however, Boston has merits which these people know not of. I am far from thinking it, as they do, the most religious, the most enlightened, and the most virtuous city in the world. There are other cities in the United States which, on the whole, I think more virtuous and more enlightened: but I certainly am not aware of so large a number of peculiarly interesting and valuable persons living in near neighbourhood, anywhere else but in London. But it happens that these persons belong chiefly to the natural, very few to the conventional, aristocracy. They have little perceptible influence. Society does not seem to be much the better for them. They save their own souls; but, as regards society, the salt appears to have lost its savour. It is so sprinkled as not to season the body. With men and women enough on the spot to redeem society from false morals, and empty religious profession, Boston is the head-quarters of Cant. Notwithstanding its superior intelligence, its large provision of benevolent institutions, and its liberal hospitality, there is an extraordinary and most pernicious union, in more than a few scattered instances, of profligacy and the worst kind of infidelity, with a strict religious profession, and an outward demeanour of remarkable propriety. The profligacy and infidelity might, I fear, be found in all other cities, on both sides the water; but nowhere, probably, in absolute co-existence with ostensible piety. This is not the connexion in which to [Pg 171] speak of the religious aspect of the matter; but, as regards the cant, I believe that it proceeds chiefly from the spirit of caste which flourishes in a society which on Sundays and holidays professes to have abjured it. It is true that the people of New England have put away duelling; but the feelings which used to vent themselves by the practice of duelling are cherished by the members of the conventional aristocracy. This is revealed, not only by the presence of cant, but by the confessions of some who are bold enough not to pretend to be either republicans or christians. There are some few who openly desire a monarchy; and a few more who constantly insinuate the advantages of a monarchy, and the distastefulness of a republic. It is observable that such always argue on the supposition that if there were a monarchy, they should be the aristocracy: a point in which I imagine they would find themselves mistaken, if so impossible an event could happen at all. This class, or coterie, is a very small one, and not influential; though a gentleman of the kind once ventured to give utterance to his aspirations after monarchy in a fourth of July oration; and afterwards to print them. There is something venerable in his intrepidity, at least. The reproach of cant does not attach to him.

The children are such faithful reflectors of this spirit as to leave no doubt of its existence, even amidst the nicest operations of cant. Gentlemen may disguise their aristocratic aspirations under sighs for the depressed state of literature and science; supposing that wealth and leisure are the constituents of literature; and station the proximate cause of science; and committing the slight mistake of assuming that the natural aristocracy of England, her philosophers and poets, have been identical with, or originated by, her conventional aristocracy. The ladies may conceal their [Pg 172] selfish pride of caste, even from themselves, under pretensions to superior delicacy and refinement. But the children use no such disguises. Out they come with what they learn at home. A school-girl told me what a delightful "set" she belonged to at her school: how comfortable they all were once, without any sets, till several grocers' daughters began to come in, as their fathers grew rich; and it became necessary for the higher girls to consider what they should do, and to form themselves into sets. She told me how the daughter of a lottery office-keeper came to the school; and no set would receive her; how unkindly she was treated, and how difficult it was for any individual to help her, because she had not spirit or temper enough to help herself. My informant went on to mention how anxious she and her set, of about sixty young people, were to visit exclusively among themselves, how "delightful" it would be to have no grocers' daughters among them; but that it was found to be impossible.

Here is an education to be going on in the middle of a republic! Much solace, however, lies in the last clause of the information above quoted. The Exclusives do find their aims 'impossible.' They will neither have a monarchy, nor be able to complete and close their 'sets:' least of all will any republican functions be discharged by those who are brought up to have any respect of occupations,—to regard a grocer as beneath a banker. The chief effect of the aristocratic spirit in a democracy is to make those who are possessed by it exclusives in a double sense; in being excluded yet more than in excluding. The republic suffers no further than by having within it a small class acting upon anti-republican morals, and becoming thereby its perverse children, instead of its wise and useful friends and servants. [Pg 173]

In Philadelphia, I was much in society. Some of my hospitable acquaintances lived in Chesnut Street, some in Arch Street, and many in other places. When I had been a few weeks in the city, I found to my surprise that some of the ladies who were my admiration had not only never seen or heard of other beautiful young ladies whom I admired quite as much, but never would see or hear of them. I inquired again and again for a solution of this mystery. One person told me that a stranger could not see into the usages of their society. This was just what I was feeling to be true; but it gave me no satisfaction. Another said that the mutual ignorance was from the fathers of the Arch Street ladies having made their fortunes, while the Chesnut Street ladies owed theirs to their grandfathers. Another, who was amused with a new fashion of curtseying, just introduced, declared it was from the Arch Street ladies rising twice on their toes before curtseying, while the Chesnut Street ladies rose thrice. I was sure of only one thing in the matter; that it was a pity that the parties should lose the pleasure of admiring each other, for no better reasons than these: and none better were apparent.

It is not to be supposed that the mere circumstance of living in a republic will ever eradicate that kind of self-love which takes the form of family pride. It is a stage in the transit from selfishness to benevolence; and therefore natural and useful in its proper time and place. As every child thinks his father the wisest man in the world, the loving member of a family thinks his relations the greatest, best and happiest of people, till he gets an intimate knowledge of some others. This species of exclusiveness exists wherever there are families. An eminent public man, travelling in a somewhat retired part of his State, told us how he had been amused with an odd instance of family pride which had just come under his notice. Some plain farmers, brothers, had claimed to be his cousins; and he found they were so. They introduced each other to him; and one brought his son,—a hideous little Flibbertigibbet, with a shock of carroty hair. His father complacently stroked his hair, and declared he was exactly like his uncle Richard: his uncle Richard over again; 'twas wonderful how like his uncle Richard he was in all respects: the hair was the very same; and his uncle Richard was dumb till very late, and then stammered: "and this little fellow," said the father, with a complacent smile,—"this little fellow is six years old, and he can't speak a word." [Pg 174]

No one will find fault with the pride of connexion in this stage. Supposing it to remain in its present state, it is harmless from its extreme smallness. In a city, under the stimulus of society, the same pride may be either perverted into the spirit of caste, or exalted into the affection of pure republican brotherhood. The alternative is significant as to the state of the republic, and all-important to the individual.

The extent and influence of the conventional aristocracy in the United States are significant of the state of the republic so far as that they afford an accurate measure of the anti-republican spirit which exists. Such an aristocracy must remain otherwise too insignificant to be dangerous. It cannot choose its own members, restrict its own numbers, or keep its gentility from contamination; for it must be perpetuated, not by hereditary transmission, but by accessions from below. Grocers grow rich, and mechanics become governors of States; and happily there is no law, nor reason, nor desire that it should be otherwise. This little cloud will always overhang the republic, like the perpetual vapour which hovers above Niagara, thrown up by the force and regularity of the movement below. Some observers may be sorry that the heaven is never to be quite clear: but none will dread the little cloud. It would be about as reasonable to fear that the white vapour should drown the cataract from whence it issues as that the conventional aristocracy of America should swamp the republic. [Pg 175]

SECTION II.
PROPERTY.

I found it an admitted truth, throughout the United States, that enormous private wealth is inconsistent with the spirit of republicanism. Wealth is power; and large amounts of power ought not to rest in the hands of individuals.

Admitted truths are not complained of as hardships. I never met with any one who quarrelled with public opinion for its enmity to large fortunes: on the contrary, every one who spoke with me on the subject was of the same mind with everybody else. Amidst the prevalent desire of gain, against which divines are preaching, and moralists are writing in vain, there seems to be no desire to go beyond what public opinion approves. The desire of riches merges in a regard to opinion. There is more of the spirit of competition and of ostentation in it, than desire of accumulation. It has been mentioned that there are not more than four or five hundred affluent men,—worth 100,000 dollars and upwards,—in all the six States of New England; in a population [Pg 176]

of above two millions.

The popular feeling is so strong against transmitting large estates, and favouring one child, that nobody attempts to do it. The rare endeavours made by persons of feudal prepossessions to perpetuate this vicious custom, have been all happily frustrated. Much ridicule was occasioned by the manœuvres of one such testator, who provided for the portions of a large estate reverting periodically; forgetting that the reversions were as saleable as anything else; and that, under a democracy, there can be no settling the private, any more than the public, affairs of future generations. The present Patroon of Albany, the story of whose hereditary wealth is universally known, intends to divide his property among his children,—in number, I believe, thirteen. Under him has probably expired the practice of favouring one child for the preservation of a large estate.

This remote approach to an equalisation of property is, as far as it goes, an improvement upon the state of affairs in the Old World, where the accumulation of wealth into masses, the consequent destitution of large portions of society, and the divisions which thus are established between class and class, between man and man, constitute a system too absurd and too barbarous to endure. The remote approach made by the Americans to an equalisation of wealth is yet more important as indicating the method by which society is to be eventually redeemed from its absurdity and barbarism in respect of property. This method is as yet perceived by only a few: but the many who imitate as far as they can the modes of the Old World, and cherish to the utmost its feudal prepossessions, will only for a time be able to resist the convictions which the [Pg 177] working of republican principles will force upon them, that there is no way of securing perfect social liberty on democratic principles but by community of property.

There is, as there ought to be, as great a horror in America as everywhere else of the despotism that would equalise property arbitrarily. Such a despotism can never become more than the ghost of a fancy. The approach to equalisation now required by public opinion is that required by justice; it is required that no man should encroach on his neighbours for the sake of enriching himself; that no man should encroach on his younger children for the sake of enriching the eldest; that no man should encroach on the present generation for the sake of enriching a future one. All this is allowed and required. But by the same rule, and for the sake of the same principle, no one will ever be allowed to take from the industrious man the riches won by his industry, and give them to the idle: to take from the strong to give to the weak: to take from the wise to give to the foolish. Such aggression upon property can never take place, or be seriously apprehended in a republic where all, except drunkards and slaves, are proprietors, and where the Declaration of Independence claims for every one, with life and liberty, the pursuit of happiness in his own way. There will be no attacks on property in the United States.

But it appears to me inevitable that there will be a general agreement, sooner or later, on a better principle of property than that under which all are restless; under which the wisdom and peace of the community fall far below what their other circumstances would lead themselves and their well-wishers to anticipate.

Their moralists are dissatisfied. "Our present civilisation," says Dr. Channing, "is characterised [Pg 178] and tainted by a devouring greediness of wealth; and a cause which asserts right against wealth, must stir up bitter opposition, especially in cities where this divinity is most adored." ... "The passion for gain is everywhere sapping pure and generous feeling, and everywhere raises up bitter foes against any reform which may threaten to turn aside a stream of wealth. I sometimes feel as if a great social revolution were necessary to break up our present mercenary civilisation, in order that Christianity, now repelled by the almost universal worldliness, may come into new contact with the soul, and may reconstruct society after its own pure and disinterested principles."[20] This is a prophecy. Men to whom truth and justice are not "hollow words" are the prophets of the times to come.

The scholars of America are dissatisfied. They complain of the superficial character of scholarship; of the depression, or rather of the non-existence, of literature. Some hope that matters will be better hereafter, merely from the nation having grown older. The greater number ascribe the mischief to men having to work at their employments; and some few of these believe that America would have a literature if only she had a hereditary aristocracy; this being supposed the only method of leaving to individuals the leisure and freedom of spirit necessary for literary pursuits. It has been pointed out that this is a mistake. Nature and social economy do not so agree as that genius is usually given to those who have hereditary wealth. The capability has so much more frequently shown itself among the busy and poor than among the rich who have leisure, as to mock the human presumption which would dictate from whose lips the oracles of Heaven should issue. One needs but to glance over the array of geniuses, of philosophers, of [Pg 179] scientific men, and even of the far lower order of scholars, to see how few of the best benefactors of mankind have issued from "classic shades," "learned leisure," "scientific retreats," &c., and how many more have sent up their axioms, their song, their prophecy, their hallelujah, from the very press of the toiling multitude. What tale is commoner than the poverty of poets; the need that philosophers have usually had of philosophy; the embarrassments and destitution of inventors; the straits of scholars? The history of society shows that the highest intellect is no more to be looked for especially amidst opulent leisure, than the highest devotion in the cloister. The divine breath of genius bloweth where it listeth. Men may hold out empty bags for it for ages, and not catch it; while it fans the temples of some maimed soldier, toiling in chains as an Algerine slave, or some rustic, treading

"In glory and in joy,
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side."

It is clearly a mistake that hereditary property, opportunity, leisure, and such things, will make a literature, or secure scholarship: as great a, mistake as that of the American newspaper editor who triumphantly anticipated an age of statuary from there being an arrival at New York of a statue by Canova, at the same time with a discovery of marble quarries. It is true that the statue lies in the marble quarry: but it is also true that it lies sepulchred in the far deeper recesses of some one unfathomable human intellect: and to bring the one right intellect to the quarry is the problem which is not given to be solved by mortal skill,—by devices of hereditary ease and scientific retreats. This kind of guidance is just that which the supreme Artist does not confide to created hands.

It is true, however, that though opportunity and leisure are not everything; that without union [Pg 180] with useful toil, they are nothing,—yet, with this union they are something,—much. The first attempt to advocate leisure as the birthright of every human being was made now some half-century ago.[21] The plea then advanced is a sound one on behalf of other things besides philosophy, literature and scholarship. Leisure, some degree of it, is necessary to the health of every man's spirit. Not only intellectual production, but peace of mind cannot flourish without it. It may be had under the present system, but it is not. With community of property, it would be secured to every one. The requisite amount of work would bear a very small proportion to that of disposable time. It would then be fairly seen how much literature may owe to leisure.

The professional men of America are dissatisfied. The best of them complain that professions rank lower than in Europe; and the reasons they assign for this are, that less education is required; and that every man who desires to get on must make himself a party man, in theology, science, or law. Professional service is not well paid in the United States, compared with other countries, and with other occupations on the spot. Very severe toil is necessary to maintain a respectable appearance, except to those who have climbed the heights of their profession; and to them it has been necessary. One of these last, a man whom the world supposes to be blessed in all conceivable respects, told me that he had followed a mistaken plan of life; and that if he could begin again, he would spend his life differently. He had chosen his occupation rightly enough, and been wholly satisfied with his domestic lot: but his life had been one of toil and care in the [Pg 181] pursuit of what he now found would have done all it could for him in half the quantity. If he could set himself back twenty years, he would seek far less diligently for money and eminence, stipulate for leisure, and cultivate mirth. Though this gentleman cares for money only that he may have it to give away; though his generosity of spirit is the most remarkable feature of his character, he would gladly exchange the means of gratifying his liberal affections, for more capacity for mirth, more repose of spirit. The present mercenary and competitive system does not suit him.

I know of one professional man who has found this repose of spirit by retiring from the competitive system, and devoting himself to an object in which there was, when he entered upon it, but too little competition. He had, some time ago, earned a competence for himself and his family. A friend who visited him on his estate made some inquiries about investments in the region where his host lived. "I am the worst person you could ask," replied the host: "I know nothing about investments here. We are very happy with the money we have; and we do not know that we should be so happy if we had more: so I do not put myself in the way of hearing about profitable investments." He has most profitably invested his time and energy in the anti-slavery cause. He has been perhaps the most eminent defender of the liberty of speech and of the press in the United States; and is setting an example, not only to his own children, but to the whole country, of what it is to follow after life itself, instead of the mere means of living.

The merchants are dissatisfied. If money, if success, apart from the object, could give happiness, who would be so happy as the merchants of America? In comparison with merchants generally, [Pg 182] they are happy: but in comparison with what men are made to be, they are shackled, careworn, and weary as the slave. I obtained many a glimpse into the condition of mind of this class; and, far superior as it is to what the state of large classes is in the Old World, it is yet full of toil and trouble. In New York, some friends, wishing to impress me with a conviction of the enviable lives of American ladies, told me how the rich merchants take handsome houses in the upper part of the city, and furnish them splendidly for their wives: how these gentlemen rise early, snatch their breakfasts, hurry off two or three miles to their counting-houses, bustle about in the heat and dust, noise and traffic of Pearl Street all the long summer's day, and come home in the evening, almost too wearied to eat or speak; while their wives, for whose sake they have thus been toiling after riches, have had the whole day to water their flowers, read the last English novel, visit their acquaintance, and amuse themselves at the milliner's; paying, perhaps, 100 dollars for the newest Paris bonnet. The representation had a different effect from what was expected. It appeared to me that if the ladies prefer their husbands' society to that of morning visitors and milliners, they are quite as much to be pitied as their husbands, that such a way of consuming life is considered necessary or honourable. If they would prefer to wear bonnets costing a dollar a-piece, and having some enjoyment of domestic life, their fate is mournful; if they prefer hundred dollar bonnets to the enjoyment of domestic life, their lot is the most mournful of all. In either case, they and their husbands cannot but be restless and dissatisfied.

I was at a ball in New York, the splendour of which equalled that of any entertainment I ever [Pg 183]

witnessed. A few days after, the lady who gave the ball asked me whether I did not disapprove of the show and luxury of their society. I replied, that of whatever was done for mere show, I did disapprove; but that I liked luxury, and approved of it, as long as the pleasures of some did not encroach on the rights of others.

"But," said she, "our husbands have to pay for it all. They work very hard."

"I suppose it is their own choice to do so. I should make a different choice, perhaps; but if they prefer hard work and plenty of money to indulge their families with, to moderate work and less money, I do not see how you can expect me to blame them."

"O, but we all live beyond our incomes."

"In that case, your pleasures encroach on the rights of others, and I have no more to say."

If this be true, how should this class be otherwise than restless and dissatisfied?

Are the mechanic and farming classes satisfied? No: not even they: outwardly blessed as they are beyond any class that society has ever contained. They, too, are aware that life must be meant to be passed far otherwise than in providing the outward means of living. They must be aware that though, by great industry, they can obtain some portion of time for occupations which are not money-getting, there must be something wrong in the system which compels men to devote almost the whole of their waking hours to procure that which, under a different combination of labour, might be obtained at a saving of three-fourths of the time. Whether their thoughts have been expressly turned to this subject or not, almost all the members of society are conscious that care for their external wants is so engrossing as to absorb almost all other cares; and that they [Pg 184] would most thankfully agree to work in their vocation for the community for a short portion of every day, on condition of being spared all future anxiety about their physical necessities. They who best know the blessings inseparable from toil; who are aware that the inner life is nourished by the activity of the outer, yet perceive of what infinite consequence it is to their progress that this activity should be varied in its objects, and separated as far as possible from association with physical necessities, and selfish possession. The poor man is rightly instructed, in the present state of things, when he is told that it is his first duty to provide for his own wants. The lesson is at present true, because the only alternative is encroachment on the rights of others: but it is a very low lesson in comparison with that which will be taught in the days when mutual and self-perfection will be the prevalent idea which the civilisation of the time will express. No thinking man or woman, who reflects on the amount of time, thought, and energy, which would be set free by the pressure of competition and money-getting being removed,—time, thought, and energy now spent in wearing out the body, and in partially stimulating and partially wasting the mind, can be satisfied under the present system.

In England, the prevalent dissatisfaction must subsist a long time before anything effectual can be done to relieve it. The English are hampered with institutions in which the rights of individual property are involved in almost hopeless intricacy. Though clear-sighted persons perceive that property is the great harbourage of crime and misery, the adversary of knowledge, the corrupter of peace, the extinguisher of faith and charity; though they perceive that institutions for the regulation of outward affairs all follow the same course, being first necessary, then useful, then [Pg 185] useless, pernicious, and finally intolerable,—that property is thus following the same course as slavery, which was once necessary, and is now intolerable,—as monarchy, which was once necessary, and is now useless, if not pernicious: though all this is clearly perceived by many far-seeing persons in England, they can do nothing but wait till the rest of society sees it too. They must be and are well content to wait; since no changes are desirable but those which proceed from the ripened mind and enlightened will of society. Thus it is in England. In America the process will be more rapid. The democratic principles of their social arrangements, operating already to such an equalisation of property as has never before been witnessed, are favourable to changes which are indeed necessary to the full carrying out of the principles adopted. When the people become tired of their universal servitude to worldly anxiety,—when they have fully meditated and discussed the fact that ninety-nine hundredths of social offences arise directly out of property; that the largest proportion of human faults bear a relation to selfish possession; that the most formidable classes of diseases are caused by over or under toil, and by anxiety of mind; they will be ready for the inquiry whether this tremendous incubus be indeed irremovable; and whether any difficulties attending its removal can be comparable to the evils it inflicts. In England, the people have not only to rectify the false principles of barbarous policy, but to surmount the accumulation of abuses which they have given out: a work, perhaps, of ages. In America, the people have not much more to do (the will being once ripe) than to retrace the false steps which their imitation of the old world has led them to take. Their accumulation of abuses is [Pg 186] too small to be a serious obstacle in the way of the united will of a nation.

It is objected that the majority of society in America would have a horror of any great change like that contemplated: and that, though in bondage to worldly anxiety, they are unconscious of their servitude, or reconciled to it. Well: as long as this is the case, they have no change to dread; for all such alteration must proceed from their own will. There is no power upon earth from which they have any compulsion to fear. Yet it may be allowed to their friends to speculate upon the better condition which is believed to await them. When we look at a caterpillar, we like to anticipate the bright day when it will be a butterfly. If we could talk about it with the caterpillar, it would probably be terrified at the idea, and plead the exceeding danger of being high up in the air. We do not desire or endeavour to force or hasten the process: yet the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, without any final objection on its own part.

The principal fear, expressed or concealed, of those who dislike the mere mention of the outgrowth of individual property is lest they should be deprived of their occupations, objects, and interests. But no such deprivation can take place till they will have arrived at preferring other interests than money, and at pursuing their favourite occupation with other views than of obtaining wealth. "O, what shall I ever do without my currant leaves?" might the caterpillar exclaim. "How shall I ever get rid of the day, if I must not crawl along the twigs any more?" By the time it has done with crawling, it finds a pair of wings unfolding, which make crawling appear despicable in comparison. It is conscious, also, of a taste for nectar, which is better than currant-leaves, be they of the juiciest. Men may safely dismiss all care about the future gratification of [Pg 187] their tastes under new circumstances, as long as it happens to be the change of tastes which brings about the change of circumstances, the incompatibility between the two being lessened at every transition.

As for the details of the future economy indicated, it will be time enough for them when the idea which now burns like a taper in scattered minds shall have caught, and spread, and lighted up all into an illumination sufficient to do the work by. Whenever a healthy hunger enables the popular mind to assimilate a great principle, there are always strong and skilful hands enough to do the requisite work.

SECTION III.
INTERCOURSE.

The manners of the Americans (in America) are the best I ever saw: and these are seen to the greatest advantage in their homes, and as to the gentlemen, in travelling. But for the drawback of inferior health, I know of no such earthly paradise as some of the homes in which I have had the honour and blessing of spending portions of the two years of my absence. The hospitality of the country is celebrated; but I speak now of more than usually meets the eye of a stranger; of the family manners, which travellers have rarely leisure or opportunity to observe. If I am asked what is the peculiar charm, I reply with some hesitation: there are so many. But I believe it is not so much the outward plenty, or the mutual freedom, or the simplicity of manners, or the incessant [Pg 188] play of humour, which characterise the whole people, as the sweet temper which is diffused like sunshine over the land. They have been called the most good-tempered people in the world: and I think they must be so. The effect of general example is here most remarkable. I met, of course, with persons of irritable temperament; with hot-tempered, and with fidgetty people; with some who were disposed to despotism, and others to contradiction: but it was delightful to see how persons thus afflicted were enabled to keep themselves in order; were so wrought upon by the general example of cheerful helpfulness as to be restrained from clouding their homes by their moods. I have often wondered what the Americans make of European works of fiction in which ailing tempers are exhibited. European fiction does not represent such in half the extent and variety in which they might be truly and profitably exhibited: but I have often wondered what the Americans make of them, such as they are. They possess the initiatory truth, in the variety of temperaments which exists among themselves, as everywhere else; and in the moods of children: but the expansion of deformed tempers in grown people must strike them as monstrous caricatures.

Of course, there must be some general influence which sweetens or restrains the temper of a whole nation, of the same Saxon race which is not everywhere so amiable. I imagine that the practice of forbearance requisite in a republic is answerable for this pleasant peculiarity. In a republic, no man can in theory overbear his neighbour; nor, as he values his own rights, can he do it much or long in practice. If the moral independence of some, of many, sinks under this equal pressure from all sides, it is no little set-off against such an evil that the outbreaks of [Pg 189] domestic tyranny are thereby restrained; and that the respect for mutual rights which citizens have perpetually enforced upon them abroad, comes thence to be observed towards the weak and unresisting in the privacy of home.

Some may find it difficult to reconcile this prevalence of good temper with the amount of duelling in the United States; with the recklessness of life which is not confined to the semi-barbarous parts of the country. When it is understood that in New Orleans there were fought, in 1834, more duels than there are days in the year, fifteen on one Sunday morning; that in 1835, there were 102 duels fought in that city between the 1st of January and the end of April; and that no notice is taken of shooting in a quarrel; when the world remembers the duel between Clay and Randolph; that Hamilton fell in a duel; and several more such instances, there may be some wonder that a nation where such things happen, should be remarkably good-tempered. But New Orleans is no rule for any place but itself. The spirit of caste, and the fear of imputation, rage in that abode of heathen licentiousness. The duels there are, almost without exception, between boys for frivolous causes. All but one of the 102 were so. And even on the spot, there is some feeling of disgust and shame at the extent of the practice. A Court of Honour was instituted for the restraint of the practice; of course, without effectual result. Its function degenerated into choosing weapons for the combatants, so that it ended by sanctioning, instead of repressing, duelling. Those who fight the most frequently and fatally are the French creoles, who use small swords.

The extreme cases which afford the clearest reading of the folly and wickedness of the practice,—of the meanness of the fear which lies at the bottom of it,—are producing their effect. The young [Pg 190]

men who go into the west to be the founders of new societies are in some instances taking their responsibility to heart, and resolving to use well their great opportunity for substituting a true for a false, a moral for a physical courage. The dreadful affair at Philadelphia, never to be forgotten there, when a quiet, inoffensive young man, the only child of a widowed mother, was forced out into the field, against his strongest remonstrances, made to stand up, and shot through the heart, could not but produce its effect. One of the principal agents was degraded in the American navy, (but has been since reinstated,) and none of the parties concerned has ever stood as well with society as other men since. Hamilton's fall, again, has opened men's eyes to the philosophy of duelling, and is working to that purpose, more and more. At the time, it was pretty generally agreed that he could not help fighting; now, there are few who think so. His correspondence with his murderer, previous to the duel, is remarkable. Having been told, on my entrance into the country, that Hamilton had been its "greatest man," I was interested in seeing what a greater than Washington could say in excuse for risking his life in so paltry a way. I read his correspondence with Colonel Burr with pain. There is fear in every line of it; a complicated, disgraceful fear. He was obviously perishing between two fears—of losing his life, and of not being able to guard his own honour against the attacks of a ruffian. Between these two fears he fell. I was talking over the correspondence with a duelling gentleman, "O," said he, "Hamilton went out like a capuchin." So the "greatest man" did not obtain even that for which he threw away what he knew was considered the most valuable life in the country. This is as it should be. When contempt becomes the wages of slavery to a false idea of honour, it will cease to stand in [Pg 191] the way of the true; and "greatest men" will not end their lives in littleness.

Certain extreme cases which occur on the semi-barbarous confines of the country come occasionally in aid of such lessons as those I have cited. A passenger on board the "Henry Clay," in which I ascended the Mississippi, showed in perfection the results of a false idea of honour. He belonged to one of the first families in Kentucky, had married well, and settled at Natchez, Mississippi. His wife was slandered by a resident of Natchez, who, refusing to retreat, was shot dead by the husband, who fled to Texas. The wife gathered their property together, followed her husband, was shipwrecked below New Orleans, and lost all. Her wants were supplied by kind persons at New Orleans, and she was forwarded by them to her destination, but soon died of cholera. Her husband went up into Missouri, and settled in a remote part of it to practise law; but with a suspicion that he was dogged by the relations of the man he had shot. One day he met a man muffled in a cloak, who engaged with him, shot him in both sides, and stabbed him with an Arkansas knife. The victim held off the knife from wounding him mortally till help came, and his foe fled. The wounded man slowly recovered; but his right arm was so disabled as to compel him to postpone his schemes of revenge. He ascertained that his enemy had fled to Texas; followed him there; at length met him, one fine evening, riding, with his double-barrelled gun before him. They knew each other instantly: the double-barrelled gun was raised and pointed; but before it could be fired, its owner fell from the saddle, shot dead like the brother he had sought to avenge. The murderer was flying up the river once more when I saw him, not doubting that he should [Pg 192] again be dogged by some relation of the brothers he had shot. Some of the gentlemen on board believed that if he surrendered himself at Natchez, he would be let off with little or no punishment, and allowed to settle again in civilised society; but he was afraid of the gallows, and intended to join some fur company in the north-west, if he could; and if he failed in this, to make himself a chief of a tribe of wandering Indians.

This story may be useful to those (if such there be) for whom the catastrophe of Hamilton is not strong enough. The two cases differ in degree, not in kind.

That such hubbub as this is occasioned by a false idea of honour, and not by fault of temper, is made clear by the amiability shown by Americans, in all cases where their idea of honour is not concerned. In circumstances of failure and disappointment, delay, difficulty, and other provocation, they show great self-command. In all cases that I witnessed, from the New York fire, and baffled legislation, down to the being "mired" in bad roads, they appeared to be proof against irritation. Sometimes this went further than I could quite understand.

While travelling in Virginia, we were anxious one day to push on, and waste no time. Our "exclusive extra" drew up before a single house, where we were to breakfast. We told the landlady that we were excessively hungry, and in some hurry, and that we should be obliged by her giving us anything she happened to have cooked, without waiting for the best she could do for us. The woman was the picture of laziness, of the most formal kind. She kept us waiting till we thought of going on without eating. When summoned to table, at length, we asked the driver to sit down with us, to save time. Never did I see a more ludicrous scene than that breakfast. The [Pg 193] lady at the tea-tray, tossing the great bunch of peacocks' feathers, to keep off the flies, and as solemn as Rhadamanthus. So was our whole party, for fear of laughter from which we should not be able to recover. Everything on the table was sour; it seemed as if studiously so. The conflict between our appetites and the disgust of the food was ridiculous. We all presently gave up but the ravenous driver. He tried the bread, the coffee, the butter, and all were too sour for a second mouthful; so were the eggs, and the ham, and the steak. No one ate anything, and the charge was as preposterous as the delay; yet our paymaster made no objection to the way we were treated. When we were off again, I asked him why he had been so gracious as to appear satisfied.

"This is a newly-opened road," he replied; "the people do not know yet how the world lives. They have probably no idea that there is better food than they set before us."

"But do not you think it would be a kindness to inform them?"

"They did their best for us, and I should be sorry to hurt their feelings."

"Then you would have them go through life on bad food, and inflicting it on other people, lest their feelings should be hurt at their being told how to provide better. Do you suppose that all the travellers who come this way will be as tender of the lady's feelings?"

"Yes, I do. You see the driver took it very quietly."

When we were yet worse treated, however, just after, when spending a night at Woodstock, our paymaster did remonstrate, (though very tenderly,) and his remonstrance was received with great candour by the master of the house; his wife being the one most to blame. [Pg 194]

With this forbearance is united the most cheerful and generous helpfulness. If a farmer is burned out, his neighbours collect, and never leave him till he is placed in a better house than the one he has lost. His barns, in like case, are filled with contributions from their crops. Though there is nothing that men prize there so much as time, there is nothing that they are more ready to give to the service of others. Their prevalent generosity in the giving of money is known, and sufficiently estimated, considering how plentiful wealth is in the country. The expenditure of time, thought, and ingenuity, is a far better test of the temper from which the helpfulness proceeds. I am sorry that it is impossible to describe what this temper is in America; its manifestations being too incessant and minute for description. If this great virtue could be exhibited as clearly as it is possible to exhibit their faults, the heart of society would warm towards the Americans more readily than it has ever been alienated from them by their own faults, or the ill-offices of strangers.

It seems to me that the Americans are generally unaware how one bad habit of their own, springing out of this very temper, goes to aggravate the evil offices of strangers. It is to me the most prominent of their bad habits; but one so likely to be cured by their being made aware of it, that I cannot but wish that some of the English vituperation which has been expended upon tobacco and its effects had been directed upon the far more serious fault of flattery. It will be seen at once how the practice of flattery is almost a necessary result of the combination of a false idea of honour with kindliness of temper. Its prevalence is so great as to tempt one to call it a [Pg 195] necessary result. There is no getting out of the way of it. A gentleman, who was a depraved school-boy, a fiendish husband, father, and slave-owner, whose reputation for brutality was as extensive as the country, was eulogised in the newspapers at his death. Every book that comes out is exalted to the skies. The public orators flatter the people; the people flatter the orators. Clergymen praise their flocks; and the flocks stand amazed at the excellence of their clergymen. Sunday-school teachers admire their pupils; and the scholars magnify their teachers. As to guests, especially from abroad, hospitality requires that some dark corner should be provided in every room where they may look when their own praises are being told to their own faces. Even in families, where, if anywhere, it must be understood that love cannot be sweetened by praise, there is a deficiency of that modesty, "simplicity and godly sincerity," in regard to mutual estimate, which the highest fidelity of affection inspires.

Passing over the puerility and vulgarity of the practice,—I think, if the Americans were convinced of its selfishness,—of its being actually a breach of benevolence, they would exercise the same command over their tongues that they do over their tempers, and suppress painful praises, as they rise to the lips. It was pleaded to me that the admiration is real, the praise sincere. Be it so: but why are they to be expressed, more than any other real thoughts whose expression would give pain? Let the admiration by all means be enjoyed: but what a pity to destroy sympathy with the person admired, by talking on the very subject at which sympathy must cease! Is it not clear that if praise be not painful to the person praised, it must be injurious? If he be modest, it is torture: if not, it is poison. Or, if there be a third case, and it is indifferent, such indifference to [Pg 196] the praise is very nearly allied to contempt for the praiser. When once the decencies of friendship are violated, and the modesty of mutual estimate is gone, the holiness of friendship is gone too; and there is every danger that selfish, conscious passion will overbear unconscious, disinterested affection. Enough. I would only put it to any person whether the friendship he values most is not that which is least coarsened by praise; and in which he and his friend are led the least frequently to think of their opinion of each other. I would put it to the intimates of such a man as Dr. Channing, for instance, whether their warmest affections do not spring towards and repose upon him in the delicious certainty, that while he is sympathising with every pure and true emotion, he will refrain from disturbing its flow by introducing a consciousness, a self and mutual reference, from which it is the highest privilege in life to escape. Praise may help some common-minded persons over the difficulties of a new and superficial intercourse: at least, so I am told: but intimate communion and permanent friendship require a purity and repose with which the interchange of expressed admiration is absolutely incompatible.

With regard to the spirit of intercourse, nothing more remains to be said here, but that the frankness practised in private life, within the doors of home, is as remarkable as the caution and reserve which prevail elsewhere. Nothing can be more delightful than the familiarity and confidence with which I was invariably treated; and to which I saw few exceptions in the cases of other persons. Everything was discussed in every house I staid in: religion, philosophy, literature; and, with quite as much freedom, character, public and private, national and individual. The language being the same as my own, I was apt to forget that I was on my travels, till some visitor [Pg 197] dropped in whose inquiries how I liked the country reminded me that I was a foreigner. Even now, having performed the voyage home, and having all manner of evidence that I have left the country three thousand miles behind me, I find it difficult to bring in my personal friends as

elements of the society whose condition I am pondering. They are too like brothers and sisters to be subjects for analysis: and I perpetually feel the want of them at hand, to assist me by their controverting or corroborating judgments. They and I know what their homes are, and how happy we have been in them: and this is all that in my affection for them I can say of their domestic life, without putting a force upon their feelings and my own.

If I am not much mistaken, society in the new world is wakening up, under the stimulus of the slave-question, to a sense of its want of practical freedom, owing to its too great regard to opinion. The examples of those who can and do assert and maintain their liberty in these times of fiery trial, are venerable and beautiful in the eyes of the young. Those in the cities who have grown old in the practice of mistrust are unconscious of the extent of their privations: but the free yeomanry, and the youth of the towns, have an eye for the right, and a heart for the true, amid the mists and subtleties in which truth and liberty have been of late involved. The young men of Boston, especially, seem to be roused: and it is all-important that they should be. Boston is looked to throughout the Union, as the superior city she believes herself to be: and nowhere is the entrance upon life more perilous to the honesty and consistency of young aspirants after the public service. Massachusetts is the head-quarters of federalism. Federalism is receding before [Pg 198] democracy, even there; but that State has still a federal majority. A Massachusetts man has little chance of success in public life, unless he starts a federalist: and he has no chance of rising above a certain low point, unless, when he reaches that point, he makes a transition into democracy. The trial is too great for the moral independence of most ambitious men: and it fixes the eyes of the world on the youth of Boston. They are watched, that it may be seen whether they who now burn with ardour for complete freedom will hereafter "reverence the dreams of their youth," or sink down into cowardice, apathy, and intolerance, as they reach the middle of life.

If they will only try, they will find how great are the ease and peace attendant on the full exercise of rights, even though it should shut the career of politics, and possibly of wealth, against them for a time. If they will look in the faces of the few who dare to live in the midst of Boston as freely as if they were in the centre of the prairies, they will see in those countenances a brightness and serenity which a sense of mere safety could never impart. The pursuit of safety,—safety from outward detriment,—is of all in this world the most hopeless. The only attainable safety is that which usually bears another name,—repose in absolute truth. Where there is a transparency of character which defies misrepresentation, a faith in men which disarms suspicion, an intrepidity which overawes malice, and a spirit of love which wins confidence, there is safety; and in nothing short of all these. If any of them are deficient, in the same proportion does safety give place to danger; and no substitution of prudence will be of more than temporary avail. Prudence is now reigning supreme over the elderly classes of Boston generally, and too many of the young. Independence is animating the rest. It remains to be seen which will have succumbed when the [Pg 199] present youth of the city shall have become her legislators, magistrates, and social representatives.

As a specimen of the thoughts and feelings of some on the spot, I give the following.

"Liberty of thought and opinion is strenuously maintained: in this proud land it has become almost a wearisome cant: our speeches and journals, religious and political, are made nauseous by the vapid and vain-glorious reiteration. But does it, after all, *characterise any community among us*? Is there any one to which a qualified observer shall point, and say, *There* opinion is free? On the contrary, is it not a fact, a sad and deplorable fact, that in no land on this earth is the mind more fettered than it is here? that here what we call public opinion has set up a despotism, such as exists nowhere else? Public opinion,—a tyrant, sitting in the dark, wrapt up in mystification and vague terrors of obscurity; deriving power no one knows from whom; like an Asian monarch, unapproachable, unimpeachable, undethronable, perhaps illegitimate,—but irresistible in its power to quell thought, to repress action, to silence conviction,—and bringing the timid perpetually under an unworthy bondage of mean fear to some impostor opinion, some noisy judgment, which gets astride on the popular breath for a day, and controls, through the lips of impudent folly, the speech and actions of the wise. From this influence and rule, from this bondage to opinion, no community, as such, is free; though doubtless individuals are. But your community, brethren, based on the principles which you profess, is bound to be so."[22]

So much for the spirit of intercourse. As for the modes in which the spirit is manifested, their [Pg 200] agreeableness, or the contrary, is a matter of taste. No nation can pretend to judge another's manners; for the plain reason that there is no standard to judge by: and if an individual attempts to pronounce upon them, his sentence amounts to nothing more than a declaration of his own particular taste. If such a declaration from an individual is of any consequence, I am ready to acknowledge that the American manners please me, on the whole, better than any that I have seen.

The circumstances which strike a stranger unpleasantly are the apparent coldness and indifference of persons in hotels and shops; the use of tobacco, and consequent spitting; the tone of voice, especially among the New England ladies; and at first, but not afterwards, the style of conversation. The great charm is the exquisite mutual respect and kindliness.

Of the tobacco and its consequences, I will say nothing but that the practice is at too bad a pass to leave hope that anything that could be said in books would work a cure. If the floors of boarding-houses, and the decks of steam-boats, and the carpets of the Capitol, do not sicken the Americans into a reform; if the warnings of physicians are of no avail, what remains to be said? I dismiss the nauseous subject.

A great unknown pleasure remains to be experienced by the Americans in the well-modulated, gentle, healthy, cheerful voices of women. It is incredible that there should not, in all time to come, be any other alternative than that which now exists, between a whine and a twang. When the health of the American women improves, their voices will improve. In the meantime, they are unconscious how the effect of their remarkable and almost universal beauty is injured by their mode of speech.

The peculiarity is less remarkable in manly conversation. The conversation of the gentlemen [Pg 201] strikes one at first as being dull and prosy. They converse with much evenness of tone, slowly and at great length: so as to leave the observer without any surprise that the Americans think English conversation hasty, sharp, and rough. I found also a prevalent idea that conversation is studied as an art in England: and many of my friends were so positive on this point as to make me doubt the correctness of my own conviction that it is not so. If there be any such study, I can only say that I have detected no instances of it; nor did the idea ever enter my mind except in reading of Lady Angelica Headingham, in 'Patronage.' In the whole course of my life, perhaps, I never met with so many particular instances of an artificial mode of conversing as during the two years that I was in America: but I could see the reason in every case; and that all were exceptions to the rule of natural though peculiar communication. The conversation of the great public men was generally more instructive than pleasing, till they forgot that they were public men, and talked on other things than public affairs. One could never conceal that he designed to effect a particular persuasion in your mind: a design against which all the listener's faculties are sure to rise up in instant rebellion. Another did not intend you should see that he was speaking from a map of the subject in his brain; bringing contrasts and comparisons to bear, as it might seem accidentally, upon your imagination. Two or three or more, willing to conceal from themselves, I really believe, as well as from the stranger, that logic is not their forte, dart off after every will-o'-the-wisp of an analogy; and talk almost wholly in figures. This is bad policy; for some of the figures were so beautiful and apparently illustrative, as to fix the attention, instead of passing over the ear, and [Pg 202] give one time to discover that they were not satisfactory. The most remarkable instances of this were in the south, where I had the pleasure of hearing more of every thing than of logic. Perhaps the most singular style of all was one which struck me so much that I wrote down pages of it for subsequent study:—a slow, impressive style, a succession of clever figures, a somewhat pompous humour, and a wrapping round of inconvenient considerations with an impenetrable cloud of the plainest-seeming words. The gushing talk of Judge Story, the brimmings of a full head and heart, natural, lively, fresh, issuing from the supposition that you can understand, and wish to understand everything that is interesting to him, and from a simple psychological curiosity, is perfectly delightful after the measured communications of some other public men.

I may here mention Dr. Channing's conversation. I do so because it has been the occasion of his being much misunderstood and consequently misrepresented. I never knew a case where the conversation of an individual did him so much injustice at first, and such eminent service in the affections of his hearers at last. Unfortunately, those who report him generally see him only once or twice; and then they are pretty sure to leave him with less real knowledge of him than they probably had three thousand miles off. This circumstance may justify my speaking here of one whom I revere and regard too much to feel it easy to say anything of him publicly beyond the mere testimony which it is an honour to bear to such men. Dr. Channing has an unfortunate habit of suiting his conversation to the supposed state of mind of the person he is conversing with, or to that person's supposed knowledge on a subject on which he wants information. The adaptation, not being natural, cannot be true, and something is thus given out which is the [Pg 203] reflection of nobody's mind; and the conversation is fruitless or worse. This is merely a habit of *drawing out*. If the visitor goes away upon this, he reports the things which are reported of Dr. Channing's opinions; which are no more like his than they are like Aristotle's. If the visitor stays long enough, or comes again often enough to catch some of his thoughts as they issue from his heart, he finds a strange power in them to move and kindle. His words become deeds when they proceed from impulse. Not a tone nor a syllable can be ever forgotten. The reason is that unseen things are to him realities; and material things are but shadows. After continued and open communication with him, it becomes an inexplicable wonder that anything but truth, justice, and charity should be made objects of serious pursuit in the world.

Mr. Madison's conversation has been already mentioned as being full of graces. The sprightliness, rapidity, and variety were remarkable in a man of eighty-four, confined to two rooms, and subject to various infirmities. He was a highly favourable specimen of the accomplished gentleman of the revolutionary times.

There are persons whom it seems to myself strange to name in this connexion, when there are things in them which I value much more highly than their eloquence. But as eloquent beyond all others, they must be mentioned here. I refer to Dr. and Mrs. Follen, late of Boston.—Dr. Follen is a German: well known in Germany for his patriotism; as troublesome to its princes as animating to their subjects. He has been thirteen years in America, and seven years a citizen of Massachusetts. His mastery of the language has been perfect for some years: but, as he brought a rich and matured mind to the first employment of it, he uses it differently from any to whom it [Pg 204] is the mother tongue. It is an instrument of extraordinary power in his hands, as a mere instrument. But he is a man of learning which I do not pretend to estimate in any department. The great mass of his knowledge is vivified by a spirit which seems to have passed through all human experiences, appropriating whatever is true and pure, and leaving behind all else. With not only a religious love of liberty, but an unerring perception of the true principle of liberty in every case as it arises, with an intrepidity which excites rage where his gentleness is not known,

and a gentleness which disarms those who fear his intrepidity, he is the most valuable acquisition that the United States, in their present condition, can well be conceived to have appropriated from the Old World, in the person of an individual citizen. I certainly think him the most remarkable, and the greatest man I saw in the country. Dr. Follen has pledged himself to the anti-slavery cause; and declared himself in other ways in favour of freedom of thought, action, and speech, so as to make himself feared,—(or rather his opinions, for no one can fear himself,)—by some of the society of his State in whom the idea of honour most wants rectifying: but, as he becomes more known to the true-hearted among his fellow-citizens, he will be regarded by them all with the pride and admiration, mixed with tender affection, which he inspires in those who have the honour and blessing of being his friends. He has married a Boston lady; a woman of genius, and of those large and kindly affections which are its natural element. What the intercourses of their home are, their guests can never forget; nor ever describe.

The most common mode of conversation in America I should distinguish as prosy, but withal rich and droll. For some weeks, I found it difficult to keep awake during the entire reply to any [Pg 205] question I happened to ask. The person questioned seemed to feel himself put upon his conscience to give a full, true, and particular reply; and so he went back as near to the Deluge as the subject would admit, and forward to the millennium, taking care to omit nothing of consequence in the interval. There was, of course, one here and there, as there is everywhere, to tell me precisely what I knew before, and omit what I most wanted: but this did not happen often: and I presently found the information I obtained in conversation so full, impartial, and accurate, and the shrewdness and drollery with which it was conveyed so amusing, that I became a great admirer of the American way of talking before six months were over. Previous to that time, a gentleman in the same house with me expressed pleasantly his surprise at my asking so few questions: saying that if he came to England, he should be asking questions all day long. I told him that there was no need of my seeking information as long as more was given me in the course of the day than my head would carry. I did not tell him that I had not power of attention sufficient for such information as came in answer to my own desire. I can scarcely believe now that I ever felt such a difficulty.

They themselves are, however, aware of their tendency to length, and also to something of the literal dulness which Charles Lamb complains of in relation to the Scotch. They have stories of American travellers which exceed all I ever heard of them anywhere else: such as that an American gentleman, returned from Europe, was asked how he liked Rome: to which he replied that Rome was a fine city; but that he must acknowledge he thought the public buildings were very much out of repair. Again, it is told against a lady that she made some undeniably true [Pg 206] remarks on a sermon she heard. A preacher, discoursing on the blindness of men to the future, remarked "how few men, in building a house, consider that a coffin is to go down the stairs!" The lady observed with much emphasis, on coming out, that ministers had got into the strangest way of choosing subjects for the pulpit! It was true that wide staircases *are* a great convenience: but she did think Christian ministers might find better subjects to preach upon than narrow staircases. And so forth. An eminent Senator told me that he was too often on the one horn or the other of a dilemma: sometimes a gentleman getting up in the Senate, and talking as if he would never sit down: and sometimes a gentleman sitting down in his study, and talking as if he would never get up.

Yet there is an epigrammatic turn in the talk of those who have never heard of "the art of conversation" which is supposed to be studied by the English. A reverend divine,—no other than Dr. Channing,—was one day paying toll, when he perceived a notice of gin, rum, tobacco, &c., on a board which bore a strong resemblance to a grave-stone. "I am glad to see," said the Dr. to the girl who received the toll, "that you have been burying those things."—"And if we had," said the girl, "I don't doubt you would have gone chief mourner."

Some young men, travelling on horseback among the White Mountains, became inordinately thirsty, and stopped for milk at a house by the road-side. They emptied every basin that was offered, and still wanted more. The woman of the house at length brought an enormous bowl of milk, and set it down on the table, saying, "One would think, gentlemen, you had never been weaned."

Of the same kind was the reply made by a gentleman of Virginia to a silly question by a lady. [Pg 207] "Who made the Natural Bridge?"—"God knows, madam."

I was struck with repeated instances of new versions, generally much improved, of old fables. I think the following an improvement upon Sour Grapes. Noah warned his neighbours of what was coming, and why he was building his ark; but nobody minded him. When people on the high grounds were up to their chins, an old acquaintance of Noah's was very eager to be taken into the ark: but Noah refused again and again. "Well," said the man, when he found it was in vain, "go, get along, you and your old ark! I don't believe we are going to have much of a shower." I tried to ascertain whether this story was American. I could trace it no further off than Plymouth, Massachusetts.

There cannot be a stronger contrast than between the fun and simplicity of the usual domestic talk of the United States, and the solemn pedantry of which the extremest examples are to be found there; exciting as much ridicule at home as they possibly can elsewhere. I was solemnly assured by a gentleman that I was quite wrong on some point, because I differed from him. Everybody laughed: when he went on, with the utmost gravity, to inform us that there had been a time when he believed, like other people, that he might be mistaken; but that experience had

convinced him that he never was; and he had in consequence cast behind him the fear of error. I told him I was afraid the place he lived in must be terribly dull,—having an oracle in it to settle everything. He replied that the worst of it was, other people were not so convinced of his being always in the right as he was himself. There was no joke here. He is a literal and serious-minded man. Another gentleman solemnly remarked upon the weather of late having been "uncommonly [Pg 208] mucilaginous." Another pointed out to me a gentleman on board a steam-boat as "a blue stocking of the first class." A lady asked me many questions about my emotions at Niagara, to which I gave only one answer of which she could make anything. "Did you not," was her last inquiry, "long to throw yourself down, and mingle with your mother earth?"—"No."—Another asked me whether I did not think the sea might inspire vast and singular ideas.—Another, an instructress of youth, in examining my ear-trumpet, wanted to know whether its length made any difference in its efficiency. On my answering, "None at all"—"O certainly not," said she, very deliberately; "for, sound being a material substance, can only be overcome by a superior force." The mistakes of unconscious ignorance should be passed over with a silent smile: but affectation should be exposed, as a service to a young society.

I rarely, if ever, met with instances of this pedantry among the yeomanry or mechanic classes; or among the young. The most numerous and the worst pedants were middle-aged ladies. One instance struck me as being unlike anything that could happen in England. A literary and very meritorious village mantua-maker declared that it was very hard if her gowns did not fit the ladies of the neighbourhood. She had got the exact proportions of the Venus de Medici, to make them by: and what more could she do? Again. A sempstress was anxious that her employer should request me to write something about Mount Auburn: (the beautiful cemetery near Boston.) Upon her being questioned as to what kind of composition she had in her fancy, she said she would have Mount Auburn considered under three points of view:—as it was on the day of creation,—as [Pg 209] it is now,—as it will be on the day of resurrection. I liked the idea so well that I got her to write it for me, instead of my doing it for her.

As for the peculiarities of language of which so much has been made,—I am a bad judge: but the fact is, I should have passed through the country almost without observing any, if my attention had not been previously directed to them. Next to the well-known use of the word "sick," instead of "ill," (in which they are undoubtedly right,) none struck me so much as the few following. They use the word "handsome" much more extensively than we do: saying that Webster made a handsome speech in the Senate: that a lady talks handsomely, (eloquently:) that a book sells handsomely. A gentleman asked me on the Catskill Mountain, whether I thought the sun handsomer there than at New York. When they speak of a fine woman, they refer to mental or moral, not at all to physical superiority. The effect was strange, after being told, here and there, that I was about to see a very fine woman, to meet in such cases almost the only plain women I saw in the country. Another curious circumstance is, that this is almost the only connexion in which the word woman is used. This noble word, spirit-stirring as it passes over English ears, is in America banished, and "ladies" and "females" substituted: the one to English taste mawkish and vulgar; the other indistinctive and gross. So much for difference of taste. The effect is odd. After leaving the men's wards of the prison at Nashville, Tennessee, I asked the warden whether he would not let me see the women. "We have no ladies here, at present, madam. We have never had but two ladies, who were convicted for stealing a steak; but, as it appeared that they were deserted by their husbands, and in want, they were pardoned." A lecturer, discoursing on the [Pg 210] characteristics of women, is said to have expressed himself thus. "Who were last at the cross? Ladies. Who were first at the sepulchre? Ladies."

A few other ludicrous expressions took me by surprise occasionally. A gentleman in the west, who had been discussing monarchy and republicanism in a somewhat original way, asked me if I would "swap" my king for his. We were often told that it was "a dreadful fine day;" and a girl at a hotel pronounced my trumpet to be "terrible handy."[23] In the back of Virginia these superlative expressions are the most rife. A man who was extremely ill, in agonizing pain, sent for a friend to come to him. Before the friend arrived, the pain was relieved, but the patient felt much reduced by it. "How do you find yourself?" inquired the friend. "I'm powerful weak; but cruel easy."

The Kentucky bragging is well known. It is so ingenious as to be very amusing sometimes: but too absurd in the mouth of a dull person. One such was not satisfied with pointing out to me how fine the woods were, but informed me that the intimate texture of the individual leaves was finer and richer in Kentucky than anywhere else. I much prefer the off-hand air with which a dashing Kentuckian intimates to you the richness of the soil; saying "if you plant a nail at night, 'twill come up a spike next morning."

However much may be the fault of strangers, in regard to the coldness of manners which is complained of in those who serve travellers in America, and however soon it may be dissipated by [Pg 211] a genial address on the part of the stranger, it certainly is very disagreeable at the first moment. We invariably found ourselves well-treated; and in no instance that I remember failed to dissipate the chill by showing that we were ready to help ourselves, and to be sociable. The instant we attacked the reserve, it gave way. But I do not wonder that strangers who are not prepared to make the concession, and especially gentlemen travelling from hotel to hotel, find the constraint extremely irksome. It should never be forgotten that it is usually a matter of necessity or of favour, seldom of choice, (except in the towns,) that the wife and daughters of American citizens render service to travellers. Such a breaking in upon their domestic quiet, such an exposure to the society of casual travellers, must be so distasteful to them generally as to excuse any apparent want of cordiality. Some American travellers, won by the *empressement* of European

waiters, declare themselves as willing to pay for civility as for their dinner. I acknowledge a different taste. I had rather have indifference than civility which bears a reference to the bill: but I prefer to either the cordiality which brightens up at your offer to make your own bed, mend your own fire, &c.—the cordiality which brings your hostess into your parlour, to draw her chair, and be sociable, not only by asking where you are going, but by telling you all that interests her in her neighbourhood. A girl at a Meadville hotel, in Pennsylvania, urged us to change our route, that we might visit some friends of hers,—"a beautiful bachelor that had lately lost his wife, and his fine son"—to whom she would give us a letter of introduction. At Maysville, Kentucky, the landlady sent repeated apologies for not being able to wait on us herself, her attendance being [Pg 212] necessary at the bedside of her sick child. On our expressing our concern that, in such circumstances, she should trouble herself about us, her substitute said we were very unlike the generality of travellers who came. The ladies were usually offended if the landlady did not wait upon them herself, and would not open or shut the window with their own hands; but rang to have the landlady to do it for them. Such persons have probably been accustomed to be waited on by slaves; or, perhaps, not at all; so that they like to make the most of the opportunity. Our landlady at Nashville, Tennessee, treated us extremely well; and on parting kissed the ladies of the party all round.

I had an early lesson in the art of distinguishing coldness from inhospitality. Our party of six was traversing the State of New York. We left Syracuse at dawn one morning, intending to breakfast at Skaneatles. By the time we reached Elbridge, however, having been delayed on the road, we were too hungry to think of going further without food. An impetuous young Carolinian, who was of the party, got out first, and returned to say we had better proceed; for the house and the people looked so cold, we should never be able to achieve a comfortable meal. Caring less, however, for comfort than for any sort of meal, we persisted in stopping.—The first room we were shown into was wet, and had no fire; and we were already shivering with cold. I could discern that the family were clearing out of the next room. It was offered to us, and logs were piled upon the fire. Two of the young women, in cotton gowns and braided and bowed hair, followed their mother into the cooking apartment, sailing about with quiet movements and solemn faces. Two more staid in the room; and, after putting up their hair before the glass in our presence, began to [Pg 213] arrange the table, knitting between times. One or another was almost all the while sitting with us, knitting, and replying with grave simplicity to our conversation. Presently, one of the best breakfasts we had in America was ready: a pie-dish full of buttered toast; hot biscuits and coffee; beef-steak, applesauce, hot potatoes, cheese, butter, and two large dishes of eggs. We were attentively waited upon by the four knitting young ladies and their knitting mother, and kindly dismissed with a charge of only two dollars and a quarter for the whole party. "Did you ever see such girls?" cried the young Carolinian, just landed from Europe: "stepping about like four captive princesses!" We all called out that we would not hear a word against the young ladies. They had treated us with all kindness; and no one could tell whether their reserve was any greater than their situation and circumstances require.

So much more has naturally been observed by travellers of American manners in stages and steam-boats than in private-houses, that all has been said, over and over again, that the subject deserves. I need only testify that I do not think the Americans eat faster than other people, on the whole. The celerity at hotel-tables is remarkable; but so it is in stage-coach travellers in England, who are allowed ten minutes or a quarter of an hour for dining. In private houses, I was never aware of being hurried. The cheerful, unintermitting civility of all gentlemen travellers, throughout the country, is very striking to a stranger. The degree of consideration shown to women is, in my opinion, greater than is rational, or good for either party; but the manners of an American stage-coach might afford a valuable lesson and example to many classes of Europeans who have a high opinion of their own civilisation. I do not think it rational or fair that every [Pg 214] gentleman, whether old or young, sick or well, weary or untired, should, as a matter of course, yield up the best places in the stage to any lady passenger. I do not think it rational or fair that five gentlemen should ride on the top of the coach, (where there is no accommodation for holding on, and no resting-place for the feet,) for some hours of a July day in Virginia, that a young lady, who was slightly delicate, might have room to lay up her feet, and change her posture as she pleased. It is obvious that, if she was not strong enough to travel on common terms in the stage, her family should have travelled in an extra; or staid behind; or done anything rather than allow five persons to risk their health, and sacrifice their comfort, for the sake of one. Whatever may be the good moral effects of such self-renunciation on the tempers of the gentlemen, the custom is very injurious to ladies. Their travelling manners are anything but amiable. While on a journey, women who appear well enough in their homes, present all the characteristics of spoiled children. Screaming and trembling at the apprehension of danger are not uncommon: but there is something far worse in the cool selfishness with which they accept the best of everything, at any sacrifice to others, and usually, in the south and west, without a word or look of acknowledgment. They are as like spoiled children when the gentlemen are not present to be sacrificed to them;—in the inn parlour, while waiting for meals or the stage; and in the cabin of a steam-boat. I never saw any manner so repulsive as that of many American ladies on board steam-boats. They look as if they supposed you mean to injure them, till you show to the contrary. The suspicious side-glance, or the full stare; the cold, immovable observation; the bristling self- [Pg 215] defence the moment you come near; the cool pushing to get the best places,—everything said and done without the least trace of trust or cheerfulness,—these are the disagreeable consequences of the ladies being petted and humoured as they are. The New England ladies, who are compelled by their superior numbers to depend less upon the care of others, are far happier and pleasanter companions in a journey than those of the rest of the country. This shows the evil to be altogether

superinduced: and I always found that if I could keep down my spirit, and show that I meant no harm, the apathy began to melt, the pretty ladies forgot their self-defence, and appeared somewhat like what I conclude they are at home, when managing their affairs, in the midst of familiar circumstances. If these ladies would but inquire of themselves what it is that they are afraid of, and whether there is any reason why people should be less cheerful, less obliging, and less agreeable, when casually brought into the society of fifty people, whose comfort depends mainly on their mutual good offices, than among half-a-dozen neighbours at home, they might remove an unpleasant feature of the national manners, and add another to the many charms of their country.

Much might be said of village manners in America: but Miss Sedgwick's pictures of them in her two best works, "Home," and "The Rich Poor Man, and the Poor Rich Man," are so true and so beautiful, and so sure of being well-known where they have not already reached, that no more is necessary than to mention them as some of the best and sweetest pictures of manners in existence. To the English reader they are full as interesting as to Americans, from the purity and fidelity of the democratic spirit which they breathe throughout. The woman who so appreciates [Pg 216] the blessing of living in such a society as she describes, deserves the honour of being the first to commend it to the affections of humanity.

The manners of the wealthy classes depend, of course, upon the character of their objects and interests: but they are not, on the whole, so agreeable as those of their less opulent neighbours. The restless ostentation of such as live for grandeur and show is vulgar;—as I have said, the only vulgarity to be seen in the country. Nothing can exceed the display of it at watering-places. At Rockaway, on Long Island, I saw in one large room, while the company was waiting for dinner, a number of groups which would have made a good year's income for a clever caricaturist. If any lady, with an eye and a pencil adequate to the occasion, would sketch the phenomena of affectation that might be seen in one day in the piazza and drawing-room at Rockaway, she might be a useful censor of manners. But the task would be too full of sorrow and shame for any one with the true republican spirit. For my own part, I felt bewildered in such company. It was as if I had been set down on a kind of debatable land between the wholly imaginary society of the so-called fashionable novels of late years, and the broad sketches of citizen-life given by Madame D'Arblay. It was like nothing real. When I saw the young ladies tricked out in the most expensive finery, flirting over the backgammon-board, tripping affectedly across the room, languishing with a seventy-dollar cambric handkerchief, starting up in ecstasy at the entrance of a baby; the mothers as busy with affectations of another kind; and the brothers sidling hither and thither, now with assiduity, and now with nonchalance; and no one imparting the refreshment of a natural countenance, movement, or tone, I almost doubted whether I was awake. The village [Pg 217] scenes that I had witnessed rose up in strong contrast;—the mirthful wedding, the wagon-drives, the offerings of wild-flowers to the stranger; the unintermitting, simple courtesy of each to all;—and it was scarcely credible that these contrasting scenes could both be existing in the same republic.

Such watering-place manners as I saw at Rockaway are considered and called vulgar on the spot:—of course, for the majority are far superior to them. They deserve notice no further than as they are absolutely anti-republican in their whole principle and spirit: and no deviation from the republican principle in any class should be passed over by the moralist without notice. The brand of contempt should be fixed upon any unprincipled or false-principled style of manners, in a community based upon avowed principles. The contempt thus inflicted upon the mode may possibly save the persons who would otherwise render themselves liable to it. The practice of ostentation may be lessened in America, as that of suicide was in France, by ridicule and contempt. It is desirable for all parties that this should be the method. The weak and vain had better be deterred from entering upon the race of vanity, than exposed when it is too late: and, for those of clearer and stronger minds, it is safer to despise things than persons: for, however necessary and virtuous the contempt of abstract vice and folly may be, there is no mind clear and strong enough to entertain with safety contempt of persons.

The best sort of rich persons, those whose principles and spirit are democratic, their desires moderate, their pursuits rational, drop out of sight of the mind's eye in considering the manners of the rich. Their wealth becomes only a comparatively unimportant circumstance connected with [Pg 218] them. They support more beneficent objects than others, and perhaps have houses and libraries that it is a luxury to go to: but these things are not associated with themselves in the minds of their friends, as long as they are not so in their own. They fall into the ranks of the honourable, independent, thorough-bred classes of the country, (its true glory,) just as if they were not rich. The next best order of rich people,—those who put their time and money to good uses, but who are not blessed with the true democratic spirit of faith, have manners,—infinitely better than the Rockaway style,—but not so good as those of more faithful republicans. They are above the vanity of show and the struggle for fashion: but they dread the ascendency of ignorance, and distrust the classes whom they do not know. They are readers: their imaginations live in the Old World; and they have insensibly adopted the old-world prejudice, that "the people" must be ignorant, passionate, and rapacious. The conversation of such gives utterance to an assumption, and their bearing betrays an uneasiness, which are highly unfavourable to good manners. This small class are so respectable in the main, and for some great objects so useful, that it is much to be desired that they could be referred back perpetually to the democratic principles which would relieve their anxiety, and give to their manners that cheerfulness which should belong to honest republicans who have everything to hope, and little to fear.

One of the most remarkable sights in the country is the President's levee. Nothing is easier than to laugh at it. There is probably no mode in which a number of human beings can assemble which may not be laughable from one point of view or another. The President's levee presents many [Pg 219] facilities for ridicule. Men go there in plain cloaks and leather belts, with all manner of wigs, and offer a large variety of obeisance to the chief magistrate. Women go in bonnets and shawls, talk about the company, stand upon chairs to look over people's heads, and stare at the large rooms. There was a story of two girls, thus dressed, being lifted up by their escorting gentlemen, and seated on the two ends of the mantel-piece, like lustres, where they could obtain a view of the company as they entered. To see such people mixed in with foreign ambassadors and their suites, to observe the small mutual knowledge of classes and persons who thus meet on terms of equality, is amusing enough. But, amidst much that was laughable, I certainly felt that I was seeing a fine spectacle. If the gentry of Washington desire to do away with the custom, they must be unaware of the dignity which resides in it, and which is apparent to the eye of a stranger, through any inconveniences which it may have. I am sorry that its recurrence is no longer annual. I am sorry that the practice of distributing refreshments is relinquished: though this is a matter of less importance and of more inconvenience. If the custom itself should ever be given up, the bad taste of such a surrender will be unquestionable. There should be some time and place where the chief magistrate and the people may meet to exchange their respects, all other business being out of the question: and I should like to see the occasion made annual again.

I saw no bad manners at the President's levee, except on the part of a silly, swaggering Englishman. All was quiet and orderly; and there was an air of gaiety which rather surprised me. The great people were amused at the aspect of the assembly: and the humbler at the novelties that were going on before their eyes. Our party went at eight o'clock. As we alighted from the [Pg 220] carriage, I saw a number of women, well attended, going up the steps in the commonest morning walking-dress. In the hall, were parties of young men, exhibiting their graces in a walk from end to end: and ladies throwing off their shawls, and displaying the most splendid dresses. The President, with some members of his cabinet on either hand, stood in the middle of the first room, ready to bow to all the ladies, and shake hands with all the gentlemen who presented themselves. The company then passed on to the fire-place, where stood the ladies of the President's family, attended by the Vice-president, and the Secretary of the Treasury. From this point, the visitors dispersed themselves through the rooms, chatting in groups in the Blue-room, or joining the immense promenade in the great East room. After two circuits there, I went back to the reception-room; by far the most interesting to an observer. I saw one ambassador after another enter with his suite; the Judges of the Supreme Court; the majority of the members of both Houses of Congress; and intermingled with these, the plainest farmers, storekeepers, and mechanics, with their primitive wives and simple daughters. Some looked merry; some looked busy; but none bashful. I believe there were three thousand persons present. There was one deficiency,—one drawback, as I felt at the time. There were no persons of colour. Whatever individuals or classes may choose to do about selecting their society according to rules of their own making, here there should be no distinction. I know the pleas that would be urged,—the levee being held in a slave district; the presence of slave-holders from the south; and many others; but such pleas will not stand before the plain fact that this levee is the appointed means by which citizens of the United States of all degrees may, once in a time, meet together, to pay [Pg 221] their equal respects to their chief magistrate. Every man of colour who is a citizen of the United States has a right to as free an admission as any other man; and it would be a dignity added to the White House if such were seen there. It is not to its credit that there is any place in the country where its people are more free to meet on equal terms. There is such a place. In the Catholic cathedral in New Orleans, I saw persons of every shade of colour kneeling on the pavement, without separation or distinction. I would fain have seen also some one secular house where, by general consent, all kinds of men might meet as brethren. But not even in republican America is there yet such an one.

The Americans possess an advantage in regard to the teaching of manners which they do not yet appreciate. They have before their eyes, in the manners of the coloured race, a perpetual caricature of their own follies; a mirror of conventionalism from which they can never escape. The negroes are the most imitative set of people living. While they are in a degraded condition, with little principle, little knowledge, little independence, they copy the most successfully those things in their superiors which involve the least principle, knowledge, and independence; viz. their conventionalisms. They carry their mimicry far beyond any which is seen among the menials of the rich in Europe. The black footmen of the United States have tiptoe graces, stiff cravats, and eye-catching flourishes, like the footmen in London: but the imitation extends into more important matters. As the slaves of the south assume their masters' names and military titles, they assume their methods of conducting the courtesies and gaieties of life. I have in my possession a note of invitation to a ball, written on pink paper with gilt edges.[24] When the lady [Pg 222] invited came to her mistress for the ticket which was necessary to authorise her being out after nine at night, she was dressed in satin with muslin over it, satin shoes, and white kid gloves:—but, the satin was faded, the muslin torn: the shoes were tied upon the extremities of her splay feet, and the white gloves dropping in tatters from her dark fingers. She was a caricature, instead of a fine lady. A friend of mine walked a mile or two in the dusk behind two black men and a woman whom they were courting. He told me that nothing could be more admirable than the coyness of the lady, and the compliments of the gallant and his friend. It could not be very amusing to those who reflect that holy and constant love, free preference, and all that makes marriage a blessing instead of a curse, were here out of the question: but the resemblance in the mode of courtship to that adopted by whites, when meditating marriage of a not dissimilar virtue,

—a marriage of barter,—could not be overlooked.

Even in their ultimate, funereal courtesies, the coloured race imitate the whites. An epitaph on a negro baby at Savannah begins, "Sweet blighted lily!"—They have few customs which are absolutely peculiar. One of these is refusing to eat before whites. When we went long expeditions, carrying luncheon, or procuring it by the road-side, the slaves always retired with their share behind trees or large stones, or other hiding-places.

The Americans may be considered secure of good manners generally while intellect is so reverenced among them as it is, above all other claims to honour. Whatever follies and frivolities the would-be fashionable classes may perpetrate, they will never be able to degrade the national [Pg 223] manners, or to make themselves the first people in the republic. Intellect carries all before it in social intercourse, and will continue to do so. I was struck by the fact that, in country villages, the most enlightened members of a family may be cultivated as acquaintance, without the rest. They may be invited to a superior party, and the others left for an inferior one. As for the cities, Washington, with its motley population in time of Session, is an exception to all rules; and I certainly saw some uncommonly foolish people treated with more attention, of a temporary kind, than some very wise ones. But in other cities I am not aware of having seen any great influence possessed by persons who had not sufficient intellectual desert. A Washington belle related to me the sad story of the death of a young man who fell from a small boat into the Potomac in the night,—it is supposed in his sleep. She told where and how his body was found; and what relations he had left; and finished with "he will be much missed at parties." Washington is a place where a young man may be thus mourned: but elsewhere there would have been a better reason given, or none at all. In the capitals of States, men rank according to their supposed intellect. Many mistakes are made in the estimate; and (far worse) many pernicious allowances are made for bad morals, for the sake of the superior intellect: but still the taste is a higher one, the gradation a more rational one, than is to be found elsewhere: and, where such a taste and a gradation subsist, the essentials of good manners can never be wanting. It is refreshing to witness the village homage paid to the author and the statesman, as to the highest of human beings. Whatever the author and the statesman may be, the homage is honourable to those who offer it. It is no less refreshing in the cities to see how the vainest fops and the most solid [Pg 224] capitalists readily succumb before men and women who are distinguished for nothing but their minds. The worst of manners,—those which fly off the furthest from nature, and do the most violence to the affections—are such as arise from a surpassing regard to things outward and shadowy: the best are those which manifest a pursuit of things invisible and real. The Americans are better mannered than others, in as far as they reverence intellect more than wealth and fashion. It remains for them to enlarge their notions, and exalt their tests of intellect, till it shall identify itself with morals. National manners, national observances of rank graduated on such a principle would be no subject of controversy, but would command the admiration, and gradually form the taste, of the world. I cannot but think that a beginning of this change is visible in the intercourses of those Americans who have rejected the prevalent false idea of honour, and in the spirit of love borne witness to unpopular truths. The freedom, gentleness, and earnestness of the manners of such offer a realisation of grace which no conventional training can secure. A southern gentleman was on board a steam-boat, proceeding from New York to Philadelphia. He engaged in conversation with two unknown gentlemen; and soon plunged into the subject of slavery. He was a slave-holder, and they were abolitionists. With one of them, he was peculiarly pleased; and they discussed their subject for a great length of time. He at last addressed the other abolitionist thus: "How easy and pleasant it is to argue this matter with such a man as your friend! If all you abolitionists were like him, how soon we and you might come to an understanding! But you are generally so coarse and violent! You are all so like Garrison! Pray give me your friend's name."

"You have just spoken it. It is Mr. Garrison." [Pg 225]

"Impossible! This gentleman is so mild, so gentlemanly."

"Ask the captain if it be not Mr. Garrison."

It was an important point. The captain was asked. This mild, courteous, simple, sprightly, gentlemanly person was Garrison.

FOOTNOTES:

[20] Channing's Letter to Birney. 1837.

[21] Godwin's Inquirer.

[22] Sober Thoughts on the State of the Times. Boston, 1835, p. 27.

[23] This reminds me of a singular instance of confusion of ideas. The landlady of a hotel declared my trumpet to be the best invention she had ever seen: better than spectacles. Query, better for what?

[24] "Mr. Richard Masey requests the pleasure of Mrs. Miken's, and Miss Arthur's company, on Saturday evening at seven o'clock, in Dr. Smith's long brick-store."

CHAPTER II.
WOMAN.

[Pg 226]

> "The vale best discovereth the hill. There is little friendship in the world, and least of all between equals, which was wont to be magnified. That that is, is between superior and inferior, whose fortunes may comprehend the one the other."
>
> *Bacon.*

If a test of civilisation be sought, none can be so sure as the condition of that half of society over which the other half has power,—from the exercise of the right of the strongest. Tried by this test, the American civilisation appears to be of a lower order than might have been expected from some other symptoms of its social state. The Americans have, in the treatment of women, fallen below, not only their own democratic principles, but the practice of some parts of the Old World.

The unconsciousness of both parties as to the injuries suffered by women at the hands of those who hold the power is a sufficient proof of the low degree of civilisation in this important particular at which they rest. While woman's intellect is confined, her morals crushed, her health ruined, her weaknesses encouraged, and her strength punished, she is told that her lot is cast in the paradise of women: and there is no country in the world where there is so much boasting of the "chivalrous" treatment she enjoys. That is to say,—she has the best place in stage-coaches: [Pg 227] when there are not chairs enough for everybody, the gentlemen stand: she hears oratorical flourishes on public occasions about wives and home, and apostrophes to woman: her husband's hair stands on end at the idea of her working, and he toils to indulge her with money: she has liberty to get her brain turned by religious excitements, that her attention may be diverted from morals, politics, and philosophy; and, especially, her morals are guarded by the strictest observance of propriety in her presence. In short, indulgence is given her as a substitute for justice. Her case differs from that of the slave, as to the principle, just so far as this; that the indulgence is large and universal, instead of petty and capricious. In both cases, justice is denied on no better plea than the right of the strongest. In both cases, the acquiescence of the many, and the burning discontent of the few, of the oppressed, testify, the one to the actual degradation of the class, and the other to its fitness for the enjoyment of human rights.

The intellect of woman is confined. I met with immediate proof of this. Within ten days of my landing, I encountered three outrageous pedants, among the ladies; and in my progress through the country I met with a greater variety and extent of female pedantry than the experience of a lifetime in Europe would afford. I could fill the remainder of my volume with sketches: but I forbear, through respect even for this very pedantry. Where intellect has a fair chance, there is no pedantry, among men or women. It is the result of an intellect which cannot be wholly passive, but must demonstrate some force, and does so through the medium of narrow morals. Pedantry indicates the first struggle of intellect with its restraints; and is therefore a hopeful symptom.

The intellect of woman is confined by an unjustifiable restriction of both methods of education,— [Pg 228] by express teaching, and by the discipline of circumstance. The former, though prior in the chronology of each individual, is a direct consequence of the latter, as regards the whole of the sex. As women have none of the objects in life for which an enlarged education is considered requisite, the education is not given. Female education in America is much what it is in England. There is a profession of some things being taught which are supposed necessary because everybody learns them. They serve to fill up time, to occupy attention harmlessly, to improve conversation, and to make women something like companions to their husbands, and able to teach their children somewhat. But what is given is, for the most part, passively received; and what is obtained is, chiefly, by means of the memory. There is rarely or never a careful ordering of influences for the promotion of clear intellectual activity. Such activity, when it exceeds that which is necessary to make the work of the teacher easy, is feared and repressed. This is natural enough, as long as women are excluded from the objects for which men are trained. While there are natural rights which women may not use, just claims which are not to be listened to, large objects which may not be approached, even in imagination, intellectual activity is dangerous: or, as the phrase is, unfit. Accordingly, marriage is the only object left open to woman. Philosophy she may pursue only fancifully, and under pain of ridicule: science only as a pastime, and under a similar penalty. Art is declared to be left open: but the necessary learning, and, yet more, the indispensable experience of reality, are denied to her. Literature is also said to be permitted: but under what penalties and restrictions? I need only refer to the last three pages of the review of [Pg 229] Miss Sedgwick's last novel in the North American Review, to support all that can be said of the insolence to which the intellect of women is exposed in America. I am aware that many blush for that article, and disclaim all sympathy with it: but the bare fact that any man in the country could write it, that any editor could sanction it, that such an intolerable scoff should be allowed to find its way to the light, is a sufficient proof of the degradation of the sex. Nothing is thus left for women but marriage.—Yes; Religion, is the reply.—Religion is a temper, not a pursuit. It is the moral atmosphere in which human beings are to live and move. Men do not live to breathe: they breathe to live. A German lady of extraordinary powers and endowments, remarked to me with amazement on all the knowledge of the American women being based on theology. She observed that in her own country theology had its turn with other sciences, as a pursuit: but nowhere, but with the American women, had she known it make the foundation of all other knowledge. Even while thus complaining, this lady stated the case too favourably. American women have not the requisites for the study of theology. The difference between theology and religion, the science

and the temper, is yet scarcely known among them. It is religion which they pursue as an occupation; and hence its small results upon the conduct, as well as upon the intellect. We are driven back upon marriage as the only appointed object in life: and upon the conviction that the sum and substance of female education in America, as in England, is training women to consider marriage as the sole object in life, and to pretend that they do not think so.

[Pg 230] The morals of women are crushed. If there be any human power and business and privilege which is absolutely universal, it is the discovery and adoption of the principle and laws of duty. As every individual, whether man or woman, has a reason and a conscience, this is a work which each is thereby authorised to do for him or herself. But it is not only virtually prohibited to beings who, like the American women, have scarcely any objects in life proposed to them; but the whole apparatus of opinion is brought to bear offensively upon individuals among women who exercise freedom of mind in deciding upon what duty is, and the methods by which it is to be pursued. There is nothing extraordinary to the disinterested observer in women being so grieved at the case of slaves,—slave wives and mothers, as well as spirit-broken men,—as to wish to do what they could for their relief: there is nothing but what is natural in their being ashamed of the cowardice of such white slaves of the north as are deterred by intimidation from using their rights of speech and of the press, in behalf of the suffering race, and in their resolving not to do likewise: there is nothing but what is justifiable in their using their moral freedom, each for herself, in neglect of the threats of punishment: yet there were no bounds to the efforts made to crush the actions of women who thus used their human powers in the abolition question, and the convictions of those who looked on, and who might possibly be warmed into free action by the beauty of what they saw. It will be remembered that they were women who asserted the right of meeting and of discussion, on the day when Garrison was mobbed in Boston. Bills were posted about the city on this occasion, denouncing these women as casting off the refinement and delicacy of their sex: the newspapers, which laud the exertions of ladies in all other charities for the prosecution of which they are wont to meet and speak, teemed with the most disgusting [Pg 231] reproaches and insinuations: and the pamphlets which related to the question all presumed to censure the act of duty which the women had performed in deciding upon their duty for themselves.—One lady, of high talents and character, whose books were very popular before she did a deed greater than that of writing any book, in acting upon an unusual conviction of duty, and becoming an abolitionist, has been almost excommunicated since. A family of ladies, whose talents and conscientiousness had placed them high in the estimation of society as teachers, have lost all their pupils since they declared their anti-slavery opinions. The reproach in all the many similar cases that I know is, not that the ladies hold anti-slavery opinions, but that they act upon them. The incessant outcry about the retiring modesty of the sex proves the opinion of the censors to be, that fidelity to conscience is inconsistent with retiring modesty. If it be so, let the modesty succumb. It can be only a false modesty which can be thus endangered. No doubt, there were people in Rome who were scandalised at the unseemly boldness of christian women who stood in the amphitheatre to be torn in pieces for their religion. No doubt there were many gentlemen in the British army who thought it unsuitable to the retiring delicacy of the sex that the wives and daughters of the revolutionary heroes should be revolutionary heroines. But the event has a marvellous efficacy in modifying the ultimate sentence. The bold christian women, the brave American wives and daughters of half a century ago are honoured, while the intrepid moralists of the present day, worthy of their grandmothers, are made the confessors and martyrs of their age.

[Pg 232] I could cite many conversations and incidents to show how the morals of women are crushed: but I can make room for only one. Let it be the following. A lady, who is considered unusually clear-headed and sound-hearted where trying questions are not concerned, one day praised very highly Dr. Channing's work on Slavery. "But," said she, "do not you think it a pity that so much is said on slavery just now?"

"No. I think it necessary and natural."

"But people who hold Dr. Channing's belief about a future life, cannot well make out the case of the slaves to be so very bad an one. If the present life is but a moment in comparison with the eternity to come, can it matter so very much how it is spent?"

"How does it strike you about your own children? Would it reconcile you to their being made slaves, that they could be so only for three-score years and ten?"

"O no. But yet it seems as if life would so soon be over."

"And what do you think of their condition at the end of it? How much will the purposes of human life have been fulfilled?"

"The slaves will not be punished, you know, for the state they may be in; for it will be no fault of their own. Their masters will have the responsibility; not they."

"Place the responsibility where you will. Speaking according to your own belief, do you think it of no consequence whether a human being enters upon a future life utterly ignorant and sensualised, or in the likeness of Dr. Channing, as you described him just now?"

"Of great consequence, certainly. But then it is no business of ours; of us women, at all events."

"I thought you considered yourself a Christian."

[Pg 233] "So I do. You will say that Christians should help sufferers, whoever and wherever they may be.

But not women, in all cases, surely."

"Where, in your Christianity, do you find the distinction made?"

She could only reply that she thought women should confine themselves to doing what could be done at home. I asked her what her christian charity would bid her do, if she saw a great boy beating a little one in the street.

"O, I parted two such the other day in the street. It would have been very wrong to have passed them by."

"Well: if there are a thousand strong men in the south beating ten thousand weak slaves, and you can possibly help to stop the beating by a declaration of your opinion upon it, does not your christian duty oblige you to make such a declaration, whether you are man or woman? What in the world has your womanhood to do with it?"

How fearfully the morals of woman are crushed, appears from the prevalent persuasion that there are virtues which are peculiarly masculine, and others which are peculiarly feminine. It is amazing that a society which makes a most emphatic profession of its Christianity, should almost universally entertain such a fallacy: and not see that, in the case they suppose, instead of the character of Christ being the meeting point of all virtues, there would have been a separate gospel for women, and a second company of agents for its diffusion. It is not only that masculine and feminine employments are supposed to be properly different. No one in the world, I believe, questions this. But it is actually supposed that what are called the hardy virtues are more appropriate to men, and the gentler to women. As all virtues nourish each other, and can no otherwise be nourished, the consequence of the admitted fallacy is that men are, after all, not [Pg 234] nearly so brave as they ought to be; nor women so gentle. But what is the manly character till it be gentle? The very word magnanimity cannot be thought of in relation to it till it becomes mild—Christ-like. Again, what can a woman be, or do, without bravery? Has she not to struggle with the toils and difficulties which follow upon the mere possession of a mind? Must she not face physical and moral pain—physical and moral danger? Is there a day of her life in which there are not conflicts wherein no one can help her—perilous work to be done, in which she can have neither sympathy nor aid? Let her lean upon man as much as he will, how much is it that he can do for her?—from how much can he protect her? From a few physical perils, and from a very few social evils. This is all. Over the moral world he has no control, except on his own account; and it is the moral life of human beings which is all in all. He can neither secure any woman from pain and grief, nor rescue her from the strife of emotions, nor prevent the film of life from cracking under her feet with every step she treads, nor hide from her the abyss which is beneath, nor save her from sinking into it at last alone. While it is so, while woman is human, men should beware how they deprive her of any of the strength which is all needed for the strife and burden of humanity. Let them beware how they put her off her watch and defence, by promises which they cannot fulfil;—promises of a guardianship which can arise only from within; of support which can be derived only from the freest moral action,—from the self-reliance which can be generated by no other means.

But, it may be asked, how does society get on,—what does it do? for it acts on the supposition of there being masculine and feminine virtues,—upon the fallacy just exposed.

It does so; and the consequences are what might be looked for. Men are ungentle, tyrannical. [Pg 235] They abuse the right of the strongest, however they may veil the abuse with indulgence. They want the magnanimity to discern woman's human rights; and they crush her morals rather than allow them. Women are, as might be anticipated, weak, ignorant and subservient, in as far as they exchange self-reliance for reliance on anything out of themselves. Those who will not submit to such a suspension of their moral functions, (for the work of self-perfection remains to be done, sooner or later,) have to suffer for their allegiance to duty. They have all the need of bravery that the few heroic men who assert the highest rights of women have of gentleness, to guard them from the encroachment to which power, custom, and education, incessantly conduce.

Such brave women and such just men there are in the United States, scattered among the multitude, whose false apprehension of rights leads to an enormous failure of duties. There are enough of such to commend the true understanding and practice to the simplest minds and most faithful hearts of the community, under whose testimony the right principle will spread and flourish. If it were not for the external prosperity of the country, the injured half of its society would probably obtain justice sooner than in any country of Europe. But the prosperity of America is a circumstance unfavourable to its women. It will be long before they are put to the proof as to what they are capable of thinking and doing: a proof to which hundreds, perhaps thousands of Englishwomen have been put by adversity, and the result of which is a remarkable improvement in their social condition, even within the space of ten years. Persecution for opinion, punishment for all manifestations of intellectual and moral strength, are still as common as [Pg 236] women who have opinions and who manifest strength: but some things are easy, and many are possible of achievement, to women of ordinary powers, which it would have required genius to accomplish but a few years ago.

SECTION I.

MARRIAGE.

If there is any country on earth where the course of true love may be expected to run smooth, it is America. It is a country where all can marry early, where there need be no anxiety about a worldly provision, and where the troubles arising from conventional considerations of rank and connexion ought to be entirely absent. It is difficult for a stranger to imagine beforehand why all should not love and marry naturally and freely, to the prevention of vice out of the marriage state, and of the common causes of unhappiness within it. The anticipations of the stranger are not, however, fulfilled: and they never can be while the one sex overbears the other. Marriage is in America more nearly universal, more safe, more tranquil, more fortunate than in England: but it is still subject to the troubles which arise from the inequality of the parties in mind and in occupation. It is more nearly universal, from the entire prosperity of the country: it is safer, from the greater freedom of divorce, and consequent discouragement of swindling, and other vicious marriages: it is more tranquil and fortunate from the marriage vows being made absolutely [Pg 237] reciprocal; from the arrangements about property being generally far more favorable to the wife than in England; and from her not being made, as in England, to all intents and purposes the property of her husband. The outward requisites to happiness are nearly complete, and the institution is purified from the grossest of the scandals which degrade it in the Old World: but it is still the imperfect institution which it must remain while women continue to be ill-educated, passive, and subservient: or well-educated, vigorous, and free only upon sufferance.

The institution presents a different aspect in the various parts of the country. I have spoken of the early marriages of silly children in the south and west, where, owing to the disproportion of numbers, every woman is married before she well knows how serious a matter human life is. She has an advantage which very few women elsewhere are allowed: she has her own property to manage. It would be a rare sight elsewhere to see a woman of twenty-one in her second widowhood, managing her own farm or plantation; and managing it well, because it had been in her own hands during her marriage. In Louisiana, and also in Missouri, (and probably in other States,) a woman not only has half her husband's property by right at his death, but may always be considered as possessed of half his gains during his life; having at all times power to bequeath that amount. The husband interferes much less with his wife's property in the south, even through her voluntary relinquishment of it, than is at all usual where the cases of women, having property during their marriage are rare. In the southern newspapers, advertisements may at any time be seen, running thus:—"Mrs. A, wife of Mr. A, will dispose of &c. &c." When Madame [Pg 238] Lalaurie was mobbed in New Orleans, no one meddled with her husband or his possessions; as he was no more responsible for her management of her human property than anybody else. On the whole, the practice seems to be that the weakest and most ignorant women give up their property to their husbands; the husbands of such women being precisely the men most disposed to accept it: and that the strongest-minded and most conscientious women keep their property, and use their rights; the husbands of such women being precisely those who would refuse to deprive their wives of their social duties and privileges.

If this condition of the marriage law should strike any English persons as a peculiarity, it is well that they should know that it is the English law which is peculiar, and not that of Louisiana. The English alone vary from the old Saxon law, that a wife shall possess half, or a large part, of her husband's earnings or makings. It is so in Spanish, French, and Italian law; and probably in German, as the others are derived thence. Massachusetts has copied the faults of the English law, in this particular; and I never met with any lawyer, or other citizen with whom I conversed on the subject, who was not ashamed of the barbarism of the law under which a woman's property goes into her husband's hands with herself. A liberal-minded lawyer of Boston told me that his advice to testators always is to leave the largest possible amount to the widow, subject to the condition of her leaving it to the children: but that it is with shame that he reflects that any woman should owe that to his professional advice which the law should have secured to her as a right. I heard a frequent expression of indignation that the wife, the friend and helper of many years, should be portioned off with a legacy, like a salaried domestic, instead of having her [Pg 239] husband's affairs come legally, as they would naturally, into her hands. In Rhode Island, a widow is entitled to one-third of her husband's property: and, on the sale of any estate of his during his life, she is examined, in the absence of the husband, as to her will with regard to her own proportion of it. There is some of the apparatus of female independence in the country. It will be most interesting to observe to what uses it is put, whenever the restraints of education and opinion to which women are subject, shall be so far relaxed as to leave them morally free.

I have mentioned that divorce is more easily obtained in the United States than in England. In no country, I believe, are the marriage laws so iniquitous as in England, and the conjugal relation, in consequence, so impaired. Whatever may be thought of the principles which are to enter into laws of divorce, whether it be held that pleas for divorce should be one, (as narrow interpreters of the New Testament would have it;) or two, (as the law of England has it;) or several, (as the Continental and United States' laws in many instances allow,) nobody, I believe, defends the arrangement by which, in England, divorce is obtainable only by the very rich. The barbarism of granting that as a privilege to the extremely wealthy, to which money bears no relation whatever, and in which all married persons whatever have an equal interest, needs no exposure beyond the mere statement of the fact. It will be seen at a glance how such an arrangement tends to vitiate marriage: how it offers impunity to adventurers, and encouragement to every kind of mercenary marriages: how absolute is its oppression of the injured party: and how, by vitiating marriage, it originates and aggravates licentiousness to an incalculable extent. To England alone belongs the disgrace of such a method of legislation. I believe that, while there is little to be said for the [Pg 240] legislation of any part of the world on this head, it is nowhere so vicious as in England.

Of the American States, I believe New York approaches nearest to England in its laws of divorce. It is less rigid, in as far as that more is comprehended under the term "cruelty." The husband is supposed to be liable to cruelty from the wife, as well as the wife from the husband. There is no practical distinction made between rich and poor by the process being rendered expensive: and the cause is more easily resumable after a reconciliation of the parties. In Massachusetts, the term "cruelty" is made so comprehensive, and the mode of sustaining the plea is so considerately devised, that divorces are obtainable with peculiar ease. The natural consequence follows: such a thing is never heard of. A long-established and very eminent lawyer of Boston told me that he had known of only one in all his experience. Thus it is wherever the law is relaxed, and, *cæteris paribus*, in proportion to its relaxation: for the obvious reason, that the protection offered by law to the injured party causes marriages to be entered into with fewer risks, and the conjugal relation carried on with more equality. Retribution is known to impend over violations of conjugal duty. When I was in North Carolina, the wife of a gamester there obtained a divorce without the slightest difficulty. When she had brought evidence of the danger to herself and her children,—danger pecuniary and moral,—from her husband's gambling habits, the bill passed both Houses without a dissenting voice.

It is clear that the sole business which legislation has with marriage is with the arrangement of property; to guard the reciprocal rights of the children of the marriage and the community. There [Pg 241] is no further pretence for the interference of the law, in any way. An advance towards the recognition of the true principle of legislative interference in marriage has been made in England, in the new law in which the agreement of marriage is made a civil contract, leaving the religious obligation to the conscience and taste of the parties. It will be probably next perceived that if the civil obligation is fulfilled, if the children of the marriage are legally and satisfactorily provided for by the parties, without the assistance of the legislature, the legislature has, in principle, nothing more to do with the matter. This principle has been acted upon in the marriage arrangements of Zurich, with the best effects upon the morals of the conjugal relation. The parties there are married by a form; and have liberty to divorce themselves without any appeal to law, on showing that they have legally provided for the children of the marriage. There was some previous alarm about the effect upon morals of the removal of such important legal restrictions: but the event justified the confidence of those who proceeded on the conviction that the laws of human affection, when not tampered with, are more sacred and binding than those of any legislature that ever sat in council. There was some levity at first, chiefly on the part of those who were suffering under the old system: but the morals of the society soon became, and have since remained, peculiarly pure.

It is assumed in America, particularly in New England, that the morals of society there are peculiarly pure. I am grieved to doubt the fact: but I do doubt it. Nothing like a comparison between one country and another in different circumstances can be instituted: nor would any one desire to enter upon such a comparison. The bottomless vice, the all-pervading corruption of European society cannot, by possibility, be yet paralleled in America: but neither is it true that [Pg 242] any outward prosperity, any arrangement of circumstances, can keep a society pure while there is corruption in its social methods, and among its principles of individual action. Even in America, where every young man may, if he chooses, marry at twenty-one, and appropriate all the best comforts of domestic life,—even here there is vice. Men do not choose to marry early, because they have learned to think other things of more importance than the best comforts of domestic life. A gentleman of Massachusetts, who knows life and the value of most things in it, spoke to me with deep concern of the alteration in manners which is going on: of the increase of bachelors, and of mercenary marriages; and of the fearful consequences. It is too soon for America to be following the old world in its ways. In the old world, the necessity of thinking of a maintenance before thinking of a wife has led to requiring a certain style of living before taking a wife; and then, alas! to taking a wife for the sake of securing a certain style of living. That this species of corruption is already spreading in the new world is beyond a doubt;—in the cities, where the people who live for wealth and for opinion congregate.

I was struck with the great number of New England women whom I saw married to men old enough to be their fathers. One instance which perplexed me exceedingly, on my entrance into the country, was explained very little to my satisfaction. The girl had been engaged to a young man whom she was attached to: her mother broke off the engagement, and married her to a rich old man. This story was a real shock to me; so persuaded had I been that in America, at least, one might escape from the disgusting spectacle of mercenary marriages. But I saw only too many [Pg 243] instances afterwards. The practice was ascribed to the often-mentioned fact of the young men migrating westwards in large numbers, leaving those who should be their wives to marry widowers of double their age. The Auld Robin Gray story is a frequently enacted tragedy here: and one of the worst symptoms that struck me was, that there was usually a demand upon my sympathy in such cases. I have no sympathy for those who, under any pressure of circumstances, sacrifice their heart's-love for legal prostitution; and no environment of beauty or sentiment can deprive the fact of its coarseness: and least of all could I sympathise with women who set the example of marrying for an establishment in a new country, where, if anywhere, the conjugal relation should be found in its purity.

The unavoidable consequence of such a mode of marrying is, that the sanctity of marriage is impaired, and that vice succeeds. Any one must see at a glance that if men and women marry those whom they do not love, they must love those whom they do not marry. There are sad tales in country villages, here and there, which attest this; and yet more in towns, in a rank of society where such things are seldom or never heard of in England. I rather think that married life is

immeasurably purer in America than in England: but that there is not otherwise much superiority to boast of. I can only say, that I unavoidably knew of more cases of lapse in highly respectable families in one State than ever came to my knowledge at home; and that they were got over with a disgrace far more temporary and superficial than they could have been visited with in England. I am aware that in Europe the victims are chosen, with deliberate selfishness, from classes which cannot make known their perils and their injuries; while in America, happily, no such class exists. [Pg 244] I am aware that this destroys all possibility of a comparison: but the fact remains, that the morals of American society are less pure than they assume to be. If the common boast be meant to apply to the rural population, at least let it not be made, either in pious gratitude, or patriotic conceit, by the aristocratic city classes, who, by introducing the practice of mercenary marriages, have rendered themselves responsible for whatever dreadful consequences may ensue.

The ultimate and very strong impression on the mind of a stranger, pondering the morals of society in America, is that human nature is much the same everywhere, whatever may be its environment of riches or poverty; and that it is justice to the human nature, and not improvement in fortunes, which must be looked to as the promise of a better time. Laws and customs may be creative of vice; and should be therefore perpetually under process of observation and correction: but laws and customs cannot be creative of virtue: they may encourage and help to preserve it; but they cannot originate it. In the present case, the course to be pursued is to exalt the aims, and strengthen the self-discipline of the whole of society, by each one being as good as he can make himself, and relying on his own efforts after self-perfection rather than on any fortunate arrangements of outward social circumstances. Women, especially, should be allowed the use and benefit of whatever native strength their Maker has seen fit to give them. It is essential to the virtue of society that they should be allowed the freest moral action, unfettered by ignorance, and unintimidated by authority: for it is unquestioned and unquestionable that if women were not weak, men could not be wicked: that if women were bravely pure, there must be an end to the dastardly tyranny of licentiousness.

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SECTION II.
OCCUPATION.

The greater number of American women have home and its affairs, wherewith to occupy themselves. Wifely and motherly occupation may be called the sole business of woman there. If she has not that, she has nothing. The only alternative, as I have said, is making an occupation of either religion or dissipation; neither of which is fit to be so used: the one being a state of mind; the other altogether a negation when not taken in alternation with business.

It must happen that where all women have only one serious object, many of them will be unfit for that object. In the United States, as elsewhere, there are women no more fit to be wives and mothers than to be statesmen and generals; no more fit for any responsibility whatever, than for the maximum of responsibility. There is no need to describe such: they may be seen everywhere. I allude to them only for the purpose of mentioning that many of this class shirk some of their labours and cares, by taking refuge in boarding-houses. It is a circumstance very unfavourable to the character of some American women, that boarding-house life has been rendered compulsory by the scarcity of labour,—the difficulty of obtaining domestic service. The more I saw of boarding-house life, the worse I thought of it; though I saw none but the best. Indeed, the degrees of merit in such establishments weigh little in the consideration of the evil of their existence at all. In the best it is something to be secure of respectable company, of a good table, [Pg 246] a well-mannered and courteous hostess, and comfort in the private apartments: but the mischiefs of the system throw all these objects into the back-ground.

To begin with young children. There can be no sufficient command of proper food for them; nor any security that they will eat it naturally at the table where fifty persons may be sitting, a dozen obsequious blacks waiting, and an array of tempting dishes within sight. The child is in imminent danger of being too shy and frightened to eat at all, or of becoming greedy to eat too much. Next, it is melancholy to see girls of twelve years old either slinking down beside their parents, and blushing painfully as often as any one of fifty strangers looks towards them; or boldly staring at all that is going on, and serving themselves, like little women of the world. After tea, it is a common practice to hand the young ladies to the piano, to play and sing to a party, composed chiefly of gentlemen, and brought together on no principle of selection except mere respectability. Next comes the mischief to the young married ladies, the most numerous class of women found in boarding-houses. The uncertainty about domestic service is so great, and the economy of boarding-house life so tempting to people who have not provided themselves with house and furniture, that it is not to be wondered at that many young married people use the accommodation provided. But no sensible husband, who could beforehand become acquainted with the liabilities incurred, would willingly expose his domestic peace to the fearful risk. I saw enough when I saw the elegantly dressed ladies repair to the windows of the common drawing-room, on their husbands' departure to the counting-house, after breakfast. There the ladies sit for hours, doing nothing but gossiping with one another, with any gentlemen of the house who may [Pg 247] happen to have no business, and with visitors. It is true that the sober-minded among the ladies can and do withdraw to their own apartments for the morning: but they complain that they cannot settle to regular employments as they could in a house of their own. Either they are not going to stay long; or they have not room for their books, or they are broken in upon by their

acquaintances in the house. The common testimony is, that little can be done in boarding-houses: and if the more sober-minded find it so, the fate of the thoughtless, who have no real business to do, may be easily anticipated. They find a dear friend or two among the boarders, to whom they confide their husbands' secrets. A woman who would do this once would do it twice, or as often as she changes her boarding-house, and finds a new dear friend in each. I have been assured that there is no end to the difficulties in which gentlemen have been involved, both as to their commercial and domestic affairs, by the indiscretion of their thoughtless young wives, amidst the idleness and levities of boarding-house life.—As for the gentlemen, they are much to be pitied. Public meals, a noisy house, confinement to one or two private rooms, with the absence of all gratifications of their own peculiar convenience and taste, are but a poor solace to the man of business, after the toils and cares of the day. When to these are added the snares to which their wives are exposed, it may be imagined that men of sense and refinement would rather bear with any domestic inconvenience from the uncertainty and bad quality of help, than give up housekeeping. They would content themselves, if need were, with a bread and cheese dinner, light their own fire, and let their wives dust the furniture a few times in the year, rather than give up privacy, with its securities. I rather think that the gentlemen generally think and feel thus; [Pg 248] and that when they break up housekeeping and go to boarding-houses, it is out of indulgence to the wishes of their wives; who, if they were as wise as they should be, would wish it seldomer and less than they do.

The study of the economy of domestic service was a continual amusement to me. What I saw would fill a volume. Many families are, and have for years been, as well off for domestics as any family in England; and I must say that among the loudest complainers there were many who, from fault of either judgment or temper, deserved whatever difficulty they met with. This is remarkably the case with English ladies settled in America. They carry with them habits of command, and expectations of obedience; and when these are found utterly to fail, they grow afraid of their servants. Even when they have learned the theory that domestic service is a matter of contract, an exchange of service for recompense, the authority of the employer extending no further than to require the performance of the service promised,—when the ladies have learned to assent in words to this, they are still apt to be annoyed at things which in no way concern them. If one domestic chooses to wait at table with no cap over her scanty chevelure, and in spectacles,—if another goes to church on Sunday morning, dressed exactly like her mistress, the lady is in no way answerable for the bad taste of her domestics. But English residents often cannot learn to acquiesce in these things; nor in the servants doing their work in their own way; nor in their dividing their time as they please between their mistress's work and their own. The consequence is, that they soon find it impossible to get American help at all, and they are [Pg 249] consigned to the tender mercies of the low Irish; and every one knows what kind of servants they commonly are. Some few of them are the best domestics in America: those who know how to value a respectable home, a steady sufficient income, the honour of being trusted, and the security of valuable friends for life: but too many of them are unsettled, reckless, slovenly; some dishonest, and some intemperate.

The most fortunate housekeepers I found to be those who acted the most strenuously on principles of justice and kindness. Such housekeepers are careful, in the first place, that no part of the mutual duty shall pass unexplained; no opening be left for future dispute that can be avoided. The candidate is not only informed precisely what the work is, and shown the accommodations of the house, but consulted with about cases where the convenience of the two parties may clash. For instance, the employer stipulates to be informed some hours before, when her domestic intends to go out; and that such going out shall never take place when there is company. In return, she yields all she can to the wishes of her domestic about recreation, receiving the visits of her family, &c. Where a complete mutual understanding is arrived at, there is the best chance of the terms of the contract being faithfully adhered to, and liberally construed, on both sides: and I have seen instances of the parties having lived together in friendship and contentment for five, seven, eleven, and fourteen years.[25] Others, again, I have seen who, without fault of their own, have changed their servants three times in a fortnight. Some, too, I have observed who will certainly never be comfortably settled, unless they can be [Pg 250] taught the first principles of democracy.

Many ladies, in the country especially, take little girls to train; having them bound to a certain term of service. In such a case, the girl is taken at about eleven years old, and bound to remain till she is eighteen. Her mistress engages to clothe her; to give her Sunday-schooling, and a certain amount of weekday schooling in the year; and to present her at the end of the term (except in case of bad behaviour) with fifty dollars, or a cow, or some equivalent. Under a good mistress, this is an excellent bargain for the girl; but mistresses complain that as soon as the girls become really serviceable, by the time they are fourteen or fifteen, they begin to grow restless, having usually abundance of kind friends to tell them what good wages they might get if they were free.

In several abodes in which I resided for a longer or shorter time, the routine of the house was as easy and agreeable as any Englishman's; elsewhere, the accounts of domestic difficulties were both edifying and amusing. At first, I heard but little of such things; there being a prevalent idea in America that English ladies concern themselves very little about household affairs. This injurious misapprehension the ladies of England owe, with many others, to the fashionable novels which deluge the country from New York to beyond the Mississippi. Though the Americans repeat and believe that these books are false pictures of manners, they cannot be wholly upon their guard against impressions derived from them. Too many of them involuntarily image to

themselves the ladies of England as like the duchesses and countesses of those low books: and can scarcely believe that the wives of merchants, manufacturers, and shopkeepers, and of the greater number of professional men, buy their own provision, keep household accounts, look to [Pg 251] the making and mending, the baking, making of preserves, &c., and sometimes cook, with their own hands, any dish of which their husbands may be fond. When it was found, from my revelations, that English and American ladies have, after all, much the same sort of things to do, the real state of household economy was laid open to me.

All American ladies should know how to clear-starch and iron: how to keep plate and glass: how to cook dainties: and, if they understand the making of bread and soup likewise, so much the better. The gentlemen usually charge themselves with the business of marketing; which is very fair. A lady, highly accomplished and very literary, told me that she had lately been left entirely without help, in a country village where there was little hope of being speedily able to procure any. She and her daughter made the bread, for six weeks, and entirely kept the house, which might vie with any nobleman's for true luxury; perfect sufficiency and neatness. She mentioned one good result from the necessity: that she should never again put up with bad bread. She could now testify that bread might always be good, notwithstanding changes of weather, and all the excuses commonly given. I heard an anecdote from this lady which struck me. She was in the habit of employing, when she wanted extra help, a poor woman of colour, to do kitchen-work. The domestics had always appeared on perfectly good terms with this woman till, one day, when there was to be an evening party, the upper domestic declined waiting on the company; giving as a reason that she was offended at being required to sit down to table with the coloured woman. Her mistress gently rebuked her pride, saying "If you are above waiting on my company, my [Pg 252] family are not. You will see my daughter carry the tea-tray, and my niece the cake." The girl repented, and besought to be allowed to wait; but her assistance was declined; at which she cried heartily. The next day, she was very humble, and her mistress reasoned with her, quite successfully. The lady made one concession in silence. She had the coloured woman come after dinner, instead of before.

A country lady travelled thirty miles to a town where she thought she might intercept some Irish, coming down from Canada into the States, and supply herself with domestics from among them. She engaged to send them thirty miles to confession, twice a year, if they would live with her.—Another country lady told me that her family suffered from want of water, because the man objected to bring it. The maids fetched it; and even the children, in their little cans. The man was sturdy on the point, and she could not dismiss him for such a reason, he was such a valuable servant; though he could not drive, from having only one eye, and always got drunk when his work was done. The same lady had her house pretty well kept, by dint of superintending everything herself: but, when she wanted her rooms papered, she thought she might leave that kind of work to the artist who undertook it. When it was done, she was summoned to look at it, and called upon to admire the way in which the man had "made every crease show." He had spent his ingenuity in contriving that the pattern should not join in any two strips.

The mother of a young bride of my acquaintance flattered herself that she had graced her daughter's new house, during the wedding journey, with two exemplary domestics. The day previous to the bride's return, before the women had seen either master or mistress, they gave [Pg 253] notice that they were going away directly, in consequence of the receipt of some family news which had changed their plans. They were prevailed upon to stay for a week, when they persisted in going, though no successors had been obtained, and their young mistress was to receive her company the next day. What made the matter desperate was that the bride knew nothing of housekeeping. She made them cook as much provision, to be eaten cold, as would possibly keep; and when they had closed the door behind them, sat down and cried for a whole hour. How she got out of her troubles, I forget: but she was in excellent spirits when she told me the story.

Many anecdotes are current about the manners of the young people who come down from the retired parts of the country to domestic service in Boston. A simple country girl obeyed her instructions exactly about putting the dinner upon the table, and then summoning the family. But they delayed a few minutes, from some cause; and when they entered the dining-room, found the domestic seated and eating. She had helped herself from a fowl, thinking that "the folk were so long a-coming, the things would get cold." A young man from Vermont was hired by a family who were in extreme want of a footman. He was a most friendly personage, as willing as he was free and easy; but he knew nothing of life out of a small farm-house. An evening or two after his arrival, there was a large party at the house. His mistress strove to impress upon him that all he had to do at tea-time was to follow, with the sugar and cream, the waiter who carried the tea; to see that every one had cream and sugar; and to hold his tongue. He did his part with an earnest face, stepping industriously from guest to guest. When he had made the circuit, and reached the door, a doubt struck him whether a group in the furthest part of the room had had the benefit of [Pg 254] his attentions. He raised himself on his toes with, "I'll ask;" and shouted over the heads of the company, "I say, how are ye off for sweetenin' in that ere corner?"

These extreme cases sound ridiculously and uncomfortably enough: but it must be remembered that they are extreme cases. For my own part, I had rather suffer any inconvenience from having to work occasionally in chambers and kitchen, and from having little hospitable designs frustrated, than witness the subservience in which the menial class is held in Europe. In England, servants have been so long accustomed to this subservience; it is so completely the established custom for the mistress to regulate their manners, their clothes, their intercourse with their friends, and many other things which they ought to manage for themselves, that it has become

difficult to treat them any better. Mistresses who abstain from such regulation find that they are spoiling their servants; and heads of families who would make friends of their domestics find them little fitted to reciprocate the duty. In America it is otherwise: and may it ever be so! All but those who care for their selfish gratification more than for the welfare of those about them will be glad to have intelligent and disinterested friends in the domestics whom they may be able to attach, though there may be difficulty at first in retaining them; and some eccentricities of manner and dress may remain to be borne with.

One of the pleasures of travelling through a democratic country is the seeing no liveries. No such badge of menial service is to be met with throughout the States, except in the houses of the foreign ambassadors at Washington. Of how much higher a character American domestic service is than any which would endure to be distinguished by a badge, the following instance will show. [Pg 255] I spent an evening at the house of the president of Harvard University. The party was waited on at tea by a domestic of the president's, who is also Major of the Horse. On cavalry days, when guests are invited to dine with the regiment, the major, in his regimentals, takes the head of the table, and has the president on his right hand. He plays the host as freely as if no other relation existed between them. The toasts being all transacted, he goes home, doffs his regimentals, and waits on the president's guests at tea.

As for the occupations with which American ladies fill up their leisure; what has been already said will show that there is no great weight or diversity of occupation. Many are largely engaged in charities, doing good or harm according to the enlightenment of mind which is carried to the work. In New England, a vast deal of time is spent in attending preachings, and other religious meetings: and in paying visits, for religious purposes, to the poor and sorrowful. The same results follow from this practice that may be witnessed wherever it is much pursued. In as far as sympathy is kept up, and acquaintanceship between different classes in society is occasioned, the practice is good. In as far as it unsettles the minds of the visitors, encourages a false craving for religious excitement, tempts to spiritual interference on the one hand, and cant on the other, and humours or oppresses those who need such offices least, while it alienates those who want them most, the practice is bad. I am disposed to think that much good is done, and much harm: and that, whenever women have a greater charge of indispensable business on their hands, so as to do good and reciprocate religious sympathy by laying hold of opportunities, instead of by making occupation, more than the present good will be done, without any of the harm.

All American ladies are more or less literary: and some are so to excellent purpose: to the saving [Pg 256] of their minds from vacuity. Readers are plentiful: thinkers are rare. Minds are of a very passive character: and it follows that languages are much cultivated. If ever a woman was pointed out to me as distinguished for information, I might be sure beforehand that she was a linguist. I met with a great number of ladies who read Latin; some Greek; some Hebrew; some German. With the exception of the last, the learning did not seem to be of much use to them, except as a harmless exercise. I met with more intellectual activity, more general power, among many ladies who gave little time to books, than among those who are distinguished as being literary. I did not meet with a good artist among all the ladies in the States. I never had the pleasure of seeing a good drawing, except in one instance; or, except in two, of hearing good music. The entire failure of all attempts to draw is still a mystery to me. The attempts are incessant; but the results are below criticism. Natural philosophy is not pursued to any extent by women. There is some pretension to mental and moral philosophy; but the less that is said on that head the better.

This is a sad account of things. It may tempt some to ask 'what then are the American women?' They are better educated by Providence than by men. The lot of humanity is theirs: they have labour, probation, joy, and sorrow. They are good wives; and, under the teaching of nature, good mothers. They have, within the range of their activity, good sense, good temper, and good manners. Their beauty is very remarkable; and, I think, their wit no less. Their charity is overflowing, if it were but more enlightened: and it may be supposed that they could not exist without religion. It appears to superabound; but it is not usually of a healthy character. It may [Pg 257] seem harsh to say this: but is it not the fact that religion emanates from the nature, from the moral state of the individual? Is it not therefore true that unless the nature be completely exercised, the moral state harmonised, the religion cannot be healthy?

One consequence, mournful and injurious, of the 'chivalrous' taste and temper of a country with regard to its women is that it is difficult, where it is not impossible, for women to earn their bread. Where it is a boast that women do not labour, the encouragement and rewards of labour are not provided. It is so in America. In some parts, there are now so many women dependent on their own exertions for a maintenance, that the evil will give way before the force of circumstances. In the meantime, the lot of poor women is sad. Before the opening of the factories, there were but three resources; teaching, needle-work, and keeping boarding-houses or hotels. Now, there are the mills; and women are employed in printing-offices; as compositors, as well as folders and stitchers.

I dare not trust myself to do more than touch on this topic. There would be little use in dwelling upon it; for the mischief lies in the system by which women are depressed, so as to have the greater number of objects of pursuit placed beyond their reach, more than in any minor arrangements which might be rectified by an exposure of particular evils. I would only ask of philanthropists of all countries to inquire of physicians what is the state of health of sempstresses; and to judge thence whether it is not inconsistent with common humanity that women should depend for bread upon such employment. Let them inquire what is the recompense of this kind of labour, and then wonder if they can that the pleasures of the

licentious are chiefly supplied from that class. Let them reverence the strength of such as keep their virtue, when the toil which they know is slowly and surely destroying them will barely afford them bread, while the wages of sin are luxury and idleness. During the present interval between the feudal age and the coming time, when life and its occupations will be freely thrown open to women as to men, the condition of the female working classes is such that if its sufferings were but made known, emotions of horror and shame would tremble through the whole of society. [Pg 258]

For women who shrink from the lot of the needlewoman,—almost equally dreadful, from the fashionable milliner down to the humble stocking-darner,—for those who shrink through pride, or fear of sickness, poverty, or temptation, there is little resource but pretension to teach. What office is there which involves more responsibility, which requires more qualifications, and which ought, therefore, to be more honourable, than that of teaching? What work is there for which a decided bent, not to say a genius, is more requisite? Yet are governesses furnished, in America as elsewhere, from among those who teach because they want bread; and who certainly would not teach for any other reason. Teaching and training children is, to a few, a very few, a delightful employment, notwithstanding all its toils and cares. Except to these few it is irksome; and, when accompanied with poverty and mortification, intolerable. Let philanthropists inquire into the proportion of governesses among the inmates of lunatic asylums. The answer to this question will be found to involve a world of rebuke and instruction. What can be the condition of the sex when such an occupation is overcrowded with candidates, qualified and unqualified? What is to be hoped from the generation of children confided to the cares of a class, conscientious perhaps beyond most, but reluctant, harassed, and depressed? [Pg 259]

The most accomplished governesses in the United States may obtain 600 dollars a-year in the families of southern planters; provided they will promise to teach everything. In the north they are paid less; and in neither case, is there a possibility of making provision for sickness and old age. Ladies who fully deserve the confidence of society may realise an independence in a few years by school-keeping in the north: but, on the whole, the scanty reward of female labour in America remains the reproach to the country which its philanthropists have for some years proclaimed it to be. I hope they will persevere in their proclamation, though special methods of charity will not avail to cure the evil. It lies deep; it lies in the subordination of the sex: and upon this the exposures and remonstrances of philanthropists may ultimately succeed in fixing the attention of society; particularly of women. The progression or emancipation of any class usually, if not always, takes place through the efforts of individuals of that class: and so it must be here. All women should inform themselves of the condition of their sex, and of their own position. It must necessarily follow that the noblest of them will, sooner or later, put forth a moral power which shall prostrate cant, and burst asunder the bonds, (silken to some, but cold iron to others,) of feudal prejudices and usages. In the meantime, is it to be understood that the principles of the Declaration of Independence bear no relation to half of the human race? If so, what is the ground of the limitation? If not so, how is the restricted and dependent state of women to be reconciled with the proclamation that "all are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?"

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SECTION III.
HEALTH.

Some popular American writers have lately laid hold of this subject, to the great advantage of the society in which they live. Dr. Combe's "Principles of Physiology" has gone through several editions; and I know that the demand of society for fresh air and soap and water has considerably increased in consequence. But much remains to be done. In private houses, baths are a rarity. In steam-boats, the accommodations for washing are limited in the extreme; and in all but first-rate hotels, the philosophy of personal cleanliness is certainly not understood. The Creoles of Louisiana are the most satisfactory hosts and hostesses in this respect, except a few particularly thoughtful people elsewhere. In the house of a Creole, a guest finds a large pan or tub of fresh cold water, with soap and towels, placed in a corner of his room, morning and night. In such a climate as that of New Orleans, there is no safety nor comfort in anything short of a complete ablution, twice a day. On board steam-boats which have not separate state-rooms, there are no means of preserving sufficient cleanliness and health. How the ladies of the cabin can expect to enjoy any degree of vigour and cheerfulness during a voyage of four or five days, during which they wash merely their faces and hands, I cannot imagine. It is to be hoped that the majority will soon demand that there should be a range of washing-closets in all steam-boats whose voyages are longer than twenty-four hours.

The common excuse for the deficient activity and lack of fresh air is the climate. But this excuse will not avail while there are ladies who do preserve their health by walking and riding, and thoroughly ventilating their houses. Any one who knows Stockbridge, and the feats which are there performed by a troop of rosy, graceful girls, and active women, will reject all pleas about the difficulty of getting air and exercise. It is one of the misfortunes of a new country that its cities have environs which are little tempting for walking. It must be acknowledged that it requires some resolution to go out to walk in places no more tempting than Pennsylvania Avenue, at Washington; Broadway, New York; or the trim streets of Philadelphia; or even the pretty Common at Boston. But the way to have good country walks provided is to wish for them. When the whole female society of America shall be as fond of exercise, as highly-principled with regard [Pg 261]

to it, as the Stockbridge ladies, the facilities will be furnished. In the meantime, there are pretty walks within reach of the whole population, except that of three or four large cities. Boston is particularly unfortunate in occupying a promontory, from which it is usually necessary to pass very long bridges to the mainland: a passage too bleak to be attempted in windy weather, and too exposed to be endurable in a hot sun, without necessity. But those who have carriages can easily get transported beyond this inconvenience; and for those who have not, there is the Common and the Neck.

Those who wish for health, and know how to seek it, contrive to walk in summer very early in the morning; like residents in India. The mornings of the sultry months are perfectly delicious; and there is no excuse for neglect of exercise while they last. The autumn weather of the northern [Pg 262] States is the best of the year, when the hues and airs of paradise seem shed abroad. The greater number of days in the winter admit of exercise. The winds are too cutting to be encountered; but the days of calm clear frost might be much better employed in walking than in sleighing. No eulogiums on the sleigh will ever reconcile me to it. I dislike the motion, and, after a short time, the jingle of the bells. But the danger is the prime consideration. Young ladies who dry up their whole frames in the heat of fires of anthracite coal, never breathing the outward air but in going to church, and in stepping in and out of the carriage in going to parties, will once in a time go on a sleighing expedition; sitting motionless in the open air, with hot bricks to their feet, and their faces in danger of being frost-bitten. If there be pleasure in such frolics, it is too dearly bought by the peril. If the troops of girls who would mourn over the abolition of sleighing would but try how they like the luxury of daily active exercise in fresh air, they would find the exchange well worth making, on the score of pleasure alone.

The ladies plead that they have much exercise within doors, about their household occupations. Except making beds, rubbing tables, and romping with children, I know of no household occupations which involve much exercise. The weariness which some of them occasion, is of a kind which would be relieved by walking. And all this does not imply fresh air, of which no one can get enough without going out into it, except in some country residences. It made me sorrowful to see children shut up during the winter in houses, heated by anthracite coal up to the temperature of 85°; and to see how pallid and dried the poor little things looked, long before there was a prospect of their speedy release from their imprisonment. Some, who were let out on [Pg 263] fine days, were pretty sure to catch cold. Those only seemed heartily to thrive who were kept in rooms moderately heated, and vigorously exercised in the open air, on all but windy and other unmanageable days. The burning of anthracite coal affected me unpleasantly, except where an evaporation of water was going on in the room. I suspect that some of the maladies of the country may be more or less owing to its use.

One proof of the badness of the system of non-exercising, is found in the fact that the distortion of the spine is even more common among women in America than in Europe. Physicians who have turned their attention to this symptom, declare that the difficulty is to find in boarding-schools a spine that is perfectly straight: and when the period of growth is completed, a large majority of cases remains where the weakness is not entirely got over. The posture-making of the United States is renowned. Of course there is a cause for a propensity so general. The languor induced by the climate is that assigned. The ladies not being able to use the same freedom as the gentlemen, get rid of their languor as they may; but not as they best may. Instead of sitting still all through the hot weather, and all through the cold weather, they had better exercise their limbs during some portion of the day, and lie down during the most sultry hours; and in the winter, avail themselves of every opportunity for active employment. If they would do this, it is not to be conceived that the next generation would be distinguished as the present is for its spare forms and pallid complexions.

The apathy on the subject of health was to me no otherwise to be accounted for than by supposing that the feeling of vigorous health is almost unknown. Invalids are remarkably uncomplaining and unalarmed; and their friends talk of their having "a weak breast," and [Pg 264] "delicate lungs," with little more seriousness than the English use in speaking of a common cold. The numbers of clergymen who had to leave their flocks, professors their chairs, young men and women their country, in pursuit of health, made me melancholy sometimes when the friends and neighbours took it calmly as the commonest of events. As I am pretty confident that a remedy might be found in more judicious management, this acquiescence strikes me as being by far too Mahomedan in its character. The extremest case that I met with was in a lady, who declared, with complacency, that she could not walk a mile. She owned her belief that the inactivity of the American women shortened their lives by some years; but thought this did not matter, as they were not aware of it at the time.

I should like to see a well-principled reform in diet tried, with a view to the improvement of the general health. I should like to see hot bread and cakes banished; a diminution in the quantity of pickles and preserves, and also in the quantity of meat eaten. I should like to see the effect of making the diet of children more simple. Almost any change would be worth trying for so great an object. What is to become of the next, and again of the succeeding generation, if the average of health cannot be raised, it is fearful to think of. The only prevalence of vigorous health that I witnessed in the country, was in the elevated parts of the Alleghany range; in the State of Michigan; and perhaps I might add, among the ladies of Charleston, who pass three quarters of the year in the open air of their piazzas.[26]

All these means of improving health, though probably necessary, will not avail without some [Pg 265] others. There must be less anxiety of mind among men, and less vacuity among women. With a

brain fully but equably exercised, and composed nerves, the above-mentioned methods would probably enable the Americans to defy the changes of their climate: but not without this justice to the brain and nerves. It is rather remarkable that this anxiety prevails most in the parts of the country which make the most conspicuous profession of religion. Religious faith and hope should naturally promote health and equanimity by teaching the spirit to repose on immovable principles, and unintermitting laws: by disburdening the mind of worldly cares, and giving rest to the weary and heavy-laden. If it does not thus calm and lighten the mind, it fails of its effect. If it disturbs the mental and bodily frame, its operation is perverted. It would be well if this were looked to. The more moderate religionists point to the graves of the young who have fallen victims to Revivals. Let them look at home to see if no spiritual competition, no asceticism interferes with the equable workings of the frame, by which its powers are kept in vigorous and joyous action, without excess.

There is no doubt of this wear and tear from anxiety being the chief cause of the excessive use of tobacco in the United States. Its charm to men, who have not the elasticity of health and good animal spirits to oppose to toil and trouble, may be imagined. It is to be hoped that the enjoyment of the natural and perfect stimulant will soon supersede the use of the artificial and pernicious one.

The vacuity of mind of many women is, I conclude, the cause of a vice which it is painful to allude to; but which cannot honestly be passed over, in the consideration of the morals and the health of American women. It is no secret on the spot, that the habit of intemperance is not infrequent among women of station and education in the most enlightened parts of the country. I witnessed some instances, and heard of more. It does not seem to me to be regarded with all the dismay which such a symptom ought to excite. To the stranger, a novelty so horrible, a spectacle so fearful, suggests wide and deep subjects of investigation. If women, in a region professing religion more strenuously than any other, living in the deepest external peace, surrounded by prosperity, and outwardly honoured more conspicuously than in any other country, can ever so far cast off self-restraint, shame, domestic affection, and the deep prejudices of education, as to plunge into the living hell of intemperance, there must be something fearfully wrong in their position. An intemperate man has strong temptation to plead: he began with conviviality, and only arrives at solitary intemperance as the ultimate degradation. A woman indulges in the vice in solitude and secrecy, as long as secrecy is possible. She knows that there is no excuse, no solace, no hope. There is nothing before her but despair. It is impossible to suppose than that there has otherwise been despair throughout: the despair which waits upon vacuity. I believe that the practice has, in some few cases, arisen from physicians prescribing cordials to growing girls at school, and from the difficulty found in desisting from the use of agreeable stimulants. In other cases, the vice is hereditary. In others, no explanation remains, but that which appears to me quite sufficient,—vacuity of mind. Lest my mention of this very remarkable fact should lead to the supposition of the practice being more common than it is, I think it right to state, that I happened to know of seven or eight cases in the higher classes of society of one city. The number of cases is a fact of comparatively small importance. That one exists, is a grief which the whole of society should take to heart, and ponder with the entire strength of its understanding.

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FOOTNOTES:

[25] The wages of domestic service vary, of course, according to circumstances. In the eastern cities, a good footman is paid about twenty-five dollars per month: a cook, two dollars a-week; and a housemaid a dollar and a-half.

[26] I was informed by an eminent physician, that within his recollection, *goîtres* were very common at Pittsburg. The patients recovered, if early sent round to the open country on the other side of the hill. Since the woods have been felled, and the city thereby well ventilated, the disease has wholly disappeared.

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CHAPTER III.
CHILDREN.

"An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth."
Cowper.

Nothing less than an entire work would be required for the discussion of the subject of education in any country. I can only indicate here two or three peculiarities which strike the stranger in the discipline of American children; of those whose lot is cast in the northern States; for it needs no further showing, that those who are reared among slaves have not the ordinary chances of wisdom and peace.

The Americans, particularly those of New England, look with a just complacency on the apparatus of education furnished to their entire population.[27] There are schools provided for the training of every individual, from the earliest age; colleges to receive the élite of the schools;

and lyceums, and other such institutions, for the subsequent instruction of working men. The provision of schools is so adequate, that any citizen who sees a child at play during school-hours, [Pg 269] may ask "why are you not at school?" and, unless a good reason be given, may take him to the school-house of the district. Some, who do not penetrate to the principle of this, exclaim upon the tyranny practised upon the parents. The principle is, that, in a democracy, where life and society are equally open to all, and where all have agreed to require of each other a certain amount of intellectual and moral competency, the means being provided, it becomes the duty of all to see that the means are used. Their use is an indispensable condition of the privileges of citizenship. No control is exercised as to how and where the child shall be educated. It rests with the parent to send him to a public or private school, or have him taught at home: but in case of his being found in a neglected state as to education, it is in the power of any citizen to bring him to the advantage provided for him by society.

The instruction furnished is not good enough for the youth of such a country, with such a responsibility and such a destiny awaiting them as the working out the first democratic organisation that the world has witnessed in practice. The information provided is both meagre and superficial. There is not even any systematic instruction given on political morals: an enormous deficiency in a republic. But it must be remembered how young the society is; how far it has already gone beyond most other countries; and how great is the certainty that the majority, always ultimately in the right, will gradually exalt the character of the instruction which it has been already wise enough to provide. It must be remembered too, how much farther the same kind and degree of instruction goes in a democracy than elsewhere. The alphabet itself is of little or no value to a slave, while it is an inestimable treasure to a conscious young republican. One [Pg 270] needs but go from a charity-school in an English county to a free-school in Massachusetts, to see how different the bare acquisition of reading and writing is to children who, if they look forward at all, do it languidly, and into a life of mechanical labour merely, and to young citizens who are aware that they have their share of the work of self-government to achieve. Elderly gentlemen in the country may smile, and foreigners of all ages may scoff at the self-confidence and complacency of young men who have just exercised the suffrage for the first time: but the being secure of the dignity, the certainty of being fully and efficaciously represented, the probability of sooner or later filling some responsible political office, are a stimulus which goes far to supply the deficiencies of the instruction imparted. It is much to be wished that this stimulus were as strong and as virtuous in one or two colleges whose inmates are on the very verge of the exercise of their political rights, as in some of even the primary schools. The aristocratic atmosphere of Harvard University, for instance, would be much purified by a few breezes of such democratic inspiration as issue from the school-houses of some of the country districts.

Some persons plead that there is less occasion for school instruction in the principles of politics, than for an improved teaching of some other things; because children are instructed in politics every day of their lives by what they hear at home, and wherever they go. But they hear all too little of principles. What they hear is argumentation about particular men, and immediate measures. The more sure they are of learning details elsewhere, the more necessary it is that they should here be exercised in those principles by which the details are to be judged and made [Pg 271] available as knowledge. They come to school with their heads crammed with prejudices, and their memories with words, which it should be part of the work of school to reduce to truth and clearness, by substituting principles for the one, and annexing ideas to the other.

A Sunday-school teacher asked a child, "Who killed Abel?" "General Jackson."—Another inquired of a scholar, "In what state were mankind left after the fall?"—"In the State of Vermont."

The early republican consciousness of which I have spoken, and the fact of the more important place which the children occupy in a society whose numbers are small in proportion to its resources, are the two circumstances which occasion that freedom of manners in children of which so much complaint has been made by observers, and on which so much remonstrance has been wasted;—I say "wasted," because remonstrance is of no avail against a necessary fact. Till the United States cease to be republican, and their vast area is fully peopled, the children there will continue as free and easy and as important as they are. For my own part, I delight in the American children; in those who are not overlaid with religious instruction. There are instances, as there are everywhere, of spoiled, pert, and selfish children. Parents' hearts are pierced there, as elsewhere. But the independence and fearlessness of children were a perpetual charm in my eyes. To go no deeper, it is a constant amusement to see how the speculations of young minds issue, when they take their own way of thinking, and naturally say all they think. Some admirable specimens of active little minds were laid open to me at a juvenile ball at Baltimore. I could not have got at so much in a year in England. If I had at home gone in among eighty or a hundred [Pg 272] little people, between the ages of eight and sixteen, I should have extracted little more than "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am." At Baltimore, a dozen boys and girls at a time crowded round me, questioning, discussing, speculating, revealing in a way which enchanted me. In private houses, the comments slipped in at table by the children were often the most memorable, and generally the most amusing part of the conversation. Their aspirations all come out. Some of these are very striking as indicating the relative value of things in the children's minds. One affectionate little sister, of less than four years old, stimulated her brother William, (five,) by telling him that if he would be very very good, he might in time be called William Webster; and then he might get on to be as good as Jesus Christ. Three children were talking over the birth-day of the second, (ten) and how they should like to keep it. They settled that they should like of all things to have Miss Sedgwick, and Mr. Bryant, and myself, to spend the day with them. They did not venture to invite us, and had no intention of our knowing their wish.

In conversing with a truly wise parent, one day, I remarked on the change of relation which takes place when the superior children of ordinary parents become guides and protectors to those who have kept their childhood restrained under a rigid rule. We talked over the difficulties of the transition here, (by far the hardest part of filial duty,) and speculated on what the case would be after death, supposing the parties to recognise each other in a new life of progression. My friend observed that the only thing to be done is to avoid to the utmost the exercise of authority, and to make children friends from the very beginning. He and many others have done this with gladdening success. They do not lay aside their democratic principles in this relation, more than [Pg 273] in others, because they happen to have almost unlimited power in their own hands. They watch and guard: they remove stumbling-blocks: they manifest approbation and disapprobation: they express wishes, but, at the same time, study the wishes of their little people: they leave as much as possible to natural retribution: they impose no opinions, and quarrel with none: in short, they exercise the tenderest friendship without presuming upon it. What is the consequence? I had the pleasure of hearing this friend say, "There is nothing in the world so easy as managing children. You may make them anything you please." In my own mind I added, "with such hearts and minds to bring to the work as the parents of your children have."—One reason of the pleasure with which I regarded the freedom of American children was that I took it as a sign that the most tremendous suffering perhaps of human life is probably lessened, if not obviated, there:—the misery of concealed doubts and fears, and heavy solitary troubles,—the misery which makes the early years of a shy child a fearful purgatory. Yet purgatory is not the word: for this misery purges no sins, while it originates many. I have a strong suspicion that the faults of temper so prevalent where parental authority is strong, and where children are made as insignificant as they can be made, and the excellence of temper in America, are attributable to the different management of childhood in the one article of freedom. There is no doubt that many children are irrecoverably depressed and unnerved for want of being convinced that anybody cares for them. They nourish doubts, they harbour fears and suspicions, and carry within them prejudices and errors, for want of its occurring to them to ask questions; and though they may outgrow these [Pg 274] defects and errors, they never recover from them. Unexplained and inexplicable obstacles are thrown in the way of their filial duty,—obstacles which not even the strongest conscientiousness can overcome with grace: the vigour of the spirit is prostrated, or perverted into wilfulness: the calmness of self-respect is forfeited, and so is the repose of a loving faith in others. In short, the temper is ruined, and the life is spoiled; and all from the parents not having made friends of their children from the beginning.—No one will suppose that I mean to represent this mistake as general anywhere. But I am confident it is very common at home: and that it cannot, in the nature of things, ever become common in America. I saw one or two melancholy instances of it: and a few rare cases where parents attempted unjustifiably to rule the proceedings of their grown up sons and daughters; not by express command, but by pleas which, from a parent, are more irresistible than even commands. But these were remarkable, and remarked upon, as exceptions. I saw two extreme contrasting cases, in near neighbourhood, of girls brought up, the one in the spirit of love, the other in that of fear. Those two girls are the best teachers of moral philosophy that ever fell in my way. In point of birth, organisation, means of education, they were about equal. Both were made to be beautiful and intelligent. The one is pallid, indolent, (with the reputation of learning,) tasteless, timid, and triste, manifesting nothing but occasionally an intense selfishness, and a prudery beyond belief. The education of this girl has been the study of her anxious parents from the day of her birth: but they have omitted to let her know and feel that anybody loved her. The other, the darling of a large family, meeting love from all eyes, and [Pg 275] hearing tenderness in every voice, is beautiful as a Hebe, and so free and joyous that her presence is like sunshine in a rainy day. She knows that she is beautiful and accomplished; but she is, as far as eye can see, absolutely devoid of vanity. She has been apprised, over and over again, that people think her a genius: she silently contradicts this, and settles with herself that she can acquire anything, but originate nothing. She studies with her whole being, as if she were coming out next year in a learned profession. She dances at balls as if nothing lay beyond the ball-room. She flits hither and thither, in rain or sunshine, walking, riding, or driving, on little errands of kindness; and bears the smallest interests of her friends in mind in the heights of her mirth and the depths of her studies. At dull evening parties, she can sit under the lamp, (little knowing how beautiful she looks) quietly amusing herself with prints, and not wanting notice: and she can speak out what she thinks and feels to a circle of admirers, as simply and earnestly as she would to her own mother. I have seen people shake their heads, and fear lest she should be spoiled; but my own conviction is that this young creature is unspoilable. She has had all the praise and admiration she can have: no watchfulness of parents can keep them from her. She does not want praise and admiration. She has other interests and other desires: and my belief is, that if she were left alone to-morrow, the last of her family, she would be as safe, busy, and, in due time, happy, as she is now under their tender guardianship. She is the most complete example I ever witnessed of a being growing up in the light and warmth and perfect freedom of love; and she has left me very little toleration for authority, in education more than in anything else.

A question was asked me, oftener than once, which indicates the difference between family [Pg 276] manners in England and America. I was asked whether it was possible that the Bennet family would act as they are represented in "Pride and Prejudice:" whether a foolish mother, with grown up daughters, would be allowed to spoil the two youngest, instead of the sensible daughters taking the case into their own hands. It is certainly true that in America the superior minds of the family would take the lead; while in England, however the domestic affairs might gradually arrange themselves, no person would be found breathing the suggestion of superseding the mother's authority. The most remarkable difference is, that in England the parents value the

authority as a right, however lenient they may be in the use of it. In America, the parent disapproves of it, as a matter of reason: and, if he acts rationally, had rather not possess it. Little revelations of the state of the case were perpetually occurring, which excited my wonder at first, and my interest throughout. It appeared through the smallest circumstances; as, for instance, when a lady was describing to me the wedding-day of her eldest daughter. She mentioned that two or three of the children were not in the drawing-room at the time of the ceremony. Why? They were so angry at their brother-in-law for taking away their sister, that they kept out of the way till he had driven from the door with his bride. What children in England would have dreamed of absenting themselves in such a way?

It is amusing to observe what the ability for self-preservation is among children in a country where nursemaids are scarce. It frightened me at first to see mere babies playing on broken wooden bridges, where the rushing water below might be seen through large holes; and little boys climbing trees which slanted over a rocky precipice; or getting into a canoe tossing on a [Pg 277] rough river. But I find that accidents to children are rarely or never heard of. The obvious results of such training are a dexterity, fearlessness, and presence of mind, and aptitude for bodily exercises, which are of eminent use in mature life.

I was sorry to perceive in some of the cities, especially in Boston, an unconsciousness on the part of many parents of the superior value of the discipline of circumstance to that of express teaching, in the work of education. Perhaps no one would be found to deny in words that the best training is that which exercises the whole being of a child: yet there is a method of education somewhat in fashion in Boston just now, which bids fair to kill off its victims in early life; and irreparably injure,—morally as well as physically,—those whom it may spare. The good people of Boston are more fond of excitement than of consistency: or, rather, that part of society is so which professes to constitute the city. When Spurzheim was there, the brain was everything; and his wise and benevolent remonstrances about the neglect or abuse of the bodily powers were received with great candour, and with much apparent conviction. Short as the interval has been, a considerable number of his disciples have gone directly over to the opposite philosophy; and in their spiritualism out-herod Herod. They frame their theory and practice on the principle that human beings are created perfect spirits in an infant body. Some go further back than this, and actually teach little children dogmatically that spirit makes body; and that their own bodies are the result of the efforts of their spirits to manifest themselves. Such outrageous absurdities might be left to contempt, but for the consequences in practice. There is a school in Boston, (a large one, when I left the city,) conducted on this principle. The master presupposes his little pupils [Pg 278] possessed of all truth, in philosophy and morals; and that his business is to bring it out into expression; to help the outward life to conform to the inner light; and, especially, to learn of these enlightened babes, with all humility. Large exposures might be made of the mischief this gentleman is doing to his pupils by relaxing their bodies, pampering their imaginations, over-stimulating the consciences of some, and hardening those of others; and by his extraordinary management, offering them every inducement to falsehood and hypocrisy. His system can be beneficial to none, and must be ruinous to many. If he should retain any pupils long enough to make a full trial of his methods with them, those who survive the neglect of bodily exercises and over-excitement of brain, will be found the first to throw off moral restraints, on perceiving at length that their moral guide has been employing their early years in the pursuit of shadows and the contempt of realities. There is, however, little fear of such a full trial being made. A few weeks are enough to convince sensible parents of the destructiveness of such a system; and it will probably issue in being one of the fancies of the day at Boston; and little heard of anywhere else.

The fundamental principle is, however, working mischief in other directions. It affects, very unfortunately, the welfare of the blind; and yet more of the deaf and dumb who are taken under the benevolent protection of society. As long as there are many of the most distinguished members of the community who hold that the interior being of these sufferers is in a perfect state, only the means of manifestation being deficient; that their training is to proceed on the supposition of their being possessed of a complete set of intellectual and moral intuitions; and [Pg 279] that they therefore only need to be furnished with types, being already full of the things typified; and even that they have the advantage over others in the exclusion of false and vulgar associations,—the pupils will have little chance of benefit beyond the protection and comfort secured to them in their appropriate institutions. In the conversation of those who verbally pitied their case, I could frequently trace an inward persuasion that the deaf and dumb were better off than those who could hear and speak: and there were few who discovered, while admiring the supposed allegorical discourse or compositions of the pupils, that the whole was little more than a set of images, absolutely empty of the abstract truth which they were supposed to involve. I had witnessed this tremendous error in the teaching of the deaf and dumb elsewhere; but I little thought ever to meet with it beyond the confines of the particular, and almost inscrutable case under notice. In the school above mentioned, however, error nourishes, blessed as the pupils are with their five senses and the instrument of speech.

Putting aside such cases of eccentricity, the children of America have the advantage of the best possible early discipline; that of activity and self-dependence. The grand defect is a subsequent one. Education is not made appropriate to the aims of its subjects. All, whatever may be their views in life, are educated nearly alike up to nineteen. This is an absurdity copied from the old world, but unworthy of the good sense of the new. It will be rectified when the lives of rich men become as steadily aimed as those of citizens who have their way to make. Young men of fortune, who may have a taste for science or literature, do not yield themselves up to these pursuits,

because "there is yet no scientific or literary class for them to fall into." Where is the necessity to them of such a class to fall into? And, supposing the necessity, how is there ever to be such a class, unless somebody begins to supply the elements?—It will be done. No restraint of custom will long be powerful enough to curb the force of intellectual tendency. The passion for truth, the craving for knowledge, are ever found, in the long run, irrepressible by the incubus of conventionalism. A genius will arise, now here, now there, to startle society out of its rules and precedents: and when America has had, now a philosopher and now a poet, who, like Schiller's "true artist," shall "look upwards to his dignity and his calling, and not downwards to his happiness and his wants," society will enlarge its discipline, and become a great preparatory school for the fruition of whatever the hand of man findeth to do, or his understanding to investigate, or his imagination to reveal. [Pg 280]

FOOTNOTE:

[27] See Appendix D.

CHAPTER IV.
SUFFERERS.

[Pg 281]

> "One of the universal sentiments which Christianity has deeply imbedded in the human heart is that of the *natural equality of men*.... It has produced the spectacle, which I believe to be peculiar to christian times, of one class uplifting another, the happy toiling for the miserable, the free vindicating the rights of the oppressed. With all the noble examples of disinterested friendship and patriotism, which ancient history affords, I can remember no approach to that *wholesale compassion*, that general action of one order of society on another, that system of *benevolent agitation* in behalf of powerless and forgotten suffering, which characterises the history of modern times."
>
> *Rationale of Religious Inquiry.*

The idea of travelling in America was first suggested to me by a philanthropist's saying to me, "Whatever else may be true about the Americans, it is certain that they have got at principles of justice and mercy in the treatment of the least happy classes of society which we may be glad to learn from them. I wish you would go and see what they are." I did so; and the results of my investigation have not been reserved for this short chapter, but are spread over the whole of my book. The fundamental democratic principles on which American society is organised, are those "principles of justice and mercy" by which the guilty, the ignorant, the needy, and the infirm, are saved and blessed. The charity of a democratic society is heart-reviving to witness; for there is a security that no wholesale oppression is bearing down the million in one direction, while charity is lifting up the hundred in another. Generally speaking, the misery that is seen is all that exists: there is no paralysing sense of the hopelessness of setting up individual benevolence against social injustice. If the community has not yet arrived at the point at which all communities are destined to arrive, of perceiving guilt to be infirmity, of obviating punishment, ignorance, and want, still the Americans are more blessed than others, in the certainty that they have far less superinduced misery than societies abroad, and are using wiser methods than others for its alleviation. In a country where social equality is the great principle in which all acquiesce, and where, consequently, the golden rule is suggested by every collision between man and man, neglect of misery is almost as much out of the question as the oppression from which most misery springs. [Pg 282]

In the treatment of the guilty, America is beyond the rest of the world, exactly in proportion to the superiority of her political principles. I was favoured with the confidence of a great number of the prisoners in the Philadelphia penitentiary where absolute seclusion is the principle of punishment. Every one of these prisoners, (none of them being aware of the existence of any other,) told me that he was under obligations to those who had the charge of him for treating him "with respect." The expression struck me much as being universally used by them. Some explained the contrast between this method of punishment and imprisonment in the old prisons, copied from those of Europe; where criminals are herded together, and treated like anything but men and citizens. Others said that though they had done a wrong thing, and were rightly sequestered on that ground, they ought not to have any farther punishment inflicted upon them; and that it was the worst of punishments not to be treated with the respect due to men. In a community where criminals feel and speak thus, human rights cannot but be, at length, as much regarded in the infliction of punishment as in its other arrangements. [Pg 283]

Much yet remains to be done, to this end. An enormous amount of wrong must remain in a society where the elaboration of a vast apparatus for the infliction of human misery, like that required by the system of solitary imprisonment, is yet a work of mercy. Milder and juster methods of treating moral infirmity will succeed when men shall have learned to obviate the largest possible amount of it. In the meantime, I am persuaded that this is the best method of punishment which has yet been tried. Much as the prisoners suffer from the dreary solitude, cheered only by their labour and the occasional visits of official superintendents, they testified, without exception and without concert, to their preference of this over all other methods of

punishment. The grounds of preference were, that they could preserve their self-respect, in the first place; and, in the next, their chance in society on their release. They leave the prison with the recompense of their extra labour in their pockets, and without the fear of being waylaid by vicious old companions, or hunted from employment to employment by those whose interest it is to deprive them of a chance of establishing a character. There is no evidence, at present, that solitary imprisonment, *with labour*, is more injurious to health than any other condition which is [Pg 284] attended with anxiety of mind. The Philadelphia prisoners certainly appeared to me to be more healthy-looking than those at Auburn, or at any other prison I visited.

There is at present a deficiency in the religious ministrations of the prison. This is a fact which, I believe, has only to be made known to cease to be true. Among the clergy of all denominations in Philadelphia, there must be many who would contrive to afford their services in turn, if they were fully aware how much they are needed. I know of no direction that can be taken by charity with such certainty of success as visiting the solitary prisoner. I think it far from desirable that prisoners should be visited for the express purpose of giving them religious, and no other, instruction and sympathy. The great object is to occupy the prisoner's mind with things which interest him most; to keep up his sympathies, and nourish his human affections; and especially to promote the activity and cheerfulness of his mind. His situation is such,—he is so driven back upon the realities of life in his own mind, that the danger is of his accepting religion as a temporary solace, of his separating it in idea from active life, and craving for the most exciting kind of it; so as that when he returns to the world, he will discard it as something suiting his prison-life, but no longer needed, no longer appropriate. If, keeping this in view, a very few good men and women of Philadelphia would go sometimes to spend an hour with a prisoner, honourably observing the rules, telling no news, but cheerfully conversing on the prisoner's affairs,—his work, his family, his prospects on coming out, the books he reads, &c.—if they would carry him good and entertaining books, and if religious ones, only those of a moderate and cheerful character, (such being indeed not easy to be found,)—these friendly visitors could [Pg 285] scarcely fail of restoring, more or less completely, the moral health of the objects of their benevolence. None who have not tried can imagine the ease with which sufferers so placed are influenced; in the absence of all that is pernicious, and in absolute dependence, as they are, on the sympathy of those who will be kind to them. If watchful observance were united with common prudence and kindness, I believe that a prisoner of five years would rarely re-enter society unqualified for the discharge of his duties there. It must be remembered that the criminals of the United States are rarely the depraved, brutish creatures that fill the prisons of the old world. Even in the old world, I have no doubt that every prison visitor has been conscious, on first conversing privately with a criminal, of a feeling of surprise at finding him so human: but in America, convicts are even more like other men. The reason of my visiting them, as I told them, was to satisfy myself about the causes of crime in a country where there is almost an absence of that want which occasions the greater proportion of social offences in England. Sooner or later, all told me their stories in full: and I found that in every case some domestic misery had been the poison of their lives. A harsh step-mother, an unfaithful wife, a jilting mistress, an intemperate son or father,—these were the miseries at home which sent them out to drink: drinking brought on murder, or caused vicious wants, which must be supplied by theft. The stories, infinitely varied in their circumstances, were all alike in their moral.

I do not like the principle of the Auburn prison: and I am confident that very little effectual reformation can take place under it. The disadvantages of the prisoners being waylaid and dogged on their discharge are very great; but there are some within the prison quite as serious. [Pg 286] The spy system is abominable, in whatever light it is viewed. It is the deepest of insults; and if there be a case rather than another in which insult is to be avoided, it is where a reformation is desired. The great point to be gained with the criminal is to regenerate self-respect. A virtuous man may preserve his self-respect under the eyes of a spy; (though even he is in some danger); but a morally infirm man can never thus acquire it. Arrangements should be made for his secure custody and harmless outward conduct, and then he should be left to himself. And what is the purpose of the spying,—of the loop-holes to peep through, and the moccasins which are to make the tread of the spies as stealthy as that of a cat? To detect talking; talking subjecting a man to the lash. Talking is an innocent act; and, in the case of men secluded from the world and their families, and all that has hitherto interested them, an unavoidable act. They ought to talk; and they do, in spite of spies, governor, and the whip. They learn to murmur intelligibly behind their teeth, without moving the lips, and to take advantage of the briefest instants when the superintendent turns his back. It is surprising to me that any effectual reformation can be looked for from men who, convicted of grave crimes, have the prohibition to speak set up before their minds as the chief circumstance and interest of their lives for five, seven, or ten years. Their interest in it makes it the chief circumstance. How the disordered being is to be rectified, how the prostrated conscience is to be reinstated, while an innocent and necessary act is thus erected into an offence, I leave those who are most versed in moral proportions to decide. I do not believe in the possibility of effectual reformation in any but a few cases, under such a discipline.

The will of the majority has not yet wrought out the right practice from good principles, in two [Pg 287] cases which regard the treatment of the guilty: and great evil arises in the interval. It is extremely difficult, in some parts of the States, and with regard to some particular offences, to get the laws enforced against offenders. In those parts of the States where personal conflicts are countenanced by opinion, offences against the person go too often unpunished; elsewhere, riot is passed over without notice; and in some few places, the most heinous crimes of all are nearly certain to be got over without the conviction of the offender. The impunity of riot arises from the reliance society has on the moral sense of the whole: a reliance very honourable in itself, but

found of late to be inadequate under the pressure of such a crisis as that of the anti-slavery question. Nothing can be more honourable to the people, than the fact that they have been safe and virtuous under the superintendence of principle, while the laws have slept so long, that it is now found difficult to put them in force: but now that the time has come for a conflict of classes and opinions, the time has also come for the law to be vigilant and inexorable. The frequent impunity of the most serious crimes arises from the growing enmity of opinion to the punishment of death. There can be little doubt that in a short time capital punishments will be abolished throughout the northern States: and if this is to be done, the sooner it is done the better: for the present impunity is a tremendous evil.

In passing the City Hall of one of the northern cities with a friend, I asked what was the meaning of a great crowd that was about the doors, and even clustered on the windows of the building. My friend told me, that a young man was being examined on the charge of being the murderer in a [Pg 288] most aggravated case, which had been related to me the day before. I observed, that no one seemed to have any doubt of his guilt. She replied, that there never was a clearer case; but that he would be acquitted: the examination and trial were a mere form, of which every one knew the conclusion beforehand. The people did not choose to see any more hanging; and till the law was so altered as to allow an alternative of punishment, no conviction for a capital offence would be obtainable. I asked, on what pretence the young man would be got off, if the evidence against him was as clear as was represented. She said, some one would be found to swear an alibi: the young man would be wholly disgraced, and would probably set out westwards the morning after his acquittal. I watched the progress of the case. The trial was a long one. There was no doubt of the suppression of large portions of the evidence against him. A tradesman swore an alibi: the young man was thereupon acquitted; and next morning he was on his way to the west.

On the principle that punishment should be reformatory, the practice of pardoning criminals has gone to far too great an extent, from the belief of reformation in each particular case. The consequence is very injurious. A sentence of life-imprisonment is generally understood to mean imprisonment for a shorter term than if ten or seven years had been named. Every one of the prisoners I conversed with was in anxious expectation of a pardon. In the cases of those who were in for five years, and who I knew would not be pardoned, I reasoned the matter; and found that the fact of all their fellow-prisoners having the same expectation with themselves, made a strong impression. They were, amidst their dreadful disappointment, easily convinced: but I could [Pg 289] not but mourn that they did not learn the philosophy of the case in society, rather than in prison.

Whenever the abolition of the punishment of death takes place, it will be essential to the safety of virtue and society, that it should be understood that the practice of pardoning is, except on rare and specified occasions, to cease; and that punishment is to be certain in proportion to its justice.

The pauperism of the United States is, to the observation of a stranger, nothing at all. To residents, it is an occasion for the exercise of their ever-ready charity. It is confined to the ports, emigrants making their way back into the country, the families of intemperate or disabled men, and unconnected women, who depend on their own exertions. The amount altogether is far from commensurate with the charity of the community; and it is to be hoped that the curse of a legal charity, at least to the able-bodied, will be avoided in a country where it certainly cannot become necessary within any assignable time. I was grieved to see the magnificent pauper asylum near Philadelphia, made to accommodate luxuriously 1200 persons; and to have its arrangements pointed out to me, as yielding far more comfort to the inmates than the labourer can secure at home by any degree of industry and prudence. There are so many persons in the city, however, who see the badness of the principle, and regret the erection, that I trust a watch will be maintained over the establishment, and its corridors kept as empty as possible. In Boston, the principles of true charity have been better acted upon. There, many of the clergymen,—among the rest, Father Taylor, the seaman's friend,—are in possession of wisdom, derived from the mournful experience of England; and seem likely to save the city from the misery of a debasing [Pg 290] pauperism among any class of its inhabitants. I know no large city where there is so much mutual helpfulness, so little neglect and ignorance of the concerns of other classes, as in Boston: and I cannot but anticipate that from thence the world may derive the brightest lesson that has yet been offered it, in the duties of the rich towards the poor. If the agents of the benevolence of the wealthy will but be scrupulously careful to avoid all that mental encroachment and moral interference, which have but too generally ruined the efficacy of charity, and go on to exhibit the devotion of the philanthropist, without the inquisitiveness and authoritativeness of the priest, they may deserve the thanks of the whole of society, as well as the attachment of those whom they befriend.

In Boston, an excellent plan has been adopted for the prevention of fraud on the part of paupers, and the mutual enlightenment and guidance of the agents of charity. A weekly meeting is held of delegates, from all societies engaged in the relief of the poor. The delegates compare lists of the persons relieved, so as to ascertain that none are fraudulently receiving from more than one society: they discuss and investigate doubtful cases; extend indulgence to those of peculiar hardship; and, in short, secure all the advantages of co-operation. Perhaps there are no cities in England but London too large for a somewhat similar organisation: and its adoption would be an act of great wisdom.

In the south, I was rather amused at a boast which was made to me of the small amount of pauperism. As the plague distances all lesser diseases, so does slavery obviate pauperism. In a

society of two classes, where the one class are all capitalists, and the other property, there can be no pauperism but through the vice or accidental disability of members of the first. But I was [Pg 291] beset by many an anxious thought about the fate of disabled slaves. Masters are, of course, bound to take care of their slaves for life. There are doubtless many masters who guard the comfort of their helpless negroes all the more carefully from the sense of the entire dependence of the poor creatures upon their mercy: but, there are few human beings fit to be trusted with absolute power: and while there are many who abuse the authority they have over slaves who are not helpless, it is fearful to think what may be the fate of those who are purely burdensome. I observed, here and there, an idiot slave. Those whom I saw were kindly treated, humoured, and indulged. These were the only cases of natural infirmity that I witnessed among the negroes; and the absence of others struck me. At Columbia, South Carolina, I was taken by a benevolent physician to see the State Lunatic Asylum, which might be considered his work; so diligent had he been in obtaining appropriations for the object from the legislature, and afterwards in organising its plans, with great wisdom and humanity. When we were looking out from the top of this building, watching the patients in their airing grounds, I observed that no people of colour were visible in any part of the establishment. I inquired whether negroes were as subject to insanity as whites. Probably; but no means were known to have been taken to ascertain the fact. From the violence of their passions, there could be no doubt that insanity must exist among them. Were such insane negroes ever seen?—No one present had ever seen any.—Where were they then?—It was some time before I could get a clear answer to this: but my friend the physician said, at length, that he had no doubt they were kept in out-houses, chained to logs, to prevent [Pg 292] their doing harm. No member of society is charged with the duty of investigating cases of disease and suffering among slaves who cannot make their own state known. They are wholly at the mercy of their owners. The physician told me that it was his intention, now he had accomplished his object of establishing a lunatic asylum for the whites, to persevere no less strenuously till he obtained one for the blacks. He will probably not find this a very difficult object to effect; for the interest of masters, as well as their humanity, is concerned in having an asylum provided by the State for their useless or mischievous negroes.

The Lunatic Asylums of the United States are an honour to the country, to judge by those which I saw. The insane in Pennsylvania hospital, Philadelphia, should be removed to some more light and cheerful abode, and be much more fully supplied with employment, and with stimulus to engage in it. I was less pleased with their condition than with that of any other insane patients whom I saw. The institution at Worcester, Massachusetts, is admirably managed under Dr. Woodward. So was that at Charlestown, near Boston, by Dr. Lee; a young physician who has since died, mourned by his grateful patients, and by all who had their welfare at heart. The establishment at Bloomingdale, near New York, is of similar excellence. The only great deficiency that I am aware of is one which belongs to most lunatic asylums, and which it does not rest with the superintendent to supply;—a want of sufficient employment. Every exertion is made to provide a variety of amusements, and to encourage all little undertakings that may be suggested: but regular, important business is what is wanted. It is to be hoped that in the establishment of all such institutions, the provision of an ample quantity of land will be one of the prime [Pg 293] considerations. Watchful and ingenious kindness may do much to alleviate the miseries of the insane; but if cure is sought, I believe it is agreed by those who know best, that regular employment, with a reasonable object, is indispensable.

The Asylum for the Blind at Philadelphia was a young institution at the time I saw it; but it pleased me more than any I ever visited: more than the larger one at Boston; whose institution and conduct are, however, honourable to all concerned in it. The reason of my preference of the Philadelphia one is that the pupils there were more active and cheerful than those of Boston. The spirits of the inmates are the one infallible test of the management of an institution for the blind. The fault of such in general is that mirth is not sufficiently cultivated, and religion too exclusively so. It should ever be remembered that religion comes out of the mind, and not in at the eye or ear; and that the truest way of cultivating religion is to exercise the faculties, and enlarge the stock of ideas to the utmost. The method of printing for the blind, introduced with such admirable ingenuity and success into the American institutions, I should like to see employed to bring within the reach of the blind the most amusing works that can be found. I should like to see it made an object with benevolent persons to go and give the pupils a hearty laugh occasionally, by reading droll books, and telling amusing stories. The one thing which the born blind want most is to have their cheerlessness removed, to be drawn out of their abstractions, and exercised in play on the greatest possible variety of familiar objects and events. They should hear no condolence: their friends should keep their sympathetic sorrow to themselves; and explain, cheerfully and fully, the allusions to visual objects which must occur in all reading and conversation. It grieves [Pg 294] me to hear the hymns and other compositions put into the mouths of blind pupils, all full of lamentation and resignation about not seeing the stars and the face of nature. Such sorrow is for those who see to feel on their behalf; or for those who have lost sight: not for those who never saw. Put into their mouths, it becomes cant. When a roving sea-captain tells his children of the glories of oriental scenery which they are destined never to behold, does he teach them to sigh, and struggle to submit patiently to their destiny of staying at home? Does he not rather make them take pleasure in mirthfully and eagerly learning what he can teach? The face of nature is a foreign land to the born blind. Let them be taught all that can possibly be conveyed to them, and in the most spirited manner that they can bear. There is a nearer approach to the realisation of this principle of teaching the blind in the Philadelphia house than I ever saw elsewhere. It would be enough to cheer a misanthrope to see a little German boy there, picked up out of the streets, dull, neglected, and depressed; but within a few months, standing in the centre of the group of

musicians, fiddling and stamping time with all his might, and quite ready to obey every instigation to laugh. Mr. Friedlander, the tutor, is much to be congratulated on what he has already done.

It may be worth suggesting here that while some of the thinkers of America, like many of the same classes in England, are mourning over the low state of the Philosophy of Mind in their country, society is neglecting a most important means of obtaining the knowledge requisite for the acquisition of such philosophy. Scholars are embracing alternately the systems of Kant, of Fichte, of Spurzheim, of the Scotch school; or abusing or eulogising Locke asking who Hartley was, or weaving a rainbow arch of transcendentalism, which is to comprehend the whole that lies [Pg 295] within human vision, but sadly liable to be puffed away in dark vapour with the first breeze of reality; scholars are thus labouring at a system of mental philosophy on any but the experimental method, while the materials for experiment lie all around and within them. If they object, as is common, the difficulty of experimenting on their conscious selves, there is the mental pathology of their blind schools, and the asylums for the deaf and dumb. I am aware that they put away the phenomena of insanity as irrelevant; but the same objections do not pertain to the other two classes. Let the closet speculations be pursued with all vigour: but if there were joined with these a close and unwearied study of the phenomena of the minds of persons deficient in a sense, and especially of those precluded from the full use of language, the world might fairly look for an advance in the science of Mind equal to that which medical science owes to pathology. It will not probably lodge us in any final and total result, any more than medicine and anatomy promise to ascertain the vital principle: but it will doubtless yield us some points of certainty, in aid of the fluctuating speculations amidst which we are now tossed, while few can be found to agree even upon matters of so-called universal consciousness. I should like to see a few philosophers interested in ascertaining and recording the manifestations of some progressive minds, peculiar from infirmity, for a series of years. If any such in America, worthy to undertake the task, from having strength enough to put away theory and prejudice, and record only what is really manifested to them, should be disposed to take my hint, I hope they will not wait for a philosophical "class to fall into."

I was told at Washington, with a smile half satirical and half complacent, that "the people of New [Pg 296] England do good by mania." I watched accordingly for symptoms of this second or third-rate method of putting benevolence into practice. The result was, that I was convinced that the people of New England, and of the whole country, do good in all manner of ways; some better and some worse, according to their light. I met with pious ladies who make clothes for the poor, but who took work (her means of bread) out of the hands of a sempstress, (who had three children,) because her husband was in prison. They told me it would be encouraging vice to have anything to do with the families of persons who had committed offences: and when I asked how reformed offenders were to put their reformation in practice, I was told that if I would employ anybody who had been in prison, I deserved the censure of society. The matter ended in the sempstress (a good young woman) having to go home to her father's house. I met with others, both men and women, who make it the business of their lives, or of their leisure from yet more pressing duties, to seek out the sinners of society, and give them, not threats, nor scorn, nor lectures, but sympathy and help. So does light vary in this glimmering age; so eloquently does the conduct of Jesus speak to some, while to others it seems to preach in an unknown tongue. With regard to some methods of charity, nothing could exceed the ingenuity, shrewdness, forethought, and determination with which they were managed: in others, I was reminded of what I had been told about mania.

In regarding the Temperance movement, the word perpetually occurred to me. How the vice of intemperance ever reached the pass it did in a country where there is no excuse of want on the one hand, or of habits of conviviality on the other, was sometimes attempted to be explained to [Pg 297] me; but never to my satisfaction. Much may be said upon it, which cannot find a place here. Certain it is that the vice threatened to poison society. It was as remarkable as licentiousness of other kinds ever was in Paris, or at Vienna. Men who doubted the goodness of the principle of Association in opposition to moral evil, were yet carried away to countenance it by seeing nothing else that was to be done. Some few of these foresaw that, as every man must be virtuous in himself and by himself; as the principle of temperance in a man is incommunicable; as no two men's temptations are alike; and as, especially in this case, the temptations of the movers were immeasurably weaker than those of the mass to be wrought upon, there could be no radical truth, no pervading sincerity to rely upon. They foresaw what had happened; that there would be a vast quantity of perjury, of false and hasty promising, of lapse, and of secret, solitary drinking; that if some waverers were saved, others would be plunged into hypocrisy in addition to their intemperance; that schisms must arise out of the ignorance of bigots, which would cause as much scandal to good morals as intemperance itself; and that, worst of all, this method was the introduction of new and fatal perils to freedom of conscience. A few foresaw all this; but a very few had strength to resist the movement. A sort of reproach was cast upon those who refused to join, like that which is now visited upon such as adhere to the principle on which they first joined; —a kind of insinuation that their temperance is not thorough.—What have the consequences already been?

The amount of visible intemperance is actually lessened prodigiously; perhaps to the full extent anticipated by the originators of the movement. Spirit-shops have been shut up by hundreds; [Pg 298] some few drunkards have been reformed; and very large numbers of young men, entering life, are now sober citizens, who seemed in danger of becoming a curse to society. The question is whether the causes of the preceding intemperance have been discovered and obviated. If not,

there is every reason to expect that the control of opinion over them will be but temporary; and that the late sweeping and garnishing will give place to a state of things at least as bad as before.

At present, the effect of example is perishing, day by day. The example of those who have not pledged themselves is the only one morally regarded; all other persons being known to be bound. Virtue under a vow has no spiritual force. The more reasonable of those who are pledged have confined their pledge to the distinct case of not touching distilled liquors. They have the utmost difficulty in maintaining their ground, as examples, (their sole object,) under the assaults of bigots who complain that they are not "getting on;" and who, on their part, have got on so far as to refuse the communion to persons who will not abjure as they have done; to banish the sacramental wine; and to forbid malt liquors, and even coffee, in taverns and private houses. The superstition,—the attachment to the form without the spirit,—is fearfully revealed upon occasion. A man was brought dead drunk into a watch-house; and before the magistrate next morning, persisted that he could not have been drunk, because he was a member of a Temperance Society. The subservience of conscience to control is as necessary and remarkable. For instance, a gentleman, whose wife, in a state of imminent danger, was ordered brandy, ran and knocked up his minister to get leave before he would procure any for her. It is true that these are extreme [Pg 299] cases: but the effect of such institutions upon weak minds must be studied, as it is for weak minds that they are created.

My own convictions are that Associations, excellent as they are for mechanical objects, are not fit instruments for the achievement of moral aims: that there is yet no proof that the principle of self-restraint has been exalted and strengthened in the United States by the Temperance movement, while the already too great regard to opinion, and subservience to spiritual encroachment have been much increased: that, therefore, great as are the visible benefits of the institution, it may at length appear that they have been dearly purchased. I have reason to think that numbers of persons in the United States, especially enlightened physicians, (who have the best means of knowledge,) are of the same opinion. This is confirmed by the fact that there is a spreading dislike of Associations for moral, while there is a growing attachment to them for mechanical, objects. The majority will show to those who may be living at the time what is the right.

Though scarcely necessary, it may be well to indicate the distinction between Temperance and Abolition societies with regard to this principle. The bond of Temperance societies is a pledge or vow respecting the personal conduct of the pledger. The bond of the Abolitionists is agreement in a principle which is to be proposed and exhibited by mechanical means,—lecturing, printing, raising money for benevolent purposes. Nobody is bound in thought, word, or action. There have been a few Temperance societies which have avoided pledges, and confined their exertions to spreading knowledge on the pathology of intemperance, and its effects on the morals of the individual and of society. Associations confined to these objects are probably not only harmless, but highly useful.

CHAPTER V. [Pg 300]
UTTERANCE.

> "A country which has no national literature, or a literature too insignificant to force its way abroad, must always be, to its neighbours, at least in every important spiritual respect, an unknown and misestimated country. Its towns may figure on our maps; its revenues, population, manufactures, political connexions, may be recorded in statistical books: but the character of the people has no symbol and no voice; we cannot know them by speech and discourse, but only by mere sight and outward observation of their manners and procedure. Now, if both sight and speech, if both travellers and native literature, are found but ineffectual in this respect, how incalculably more so the former alone!"
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> *Edinburgh Review.*—Vol. xlvi. p. 309.

There is but one method by which most nations can express the general mind: by their literature. Popular books are the ideas of the people put into language by an individual. To a self-governing people there are two methods open: legislation is the expression of the popular mind, as well as literature.

If the national mind of America be judged of by its legislation, it is of a very high order; so much less violence to the first principles of morals is exhibited there than in any other social arrangements that the world has yet seen. If the American nation be judged of by its literature, it [Pg 301] may be pronounced to have no mind at all.

The two appearances are, however, reconcilable. The mind of a nation grows, like that of an individual; and its growth follows somewhat the same course. There may be in each a mind, vigorous and full of promise, unerring in the recognition of true principles, but apt to err in the application of them; ardent in admiration of all faithful and beautiful expression of mind by others; but not yet knowing how to utter itself. The youthful philosopher or poet is commonly a metaphysician before he indicates what he is ultimately to become. In the age of vivid consciousness, before he is twenty, the invisible and intangible world of reality opens to him with

a distinctness and lustre which make him in after time almost envy himself his youthful years. In this bright spiritual world, much is as indisputably revealed to him as material objects to the bodily eye: principles in full prominence; and a long perspective of certainties melting imperceptibly into probabilities; and lost at last in the haze of possibility, bright with the meridian sun of faith. To him

> "The primal duties shine aloft, like stars:
> The charities that soothe and heal and bless
> Lie scattered at the feet of man, like flowers."

But of all this he can, for some time, express nothing. He burns with convictions, but can testify them to others only by recognising the expression which others have obtained the power of affording. If he makes the attempt, he is either unintelligible or trite.

This appears to me to be the stage at which the mind of America has arrived. That the legislation of the country is, on the whole, so noble, is owing to the happy circumstance (a natural one in the order of Providence, by which great agents rise up when a great work has to be done) that accomplished individuals were standing ready to help the people to an expression of its first convictions. The earliest convictions of a nation so circumstanced are of their fundamental and common rights: and the expression must be legislation. This has been done so well by the Americans that there is every reason to anticipate that more will follow; since principles are so linked together that it is scarcely possible to grasp one without touching another. Accordingly, though there is no contribution yet to the Philosophy of Mind from America, many thinking men are feeling after its principles amidst the accumulations of the old world: though no light has been given to society from the American press on the principles of politics, Americans may be heard quoting Burke from end to end of the country, infallibly separating the democratic aspirations of his genius from the aristocratic perversions of his temper and education: though America has yet witnessed no creation, either in literature or the arts, and cannot even distinguish a creation from a combination, imitation, or delineation, yet the power of admiration which she shows in hailing that which is far inferior to what she needs,—the vigour with which, after incessant disappointment, she applies herself to the produce of her press, to find the imperishable in what is just as transient as all that has gone before,—is a prophecy that a creator will arise. The faith that America is to have an artist of some order is universal: and such a faith is a sufficient guarantee of the event. Every ephemeron of a tale-writer, a dramatist, novelist, [Pg 302]
lyrist, and sonnetteer, has been taken by one or another for the man. But he has not come out of [Pg 303]
his silence yet; and it is likely that it may still be long before he does. Every work of genius is, as has been said, a mystery till it appears. What its principles and elaboration may be, it is for one man only—its author—to conceive: but it is plain what it will not be. It will not be, more or less, a copy of anything now existing. It will not be a mere delineation of what passes before the bodily eye, unillumined and unvivified by the light and movement of principles, of which forms are but the exponents. It will not be an exhibition of the relations which conventionalisms mutually bear, however fine may be the perception, and however clever the presentation may be. Further than this American literature has, as yet, produced nothing.

There is another reason, besides those which have been mentioned, why it would be highly unjust and injurious to conclude that there is nothing more in the nation's heart and brain than has come out before the eye. The American nation is made up of contributions from almost all other civilised nations: and, though the primary truths of God, and the universal characteristics of Man are common to them all, there are infinite diversities to be blended into unity before a national character can arise; before a national mind can be seen to actuate the mass of society. It is probable that the first great work of genius that appears will be the most powerful instrument for effecting this blending and reconciling: but the appearance of such a work is doubtless retarded in proportion to the checks and repression of social sympathy, caused by the diversity of influences under which society proceeds. The tuning for the concert has begun; some captious persons are grumbling at the discord; some inexperienced expectants take a wail here, and a
flourish there, to be music: but the hour has not struck. The leader has not yet come to his place, [Pg 304]
to play the chord which shall bring the choral response that must echo over the world.

I saw the house which Berkeley built in Rhode Island,—built in the particular spot where it is, that he might have to pass, in his rides, over the hill which lies between it and Newport, and feast himself with the tranquil beauty of the sea, the bay and the downs, as they appear from the ridge of the eminence. I saw the pile of rocks, with its ledges and recesses, where he is said to have meditated and composed his "Minute Philosopher." It was at first melancholy to visit these his retreats, and think how empty the land still is of the philosophy he loved. But the more one sees of the people, and the less of their books, the stronger grows the hope of the stranger. One finds the observation of many turned inwards. Fragments of spiritual visions occur to one and another. Though some dogmatise, and others wait for revelation, and none seem to remember the existence of the experimental method, still there is a reaching after the Philosophy of Mind. At Harvard University, the chair of Mental Philosophy has been vacant for above eight years: it having been the custom formerly to indoctrinate the students with a certain number of chapters of Locke; and no man being now found hardy enough to undertake to discharge the duty thus; and the way not being yet clear to any one who would lay open the whole field of this philosophy, and let the students gather what they could out of it. Such impediments do not exist beyond the walls; and many young minds are at work without guidance, to whom guidance, however acceptable, is not necessary. If the lectures which are given to young ladies, who are carefully

misinformed from Reid and Stewart,—if the reviews and panegyrics of Dr. Brown, hazarded without the slightest conception of the nature and extent of his meaning, are likely to throw the observer into despair;—if he is amazed to see a coterie disputing upon the ultimate principles perceived by Pure Reason, while he finds within himself no evidence of the existence of this Pure Reason, and believes that if it did universally exist, ultimate principles could admit of no dispute, —he is yet cheered by finding, not only eagerness in the pursuit of the philosophical ideas of others, but traces of some originality of speculation. There is a little book, by a Swedenborgian, called "The Growth of the Mind," which is, I believe unquestionably, an original work. From its originality, and the beauty of some of its images, and yet more of its exhibition of certain relations, it is highly interesting, though it is not found to command that extensive assent, which is the only guarantee of the soundness of works on the Philosophy of Mind. Mankind may demur for ages to the earth being round, and to its moving through space; but where the primary appeal, as in the Philosophy of Mind, must be to consciousness, works which do not command assent to their fundamental positions are failures as philosophy, though they may have inferior merits and attractions. [Pg 305]

The best productions of American literature are, in my opinion, the tales and sketches in which the habits and manners of the people of the country are delineated, with exactness, with impartiality of temper, and without much regard to the picturesque. Such are the tales of Judge Hall of Cincinnati. Such are the tales by the author of Swallow Barn; where, however, there is the addition of a good deal of humour, and a subtraction of some of the truth. Miss Sedgwick's tales are of the highest order of the three, from the moral beauty which they breathe. This moral beauty is of a much finer character than the *bonhommie* which is the charm of Irving's pictures of manners. She sympathises where he good-naturedly observes; she cheerily loves where he gently quizzes. Miss Sedgwick's novels have this moral beauty too; as has everything she touches: but they have great and irretrievable faults as works of art. Tale-writing is her forte: and in this vocation, no one who has observed her striking progression will venture to say what she may not achieve. [Pg 306]

Among the host of tales which appear without the names of their authors are three, which strike me as excellent in their several ways: "Allen Prescott," containing the history of a New England boy, drawn to the life, and in a just and amiable spirit: "The New England Housekeeper," in which the *ménage* of a rising young lawyer, with its fresh joys and ludicrous perplexities, is humorously exhibited: and "Memoirs of a New England Village Choir," a sketch of even higher merit.

Irving's writings have had their meed. He has lived in the sunshine of fame for many years, and in the pleasant consciousness that he has been a benefactor to the present generation, by shedding some gentle, benignant, and beguiling influences on many intervals of their rough and busy lives. More than this he has probably not expected; and more than this he does not seem likely to achieve. If any of his works live, it will be his Columbus: and the later of his productions will be the first forgotten.

Cooper's novels have a very puny vitality. Some descriptions of scenery, and some insulated adventures, have great merit: but it is not human life that he presents. His female characters are far from human; and in his selections of the chances of mortal existence, he usually chooses the remotest. He has a vigour of perception and conception, which might have made him, with study and discipline, a great writer. As it is, he is, I believe, regarded as a much-regretted failure. [Pg 307]

The Americans have a poet. Bryant has not done anything like what he can and will do: but he has done some things that will live. Those of his poems which are the best known, or the most quoted, are smooth, sweet, faithful descriptions of nature, such as his own imagination delights in. I shall always remember the voice and manner with which he took up a casual remark of mine, about sights to be seen in the pine-barrens. When the visitors had all departed, his question "And what of the pine-barrens?" revealed the spirit of the poet. Of his poems of this class, "The Evening Wind" is to me the most delicious. But others,—"The Past," and "Thanatopsis"—indicate another kind, and a higher degree of power. If he would live for his gifts, if his future years could be devoted to "clear poetical activity," "looking up," like the true artist, "to his dignity and his calling," that dignity and that calling may prove to be as lofty as they no doubt appeared in the reveries of his boyhood; and he may be listened to as lovingly over the expanse of future time, as he already is over that of the ocean.

The Americans have also a historian of promise. Mr. Bancroft's History of the United States is little more than begun: but the beginning is characterised by an impartial and benevolent spirit, and by the indications which it affords of the author's fidelity to democratic principles; the two primary requisites in a historian of the republic. The carrying on the work to a completion will be a task of great toil and anxiety: but it will be a most important benefit to society at large, if it fulfils its promise.

The periodical literature of the United States is of a very low order. I know of no review where anything like impartial, enlightened criticism is to be found. The North American Review had once some reputation in England; but it has sunk at home and abroad, less from want of talent than of principle. If it has any principle whatever at present, it seems to be to praise every book it mentions, and to fall in as dexterously as possible with popular prejudice. The American Quarterly, published at Philadelphia, is uninteresting from the triteness of its morals, and a general dearth of thought, amidst a good deal of cleverness. The Southern Review, published at Charleston,—sometime ago discontinued, but I believe lately renewed,—is the best specimen of [Pg 308]

periodical literature that the country has afforded. After the large deductions rendered necessary by the faults of southern temper, this Review maintains its place above the rest; a rank which is, I believe, undisputed.

I met with one gem in American literature, where I should have least expected it:—in the Knickerbocker; a New York Monthly Magazine. Last spring, a set of papers began to appear, called "Letters from Palmyra,"[28] six numbers of which had been issued when I left the country. I have been hitherto unable to obtain the rest: but if they answer to the early portions, there can be no doubt of their being shortly in everybody's hands, in both countries. These letters remain in my mind, after repeated readings, as a fragment of lofty and tender beauty. Zenobia, Longinus, and a long perspective of characters, live and move in natural majesty; and the beauties of description and sentiment appear to me as remarkable as the strong conception of character, and [Pg 309] of the age. If this anonymous fragment be not the work of a true artist,—if the work, when entire, do not prove to be of a far higher order than anything which has issued from the American press, —its early admirers will feel yet more surprise than regret.

It is continually said, on both sides of the water, and with much truth, that the bad state of the laws of literary property is answerable for some of the depression of American literature. It is true that the imperfection of these laws inflicts various discouragements on American writers, while it is disgracefully injurious to foreign authors. It is true that American booksellers will not remunerate native authors while they can purloin the works of British writers: and that the American public has a strong disposition to listen to the utterance of the English in preference to the prophets of their own country. It is true that in America, where every man must work for his living, it is a discouragement to the pursuit of literature that a living cannot, except in a few rare cases, be got by it. But all this is no solution of the fact of the non-existence of literature in America: which fact is indeed no mystery. The present state of the law, by which the works of English authors are pirated, undefended against mutilation, and made to drive native works out of the market, is so conspicuously bad, that there is every prospect of a speedy alteration: but there is nothing in the abuse which can silence genius, if genius is wanting to speak. It ought by this time to be understood that there is no power on earth which can repress mental force of the highest kinds; which can stifle the utterance of a thoroughly-moved spirit: certainly no power which is held by piratical booksellers under defective laws. Such discouragement is unjust and harsh; but it cannot be fatal. If a native genius, of a far higher order than any English, had been [Pg 310] existing in America for the last ten years, he would have made himself heard ere this, and won his way into the general mind and heart through a host of bookselling harpies, and a chaos of lawlessness: he would have done this, even if it had been necessary to give his dinner for paper, and sell his bed to pay the printer;—expedients which it is scarcely conceivable that any author in that thriving land should be driven to. The absence of protection to foreign literary property is injurious enough, without its being made answerable for the deficiency of literary achievement. The causes lie deeper, and will not have ceased to operate till long after the law shall have been made just in this particular.

Some idea of the literary taste of the country may be arrived at through a mention of what appeared to me to be the comparative popularity of living or recent British authors.

I heard no name so often as Mrs. Hannah More's. She is much better known in the country than Shakspeare. This is, of course, an indication of the religious taste of the people; and the fact bears only a remote relation to literature. Scott is idolised; and so is Miss Edgeworth; but I think no one is so much read as Mr. Bulwer. I question whether it is possible to pass half a day in general society without hearing him mentioned. He is not worshipped with the dumb self-surrendering reverence with which Miss Edgeworth is regarded: but his books are in every house; his occasional democratic aspirations are in every one's mouth; and the morality of his books is a constant theme of discussion, from among the most sensitive of the clergy down to the "thinking, thoughtless school-boy" and his chum. The next name is, decidedly, Mrs. Jameson's. She is altogether a favourite; and her "Characteristics of Women" is the book which has made her [Pg 311] so. At a considerable distance follows Mrs. Hemans. Byron is scarcely heard of. Wordsworth lies at the heart of the people. His name may not be so often spoken as some others; but I have little doubt that his influence is as powerful as that of any whom I have mentioned. It is less diffused, but stronger. His works are not to be had at every store; but within people's houses they lie under the pillow, or open on the work-box, or they peep out of the coat-pocket: they are marked, re-marked, and worn. Coleridge is the delight of a few. So is Lamb; regarded, however, with a more tender love. I heard Mr. Hallam's name seldom, but always in a tone of extraordinary respect, and from those whose respect is most valuable.

No living writer, however, exercises so enviable a sway, as far as it goes, as Mr. Carlyle. It is remarkable that an influence like his should have been gained through scattered articles of review and speculation, spread over a number of years and a variety of periodicals. The Americans have his "Life of Schiller;" but it was not that. His articles in the Edinburgh Review met the wants of several of the best minds in the society of New England; minds weary of cant, and mechanical morals, and seeking something truer to rest upon. The discipleship immediately instituted is honourable to both. Mr. Carlyle's remarkable work, "Sartor Resartus," issued piecemeal through Fraser's Magazine, has been republished in America, and is exerting an influence proportioned to the genuineness of the admiration it has excited. Perhaps this is the first instance of the Americans having taken to their hearts an English work which came to them anonymously, unsanctioned by any recommendation, and even absolutely neglected at home. The book is acting upon them with wonderful force. It has regenerated the preaching of more than [Pg 312]

one of the clergy; and, I have reason to believe, the minds and lives of several of the laity. It came as a benefactor to meet a pressing want; how pressing, the benefited testify by the fervour of their gratitude.

I know of no method by which the Americans could be assisted to utter what they may have in them so good as one which has been proposed, but which is not yet, I believe, in course of trial. It has been proposed that a publication should be established, open to the perfectly full and free discussion of every side of every question, within a certain department of inquiry;—Social Morals, for instance. There are difficulties at present in the way of presenting the whole of any subject to the public mind; difficulties arising from the unprincipled partiality of the common run of newspapers, the cautious policy of reviewers, the fear of opinion entertained by individual writers, and the impediments thrown in the way of free publication by the state of the laws relating to literary property. A publication devoted to the object of presenting, without fear or favour, all that can be said on any subject, without any restriction, except in the use of personalities towards opponents, would be the best possible remedy, under the circumstances, for the inconveniences complained of; the finest stimulus to the ascertainment of truth; the best education in the art of free and distinct utterance. A publication like this, under the editorship of such a man as Dr. Follen, a man full of learning, philosophy, and that devout love of truth which is a guarantee of impartiality, would be a high honour to the country, and a good lesson to some older societies, from which the fear of free discussion has not yet vanished. An editor worthy of the work would decline the responsibility of suppressing any views, coming within the range of subjects embraced. He would merely weed out personalities; cherish the spirit of justice and [Pg 313] charity; and for the sake of these, strengthen the weaker side, where he saw that it was inadequately defended. It may be said that editors who would thus discharge their function are rare. They are so: but there is Dr. Follen; a living reply to the objection.

I have not the apprehension which some entertain that such a publication would be feared and rejected by the public. At first, it would excite some surprise and perplexity; one-sidedness being so generally the characteristic of periodicals in America, that it would take some time to convey the idea of a consistent opposite practice. But the American public has given no evidence of a dislike to be made acquainted with truth; but quite the contrary. My own conviction is, that before two years from its commencement, such a work would be in the houses of all the honest thinkers and most principled doers in the country; and that eloquent voices would, by its means, make themselves heard from many a remote dwelling-place; using with delight their means of utterance; and proving that the dearth of American literature is not owing to vacuity of thought or deadness of feeling. At any rate, such an experiment would ascertain whether the want is of means of utterance, or of something to utter.

FOOTNOTE:

[28] "Letters of Lucius M. Piso, from Palmyra, to his friend Marcus Curtius, at Rome: now first translated and published." They present a picture of the state of the East in the reign of Aurelian; and are to end, I suppose, with the fall of Palmyra.

PART IV.

[Pg 314]

CHAPTER I.
RELIGION.

> "Der Grund aller Democratie; die höchste Thatsache der Popularität."
>
> *Novalis.*
>
> "The Christian Religion is the root of all democracy; the highest fact in the Rights of Man."

Religion is the highest fact in the Rights of Man from its being the most exclusively private and individual, while it is also a universal, concern, of any in which man is interested. Religion is, in its widest sense, "the tendency of human nature to the Infinite;" and its principle is manifested in the pursuit of perfection in any direction whatever. It is in this widest sense that some speculative atheists have been religious men; religious in their efforts after self-perfection; though unable to personify their conception of the Infinite. In a somewhat narrower sense, religion is the relation which the highest human sentiments bear towards an infinitely perfect Being.

There can be no further narrowing than this. Any account of religion which restricts it within the [Pg 315] boundaries of any system, which connects it with any mode of belief, which implicates it with hope of reward or fear of punishment, is low and injurious, and debases religion into superstition.

The Christian religion is specified as being the highest fact in the rights of man from its embodying (with all the rest) the principle of natural religion—that religion is at once an individual, an universal, and an equal concern. In it may be found a sanction of all just claims of political and social equality; for it proclaims, now in music and now in thunder,—it blazons, now

in sunshine and now in lightning,—the fact of the natural equality of men. In giving forth this as its grand doctrine, it is indeed "the root of all democracy;" the root of the maxim (among others) that among the inalienable rights of all men are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The democracy of America is planted down deep into the christian religion; into its principles, which it has in common with natural religion, and which it vivifies and illumines, but does not alter.

How does the existing state of religion accord with the promise of its birth? In a country which professes to secure to every man the pursuit of happiness in his own way, what is the state of his liberty in the most private and individual of all concerns? How carefully are all men and women left free from interference in following up their own aspirations after the Infinite, in realising their own ideas of perfection, in bringing into harmonious action the functions of their spirits, as infinitely diversified as the expression of their features?

The absence of such diversity is the first striking fact which presents itself on the institution of such an inquiry. If there were no constraint,—no social reward or penalty,—such an approach to [Pg 316] uniformity of profession could not exist as is seen in the United States. In a society where speculation and profession were left perfectly free, as included among the inalienable rights of man, there would be many speculative (though probably extremely few practical) atheists: there would be an adoption by many of the principles of natural religion, otherwise than in and through Christianity: and Christianity would be adopted in modes as various as the minds by which it would be recognised. Instead of this, we find laws framed against speculative atheists: opprobrium directed upon such as embrace natural religion otherwise than through Christianity: and a yet more bitter oppression exercised by those who view Christianity in one way, over those who regard it in another. A religious young christian legislator was pitied, blamed, and traduced in Boston, last year, by clergymen, lawyers, and professors of a college, for endeavouring to obtain a repeal of the law under which the testimony of speculative atheists is rejected in courts of justice: Quakers (calling themselves Friends) excommunicate each other: Presbyterian clergymen preach hatred to Catholics: a convent is burnt, and the nuns are banished from the neighbourhood: and Episcopalian clergymen claim credit for admitting Unitarians to sit in committees for public objects! As might be expected under such an infringement of the principle of securing to every man the pursuit of happiness in his own way, there is no such endless diversity in the action of minds, and utterance of tongues, as nature and fidelity to truth peremptorily demand. Truth is deprived of the irrefragable testimony which would be afforded by whatever agreement might arise amidst this diversity: religion is insulted and scandalised by nominal adherence and hypocritical advocacy. There are many ways of professing Christianity in [Pg 317] the United States: but there are few, very few men, whether speculative or thoughtless, whether studious or ignorant, whether reverent or indifferent, whether sober or profligate, whether disinterested or worldly, who do not carefully profess Christianity, in some form or another. This, as men are made, is unnatural. Society presents no faithful mirror of the religious perspective of the human mind.

It may be asked whether this is not true of the Old World also. It is. But the society of the Old World has not yet grasped in practice any one fundamental democratic principle: and the few who govern the many have not yet perceived that religion is "the root of all democracy:" they are so far from it that they are still upholding an established form of religion; in which a particular mode of belief is enforced upon minds by the imposition of virtual rewards and punishments. The Americans have long taken higher ground; repudiating establishments, and professing to leave religion free. They must be judged by their own principles, and not by the example of societies whose errors they have practically denounced by their adoption of the Voluntary Principle.

The almost universal profession in America of the adoption of Christianity,—this profession by many whose habits of thought, and others whose habits of living forbid the supposition that it is the religion of their individual intellects and affections, compels the inquiry what sort of Christianity it is that is professed, and how it is come by. There is no evading the conviction that it is to a vast extent a monstrous superstition that is thus embraced by the tyrant, the profligate, the worldling, the bigot, the coward, and the slave; a superstition which offers little molestation to their vices, little rectification to their errors; a superstition which is but the spurious offspring [Pg 318] of that divine Christianity which "is the root of all democracy, the highest fact in the Rights of Man." That so many of the meek, pure, disinterested, free, and brave, make the same profession, proves only that they penetrate to religion through superstition; or that they cast away unconsciously the superstition with which their spirits have no affinity, and accept such truth as all superstition must include in order to live.

The only test by which religion and superstition can be ultimately tried is that with which they co-exist. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The Presbyterian body is a very large one; the total number in communion, according to the minutes of the General Assembly for 1834, being then 247,964. New England contains a very small, and the south and west a very large, proportion of the body. Some of the most noble of the abolitionists of the north are Presbyterians; and from the lips and pens of Presbyterians in the south, come some of the defences of slavery which evince the deepest depravity of principle and feeling. This is only another proof, added to the million, that religion comes out of morals. In the words of a pure moralist,[29] "Morality is usually said to depend upon religion; but this is said in that low sense in which outward conduct is considered as morality. In that higher sense in which morality denotes sentiment, it is more exactly true to say, that religion depends on morality, and springs from it. Virtue is not the conformity of outward actions to a rule; nor is religion the fear of punishment, or the hope of reward. Virtue is the state of a just, prudent, benevolent, firm, and

temperate mind. Religion is the whole of those sentiments which such a mind feels towards an infinitely perfect being." With these views, we may account for the different morality of the [Pg 319] Presbyterians of the south from that of such of the friends of the slave in the north as are of the same communion. Of the Presbyterian, as well as other clergy of the south, some are even planters, superintending the toils of their slaves, and making purchases, or effecting sales in the slave-markets, during the week, and preaching on Sundays whatever they can devise that is least contradictory to their daily practice. I watched closely the preaching in the south,—that of all denominations,—to see what could be made of Christianity, "the highest fact in the Rights of Man," in such a region. I found the stricter religionists preaching reward and punishment in connexion with modes of belief, and hatred to the Catholics. I found the more philosophical preaching for or against materialism, and diverging to phrenology. I found the more quiet and "gentlemanly" preaching harmless abstractions,—the four seasons, the attributes of the Deity, prosperity and adversity, &c. I heard one clergyman, who always goes out of the room when the subject of negro emancipation is mentioned, or when slavery is found fault with, preach in a southern city against following a multitude to do evil. I heard one noble religious discourse from the Rev. Joel Parker, a Presbyterian clergyman, of New Orleans; but except that one, I never heard any available reference made to the grand truths of religion, or principles of morals. The great principles which regard the three relations to God, man, and self,—striving after perfection, mutual justice and charity, and christian liberty,—were never touched upon.—Meantime, the clergy were pretending to find express sanctions of slavery in the Bible; and putting words to this purpose into the mouths of public men, who do not profess to remember the existence of the [Pg 320] Bible in any other connexion. The clergy were boasting at public meetings, that there was not a periodical south of the Potomac which did not advocate slavery; and some were even setting up a magazine, whose "fundamental principle is, that man ought to be the property of man." The clergy, who were to be sent as delegates to the General Assembly, were receiving instructions to leave the room, if the subject of slavery was mentioned; and to propose the cessation of the practice of praying for slaves. At the same time, the wife of a clergyman called upon me to admire the benevolent toils of a friend, who had been "putting up 4000 weight of pork" for her slave household: and another lady, kindly and religiously disposed, told me what pains she took on Sunday mornings to teach her slaves, by word of mouth, as much of Christianity as was good for them. When I pressed her on the point as to why they were to have Christianity and not the alphabet, and desired to know under what authority she dared to keep from them knowledge, which God has shed abroad for all, as freely as the the air and sunshine, I found that the idea was wholly new to her: nothing that she had heard in church, or out of it, from any of the Christians among whom she lived, had awakened the suspicion that she was robbing her brethren of their birth-right. The religion of the south strictly accords with the morals of the south. There is much that is gentle, merciful, and generous: much among the suffering women that is patient, heroic, and inspiring meek resignation. Among these victims, there is faith, hope, and charity. But Christianity is severed from its radical principles of justice and liberty; and it will have to be cast out as a rotten branch.

A southern clergyman mentioned to me, obviously with difficulty and pain, that though he was as [Pg 321] happily placed as a minister could be, treated with friendliness and generosity by his people, and so cherished as to show that they were satisfied, he had one trouble. During all the years of his ministry, no token had reached him that he had religiously impressed their minds, more or less. They met regularly and decorously on Sundays, and departed quietly, and there was an end. He did not know that any one discourse had affected them more than any other; and no opportunity was offered him of witnessing any religious emotion among them whatever.—Another, an Unitarian clergyman of the south, was known to lament the appearance of Dr. Channing's work on slavery, "the cause was going on so well before!" "The cause going on!" exclaimed another Unitarian clergyman in the north; "what should the ship go on for, when they have thrown both captain and cargo overboard?"

What is to be said of the southern fruits of "the root of all democracy?" Excluding the debased slaves, and the helpless, suffering victims of the system, there remain the laity, who, as they do not abolish slavery, must be concluded not to understand the religion with whose principles it cannot coexist; and the acquiescing clergy, who, if they do not understand its principles, are unfit to be clergymen: and if they do, are unfit to be called Christians.

The Presbyterians of the south have reason to perceive that the principles of christian liberty are not fully embraced by their brethren of the north, though acted upon by some with a disinterested heroism in the direction of abolition. Those who would exclude slave-holders from the communion-table are usurping an authority which the principles of their religion forbid. The hatred to the Catholics also approaches too nearly in its irreligious character to the oppression of [Pg 322] the negro. It is pleaded by some who most mourn the persecution the Catholics are at present undergoing in the United States, that there is a very prevalent ignorance on the subject of the Catholic religion; and that dreadful slanders are being circulated by a very few wicked, which deceive a great many weak, persons. This is just the case: but there is that in the true christian religion which should intercept the hatred, whatever may be the ignorance. There is that in the true christian religion which should give the lie to those slanders, in the absence of all outward evidence of their untruth. There is that in true Christianity which should chasten the imagination, allay faithless apprehensions, and inspire a trust that, as heart answers to heart, no vast body of men can ever bind themselves by the name of Jesus, to become all that is most the reverse of holy, harmless, and undefiled. The question "where is thy faith?" might reasonably have been put to the Presbyterian clergyman who preached three long denunciations against the Catholics in Boston, the Sunday before the burning of the Charlestown convent: and also to parents, who can

put into their children's hands, as religious books, the foul libels against the Catholics which are circulated throughout the country. In the west, I happened to find in the chamber of a very young lady, the only child of an opulent and influential citizen, a book of this kind, which no epithet but filthy will suit. It lay with her Bible and Prayer-book; the secular part of her library being disposed elsewhere. If religion springs from morals, those who put the book into the hands of this young girl will be answerable, if her religion should be as little like that which is "first pure, then peaceable," as their own.

I was seriously told, by several persons in the south and west, that the Catholics of America were [Pg 323] employed by the Pope, in league with the Emperor of Austria and the Irish, to explode the Union. The vast and rapid spread of the Catholic faith in the United States has excited observation, which grew into this rumour. I believe the truth to be that, in consequence of the Pope's wish to keep the Catholics of America a colonial church, and the Catholics of the country thinking themselves now sufficiently numerous to be an American Catholic church, a great stimulus has been given to proselytism. This has awakened fear and persecution; which last has, again, been favourable to the increase of the sect. While the Presbyterians preach a harsh, ascetic, persecuting religion, the Catholics dispense a mild and indulgent one; and the prodigious increase of their numbers is a necessary consequence. It is found so impossible to supply the demand for priests, that the term of education has been shortened by two years.—Those observers who have made themselves familiar with the modes in which institutions, even of the most definite character, adapt themselves to the wants of the time, will not be made uneasy by the spread of a religion so flexible in its forms as the Catholic, among a people so intelligent as the Americans. The Catholic body is democratic in its politics, and made up from the more independent kind of occupations. The Catholic religion is modified by the spirit of the time in America; and its professors are not a set of men who can be priest-ridden to any fatal extent. If they are let alone, and treated on genuine republican principles, they may show us how the true, in any old form of religion, may be separated from the false, till, the eye being made clear, the whole body will be full of light. If they cannot do this, their form of religion will decay, or at least remain harmless; for it is assuredly too late now for a return of the dark ages. At all events, every [Pg 324] American is required by his democratic principles to let every man alone about his religion. He may do with the religion what seems to him good; study, controvert, adopt, reject, speak, write, or preach, whatever he perceives and thinks about its doctrines and its abuses: but with its professors he has nothing to do, further than religiously to observe his fraternal relation to them; suffering no variance of opinion to seduce him into a breach of the republican and christian brotherhood to which he is pledged.

What other fruits are there of the superstition which pervades society, comprehending under the term Christian many who know little of its doctrine, and exhibit less of its spirit? The state and treatment of infidelity are some of the worst.

There is in this respect a dreadful infringement on human rights throughout the north; though a better spirit is being cherished and extended by a few who see how contrary to all christian and all democratic principles it is that a man should be the worse for his opinions in society. I have seen enough to know how little chance Christianity has in consequence of this infringement. I know that very large numbers of people are secretly disinclined to cherish what is imposed upon them, with perpetual and unvarying modes of observance, from their childhood up; and how the disgust grows from the opprobrium with which unbelief is visited. I know that there are minds in New England, as everywhere else, which must, from their very structure, pass through a state of scepticism on their way to stability; and that such are surrounded with snares, such as no man should lay in his brother's path; with temptations to hypocrisy, to recklessness, to despair; and to an abdication of their human prerogative of reason, as well as conscience. I know how women, in [Pg 325] whom the very foundations of belief have been ploughed up by the share of authority, go wearily to church, Sunday after Sunday, to hear what they do not believe; lie down at night full of self-reproach for a want of piety which they do not know how to attain; and rise up in the morning hopelessly, seeing nothing in the day before them but the misery of carrying their secret concealed from parents, husband, sisters, friends. I know how young men are driven into vice, by having only the alternative of conformity or opprobrium: feeling it impossible to believe what is offered them; feeling it to be no crime to disbelieve: but, seeing unbelief treated as crime, and themselves under suspicion of it, losing faith in others and in themselves, and falling in reality at last. All this, and very much more, I know to be happening. I was told of one and another, with an air of mystery, like that with which one is informed of any person being insane, or intemperate, or insolvent, that so and so was thought to be an unbeliever. I was always tempted to reply, "And so are you, in a thousand things, to which this neighbour of yours adds one."—An elderly, generally intelligent, benevolent gentleman told me that he wanted to see regulations made by which deists should be excluded from office, and moral men only admitted. Happily, the community is not nearly so far gone in tyranny and folly as to entertain such a project as this: but it must be a very superstitious society where such an idea could be deliberately expressed by a sane man.

One circumstance struck me throughout the country. Almost as often as the conversation between myself and any other person on religious subjects became intimate and earnest, I was met by the supposition that I was a convert. It was the same in other instances: wherever there was a strong interest in the christian religion, conversion to a particular profession of it was [Pg 326] confidently supposed. This fact speaks volumes.

Happy influences are at work to enlighten and enlarge the mind of society. One of the most

powerful of these is the union of men and women of all religions in pursuit of objects of common interest; particularly in the abolition cause. Persons who were once ready to excommunicate each other are now loving friends in their mutual obedience to the weightier matters of the law. The churches in Boston, and even the other public buildings, being guarded by the dragon of bigotry, so that even faith, hope, and charity are turned back from the doors, a large building is about to be erected for the use of all, deists not excepted, who may desire to meet for purposes of free discussion. This is, at least, an advance.

A reflecting and eminently religious person was speculating with me one day, on the influences by which the human mind is the most commonly and the most powerfully awakened to vivid and permanent religious sensibility. We brought cases and suppositions of its being now strong impressions of the beauty and grandeur of nature; now grief, and now joy, and so on. My friend concluded that it was most frequently the spectacle of moral beauty in an individual. I have no doubt it is so: and if it be, what tremendous injury must be done to the highest parts of man's nature by the unprincipled tyranny of the religious world in the republic! Men declare by this very tyranny how essential they consider belief to be. Belief is essential,—not only to safety, but to existence. Every mind lives by belief, as the body lives by the atmosphere: but the objects and modes of belief must be various; and it is from disallowing this that superstition arises. If men must exercise the mutual vigilance which their human affections prompt, it would be well for [Pg 327] religion and for themselves that they should note how much their brethren believe, rather than what they disbelieve: the amount would be found so vast as immeasurably to distance the deficiency. If this were done, religion would be found to be so safe that the proportions of sects, and the eccentricities of individuals would be lost sight of in the presence of universal, living, and breathing faith. I was told of a child who stood in the middle of a grass-plat, with its arms by its sides, and listening with a countenance of intense expectation, "to hear God's tramp on that high blue floor." Who would care to know what christian sect this child belonged to; or whether to any?—I was told of a father and mother, savages, who lost their only child, and were overwhelmed with grief, under which the father soon sank. From the moment of his death, the solitary survivor recovered her cheerfulness. Being asked why, she said she had been miserable for her child, lest he should be forlorn in the world of spirits: he had his father with him now, and would be happy. Who would inquire for the creed of this example of disinterested love?—I was told of a young girl, brought up from the country by a selfish betrayer, refused the marriage which had been promised, and turned out of doors by him on her being seized with the cholera. She was picked up from a doorstep, and carried to the hospital. In the midst of her dying agonies, no inducement could prevail on her to tell the name of her betrayer; and she died faithful to him, so that the secret of whose treachery we are abhorring is dead with her. With such testimony that the very spirit of the gospel was in this humble creature, none but those who would dare to cast her out for her fall would feel any anxiety as to how she received the facts of the gospel. [Pg 328] Religion is safe, and would be seen to be so if we would set ourselves to mark how universal are some few of men's convictions, and the whole of man's affections. While men feel wonder, and the universe is wonderful; while men love natural glory, and the heavens and the earth are resplendent with it; while men revere holiness, and the beauty of holiness beams at times upon the dimmest sight, religion is safe. For the last reason, Christianity is also safe. If the beauty of its holiness were never obscured by the defilements of human passion with which it is insulted, it is scarcely conceivable that all men would not be, in some sense or other, Christians.

Those who are certain that Christianity is safe, (and they are not a few,) and who, therefore, beware of encroaching on their brother's liberty of conscience, will be found to be the most principled republicans, the firmest believers that Christianity is "the root of all democracy: the highest fact in the Rights of Man."

FOOTNOTE:

[29] Sir James Mackintosh.

[Pg 329]

CHAPTER I.
SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

> "And therefore the doctrine of the one (Christ) was never afraid of universities, or endeavoured the banishment of learning like the other (Mahomet.) And though Galen doth sometimes nibble at Moses, and, beside the apostate Christian, some heathens have questioned his philosophical part or treatise of the creation; yet there is surely no reasonable Pagan that will not admire the rational and well-grounded precepts of Christ, whose life, as it was conformable unto his doctrine, so was that unto the highest rules of reason, and must therefore flourish in the advancement of learning, and the perfection of parts best able to comprehend it."
>
> *Sir Thomas Browne.*

Religion has suffered from nothing, throughout all Christendom, more than from its science having been mixed up with its spirit and practice. The spirit and practice of religion come out of morals; but its science comes out of history also; with chronology, philology, and other collateral

kinds of knowledge. The spirit and practice of religion are for all, since all bear the same relation to their Creator and to their race, and are endowed with reason and with affections. But the high science of religion is, at present at least, like all other science, for the few. The time may come when all shall have the comprehension of mind and range of knowledge which are requisite for investigating spiritual relations, tracing the religious principle through all its manifestations in individuals and societies, studying its records in many languages, and testing the interpretations [Pg 330] which have been put upon them, from age to age. The time may possibly come when all may be able thus to be scientific in theology: but that time has assuredly not arrived. It is so far from being at hand, that by far the largest portion of christian society seems to be ignorant of the distinction between the science of theology and the practice of religion. The scientific study and popular administration of religion have not only been confided to the same persons, but actually mixed up and confounded in the heads and hands of those persons. Contrary to all principle, and to all practice in other departments, the student who enters upon this science is warned beforehand what conclusions he must arrive at. The results are given to him prior to investigation; and sanctioned by reward and punishment. The first injury happens to the student, under a method of pursuing science as barbarous as any by which the progress of natural knowledge was retarded in ages gone by. The student, become an administrator, next injures his flock in his turn, by mixing up portions of his scholastic science with religious sentiment. He teaches dogmatically that which bears no relation to duty and affection; requiring assent where, for want of the requisite knowledge, true assent is impossible; where there can be only passive reception or ignorant rejection. The consequences are the corruptions of Christianity, which grieve the spirit of those who see where and how the poison is mixed with the bread of life.

The office of theological science is to preserve,—we must now say to recover,—the primary simplicity of Christianity. It is a high and noble office to penetrate to and test the opinions of ages, in order to trace corruptions to their source, and separate them from the pure waters of truth. It is a high and noble task to master the associations of the elder time, and look again at [Pg 331] the gospel to see it afresh in its native light. It is a high and noble task to strip away false glosses, not only of words but of ideas, that the true spirit of the gospel may shine through the record. But these high and noble labours are but means to a higher and nobler end. The dignity of theological study arises from its being subservient to the administration of religion. The last was Christ's own office; the highest which can be discharged by man: so high as to indicate that when its dignity is fully understood, it will be confided to the hands of no class of men. Theologians there will probably always be; but no man will be a priest in those days to come when every man will be a worshipper.

On some accounts it may seem desirable that the theologians of this age should be the clergy. It was once desirable; for reasons analogous to those which constituted priests once the judges, then the politicians, then the literati of society. It has been, and is, the plea that those who professed to clear Christianity from its corruptions, and to master its history, were the fittest persons to present it to the popular mind.

If this were ever the case, the time seems to have passed by. The press affords the means of placing the clear results of theological inquiry in the hands of those whom they concern. There seems to be no other relation between the theologian, as a theologian, and the worshipper, which should constitute him the organ of their worship. The habits of mind most favourable to the pursuit of theological study are not those which qualify for a successful administration of religious influences. This is proved by fact; by the limited efficacy of preaching, and by the fatal confusion which has been caused by the clergy having given out fragments of their studies from [Pg 332] the pulpit, with annexations of promise and threatening. It does not follow that the administrators should be ignorant; only that their knowledge should be other than scholastic and technical. The organ of a worshipping assembly should be furnished with the clear results of theological study; and with such intellectual and moral science as shall enable him, if his sympathies be warm enough, to identify himself with the mind and heart of humanity. He must have that knowledge of men's relations and interests in life which shall enable him to look into infinity from their point of view; to give voice to whatever sentiments are common to all; to appeal to whatever affections and desires are stirring in all. For this purpose, he must be practically engaged in the great moral questions of the time, carrying the principles of religion into them with his whole experimental force; and bringing out of them new light whereby to illustrate these principles, new grounds on which to reason in behalf of duty, and new forces with which to animate the convictions of his fellow-worshippers into practice.

The fluctuations through which the Methodist body in America, as well as elsewhere, is arriving at the true principle as to the ministering of religion, are well known. First, they clearly saw the corruption of christian doctrine and the deadness of religious service which must follow from putting closet students into the pulpit: and, holding the belief of immediate and special inspiration, they abjured human learning. The mischiefs which have followed upon the ministry of ignorant and fanatical clergy have converted large numbers to the advocacy of human learning. It will probably yet be long before they can put in practice the true method of having one set of men to be theologians, and another to be preachers or other organs of worship. The complaint of [Pg 333] every denomination in the United States is of a scarcity of ministers. This is so pressing that, as we have seen in the case of the Catholics, the term of study is shortened. Now seems the time, and America the place, for dispensing with the formalities which restrict religious worship. It would be an incalculable injury to have theological study brought to an end by every youth who devotes himself to it being called away to preach, before he can possibly possess many of the requisites for preaching. It would be far better to throw open the office of administration to all

who feel and can speak religiously, and so as to be the genuine voice of the thoughts of others. Even if it were necessary to reconstitute religious societies, making the meetings for worship smaller, and the exercises varying with the nature of the case, there could no evil arise so serious as the interruption of theological study, and the deterioration of public worship. In the wild west, where the people can no more live without religion than they can anywhere else, the farmer's neighbours collect around him from within a circuit of thirty miles, and he reads or speaks, and prays, and they are refreshed. If this is not done, if it is not frequently done, the settlers become liable to the insanity of camp-meetings and revivals. If the national want can be thus naturally supplied in the heart of the forest or prairie, why not also in the city? The city has the advantage of a greater number of persons qualified to express the common desires, and meet the common sympathies of the worshippers.

There are enlightened and religious persons who think it would be a great advantage to religion if the present system of dogmatical theological study in America were broken up. It might be so, if it were sure to be reconstituted upon better principles, and if it were not done for the purpose of supplying the pulpit with men who might be even less fit for their office than they are now. But [Pg 334] there is no prospect of such a breaking up at present; and, I am afraid, as little of any great improvement in the principles of research. Though there are differences arising about creeds; though there are schisms within the walls of churches and of colleges, and trials for heresy before synods and assemblies, which promise a more or less speedy relaxation of the bonds of creeds, and the tyranny of church government, there is no near prospect of theological science being left as free as other kinds. There is no near prospect of evidence on the most important of all subjects being consigned to the heaven-made laws of the human mind. There is no near prospect of inquiry being left to work out its results, without any prior specification, under penalty, of what they must be. There is no near prospect of the clergy having such faith in the religion they profess as to leave it to the administration of Him who sent it, free from their pernicious and arrogant protection.

If other science had its results mixed up with hope and fear, its pursuit watched over by tyranny, and divergence from old opinions punished by opprobrium, the world, instead of being "an immense whispering gallery, where the faintest accent of science is heard throughout every civilised country as soon as uttered," would be a Babel; where all utterance would be vociferation, and life one interminable quarrel. It would be an extreme exemplification of the principle of making convictions the object of moral approbation and disapprobation. As it is, though natural philosophers sometimes fall out, yet there is a practical admission of the right of free research, and of the innocence of arriving, by strict fidelity, at any conclusions whatever, in natural science. The consequence is that, instead of men being imprisoned for their discoveries, and made to do penance for the benefits they confer on the community, science proceeds [Pg 335] expeditiously and joyously, under the hands of intent workers, mutually aiding and congratulating, while society gratefully accepts the results, and adopts the knowledge evolved, as it becomes necessarily and regularly popularised.

Whenever moral science shall be undertaken, and religious science emancipated, such will be the harmonious progress of each, and the christian religion will be anew revealed to men. Meantime, the religious world is in one aspect like an inquisition; in another, like a Babel. The religious world: not by any means the intercourse of all religious persons. Some of the most religious persons are quite out of the religious world; voluntarily retreating from it that they may retain their reverence; or driven from it, because they are faithful to convictions which are prescribed to them only by God, without the sanction of man.

Is it thus that religion should be followed and professed in a democratic republic? Does it carry with it any dispensation from democratic principles? any authority for despotism in this one particular? any denial of human equality? any sanction of human authority over reason and conscience? Is it not rather "the root of all democracy; the highest fact in the Rights of Man?" America has left it to the Old World to fortify Christianity by establishments, and has triumphantly shown that a great nation may be trusted to its religious instincts to provide for its religious wants. In order to the complete following out of her principles, she must leave religious speculation and pursuit of knowledge and peace as open as any other; and beware of making the ascertainments of science an occasion for the oppression of a single individual in fortune, name, or natural inheritance of spiritual liberty.

CHAPTER II. [Pg 336]
SPIRIT OF RELIGION.

> "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
>
> *Paul the Apostle.*

"Hands full of hearty labours: pains that pay
And prize themselves—do much that more they may.
No cruel guard of diligent cares, that keep
Crowned woes awake, as things too wise for sleep:
But reverend discipline, religious fear,
And soft obedience, find sweet biding here.
Silence, and sacred rest, peace and pure joys—
Kind loves keep house, lie close, and make no noise.
And room enough for monarchs, while none swells
Beyond the limits of contentful cells.
The self-remembering soul sweetly recovers
Her kindred with the stars: not basely hovers
Below—but meditates th' immortal way
Home to the source of light and intellectual day."

Crashaw.

Society in America is as much in a transition state about religion as France and England are about politics. The people are in advance of the clergy in America, as the English are in advance of such of their political institutions as are in dispute. Discouraging as the aspect of religious profession in America is on a superficial survey, a closer study will satisfy the observer that all will be well; that the most democratic of nations is religious at heart; and that its superstitions and offences against the spirit of Christianity are owing to temporary influences.

In order to ascertain what the spirit of religion really is in the country, we must not judge by the [Pg 337] periodicals. Religious periodicals are almost entirely in the hands of the clergy, who are in no country fair representatives of the religion of the people. These periodicals are, almost without exception, as far as my knowledge of them goes, extremely bad. A very few have some literary and scientific merit; and many advocate with zeal particular methods of charity, and certainly effect a wide and beneficent co-operation for mutual help which could not be otherwise so well secured. But arrogance and uncharitableness, cant, exclusiveness, and an utter absence of sympathy with human interests and affections, generally render this class of publications as distasteful as the corresponding organs of religious bodies in the Old World. They are too little human in their character, from the books of the Sunday School Union to the most important of the religious reviews, to be by any possibility a fair expression of the spiritual state of some millions of persons. The acts of the laity, and especially of those who are least under the influence of the clergy, must be looked to as the only true manifestations.

If religion springs from morals, the religion must be most faulty where the morals are so. The greatest fault in American morals is an excessive regard to opinion. This is the reason of the want of liberality of which unbelievers, and unusual believers, have so much reason to complain. But the spirit of religion is already bursting through sectarian restraints. Many powerful voices are raised, within the churches as well as out of them, and even from a few pulpits, against the mechanical adoption and practice of religion, and in favour of individuality of thought, and the consequent spontaneousness of speech and action. Many indubitable Christians are denouncing cant as strongly as those whom cant has alienated from Christianity. The dislike of associations [Pg 338] for religious objects is spreading fast; and the eyes of multitudes are being opened to the fact that there can be little faith at the bottom of that craving for sympathy which prevents men and women from cheerfully doing their duty to God and their neighbour unless sanctioned by a crowd. Some of the clergy have done away with the forms of admission to their churches which were formerly considered indispensable. There is a visible reaction in the best part of society in favour of any man who stands alone on any point of religious concern: and though such an one has the more regularly drilled churches against him, he is usually cheered by the grasp of some trusty right hand of fellowship.

The eagerness in pursuit of speculative truth is shown by the rapid sale of every kind of heretical work. The clergy complain of the enormous spread of bold books, from the infidel tract to the latest handling of the miracle question, as sorrowfully as the most liberal members of society lament the unlimited circulation of the false morals issued by certain Religious Tract Societies. Both testify to the interest taken by the people in religion. The love of truth is also shown by the outbreak of heresy in all directions. There are schisms among all the more strict of the religious bodies, and large secessions and new formations among those which are bound together by slight forms. There are even a few places to be found where Deists may come among Christians to worship their common Father, without fear of insult to their feelings, and mockery of their convictions.

I know also of one place, at least, and I believe there are now several, where the people of colour are welcome to worship with the whites,—actually intermingled with them, instead of being set apart in a gallery appropriated to them. This is the last possible test of the conviction of human [Pg 339] equality entertained by the white worshippers. It is such a test of this, their christian conviction, as no persons of any rank in England are ever called upon to abide. I think it very probable that the course of action which is common in America will be followed in this instance. A battle for a principle is usually fought long, and under discouragement: but the sure fruition is almost instantaneous, when the principle is but once put into action. The people of colour do actually, in one or more religious assemblies, sit among the whites, in token that the principle of human brotherhood is fully admitted. It may be anticipated that the example will spread from church to

church—in the rural districts of the north first, and then in the towns;[30] so that the clergy will soon find themselves released from the necessity of veiling, or qualifying, the most essential truth of the gospel, from the pastoral consideration for the passions and prejudices of the white portion of their flocks, which they at present plead in excuse of their compromise.

The noble beneficence of the whole community shows that the spirit of the gospel is in the midst of them, as it respects the condition of the poor, ignorant, and afflicted. Of the generosity of society there can be no question; and if it were only accompanied with the strict justice which the [Pg 340] same principles of christian charity require; if there were as zealous a regard to the rights of intellect and conscience in all as to the wants and sufferings of the helpless, such a realisation of high morals would be seen as the world has not yet beheld. I have witnessed sights which persuade me that the principle of charity will yet be carried out to its full extent. It gave me pleasure to see the provisions made for every class of unfortunates. It gave me more to see young men and women devoting their evening and Sunday leisure to fostering, in the most benignant manner, the minds of active and trustful children. But nothing gave me so much delight as what was said by a young physician to a young clergyman, on their entering a new building prepared as a place of worship for children, and also as a kind of school: as a place where religion might have its free course among young and free minds. "Now," said the young physician, "here we are, with these children dependent upon us. Never let us defile this place with the smallest act of spiritual tyranny. Watch me, and I will watch you, that we may not lay the weight of a hair upon these little minds. If we impose one single opinion upon them, we bring a curse upon our work. Here, in this one place, let minds be absolutely free." This is the true spirit of reverence. He who spoke those words may be considered, I believe and trust, as the organ of no few, who are aware that reverence is as requisite to the faithful administration of charity, as to the acceptable offering of prayer.

The asceticism which pervades large sections of society in America, testifies to the existence of a strong interest in religion. Its effects are most melancholy; but they exhibit only the perversion of that which is, in itself, a great good.—The asceticism of America is much like that of every other [Pg 341] place. It brings religion down to be ceremonial, constrained, anxious, and altogether divested of its free, generous, and joyous character. It fosters timid selfishness in some; and in others a precise proportion of reckless licentiousness. Its manifestations in Boston are as remarkable as in the strictest of Scotch towns. Youths in Boston, who work hard all the week, desire fresh air and exercise, and a sight of the country, on Sundays. The country must be reached over the long bridges before-mentioned, and the youths must ride to obtain their object. They have been brought up to think it a sin to take a ride on Sundays. Once having yielded, and being under a sense of transgression for a wholly fictitious offence, they rarely stop there.[31] They next join parties to smoke, and perhaps to drink, and so on. If they had but been brought up to know that the Sabbath, like all times and seasons, was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; that their religion is in their state of mind, and not in the arrangement of their day, their Sabbaths would most probably have been spent as innocently as any other day; and the chances would have been much increased of their desiring the means of improving their religious knowledge, [Pg 342] and cherishing their devotional affections, by social worship. I was struck by the fact that at the Jefferson University, at Charlottesville, Virginia, where no fundamental provision is made for worship, where not the slightest authority is exercised over the students with regard to religious observances, there is not only a most regular administration of religion, but the fullest attendance upon it. Every one knows what a burden and snare the public prayers are at our English Universities, where the attendance is compulsory. At Charlottesville, where the matter is left to the inclination of the students, the attendance is punctual, quiet, and absolutely universal. [32]

The ascetic proscription of amusements extends to the clergy throughout the country; and includes the whole of the religious world in New England. As to the clergy, the superstition can scarcely endure long, it is so destitute of all reason. I went to a large party at Philadelphia, with a clergyman and other friends. Dancing presently began. I was asked a question, which implied that my clerical friend had gone home. "There he is," I replied. "O, I concluded that he went away when the dancing began;" said the lady, in a tone which implied that she thought he ought to have gone home. It was observed of this gentleman, that he could not be a religious man, he was seen at so many parties during my visit to his house. No clergyman ever enters the theatre, or touches a card. It is even expected that he should go away when cards are introduced, as from the ball-room. The exclusion from the theatre is of the least consequence, as large portions of society have reasonable doubts about the encouragement of an amusement which does seem to [Pg 343] be vitiated there, almost to the last degree. The Americans have little dramatic taste: and the spirit of puritanism still rises up in such fierce opposition to the stage, as to forbid the hope that this grand means of intellectual exercise will ever be made the instrument of moral good to society there that it might be made: and the proscribed race of dramatic artists is, in talent and in morals, just what a proscribed and depressed class might be expected to be. The attempt to raise their condition and their art has been strenuously made by the manager of the Boston theatre, who has sternly purified his establishment, excluding from his stage everything that could well give offence even to Boston prudery. But it is in vain. The uncongeniality is too great: and those who respect dramatic entertainments the most highly, will be the most anxious that the American theatres should be closed. I even know of more families than one, unconnected with clergy, and not making any strict religious profession, where Shakspeare is hidden, for prudish reasons. I need not add, that among such persons there is not the remotest comprehension of what the drama is. If a reader of Shakspeare occurs, here and there, it usually turns out that he considers the plays as collections of passages, descriptive, didactic, &c. &c. Such being the state

of things, it is no matter of surprise and regret that the clergy, among others, abstain from the theatre. But, as to the dancing,—either dancing is innocent, or it is not. If not, nobody should dance: if innocent, the clergy should dance, like others, as they have the same kind of bodies to be animated, and of minds to be exhilarated. Once admit any distinction on account of their office, and there is no stopping short, in reason, of the celibacy of the clergy, and the other gloomy superstitions by which the free and genial spirit of Christianity has been grieved. [Pg 344]

This ascetic practice of taking care of one another's morals has gone to such a length in Boston, as to excite the frequent satire of some of its wisest citizens. This indicates that it will be broken through. When there was talk of attempting to set up the Italian opera there, a gentleman observed that it would never do: people would be afraid of the very name. "O!" said another, "call it Lectures on Music, with illustrations, and everybody will come."

Lectures abound in Boston: and I am glad of it; at least in the interval before the opening of the public amusements which will certainly be required, sooner or later. These lectures may not be of any great use in conveying science and literature: lectures can seldom do more than actuate to study at home. But in this case, they probably obviate meetings for religious excitement, which are more hurtful than lectures are beneficial. The spiritual dissipations indulged in by the religious world, wherever asceticism prevails, are more injurious to sound morals than any public amusements, as conducted in modern times, have ever been proved to be. It is questionable whether even gross licentiousness is not at least equally encouraged by the excitement of passionate religious emotions, separate from action: and it is certain that rank spiritual vices, pride, selfishness, tyranny, and superstition, spring up luxuriantly in the hotbeds of religious meetings. The odiousness of spiritual vices is apt to be lost sight of in the horror of sensual transgressions. If a pure intelligence, however, had to decide between the two, he would probably point out that the vices which arise from the frailty of nature are less desperate and less revolting than those which are mainly factitious, and which arise from a perversion of man's highest relation. It is difficult to decide which set of vices (if indeed the line can be drawn between them) spreads the most extensive misery, and most completely ruins the unhappy subjects of them; but it is certain that the sympathies of unsophisticated minds turn more readily to the publicans and sinners, than to the pharisees of society: and they have high authority for so doing. [Pg 345]

Still, the asceticism shows that a strong religious feeling, a strong sense of religious duty exists, which has only to be enlarged and enlightened. A most liberal-minded clergyman, a man as democratic in his religion, and as genial in his charity, as any layman in the land, remarked to me one day on the existence of this strong religious sensibility in the children of the Pilgrims, and asked me what I thought should be done to cherish and enlarge it, we having been alarming each other with the fear that it would be exasperated by the prevalent superstition, and become transmuted, in the next generation, to something very unlike religious sensibility. We proposed great changes in domestic and social habits: less formal religious observance in families, and more genial interest in the intellectual provinces of religion: more rational promotion of health, by living according to the laws of nature, which ordain bodily exercise and mental refreshment. We proposed that new temptations to walking, driving, boating, &c. should be prepared, and the delights of natural scenery laid open much more freely than they are: that social amusements of every kind should be encouraged, and all religious restraints upon speech and action removed: in short, that spontaneousness should be reverenced and approved above all things, whatever form it may take. Of course, this can only be done by those who do approve and reverence spontaneousness: but I am confident that there are enough of them, in the very heart of the most ascetic society in America, to make it unreasonable that they should any longer succumb to the priests and devotees of the community. [Pg 346]

Symptoms of the breaking out of the true genial spirit of liberty were continually delighting me. A Unitarian clergyman, complaining of the superstition of the body to which he belonged, while they were perpetually referring to their comparative freedom, observed, "We are so bent on standing fast in our liberty, that we don't get on." Another remarked upon an eulogy bestowed on some one as a man and a Christian: "as if," said the speaker, "the Christian were the climax! as if it were not much more to be a man than a Christian!"

The way in which religion is made an occupation by women, testifies not only to the vacuity which must exist when such a mistake is fallen into, but to the vigour with which the religious sentiment would probably be carried into the great objects and occupations of life, if such were permitted. I was perpetually struck with this when I saw women braving hurricane, frost, and snow, to flit from preaching to preaching; and laying out the whole day among visits for prayer and religious excitement, among the poor and the sick. I was struck with this when I saw them labouring at their New Testament, reading superstitiously a daily portion of that which was already too familiar to the ear to leave any genuine and lasting impression, thus read. Extraordinary instances met my knowledge of both clergymen and ladies making the grossest mistakes about conspicuous facts of the gospel history, while reading it in daily portions for ever. It is not surprising that such a method of perusal should obviate all real knowledge of the book: but it is astonishing that those who feel it to be so should not change their methods, and begin at length to learn that which they have all their lives been vainly trusting that they knew. [Pg 347]

The wife of a member of Congress, a conscientious and religious woman, judges of persons by one rule,—whether they are "pious." I could never learn how she applied this; nor what she comprehended under her phrase. She told me that she wished her husband to leave Congress. He was no longer a young man, and it was time he was thinking of saving his soul. She could not,

after long conversation on this subject, realise the idea that religion is not an affair of occupation and circumstance, but of principle and temper; and that, as there is no more important duty than that of a member of Congress, there is no situation in which a man can attain a higher religious elevation, if the spirit be in him.

The morality and religion of the people of the United States have suffered much by their being, especially in New England, an ostensibly religious community. There will be less that is ostensible and more that is genuine, as they grow older. They are finding that it is the possession of the spirit, and not the profession of the form, which makes societies as well as individuals religious. All they have to do is to assert their birth-right of liberty; to be free and natural. They need have no fear of licence and irreligion. The spirit of their forefathers is strong in them: and, if it were not, the spirit of Humanity is in them; the very sanctum of religion. The idea of duty (perverted or unperverted) is before them in all their lives; and the love of their neighbour is in all their hearts. As surely then as they live and love, they will be religious. What they have to look to is that their religion be free and pure.

FOOTNOTES:

[30] When I visited the New York House of Refuge for the reformation of juvenile delinquents, one of the officers showed me, with complacency, that children of colour were sitting among the whites, in both the boys' and girls' schools. On explaining to me afterwards the arrangements of the chapel, he pointed out the division appropriated to the pupils of colour. "Do you let them mix in school, and separate them at worship?" I asked. He replied, with no little sharpness, "*We* are not amalgamationists, madam." The absurdity of the sudden wrath, and of the fact of a distinction being made at worship (of all occasions) which was not made elsewhere, was so palpable, that the whole of our large party burst into irresistible laughter.

[31] The author of "Home" arranged the Sunday, in her book, somewhat differently from the usual custom; describing the family whose home she pictured as spending the Sunday afternoon on the water, after a laborious week, and an attendance on public worship in the morning. Religious conversation was described as going on throughout the day. So much offence was taken at the idea of a Sunday sail, that the editor of the book requested the author to alter the chapter; the first print being proposed to be cancelled. I am sorry to say that she did alter it. If she was converted to the popular superstition, (which could scarcely be conceived,) no more is to be said. If not, it was a matter of principle which she ought not to have yielded. If books are to be altered, an author's convictions to be unrepresented, to avoid shocking religious prejudices, there is a surrender, not only of the author's noblest prerogative, but of his highest duty.

[32] Ministers of four denominations undertake the duty in rotation, in terms of a year each. The invitation, and the discharge of the duty, are as purely voluntary as the attendance upon the services.

CHAPTER III.

[Pg 348]

ADMINISTRATION OF RELIGION.

"What will they then
But force the spirit of grace itself, and bind
His consort Liberty? what but unbuild
His living temples, built by faith to stand,
Their own faith, not another's?"

Milton.

"Truth shall spring out of the earth;
And righteousness shall look down from heaven."

85th Psalm.

The inquiry concerning the working of the voluntary system in America,—the only country where it operates without an establishment by its side,—takes two directions. It is asked, first, whether religion is administered sufficiently to the people: and, secondly, what is the character of the clergy.

The first question is easily answered. The eagerness for religious instruction and the means of social worship are so great that funds and buildings are provided wherever society exists. Though the clergy bear a larger proportion to men of other occupations, I believe, than is the case anywhere, except perhaps in the Peninsula, they are too few for the religious wants of the people. Men are wanting; but churches and funds are sufficient. According to a general summary of religious denominations,[33] made in 1835, the number of churches or congregations was [Pg 349] 15,477; the population being, exclusive of the slaves, between fifteen and sixteen millions; and a not inconsiderable number being settlers scattered in places too remote for the formation of regular societies, with settled ministers. To these 15,477 churches there were only 12,130 ministers. If to these settled clergy, there are added the licentiates and candidates of the

Presbyterian church, the local preachers of the Methodists, the theological students, and quaker administrators, it will be acknowledged that the number of religious teachers bears an unusually large proportion to the population. Yet the Baptist sect alone proclaims a want of above three thousand ministers to supply the existing churches. Every exertion is made to meet the religious wants of the people. The American Education Society has assisted largely in sending forth young ministers: the Mission and Bible Societies exhibit large results. In short, society in the United States offers every conceivable testimony that the religious instincts of the people may be trusted to supply their religious wants. It is only within four or five years that this has been fully admitted even in the State of Massachusetts. Up to 1834, every citizen of that State was obliged to contribute something to the support of some sect or church. The inconsistency of this obligation with true democratic principle was then fully perceived, and religion left wholly to voluntary support. It is needless to say that the event has fully justified the confidence of those who have faith enough in Christianity to see that it needs no protection from the State, but will commend itself to human hearts better without.

As to the other particular of the inquiry,—the character of the clergy,—more is to be said. [Pg 350]

It is clear that there is no room under the voluntary system for some of the worst characteristics which have disgraced all christian priesthoods. In America, there can be no grasping after political power; no gambling in a lottery of church livings; no worldly pomp and state. These sins are precluded under a voluntary system, in the midst of a republic. Instead of these things, we find the protestant clergy generally belonging to the federal party, when they open their lips upon politics at all. They belong to the apprehensive party; according to all precedent. It would be called strange if it did not almost universally happen, that (with the exception of the political churchmen of the Old World) they who uphold a faith which shall remove mountains, who teach that men are not to fear "them that kill the body, and afterwards have no more that they can do," are the most timid class of society; the most backward in all great conflicts of principles. They have ever rested invisible in their tents, when any wrestling was going on between morals and abuses. They have ever, as a body, belonged to the aristocratic and fearing party. So it is in America, where the fearing party is depressed; as it has ever been where the aristocratic party is uppermost.

The clergy in America are not, as a body, seekers of wealth. It is so generally out of their reach, that the adoption of the clerical profession is usually an unequivocal testimony to their disinterestedness about money. I say "usually," because there are exceptions. The profession has been one of such high honour that it rises to an equality with wealth. It is common, not to say usual, that young clergymen, who are almost invariably from poor families, marry ladies of fortune. Where there are several sisters in a rich family, it seems to be regarded as a matter of [Pg 351] course that one will marry a clergyman. Amidst some good which arises out of this practice, there is the enormous evil, not peculiar to America, that adventurers are tempted into the profession. Not a few planters in the south began life as poor clergymen, and obtained by marriage the means of becoming planters. Not a few pastors in the north grow more sleek than they ever were saintly, and go through two safe and quiet preachments on Sundays, as the price of their week-day ease. But, as long as the salaries of ministers are so moderate as they now are, it cannot be otherwise than that the greater number of clergy enter upon their profession in full view of a life of labour, with small pecuniary recompense. There can, I think, be no question that the vocation is adopted from motives as pure as often actuate men; and that the dangers to which the clergy succumb arise afterwards out of their disadvantageous position.

It is to be wished that some alteration could be made in the mode of remunerating the clergy. At present, they have usually small salaries and large presents. Nothing is more natural than that grateful individuals or flocks should like to testify their respect for their pastor by adding to his comforts and luxuries: but, if all the consequences were considered, I think the practice would be forborne, and the salary increased instead. In the present state of morals, it happens that instances are rare where one person can give pecuniary benefit to another without injury to one or both. Sympathy, help, may be given, with great mutual profit; but rarely money or money's worth.[34] This arises from the false associations which have been gathered round wealth, and [Pg 352] have implicated it too extensively with mental and moral independence. Any one may answer for himself the question whether it is often possible to regard a person to whom he is under pecuniary obligation with precisely the same freedom, from first to last, which would otherwise exist. If among people of similar views, objects, and interests, this is felt as a difficulty, it is aggravated into a great moral danger when spiritual influences are to be dispensed by the aided and obliged party. I see no safety in anything short of a strict rule on the part of an honourable pastor to accept of no gift whatever. This would require some self-denial on the part of his friends; but they ought to be aware that giving gifts is the coarsest and lowest method of testifying respect and affection. Many ways are open to them: first by taking care that their pastor has such a fixed annual provision made for him as will secure him from the too heavy pressure of family cares; and then by yielding him that honest friendship, and plain-spoken sympathy, (without any religious peculiarity,) which may animate him in his studies and in his ministrations.

The American clergy being absolved from the common clerical vices of ambition and cupidity, it remains to be seen whether they are free also from that of the idolatry of opinion. They enter upon their office generally with pious and benevolent views. Do they retain their moral independence in it?—I cannot answer favourably.

The vices of any class are never to be imputed with the full force of disgraces to individuals. The

vices of a class must evidently, from their extent, arise from some overpowering influences, under whose operation individuals should be respectfully compassionated, while the morbid influences are condemned. The American clergy are the most backward and timid class in the [Pg 353] society in which they live; self-exiled from the great moral questions of the time; the least informed with true knowledge; the least efficient in virtuous action; the least conscious of that christian and republican freedom which, as the native atmosphere of piety and holiness, it is their prime duty to cherish and diffuse. The proximate causes of their degeneracy in this respect are easily recognised.

It is not merely that the living of the clergy depends on the opinion of those whom they serve. To all but the far and clear-sighted it appears that the usefulness of their function does so. Ordinary men may be excused for a willingness to seize on the precept about following after the things that make for peace, without too close an inquiry into the nature of that peace. Such a tendency may be excused, but not praised, in ordinary men. It must be blamed in all pastors who believe that they have grasped purer than ordinary principles of gospel freedom.

The first great mischief which arises from the disinclination of the clergy to bring what may be disturbing questions before their people, is that they themselves inevitably undergo a perversion of views about the nature of their pastoral office. To take the most striking instance now presented in the United States. The clergy have not yet begun to stir upon the Anti-Slavery question. A very few Presbyterian clergymen have nobly risked everything for it; some being members of Abolition societies; and some professors in the Oberlin Institute and its branches, where all prejudice of colour is discountenanced. But the bulk of the Presbyterian clergy are as fierce as the slave-holders against the abolitionists. I believe they would not object to have Mr. Breckinridge considered a sample of their body. The episcopalian clergy are generally silent on [Pg 354] the subject of Human Rights, or give their influence against the Abolitionists. Not to go over the whole list of denominations, it is sufficient to mention that the ministers generally are understood to be opposed to abolition, from the circumstances of their silence in the pulpit, their conversation in society, and the conduct of those who are most under their influence. I pass on to the Unitarians, the religious body with which I am best acquainted, from my being a Unitarian myself. The Unitarians believe that they are not liable to many superstitions which cramp the minds and actions of other religionists. They profess a religion of greater freedom; and declare that Christianity, as they see it, has an affinity with all that is free, genial, intrepid, and true in the human mind; and that it is meant to be carried out into every social arrangement, every speculation of thought, every act of the life. Clergymen who preach this live in a crisis when a tremendous conflict of principles is taking place. On one side is the oppressor, struggling to keep his power for the sake of his gold; and with him the mercenary, the faithlessly timid, the ambitious, and the weak. On the other side are the friends of the slave; and with them those who, without possibility of recompense, are sacrificing their reputations, their fortunes, their quiet, and risking their lives, for the principle of freedom. What are the Unitarian clergy doing amidst this war which admits of neither peace nor truce, but which must end in the subjugation of the principle of freedom, or of oppression?

I believe Mr. May had the honour of being the first Unitarian pastor who sided with the right. Whether he has sacrificed to his intrepidity one christian grace; whether he has lost one charm of his piety, gentleness, and charity, amidst the trials of insult which he has had to undergo, I dare [Pg 355] appeal to his worst enemy. Instead of this, his devotion to a most difficult duty has called forth in him a force of character, a strength of reason, of which his best friends were before unaware. It filled me with shame for the weakness of men, in their noblest offices, to hear the insolent compassion with which some of his priestly brethren spoke of a man whom they have not light and courage enough to follow through the thickets and deserts of duty, and upon whom they therefore bestow their scornful pity from out of their shady bowers of complacency.—Dr. Follen came next: and there is nothing in his power that he has not done and sacrificed in identifying himself with the cause of emancipation. I heard him, in a perilous time, pray in church for the "miserable, degraded, insulted slave; in chains of iron, and chains of gold." This is not the place in which to exhibit what his sacrifices have really been.—Dr. Channing's later services are well known. I know of two more of the Unitarian clergy who have made an open and dangerous avowal of the right: and of one or two who have in private resisted wrong in the cause. But this is all. As a body they must, though disapproving slavery, be ranked as the enemies of the abolitionists. Some have pleaded to me that it is a distasteful subject. Some think it sufficient that they can see faults in individual abolitionists. Some say that their pulpits are the property of their people, who are not therefore to have their minds disturbed by what they hear thence. Some say that the question is no business of theirs. Some urge that they should be turned out of their pulpits before the next Sunday, if they touched upon Human Rights. Some think the subject not spiritual enough. The greater number excuse themselves on the ground of a doctrine which, I [Pg 356] cannot but think, has grown out of the circumstances; that the duty of the clergy is to decide on how much truth the people can bear, and to administer it accordingly.—So, while society is going through the greatest of moral revolutions, casting out its most vicious anomaly, and bringing its Christianity into its politics and its social conduct, the clergy, even the Unitarian clergy, are some pitying and some ridiculing the apostles of the revolution; preaching spiritualism, learning, speculation; advocating third and fourth-rate objects of human exertion and amelioration, and leaving it to the laity to carry out the first and pressing moral reform of the age. They are blind to their noble mission of enlightening and guiding the moral sentiment of society in its greatest crisis. They not only decline aiding the cause in weekdays by deed or pen, or spoken words; but they agree in private to avoid the subject of Human Rights in the pulpit till the crisis be past. No one asks them to harrow the feelings of their hearers by sermons on slavery: but they avoid

offering those christian principles of faith and liberty with which slavery cannot co-exist.

Seeing what I have seen, I can come to no other conclusion than that the most guilty class of the community in regard to the slavery question at present is, not the slave-holding, nor even the mercantile, but the clerical: the most guilty, because not only are they not blinded by life-long custom and prejudice, nor by pecuniary interest, but they profess to spend their lives in the study of moral relations, and have pledged themselves to declare the whole counsel of God.—Whenever the day comes for the right principle to be established, let them not dare to glory in the glory of their country. Now, in its martyr-age, they shrink from being confessors. It will not be for them to [Pg 357] march in to the triumph with the "glorious army." Yet, if the clergy of America follow the example of other rear-guards of society, they will be the first to glory in the reformation which they have done their utmost to retard.

The fearful and disgraceful mistake about the true nature of the clerical office,—the supposition that it consists in adapting the truth to the minds of the hearers,—is already producing its effect in thinning the churches, and impelling the people to find an administration of religion better suited to their need. The want of faith in other men and in principles, and the superabundant faith in themselves, shown in this notion of pastoral duty, (which has been actually preached, as well as pleaded in private,) are so conspicuous, as to need no further exposure. The history of priesthoods may be referred to as an exhibition of its consequences. I was struck at first with an advocacy of Ordinances among some of the Unitarian clergy, which I was confident must go beyond their own belief. I was told that a great point was made of them, (not as observances but as ordinances,) because the public mind required them. I saw a minister using vehement and unaccustomed action, (of course wholly inappropriate,) in a pulpit not his own; and was told that that set of people required plenty of action to be assured the preacher was in earnest. I was told that when prejudices and interests have gathered round any point of morals, truth ceases to be truth, and it becomes a minister's duty to avoid the topic altogether. The consequences may be anticipated.—"What do you think, sir, the people will do, as they discover the backwardness of their clergy?" I heard a minister of one sect say to a minister of another.—"I think, sir, they will soon require a better clergy," was the reply. The people are requiring a better clergy. Even in Boston, so far behind the country as that city is, a notable change has already taken place. A [Pg 358] strong man, full of enlarged sympathies, has not only discerned the wants of the time, but set himself to do what one man may to supply them. He invites to worship those who think and feel with him, as to what their communion with the Father must be, to sustain their principles and their cheer in this trying time. A multitude flocks round him; the earnest spirits of the city and the day, whose full hearts and worn spirits can find little ease and refreshment amidst the abstract and inappropriate services of ministers who give them truth as they judge they can receive it. Nothing but the whole truth will satisfy those who are living and dying for it. The rising up of this new church in Boston is an eloquent sign of the times.[35]

An extraordinary revelation of the state of the case between the clergy and the people was made to me, most unconsciously, by a minister who, by the way, acknowledges that he avoids, on principle, preaching on the subjects which interest him most: he thinks he serves his people best, by carrying into the pulpit subjects of secondary interest to himself. This gentleman, shocked with the tidings of some social tyranny on the anti-slavery question, exclaimed, "Such a revelation of the state of people's minds as this, is enough to make one leave one's pulpit, and set to work to mend society." What a volume do these few words disclose, as to the relation of the clergy to the people and the time!

What the effect would be of the clergy carrying religion into what is most practically important, [Pg 359] and therefore most interesting, is shown as often as opportunity occurs; which is all too seldom. When Dr. Channing dropped, in a sermon last winter, that legislatures as well as individuals were bound to do the will of God, every head in the church was raised or turned; every eye waited upon him. When another minister preached on being 'alone,' and showed how the noblest benefactors of the race, the truest servants of God, must, in striking out into new regions of thought and action, pass beyond the circle of common human sympathies, and suffer accordingly, many a stout heart melted into tears; many a rigid face crimsoned with emotion; and the sermon was repeated and referred to, far and near, under the name of "the Garrison sermon;" a name given to it, not by the preacher, but by the consciences of some and the sympathies of others. Contrast with such an effect as this the influence of preaching, irrelevant to minds and seasons. If such sayings are admired or admitted at the moment, they are soon forgotten, or remembered only in the general. "Don't you think," said a gentleman to me, "that sermons are sadly useless things for the most part? admonitions strung like bird's eggs on a string; so that they tell pretty much the same, backwards or forwards, one way or another."

It appears to me that the one thing in which the clergy of every kind are fatally deficient is faith: that faith which would lead them, first, to appropriate all truth, fearlessly and unconditionally; and then to give it as freely as they have received it. They are fond of apostolic authority. What would Paul's ministry have been if he had preached on everything but idolatry at Ephesus, and licentiousness at Corinth? There were people whose silver shrines, whose prejudices, whose false moral principles were in danger. There were people who were as unconscious of the depth of [Pg 360] their sin as the oppressors of the negro at the present day. How would Paul have then finished his course? If he had stopped short from the expediency of not dividing a household against itself, in case such should be the consequence of giving true principles to the air; if, dreading to break up the false peace of successful lucre and overbearing profligacy, he had confined himself to speculations like those with which he won the ear of the Athenians, carefully avoiding all

allusions to Diana at Ephesus, and to temperance and judgment to come at Corinth, what kind of an apostle would he have been? Very like the American christian clergy of the nineteenth century.

The next great mischief that arises from the fear of opinion which makes the clergy keep aloof from the stirring questions of the time, is that they are deprived of that influence, (the highest kind of all,) that men exert by their individual characters and convictions. Their character is comparatively uninfluential from its being supposed professional; and their convictions, because they are concluded to be formed from imperfect materials. A clergyman's opinions on politics, and on other affairs of active life in which morals are most implicated, are attended to precisely in proportion as he is secular in his habits and pursuits. A minister preached, a few years ago, against discount, and high prices in times of scarcity. The merchants of his flock went away laughing: and the pastor has never got over it. The merchants speak of him as a very holy man, and esteem his services highly for keeping their wives, children, and domestics in strict religious order: but in preaching to themselves he has been preaching to the winds ever since that day. A liberal-minded, religious father of a family said to me, "Take care how you receive the [Pg 361] uncorroborated statements of clergymen about that;" (a matter of social fact;) "they know nothing about it. They are not likely to know anything about it." "Why?" "Because there is nobody to tell them. You know the clergy are looked upon by all grown men as a sort of people between men and women." In a republic, where politics afford the discipline and means of expression of every man's morals, the clergy withdraw from, not only all party movements, but all political interests. Some barely vote: others do not even do this. Their plea is, as usual, that public opinion will not bear that the clergy should be upon the same footing as to worldly affairs as others. If this be true, public opinion should not be allowed to dictate their private duty to the moral teachers of society. A clergyman should discharge the duties of a citizen all the more faithfully for the need which the public thus show themselves to be in of his example. But, if it be true, whence arises the objection of the public to the clergy discharging the responsibilities of citizens, but from the popular belief that they are unfitted for it? If the democracy see that the clergy are almost all federalists, and the federalist merchants and lawyers consider the clergy so little fit for common affairs as to call them a set of people between men and women, it is easy to see whence arises the dislike to their taking part in politics; if indeed the dislike really exists. The statement should not, however, be taken on the word of the clergy alone; for they are very apt to think that the people cannot yet bear many things in which the flocks have already outstripped their pastors.

A third great mischief from the isolation of the clergy is that, while it deprives them of the highest kind of influence which is the prerogative of manhood, it gives them a lower kind:—an influence as strong as it is pernicious to others, and dangerous to themselves;—an influence [Pg 362] confined to the weak members of society; women and superstitious men. By such they are called "faithful guardians." Guardians of what? A healthy person may guard a sick one: a sane man may guard a lunatic: a grown person may guard a child: and, for social purposes, an appointed watch may guard a criminal. But how can any man guard his equal in spiritual matters, the most absolutely individual of all? How can any man come between another's soul and the infinite to which it tends? If it is said that they are guardians of truth, and not of conscience, they may be asked for their warrant. God has given his truth for all. Each is to lay hold of what he can receive of it; and he sins if he devolves upon another the guardianship of what is given him for himself. As to the fitness of the clergy to be guardians, it is enough to mention what I know: that there is infidelity within the walls of their churches of which they do not dream; and profligacy among their flocks of which they will be the last to hear. Even in matters which are esteemed their peculiar business, the state of faith and morals, they are more in the dark than any other persons in society. Some of the most religious and moral persons in the community are among those who never enter their churches; while among the company who sit at the feet of the pastor while he refines upon abstractions, and builds a moral structure upon imperfect principles, or upon metaphysical impossibilities, there are some in whom the very capacity of stedfast belief has been cruelly destroyed; some who hide loose morals under a strict profession of religion; and some if possible more lost still, who have arrived at making their religion co-exist with their profligacy. Is there not here something like the blind leading the blind?

Over those who consider the clergy "faithful guardians," their influence, as far as it is [Pg 363] professional, is bad; as far as it is that of friendship or acquaintanceship, it is according to the characters of the men. I am disposed to think ill of the effects of the practice of parochial visiting, except in cases of poor and afflicted persons, who have little other resource of human sympathy. I cannot enlarge upon the disagreeable subject of the devotion of the ladies to the clergy. I believe there is no liberal-minded minister who does not see, and too sensibly feel, the evil of women being driven back upon religion as a resource against vacuity; and of there being a professional class to administer it. Some of the most sensible and religious elderly women I know in America speak, with a strength which evinces strong conviction, of the mischief to their sex of ministers entering the profession young and poor, and with a great enthusiasm for parochial visiting. There is no very wide difference between the auricular confession of the catholic church, and the spiritual confidence reposed in ministers the most devoted to visiting their flocks. Enough may be seen in the religious periodicals of America about the help women give to young ministers by the needle, by raising subscriptions, and by more toilsome labours than they should be allowed to undergo in such a cause. If young men cannot earn with their own hands the means of finishing their education, and providing themselves with food and clothing, without the help of women, they may safely conclude that their vocation is to get their bread first; whether or not it may be to preach afterwards.[36] But this kind of dependence is wholly unnecessary. There is more

provision made for the clergy than there are clergy to use it.

A young clergyman came home, one day, and complained to me that some of his parochial [Pg 364] visiting afflicted him much. He had been visiting and exhorting a mother who had lost her infant; a sorrow which he always found he could not reach. The mourner had sat still, and heard all he had to say: but his impression was that he had not met any of her feelings; that he had done nothing but harm. How should it be otherwise? What should he know of the grief of a mother for her infant? He was sent for, as a kind of charmer, to charm away the heart's pain. Such pain is not sent to be charmed away. It could be made more endurable only by sympathy, of all outward aids: and sympathy, of necessity, he had none; but only a timid pain with which to aggravate hers. It was natural that he should do nothing but harm.

My final impression is, that religion is best administered in America by the personal character of the most virtuous members of society, out of the theological profession: and next, by the acts and preachings of the members of that profession who are the most secular in their habits of mind and life. The exclusively clerical are the worst enemies of Christianity, except the vicious.

The fault is not in the Voluntary System; for the case is equally bad on both sides the Atlantic: and an Establishment like the English does little more than superadd the danger of a careless, ambitious, worldly clergy,[37] in the richer priests of the church, and an overworked and ill-recompensed set of working clergy. The evil lies in a superstition which no establishment can ever obviate; in the superstition, to use the words of an American clergyman, "of believing that religion is something else than goodness." From this it arises that an ecclesiastical profession still [Pg 365] exists; not for the study of theological science, (which is quite reasonable,) but for the dispensing of goodness. From this it arises that ecclesiastical goodness is practically separated from active personal and social goodness. From this it arises that the yeomanry of America, those who are ever in the presence of God's high priest, Nature, and out of the worldly competitions of a society sophisticated with superstition, are perpetually in advance of the rest of the community on the great moral questions of the time, while the clergy are in the rear.

What must be done? The machinery of administration must be changed. The people have been brought up to suppose that they saw Christianity in their ministers. The first consequence of this mistake was, that Christianity was extensively misunderstood; as it still is. The trying moral conflicts of the time are acting as a test. The people are rapidly discovering that the supposed faithful mirror is a grossly refracting medium; and the blessed consequence will be, that they will look at the object for themselves, declining any medium at all. The clerical profession is too hard and too perilous a one, too little justifiable on the ground of principle, too much opposed to the spirit of the gospel, to outlive long the individual research into religion, to which the faults of the clergy are daily impelling the people.

To what then must we meantime trust for religion?—To the administration of God, and the heart of man. Has not God his own ways, unlike our ways, of teaching when man misteaches? It is worth travelling in the wild west, away from churches and priests, to see how religion springs up in the pleasant woods, and is nourished by the winds and the star-light. The child on the grass is not alone in listening for God's tramp on the floor of his creation. We are all children, ever so [Pg 366] listening. Impulses of religion arise wherever there is life and society; whenever hope is rebuked, and fear relieved; wherever there is love to be cherished, and age and childhood to be guarded. If it be true, as my friend and I speculated, that religious sensibility is best awakened by the spectacle of the beauty of holiness, religion is everywhere safe; for this beauty is as prevalent, more or less perceptibly, as the light of human eyes. It is safe as long as the gospel history is extant. The beauty of holiness is there so resplendent, that, to those who look upon it with their own eyes, it seems inconceivable that, if it were once brought unveiled before the minds of men, every one would not adopt it into his reason and his affections from that hour. It has been reorganising and vivifying society from the day of its advent. It is carrying on this very work now in the New World. The institutions of America are, as I have said, planted down deep into Christianity. Its spirit must make an effectual pilgrimage through a society, of which it may be called a native; and no mistrust of its influences can for ever intercept that spirit in its mission of denouncing anomalies, exposing hypocrisy, rebuking faithlessness, raising and communing with the outcast, and driving out sordidness from the circuit of this, the most glorious temple of society that has ever yet been reared. The community will be christian as sure as democracy is christian.

FOOTNOTES:

[33] This summary does not pretend to be complete, but it is the nearest approximation to fact that can be obtained. According to it the Episcopalian Methodists are the most numerous sect: then the Catholics, Calvinistic Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Christians, Episcopalians, and Quakers. The other denominations follow, down to the Tunkers and Shakers, which are the smallest.

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"It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it, as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact."

Edinburgh Review, xlviii. p. 303.

[35] See Appendix E, for a part of a discourse by Orestes A. Brownson on the Wants of the Times. It is given as it fell from his lips, and not as a specimen of his practice of composition. The reader, however, will probably be no more disposed to remember anything about style in the presence of this discourse, than Mr. Brownson's hearers are wont to be.

[36] See Appendix F.

[37] It is amusing to see how our aristocratic and ecclesiastical institutions strike simple republicans. I was asked whether the English Bishops were not a necessary intermediate aristocracy between the Lords and the Commons.

CONCLUSION.

[Pg 367]

My book must come to an end; but I offer no conclusion of my subject. I do not pretend to have formed any theory about American society or prospects to which a finishing hand can be put in the last page. American society itself constitutes but the first pages of a great book of events, into whose progress we can see but a little way; and that but dimly. It is too soon yet to theorise; much too soon to speak of conclusions even as to the present entire state of this great nation.

Meantime, some prominent facts appear to stand out from their history and condition, which it may be useful to recognise, while refusing to pronounce upon their positive or comparative virtue and happiness.

By a happy coincidence of outward plenty with liberal institutions, there is in America a smaller amount of crime, poverty, and mutual injury of every kind, than has ever been known in any society. This is not only a present blessing, but the best preparation for continued fidelity to true democratic principles.

However the Americans may fall short, in practice, of the professed principles of their association, they have realised many things for which the rest of the civilised world is still struggling; and which some portions are only beginning to intend. They are, to all intents and purposes, self-governed. They have risen above all liability to a hereditary aristocracy, a [Pg 368] connexion between religion and the State, a vicious or excessive taxation, and the irresponsibility of any class. Whatever evils may remain or may arise, in either the legislative or executive departments, the means of remedy are in the hands of the whole people: and those people are in possession of the glorious certainty that time and exertion will infallibly secure all wisely desired objects.

They have one tremendous anomaly to cast out; a deadly sin against their own principles to abjure. But they are doing this with an earnestness which proves that the national heart is sound. The progress of the Abolition question within three years, throughout the whole of the rural districts of the north, is a far stronger testimony to the virtue of the nation than the noisy clamour of a portion of the slave-holders of the south, and the merchant aristocracy of the north, with the silence of the clergy, are against it. The nation must not be judged of by that portion whose worldly interests are involved in the maintenance of the anomaly; nor yet by the eight hundred flourishing abolition societies of the north, with all the supporters they have in unassociated individuals. The nation must be judged of as to Slavery by neither of these parties; but by the aspect of the conflict between them. If it be found that the five abolitionists who first met in a little chamber five years ago, to measure their moral strength against this national enormity, have become a host beneath whose assaults the vicious institution is rocking to its foundations, it is time that slavery was ceasing to be a national reproach. Europe now owes to America the justice of regarding her as the country of abolitionism, quite as emphatically as the country of slavery.

The civilisation and the morals of the Americans fall far below their own principles. This is [Pg 369] enough to say. It is better than contrasting or comparing them with European morals and civilisation: which contrast or comparison can answer no purpose, unless on the supposition, which I do not think a just one, that their morals and civilisation are derived from their political organisation. A host of other influences are at work, which must nullify all conclusions drawn from the politics of the Americans to their morals. Such conclusions will be somewhat less rash two centuries hence. Meantime, it will be the business of the world, as well as of America, to watch the course of republicanism and of national morals; to mark their mutual action, and humbly learn whatever the new experiment may give out. To the whole world, as well as to the Americans, it is important to ascertain whether the extraordinary mutual respect and kindness of the American people generally are attributable to their republicanism: and again, how far their republicanism is answerable for their greatest fault,—their deficiency of moral independence.

No peculiarity in them is more remarkable than their national contentment. If this were the result of apathy, it would be despicable: if it did not coexist with an active principle of progress, it would be absurd. As it is, I can regard this national attribute with no other feeling than veneration. Entertaining, as I do, little doubt of the general safety of the American Union, and none of the moral progress of its people, it is clear to me that this national contentment will live down all contempt, and even all wonder; and come at length to be regarded with the same genial and universal emotion with which men recognise in an individual the equanimity of rational self-

reverence.

NOTE.

[Pg 370]

Since pp. 47-52, in the first volume, were printed, intelligence has arrived of the admission of Michigan into the Union: on what terms, I have not been able to ascertain.

APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX.

[Pg 373]

A.

MR. ADAMS'S SPEECH ON TEXAS.

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I suppose a more portentous case, certainly within the bounds of possibility—I would to God I could say not within the bounds of probability. You have been, if you are not now, at the very point of a war with Mexico—a war, I am sorry to say, so far as public rumour may be credited, stimulated by provocations on our part from the very commencement of this administration down to the recent authority given to General Gaines to invade the Mexican territory. It is said that one of the earliest acts of this administration was a proposal, made at a time when there was already much ill-humour in Mexico against the United States, that she should cede to the United States a very large portion of her territory—large enough to constitute nine States equal in extent to Kentucky. It must be confessed that a device better calculated to produce jealousy, suspicion, ill-will, and hatred, could not have been contrived. It is further affirmed that this overture, offensive in itself, was made precisely at the time when a swarm of colonists from these United States were covering the Mexican border with land-jobbing, and with slaves, introduced in defiance of the Mexican laws, by which slavery had been abolished throughout that Republic. The war now [Pg 374] raging in Texas is a Mexican civil war, and a war for the re-establishment of slavery where it was abolished.—It is not a servile war, but a war between slavery and emancipation, and every possible effort has been made to drive us into the war, on the side of slavery.

It is, indeed, a circumstance eminently fortunate for us that this monster, Santa Ana, has been defeated and taken, though I cannot participate in that exquisite joy with which we have been told that every one having Anglo-Saxon blood in his veins must have been delighted on hearing that this ruffian has been shot, in cold blood, when a prisoner of war, by the Anglo-Saxon leader of the victorious Texan army. Sir, I hope there is no member of this house, of other than Anglo-Saxon origin, who will deem it uncourteous that I, being myself in part Anglo-Saxon, must, of course, hold that for the best blood that ever circulated in human veins. Oh! yes, sir! far be it from me to depreciate the glories of the Anglo-Saxon race; although there have been times when they bowed their necks and submitted to the law of conquest, beneath the ascendency of the Norman race. But, sir, it has struck me as no inconsiderable evidence of the spirit which is spurring us into this war of aggression, of conquest, and of slave-making, that all the fires of ancient, hereditary national hatred are to be kindled, to familiarise us with the ferocious spirit of rejoicing at the massacre of prisoners in cold blood. Sir, is there not yet hatred enough between the races which compose your Southern population and the population of Mexico, their next neighbour, but you must go back eight hundred or a thousand years, and to another hemisphere, for the fountains of bitterness between you and them? What is the temper of feeling between the component parts of our own Southern population, between your Anglo-Saxon, Norman, French, and Moorish Spanish inhabitants of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Missouri? between them all and the Indian savage, the original possessor of the land from which you are scourging [Pg 375] him already back to the foot of the Rocky Mountains? What between them all and the native American negro, of African origin, whom they are holding in cruel bondage? Are these elements of harmony, concord, and patriotism between the component parts of a nation starting upon a crusade of conquest? And what are the feelings of all this motley compound of your Southern population towards the compound equally heterogeneous of the Mexican population? Do not you, an Anglo-Saxon, slave-holding exterminator of Indians, from the bottom of your soul, hate the Mexican-Spaniard-Indian, emancipator of slaves and abolisher of slavery? And do you think that your hatred is not with equal cordiality returned? Go to the city of Mexico, ask any of your fellow-citizens who have been there for the last three or four years, whether they scarcely dare show their faces, as Anglo-Americans, in the streets. Be assured, sir, that, however heartily you detest the Mexican, his bosom burns with an equally deep-seated detestation of you.

And this is the nation with which, at the instigation of your Executive Government, you are now rushing into war—into a war of conquest; commenced by aggression on your part, and for the re-

establishment of slavery, where it has been abolished, throughout the Mexican Republic. For your war will be with Mexico—with a Republic of twenty-four States, and a population of eight or nine millions of souls. It seems to be considered that this victory over twelve hundred men, with the capture of their commander, the President of the Mexican Republic, has already achieved the conquest of the whole Republic. That it may have achieved the independence of Texas, is not impossible. But Texas is to the Mexican Republic not more nor so much as the State of Michigan is to yours. That State of Michigan, the people of which are in vain claiming of you the performance of that sacred promise you made them, of admitting her as a State into the Union; that State of Michigan, which has greater grievances and heavier wrongs to allege against you [Pg 376] for a declaration of her independence, if she were disposed to declare it, than the people of Texas have for breaking off their union with the Republic of Mexico. Texas is an extreme boundary portion of the Republic of Mexico; a wilderness inhabited only by Indians, till after the Revolution which separated Mexico from Spain; not sufficiently populous at the organisation of the Mexican Confederacy to form a State by itself, and therefore united with Coahuila, where the greatest part of the indigenous part of the population reside. Sir, the history of all the emancipated Spanish American colonies has been, ever since their separation from Spain, a history of convulsionary wars; of revolutions, accomplished by single, and often very insignificant battles; of chieftains, whose title to power has been the murder of their immediate predecessors. They have all partaken of the character of the first conquest of Mexico by Cortez, and of Peru by Pizarro; and this, sir, makes me shudder at the thought of connecting our destinies indissolubly with theirs. It may be that a new revolution in Mexico will follow upon this captivity or death of their president and commanding general; we have rumours, indeed, that such a revolution had happened even before his defeat; but I cannot yet see my way clear to the conclusion that either the independence of Texas, or the capture and military execution of Santa Ana, will save you from war with Mexico. Santa Ana was but one of a breed of which Spanish America for the last twenty-five years has been a teeming mother—soldiers of fortune, who, by the sword or the musket-ball, have risen to supreme power, and by the sword or the musket-ball have fallen from it. That breed is not extinct; the very last intelligence from Peru tells of one who has fallen there as Yturbide, and Mina, and Guerrero, and Santa Ana have fallen in Mexico. The same soil which produced them is yet fertile to produce others. They reproduce themselves, with nothing but a change of the name and of the man. Your war, sir, is to be a war of races—the Anglo-Saxon American pitted against the Moorish-Spanish-Mexican American; a war between the Northern and Southern [Pg 377] halves of North America; from Passamaquoddy to Panama. Are you prepared for such a war?

And again I ask, what will be your *cause* in such a war? Aggression, conquest, and the re-establishment of slavery where it has been abolished. In that war, sir, the banners of *freedom* will be the banners of Mexico; and your banners, I blush to speak the word, will be the banners of slavery.

Sir, in considering these United States and the United Mexican States as mere masses of power coming into collision against each other, I cannot doubt that Mexico will be the greatest sufferer by the shock. The conquest of all Mexico would seem to be no improbable result of the conflict, especially if the war should extend no farther than to the two mighty combatants. But will it be so confined? Mexico is clearly the weakest of the two powers; but she is not the least prepared for action. She has the more recent experience of war. She has the greatest number of veteran warriors; and although her highest chief has just suffered a fatal and ignominious defeat, yet that has happened often before to leaders of armies, too confident of success, and contemptuous of their enemy. Even now, Mexico is better prepared for a war of invasion upon you, than you are for a war of invasion upon her. There may be found a successor to Santa Ana, inflamed with the desire, not only of avenging his disaster, but what he and his nation will consider your perfidious hostility. The national spirit may go with him. He may not only turn the tables upon the Texan conquerors, but drive them for refuge within your borders, and pursue them into the heart of your own territories. Are you in a condition to resist him? Is the success of your whole army, and all your veteran generals, and all your militia-calls, and all your mutinous volunteers, against a miserable band of five or six hundred invisible Seminole Indians, in your late campaign, an earnest of the energy and vigour with which you are ready to carry on that far otherwise formidable and complicated war?—Complicated did I say? And how complicated? Your Seminole [Pg 378] war is already spreading to the Creeks; and, in their march of desolation, they sweep along with them your negro slaves, and put arms into their hands to make common cause with them against you; and how far will it spread, sir, should a Mexican invader, with the torch of liberty in his hand, and the standard of freedom floating over his head, proclaiming emancipation to the slave, and revenge to the native Indian, as he goes, invade your soil? What will be the condition of your States of Louisiana, of Mississippi, of Alabama, of Arkansas, of Missouri, and of Georgia? Where will be your negroes? Where will be that combined and concentrated mass of Indian tribes, whom, by an inconceivable policy, you have expelled from their widely-distant habitations, to embody them within a small compass on the very borders of Mexico, as if on purpose to give to that country a nation of natural allies in their hostilities against you? Sir, you have a Mexican, an Indian, and a negro war upon your hands, and you are plunging yourself into it blindfold; you are talking about acknowledging the independence of the Republic of Texas, and you are thirsting to annex Texas, ay, and Coahuila, and Tamaulipas, and Santa Fe, from the source to the mouth of the Rio Bravo, to your already over-distended dominions. Five hundred thousand square miles of the territory of Mexico would not even now quench your burning thirst for aggrandisement.

But will your foreign war for this be with Mexico alone? No, sir. As the weaker party, Mexico, when the contest shall have once begun, will look abroad, as well as among your negroes and your Indians, for assistance. Neither Great Britain nor France will suffer you to make such a

conquest from Mexico; no, nor even to annex the independent State of Texas to your Confederation, without their interposition. You will have an Anglo-Saxon intertwined with a Mexican war to wage. Great Britain may have no serious objection to the independence of Texas, and may be willing enough to take her under her protection, as a barrier both against Mexico and [Pg 379] against you. But, as an aggrandisement to you, she will not readily suffer it; and, above all, she will not suffer you to acquire it by conquest, and the re-establishment of slavery. Urged on by the irresistible, overwhelming torrent of public opinion, Great Britain has recently, at a cost of one hundred million of dollars, which her people have joyfully paid, abolished slavery, throughout all her colonies in the West Indies. After setting such an example, she will not—it is impossible that she should—stand by and witness a war for the re-establishment of slavery, where it had been for years abolished, and situated thus in the immediate neighbourhood of her islands. She will tell you, that if you must have Texas as a member of your Confederacy, it must be without the taint or the trammels of slavery; and if you will wage a war to handcuff and fetter your fellow-man, she will wage the war against you to break his chains. Sir, what a figure, in the eyes of mankind, would you make, in deadly conflict with Great Britain: she fighting the battles of emancipation, and you the battles of slavery; she the benefactress, and you the oppressor, of human kind! In such a war, the enthusiasm of emancipation, too, would unite vast numbers of her people in aid of the national rivalry, and all her natural jealousy against our aggrandisement. No war was ever so popular in England as that war would be against slavery, the slave-trade, and the Anglo-Saxon descendant from her own loins.

As to the annexation of Texas to your Confederation, for what do you want it? Are you not large and unwieldy enough already? Do not two millions of square miles cover surface enough for the insatiate rapacity of your land-jobbers? I hope there are none of them within the sound of my voice. Have you not Indians enough to expel from the land of their fathers' sepulchres, and to exterminate? What, in a prudential and military point of view, would be the addition of Texas to your domain? It would be weakness, and not power. Is your southern and south-western frontier not sufficiently extensive? not sufficiently feeble? not sufficiently defenceless? Why are you [Pg 380] adding regiment after regiment of dragoons to your standing army? Why are you struggling, by direction and by indirection, to raise *per saltum* that army from less than six to more than twenty thousand men? Your commanding general, now returning from his excursion to Florida, openly recommends the increase of your army to that number. Sir, the extension of your sea-coast frontier from the Sabine to the Rio Bravo, would add to your weakness tenfold; for it is now only weakness with reference to Mexico. It would then be weakness with reference to Great Britain, to France, even perhaps to Russia, to every naval European power, which might make a quarrel with us for the sake of settling a colony; but, above all, to Great Britain. She, by her naval power, and by her American colonies, holds the keys of the Gulf of Mexico. What would be the condition of your frontier from the mouth of the Mississippi to that of the Rio del Norte, in the event of a war with Great Britain? Sir, the reasons of Mr. Monroe for accepting the Sabine as the boundary were three. First, he had no confidence in the strength of our claim as far as the Rio Bravo; secondly, he thought it would make our union so heavy, that it would break into fragments by its own weight; thirdly, he thought it would protrude a long line of sea-coast, which, in our first war with Great Britain, she might take into her own possession, and which we should be able neither to defend nor to recover. At that time there was no question of slavery or of abolition in the controversy. The country belonged to Spain; it was a wilderness, and slavery was the established law of the land. There was then no project for carving out nine slave States, to hold eighteen seats in the other wing of this capitol, in the triangle between the mouths and the sources of the Mississippi and Bravo rivers. But what was our claim? Why it was that La Salle, having discovered the mouth of the Mississippi, and France having made a settlement at New Orleans, France had a right to one half the sea-coast from the mouth of the Mississippi to the next Spanish settlement, which was Vera Cruz. The mouth of the Rio Bravo was about half way from the Balize [Pg 381] to Vera Cruz; and so as grantees, from France of Louisiana, we claimed to the Rio del Norte, though the Spanish settlement of Santa Fe was at the head of that river. France, from whom we had received Louisiana, utterly disclaimed ever having even raised such a pretension. Still we made the best of the claim that we could, and finally yielded it for the Floridas, and for the line of the 42d degree of latitude from the source of the Arkansas river to the South Sea. Such was our claim; and you may judge how much confidence Mr. Monroe could have in its validity. The great object and desire of the country then was to obtain the Floridas. It was General Jackson's desire; and in that conference with me to which I have heretofore alluded, and which it is said he does not recollect, he said to me that so long as the Florida rivers were not in our possession, there could be no safety for our whole Southern country.

But, sir, suppose you should annex Texas to these United States; another year would not pass before you would have to engage in a war for the conquest of the Island of Cuba. What is now the condition of that island? Still under the nominal protection of Spain. And what is the condition of Spain herself? Consuming her own vitals in a civil war for the succession to the crown. Do you expect, that whatever may be the issue of that war, she can retain even the nominal possession of Cuba? After having lost *all* her continental colonies in North and South America, Cuba will stand in need of more efficient protection; and above all, the protection of a naval power. Suppose that naval power should be Great Britain. There is Cuba at your very door; and if you spread yourself along a naked coast, from the Sabine to the Rio Bravo, what will be your relative position towards Great Britain, with not only Jamaica, but Cuba, and Porto Rico in her hands, and abolition for the motto to her union cross of St. George and St. Andrew? Mr. Chairman, do you think I am treading on fantastic grounds? Let me tell you a piece of history, not far remote. Sir, many years have not [Pg 382] passed away since an internal revolution in Spain subjected that country and her king for a short

time to the momentary government of the Cortes. That revolution was followed by another, by which, under the auspices of a French army with the Duke d'Angouleme at their head, Ferdinand the Seventh was restored to a despotic throne; Cuba had followed the fortunes of the Cortes when they were crowned with victory; and when the counter-revolution came, the inhabitants of the island, uncertain what was to be their destination, were for some time in great perplexity what to do for themselves. Two considerable parties arose in the island, one of which was for placing it under the protection of Great Britain, and another was for annexing it to the confederation of these United States. By one of these parties I have reason to believe that overtures were made to the Government of Great Britain. By the other *I know* that overtures were made to the government of the United States. And I further know that secret, though irresponsible assurances were communicated to the then President of the United States, as coming from the French Government, that *they* were secretly informed that the British Government had determined to take possession of Cuba. Whether similar overtures were made to France herself, I do not undertake to say; but that Mr. George Canning, then the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was under no inconsiderable alarm, lest, under the pupilage of the Duke d'Angouleme, Ferdinand the Seventh might commit to the commander of a French naval squadron the custody of the Moro Castle, is a circumstance also well known to me. It happened that just about that time a French squadron of considerable force was fitted out and received sailing orders for the West Indies, without formal communication of the fact to the British Government; and that as soon as it was made known to him, he gave orders to the British Ambassador at Paris to demand, in the most peremptory tone, what was the destination of that squadron, and a special and positive disclaimer that it was intended even to visit the Havana; and this was made the occasion of mutual explanations, by which Great Britain, France, and the [Pg 383] United States, not by the formal solemnity of a treaty, but by the implied engagement of mutual assurances of intention, gave pledges of honour to each other, that neither of them should in the then condition of the island take it, or the Moro Castle, as its citadel, from the possession of Spain. This engagement was on all sides faithfully performed; but, without it, who doubts that from that day to this either of the three powers might have taken the island and held it in undisputed possession?

At this time circumstances have changed—popular revolutions both in France and Great Britain have perhaps curbed the spirit of conquest in Great Britain, and France may have enough to do to govern her kingdom of Algiers. But Spain is again convulsed with a civil war for the succession to her crown; she has irretrievably lost all her colonies on both continents of America. It is impossible that she should hold much longer a shadow of dominion over the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico; nor can those islands, in their present condition, form independent nations, capable of protecting themselves. They must for ages remain at the mercy of Great Britain or of these United States, or of both; Great Britain is even now about to interfere in this war for the Spanish succession. If by the utter imbecility of the Mexican confederacy this revolt of Texas should lead immediately to its separation from that Republic, and its annexation to the United States, I believe it impossible that Great Britain should look on while this operation is performing with indifference. She will see that it must shake her own whole colonial power on this continent, in the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Caribbean Seas, like an earthquake; she will see, too, that it endangers her own abolition of slavery in her own colonies. A war for the restoration of slavery where it has been abolished, if successful in Texas, must extend over all Mexico; and the example will threaten her with imminent danger of a war of colours in her own islands. She will take possession of Cuba and of Porto Rico, by cession from Spain or by the batteries from her wooden walls; and if you ask her by what authority she has done it, she will ask you, in return, by what [Pg 384] authority you have extended your sea-coast from the Sabine to the Rio Bravo. She will ask you a question more perplexing, namely—by what authority you, with freedom, independence, and democracy upon your lips, are waging a war of extermination to forge new manacles and fetters, instead of those which are falling from the hands and feet of man. She will carry emancipation and abolition with her in every fold of her flag; while your stars, as they increase in numbers, will be overcast with the murky vapours of oppression, and the only portion of your banners visible to the eye will be the blood-stained stripes of the taskmaster.

Mr. Chairman, are you ready for all these wars? A Mexican war? a war with Great Britain, if not with France? a general Indian war? a servile war? and, as an inevitable consequence of them all, a civil war? For it must ultimately terminate in a war of colours as well as of races. And do you imagine that while with your eyes open you are wilfully kindling, and then closing your eyes and blindly rushing into them; do you imagine that while, in the very nature of things, your own Southern and Southwestern States must be the Flanders of these complicated wars, the battle-field upon which the last great conflict must be fought between slavery and emancipation; do you imagine that your Congress will have no constitutional authority to interfere with the institution of slavery *in any way* in the States of this Confederacy? Sir, they must and will interfere with it—perhaps to sustain it by war; perhaps to abolish it by treaties of peace; and they will not only possess the constitutional power so to interfere, but they will be bound in duty to do it by the express provisions of the Constitution itself. For the instant that your slaveholding States become the theatre of war, civil, servile, or foreign, from that instant the war powers of Congress extend to interference with the institution of slavery in every way by which it can be interfered with, from a claim of indemnity for slaves taken or destroyed, to the cession of the State burdened with slavery to a foreign power.

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B.

[Pg 385]

GENERAL AND STATE FINANCES.

Statement of Moneys received into the Treasury from all sources, for the year 1832.

		Dollars.	Cts.
From the Customs		22,178,735	30
Public Lands		2,623,381	03
From dividends on Stock in the Bank of the United States		490,000	00
Sales of Stock in Bank of the United States		169,000	00
Arrears of direct tax	6,791 13		
Arrears of internal revenue	11,630 65		
Fees on Letters Patent	14,160 00		
Cents coined at the Mint	21,845 40		
Fines, penalties, and forfeitures	8,868 04		
Surplus emoluments of officers of the Customs	31,965 46		
Postage on letters	244 95		
Consular receipts	1,884 52		
Interest on debts due by Banks to United States	136 00		
Persons unknown, said to be due to United States	500 00		
Moneys obtained from the Treasury on forged documents	115 00		
Moneys previously advanced for Biennial Register	37 00		
Securing Light-house on the Brandy-wine Shoal	1,000 00		
Light-house on Mahon's Ditch, Delaware	4,975 00		
Balance of advances in the War Department, repaid	15,679 24		
	119,832 39		
Deduction, &c.	1,889 50		
		117,942	89
		25,579,059	22

Statement of Expenditures of the United States, for 1832.

[Pg 386]

	Dollars.	Cts.
Civil, miscellaneous, and foreign intercourse	4,577,141	45
Military establishment	7,982,877	03
Naval establishment	3,956,370	29
	16,516,388	77

Such were the expenses of the federal government of the United States, exclusive of the Debt, of which nearly 35,000,000 dollars were that year paid.

For the State of Connecticut, the same year, the receipts were,—

	Dollars.	Cts.
From interest on United States 3 per cents	1,382	00
Tax on non-resident owners of Bank stock	2,817	00
Avails of State prison	5,000	00
Dividends on Bank stock, owned by the State	25,670	00
Fines and miscellaneous receipts	7,448	00
State tax	37,984	00
	80,301	00
Disbursements were—		
For ordinary expenses of government	60,852	00
For public buildings and institutions	10,774	00
	71,626	00

Population in 1830,—297,665.

I will give also the receipts and expenditure of one of the largest and busiest of the States, with a population (in 1830) of 1,348,233.

[Pg 387]

PENNSYLVANIA. 1832 AND 1833.

Receipts.

	Ds.	Cts.
Lands and Land-office fees	48,379	64
Auction commissions and duties	94,738	08
Dividends on various stock	171,765	20
Tax on bank dividends	45,404	91
Tax on offices	14,399	51
Tax on writs, &c.	24,771	00
Fees, Secretary of State's office	728	33
Tavern licenses	52,267	16
Duties on dealers in foreign merchandise	61,480	86
State maps	131	30
Collateral inheritances	160,626	26
Pamphlet laws	96	26
Militia and exempt fines	1,693	00
Tin and clock pedlars' licences	2,461	93
Hawkers' and pedlars' licences	3,025	45
Increase of county rates and levies	185,177	32
Tax on personal property	43,685	37
Escheats	1,746	99
Canal tolls	151,419	69
Loans, and premiums on loans	2,875,638	72
Premiums on Bank charters	102,297	90
Old debts and miscellaneous	5,119	74
	4,047,054	62

Expenditures.

	Ds.	Cts.
Internal improvements	2,588,879	13
Expenses of government	212,940	95
Militia expenses	20,776	99
Pensions and gratuities	29,303	21
Education	7,954	48
House of Refuge	5,000	00
Interest on loans	94,317	47
Pennsylvania claimants	351	00
State maps	187	30
Internal improvement fund	755,444	01
Penitentiary at Philadelphia	44,312	50
Penitentiary near Pittsburg	23,047	75
Conveying convicts	1,350	22
Conveying fugitives	581	50
Miscellaneous	12,187	97
Defence of the State	160	00
	3,796,794	48

NORTH CAROLINA. [Pg 388]

Receipts, for 1832,	3188,819	97
Disbursements	138,867	46

Population in 1830,—737,987.

C.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A SOUTHERN MATRON.

CHAP. VI.

"*Mrs. Page.*—Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you ask him some questions in his accidence."

"*Evans.*—Come hither, William, hold up your head, come."

After the departure of our Connecticut teacher, Mr. Bates, papa resolved to carry on our education himself. We were to rise by daylight, that he might pursue his accustomed ride over the fields after breakfast. New writing-books were taken out and ruled, fresh quills laid by their side, our task carefully committed to memory, and we sat with a mixture of docility and curiosity, to know how he would manage as a teacher. The first three days our lessons being on trodden ground, and ourselves under the impulse of novelty, we were very amiable, he very paternal; on the fourth, John was turned out of the room, Richard was pronounced a mule, and I went sobbing to mamma as if my heart would break, while papa said he might be compelled to ditch rice fields, but he never would undertake to teach children again.

A slight constraint was thrown over the family for a day or two, but it soon wore off, and he returned to his good-nature. For three weeks we were as wild as fawns, until mamma's attention was attracted by my sun-burnt complexion, and my brothers' torn clothes.

"This will never answer," said she to papa. "Look at Cornelia's face! It is as brown as a chinquapin. Richard has ruined his new suit, and John has cut his leg with the carpenter's tools. I have half a mind to keep school for them myself." [Pg 389]

Papa gave a slight whistle, which seemed rather to stimulate than check her resolution.

"Cornelia," said she, "go directly to your brothers, and prepare your books for to-morrow. *I* will teach you."

The picture about to be presented is not overwrought. I am confident of the sympathy of many a mother, whose finger has been kept on a word in the dictionary so long a time, that her pupils, forgetting her vocation, have lounged through the first interruptions and finished with a frolic.

One would suppose that the retirement of a plantation was the most appropriate spot for a mother and her children to give and receive instruction. Not so, for instead of a limited household, her dependants are increased to a number which would constitute a village. She is obliged to listen to cases of grievance, is a nurse to the sick, distributes the half-yearly clothing; indeed, the mere giving out of thread and needles is something of a charge on so large a scale. A planter's lady may seem indolent, because there are so many under her who perform trivial services, but the very circumstance of keeping so many menials in order is an arduous one, and the *keys* of her establishment are a care of which a northern housekeeper knows nothing, and include a very extensive class of duties. Many fair and even aristocratic girls, if we may use this phrase in our republican country, who grace a ball-room, or loll in a liveried carriage, may be seen with these steel talismans, presiding over store-houses, and measuring with the accuracy and conscientiousness of a shopman, the daily allowance of the family; or cutting homespun suits, for days together, for the young and old slaves under their charge; while matrons, who would ring a bell for their pocket-handkerchief to be brought to them, will act the part of a surgeon or physician, with a promptitude and skill, which would excite astonishment in a stranger. Very frequently, slaves, like children, will only take medicine from their superiors, and in this case the planter's wife or daughter is admirably fitted to aid them. [Pg 390]

There are few establishments where all care and responsibility devolves on the master, and even then the superintendence of a large domestic circle, and the rites of hospitality, demand so large a portion of the mistress's time, as leaves her but little opportunity for systematic teaching in her family. In this case she is wise to seek an efficient tutor, still appropriating those opportunities which perpetually arise under the same roof, to improve their moral and religious culture, and cultivate those sympathies which exalt these precious beings from children to friends.

The young, conscientious, ardent mother must be taught this by experience. She has a jealousy at first of any instruction that shall come between their dawning minds and her own, and is only taught by the constantly thwarted recitation, that in this country, at least, good housekeeping and good teaching cannot be combined.

But to return to my narrative. The morning after mamma's order, we assembled at ten o'clock. There was a little trepidation in her manner, but we loved her too well to annoy her by noticing it. Her education had been confined to mere rudiments, and her good sense led her only to conduct our reading, writing, and spelling.

We stood in a line.

"Spell *irrigate*," said she. Just then the coachman entered, and bowing, said, "Maussa send me for de key for get four quart o'corn for him bay horse."

The key was given.

"Spell *imitate*," said mamma.

"We did not spell *irrigate*," we all exclaimed.

"Oh, no," said she, "*irrigate*."

By the time the two words were well through, Chloe, the most refined of our coloured circle, appeared.

"Will mistress please to *medjure* out some calomel for Syphax, who is feverish and onrestless?" [38]

During mamma's visit to the doctor's shop, as the medicine-closet was called, we turned the inkstand over on her mahogany table, and wiped it up with our pocket-handkerchiefs. It required some time to cleanse and arrange ourselves; and just as we were seated and had advanced a little way on our orthographical journey, maum Phillis entered with her usual drawl, "Little maussa want for nurse, marm." [Pg 391]

While this operation was going on, we gathered round mamma to play bo-peep with the baby, until even she forgot our lessons. At length the little pet was dismissed with the white drops still resting on his red lips, and our line was formed again.

Mamma's next interruption, after successfully issuing a few words, was to settle a quarrel between La Fayette and Venus, two little blackies, who were going through their daily drill, in learning to rub the furniture, which with brushing flies at meals constitutes the first instruction for house servants. These important and classical personages rubbed about a stroke to the minute on each side of the cellaret, rolling up their eyes and making grimaces at each other. At this crisis they had laid claim to the same rubbing-cloth; mamma stopped the dispute by ordering my seamstress Flora, who was sewing for me, to apply the weight of her thimble, that long-known weapon of offence, as well as implement of industry, to their organ of firmness.

"Spell *accentuate*" said mamma, whose finger had slipped from the column.

"No, no, that is not the place," we exclaimed, rectifying the mistake.

"Spell *irritate*" said she, with admirable coolness, and John fairly succeeded just as the overseer's son, a sallow little boy with yellow hair, and blue homespun dress, came in with his hat on, and kicking up one foot for manners, said, "Fayther says as how he wants master Richard's horse to help tote some tetters[39] to t'other field."

This pretty piece of alliteration was complied with, after some remonstrance from brother Dick, and we finished our column. At this crisis, before we were fairly seated at writing, mamma was [Pg 392] summoned to the hall to one of the field hands, who had received an injury in the ancle from a hoe. Papa and the overseer being at a distance, she was obliged to superintend the wound. We all followed her, La Fayette and Venus bringing up the rear. She inspected the sufferer's great foot, covered with blood and perspiration, superintended a bath, prepared a healing application, and bound it on with her own delicate hands, first quietly tying a black apron over her white dress. Here was no shrinking, no hiding of the eyes, and while extracting some extraneous substance from the wound, her manner was as resolute as it was gentle and consoling. This episode gave Richard an opportunity to unload his pockets of groundnuts, and treat us therewith. We were again seated at our writing-books, and were going on swimmingly with "*Avoid evil company*," when a little crow-minder, hoarse from his late occupation, came in with a basket of eggs, and said,

"Mammy Phillis send Missis some egg for buy, ma'am; she ain't so bery well, and ax for some 'baccer."

It took a little time to pay for the eggs and send to the store-room for the Virginia-weed, of which opportunity we availed ourselves to draw figures on our slates: mamma reproved us, and we were resuming our duties, when the cook's son approached and said,

"Missis, Daddy Ajax say he been broke de axe, and ax me for ax you for len him de new axe."

This made us shout out with laughter, and the business was scarcely settled, when the dinner-horn sounded. That evening a carriage full of friends arrived from the city to pass a week with us, and thus ended mamma's experiment in teaching.

Our summers were usually passed at Springland, a pine-settlement, where about twenty families resorted at that season of the year. We were fortunate to find a French lady already engaged in teaching, from whom I took lessons on the piano-forte and guitar. The summer passed swiftly away. Papa was delighted with my facility in French, in which my brothers were also engaged, [Pg 393] and we were happy to retain Madame d'Anville in our own family, on our return to Roseland.

In the middle of November a stranger was announced to papa, and a young man of very prepossessing appearance entered with a letter. It proved to be from our teacher, Mr. Bates. The contents were as follows:—

"*Respected Sir.*—I now sit down to write to you, to inform you that I am well, as also are Sir and Mar'm, my sister Nancy, and all the rest of our folks except aunt Patty, who is but poorly, having attacks of the rheumatiz, and shortness of breath. I should add, that Mrs. Prudence Bates, (who after the regular publishment on the church-doors for three Sundays, was united to me in the holy bands of wedlock, by our minister Mr. Ezekiel Duncan,) is in a good state of health, at this present, though her uncle, by her father's side, has been sick of jaundice, a complaint that has been off and on with him for a considerable spell.

"The bearer of this epistle is Parson Duncan's son, by name Mr. Charles Duncan, a very likely young man, but poorly in health, and Dr. Hincks says, going down to Charleston may set him up. I have the candour to say, that I think him, on some accounts, a more proper teacher than your humble servant, having served his time at a regular college edication.

* * * * * *

"I have writ a much longer letter than I thought on, but somehow it makes me chirpy to think of Roseland, though the young folks were obstreperous.

"Give my love nevertheless to them, and Miss Wilton, and all the little ones, as also I would not forget Daddy Jacque, whom I consider, notwithstanding his colour, as a very respectable person. I cannot say as much for Jim, who was an eternal thorn in my side, by reason of his quickness at mischief, and his slowness at waiting upon me; and I take this opportunity of testifying, that I believe if he had been in New England, he would have had his deserts before this; but you Southern folks do put up with an unaccountable sight from niggers, and I hope Jim will not be [Pg 394] allowed his full tether, if so be Mr. Charles should take my situation in your family. I often tell our folks how I used to catch up a thing and do it rather than wait for half-a-dozen on 'em to take their own time. If I lived to the age of Methusalem, I never could git that composed, quiet kind of way you Southern folks have of waiting on the niggers. I only wish they could see aunt Patty move when the rheumatiz is off—if she isn't spry, I don't know.

"Excuse all errors,
"Yours to serve,
"JOSEPH BATES."

I detected a gentle, half-comical smile on Mr. Duncan's mouth as he raised his splendid eyes to papa, while delivering Mr. Bates' letter; but he soon walked to the window, and asked me some questions about the Cherokee-rose hedge, and other objects in view, which were novelties to him. I felt instantly that he was a gentleman, by the atmosphere of refinement which was thrown over him, and I saw that papa sympathised with me, as with graceful courtesy he welcomed him to Roseland.—*Southern Rose-bud.*

D.

The following is such information as I have been able to obtain respecting the public Educational provision in the United States, from the year 1830 to 1835.

The Free States in 1830.

MAINE.—"By a law of the State, every town, however large or small, is required to raise annually, for the support of schools, a sum equal at least to *forty cents.* for each person in the town, and to distribute this sum among the several schools or districts, in proportion to the number of scholars in each. The expenditure of the sum is left principally to the direction of the town, and its [Pg 395] committee or agents, appointed for that purpose. In the year 1825, the legislature required a report from each town in the State, respecting the situation of the schools."—*United States Almanack.*

At that time, the number of school districts in ten counties was, 2,499.

The number of children between 4 and 21 was	137,931
The number who usually attend schools	101,325

	Dollars.
Amount required by law to be expended annually	119,334
Amount raised from taxes	132,263
Amount from the income of permanent funds	5,614
Total annual expenditure	137,878

The number of incorporated academies in the State was 31; 4 of which were for girls: the amount of funds varying from 2,000 to 22,000 dollars a-year.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.—"From the year 1808 to 1818, there were raised in New Hampshire 70,000 dollars annually by law, for the support of common schools. This amount was raised by a separate tax, levied throughout the State, in the ratio of taxation for the State Tax. Since 1818, the yearly amount of the sum raised has been 90,000 dollars. This is the amount required by law, but a few towns raise more than they are required. The legislature assumes no control over the immediate appropriation, but leaves this to each town."

The State had also, in 1830, an annual income of 9,000 dollars, and a literary fund of 64,000 dollars, raised by a tax of a half per cent. on the capital of the banks; both to be, from that time, annually divided among the towns, in the ratio of taxation.

Some of the towns had separate school funds.

The white population of New Hampshire at this time was 268,721

VERMONT.—An act was passed in 1827 to provide for the support of common schools. About 100,000 dollars was raised in 1830. A fund was also accumulating, which was to be applied whenever its income would support a common free-school in every district of the State, for two months in the year. [Pg 396]

There were about 20 incorporated academies in the State, where young men were fitted for college. The number of students was supposed to average 40 at each.

MASSACHUSETTS.—"By the returns from 131 towns, presented to the legislature, it appears that the amount annually paid in these towns for public schools, is 177,206 dollars.

"The number of scholars receiving instruction	70,599
The number of pupils attending private schools in those towns	12,393
At an expense of	170,342 dollars.

"The number of persons in those towns, between the ages of 14 and 21, unable to read and write, is 58.

"In the town of Hancock, in Berkshire county, there are only 3 persons between 14 and 21 who cannot read and write; and they are *mutes*."—*American Annual Register.*

RHODE ISLAND.—"In January, 1828, the legislature appropriated 10,000 dollars annually for the support of public schools, to be divided among the several towns, in proportion to the population, with authority for each town to raise, by annual tax, double the amount received from the Treasury, as its proportion of the 10,000 dollars.

"There has been as yet no report of the number of school establishments under the act, but it is thought that they may safely be put down at 60, as all the towns have availed themselves of its provisions. The whole number of schools in the State now probably exceeds 650."—*American Almanack.*

The white population in 1830	93,621
The coloured	3,578

[Pg 397]

CONNECTICUT.—The revenue derived from the school fund amounted to 80,243 dollars. The State is divided into 208 school societies, which contained in the aggregate 84,899 children, between the ages of 4 and 16.

The white population in 1830	289,603
The coloured	8,072

NEW YORK.

The number of school districts was	8,609
Number of children between 5 and 15	449,113
Number of children taught in the schools	468,205

This estimate does not include the scholars instructed in the two great cities, New York and Albany.

	Dollars.
Amount paid to the districts	232,343
Of this, there came out of the Treasury	100,000
Raised by tax upon the towns	119,209
From a local fund	13,133
Voluntary tax by the towns	19,209

PENNSYLVANIA.—This State was in the rear. Not above 9,000 children were educated at the public charge, of about 16,000 dollars.

The white population in 1830	1,309,900
The coloured	38,333

NEW JERSEY.—A fund of 222,000 dollars being realised, a system of Common School education was

about to be put in action; an appropriation of 20,000 dollars per annum being ordered to be distributed among the towns for that purpose.

OHIO.—In Cincinnati, the first anniversary of free-schools was kept in 1830. Three thousand pupils belonged to the free-schools of Cincinnati. The amount of the school-tax was about 10,000 dollars.

INDIANA.—A committee of the legislature was appointed to consider and report upon the expediency of adopting the Common School system. [Pg 398]

The white population in 1830	339,399
The coloured	3,632

ILLINOIS contained less than 160,000 persons in 1830, and had no public schools.

The Slave States in 1830.

MARYLAND.—Provision was made for the establishment of Primary Schools throughout the State. One was opened in Baltimore in 1829.

There were 8 or 10 academies, which received annually from 400 to 600 dollars from the Treasury of the State.

Grants to the University of Maryland	5,000	dollars.
Grants to Colleges, Academies, and Schools	13,000	

DELAWARE.—A law ordaining the establishment of a Common School system was passed in 1829, and the counties were being divided into districts in 1830.

NORTH CAROLINA had a literary fund of 70,000 dollars; but nothing had yet been done towards applying it.

VIRGINIA.—No free-schools.

SOUTH CAROLINA.—"It appeared by a Report of a Committee on Schools, that the number of public schools established in the State was 513, wherein 5,361 scholars were educated at the annual expense of 35,310 dollars."

"The benefit derived from this appropriation," says the governor, "is partial, founded on no principle, and arbitrarily dispensed by the Commissioners. If the fund could be so managed as to educate thoroughly a given number of young men, and to require them afterwards to teach for a limited time, as an equivalent, the effects would soon be seen and felt."—*American Annual Register.* [Pg 399]

The white population in 1830	257,863
The coloured	323,322

GEORGIA.—The appropriations for county academies amounted to 14,302 dollars: and the poor school fund, 742 dollars.

The white population in 1830	296,806
The coloured	220,017

ALABAMA.—No schools.

MISSISSIPPI.—No schools.

MISSOURI.—No schools.

LOUISIANA.—Instead of schools, a law making imprisonment the punishment of teaching a slave to read.

TENNESSEE.—A fund is set to accumulate for the purpose of hereafter encouraging schools, colleges, and academies.

KENTUCKY.—The Common School system was established by law, and provisions made for the division of the counties into districts, and the levying of the poll and property taxes for the purpose.

"The Louisville Advertiser announces the establishment by that city of a school at the public expense, stated to be the first south of the Ohio. It is opened to the children of all the citizens. The number of pupils entered is 300."—*American Annual Register.*

The Free States in 1833 to 1835.

MAINE, 1835.

Annual expenditure for free-schools	156,000	dollars.
Aggregate number of pupils	106,000	

Academies, 12; Colleges, 2.

[Pg 400]

NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1835.—Amount expended on primary schools, 101,000 dollars.

MASSACHUSETTS, 1834.—Returns not received from 44 towns out of 261.

Boys, between 4 and 16 years, attending school	67,499	
Girls, of the same age	63,728	
Number of persons, between 16 and 21, unable to read and write	158	
Number of male teachers	1,967	
Number of female teachers	2,388	
Amount of school-money raised by tax	310,178	dollars.
Amount of school-money raised by contribution	15,141	
Average number of scholars attending academies and private schools	24,749	
Estimated amount paid for tuition in academies and private schools	276,575	dollars.

RHODE ISLAND, 1835.

Revenue from school tax	10,000	dollars.
Permanent school fund	50,000	
Amount raised by the towns besides	11,490	
Public Schools in the State (in 1832)	324	
Children educated in them	17,114	
Private schools	220	
Scholars in them	8,007	
Estimated expense of private schools	81,375	dollars.

CONNECTICUT.—The capital of the School Fund on the 1st of April, 1833, amounted to 1,929,738 dollars: and the dividend, in 1834, was at the rate of one dollar to each child in the State, between the ages of 4 and 16. Number of such children, under the returns,—83,912.

NEW YORK, 1835.

School-houses	9,580	
Public school money	316,153	dollars.
Paid besides to teachers	398,137	

Number of children receiving instruction in the Common Schools, 534,002, being 50 to 51 of the whole population.

PENNSYLVANIA.—There had been difficulties about putting the act in operation; and no returns had been made in 1835. [Pg 401]

OHIO.—"Our system of Common Schools has not advanced with the rapidity that was anticipated. It was at first unpopular with the people in some parts of the State; but it has gradually become more and more in favour with them. Its utility is now acknowledged."—*Governor's Message*, Dec. 6, 1834.

Nothing more done in the Slave States.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The Reports of the Sunday School Union up to May, 1835, show that there are, or have been, connected with it, (besides a large number of unassociated schools,) upwards of 16,000 schools, 115,000 teachers, and 799,000 pupils. The officers and managers are all laymen.

COLLEGES.

Colleges in the United States 79
The number of students varying from 15 to 523.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

Theological Seminaries in the United States 31
Number of students varying from 1 to 152.

MEDICAL SCHOOLS.

Medical Schools in the United States 23
Number of students varying from 18 to 392.

LAW SCHOOLS.

Law Schools in the United States 9
Number of students varying from 6 to 36.

E.

[Pg 402]

DISCOURSE ON THE WANTS OF THE TIMES.

* * * * *

The age, and especially the country, in which we live, are peculiar. They, therefore, require a peculiar kind of instruction, and, I may say, a peculiar mode of dispensing christian truth. They are unlike any which have preceded us. They are new, and consequently demand what I have called a new Dispensation of Christianity, a dispensation in perfect harmony with the new order of things which has sprung into existence. Yet of this fact we seem not to have been generally aware. The character of our religious institutions, the style of our preaching, the means we rely upon for the production of the christian virtues, are such as were adopted in a distant age, and fitted to wants which no longer exist, or which exist only in a greatly modified shape.

It is to this fact that I attribute that *other* fact, of which I have heretofore spoken, that our churches are far from being filled, and that a large and an increasing portion of our community take very little interest in religious institutions, and manifest a most perfect indifference to religious instruction. These persons do not stay away from our churches because they have no wish to be religious, no desire to meet and commune in the solemn Temple with their fellow men, and with the Great and Good Spirit which reigns everywhere around and within them. It is not because they do not value this communion, that they do not come into our churches, but because they do not find it in our churches. They cannot find, under the costume of our institutions, and our instructions, the Father-God, to love and adore, with whom to hold sweet and invigorating communings; they are unable to find that sympathy of man with man which they crave—to obtain [Pg 403] that response to the warm affections of the heart, which would make them love to assemble together and bow together before one common altar.

* * * * * *

But were this difficulty obviated, were seats easily obtained by all, and so obtained as to imply on the part of no one an assumption of superiority, or a confession of inferiority, the preaching which is most common is far from being satisfactory, and the wants of the times would by no means be met. I say the preaching which is most common is far from being satisfactory; but not because it is not true. I accuse no preacher of not preaching the truth. The truth is, I believe, preached in all churches, of all denominations, to a certain extent at least; but not the right kind of truth, or not truth under the aspects demanded by the wants of the age and country. All truth is valuable, but all truths are not equally valuable; and all aspects of the same truths are not at all times, in all places, equally attractive. The fault I find with preaching in general is, that it is not on the right kind of topics to interest the masses in this age and country. The topics usually discussed may once have been of the highest importance; they may now be very interesting to the scholar, or to the student in his closet, or with his fellow-students; but they are, to a great extent, matters of perfect indifference to the many. The many care nothing about the meaning of a Greek particle, or the settling of a various reading; nothing about the meaning of dogmas long since deprived of life, about the manners and customs of a people of whom they may have heard, but in whose destiny they feel no peculiar interest; they are not fed by descriptions of a Jewish marriage-feast, a reiteration of Jewish threatenings, nor with beautiful essays, and rounded periods, on some petty duty, or some insignificant point in theology. They want strong language, stirring discourses on great principles, which go deep into the universal mind, and strike a chord which vibrates through the universal heart. They want to be directed to the deep things of God and humanity, and enlightened and warmed on matters with which they every day come in [Pg 404] contact, and which will be to them matters of kindling thought and strong feeling through eternity.

That our religious institutions, or our modes of dispensing christian truth, are not in harmony with the wants of the times, is evinced by the increase of infidelity, and the success infidels have in their exertions to collect societies and organise opposition to Christianity. There is sustained in this city a society of infidels: free inquirers, I believe they call themselves. Why has this society been collected? Not, I will venture to say, because their leader is an infidel. People do not go to hear him because he advocates atheistical or pantheistical doctrines; not because he denies Christianity, rejects the bible, and indulges in various witticisms at the expense of members of the clerical profession; but because he opposes the aristocracy of our churches, and vindicates the rights of the mind. He succeeds, not because he is an infidel, but because he has hitherto shown himself a democrat.

Men are never infidels for the sake of infidelity. Infidelity—I use not the term reproachfully—has no charms of its own. There is no charm in looking around on our fellow men as mere plants that spring up in the morning, wither and die ere it is night. It is not pleasant to look up into the heavens, brilliant with their sapphire gems, and see no spirit shining there—over the rich and flowering earth, and see no spirit blooming there—abroad upon a world of mute, dead matter, and feel ourselves—alone. It is not pleasant to look upon the heavens as dispeopled of the Gods, and the earth of men, to feel ourselves in the centre of a universal blank, with no soul to love, no spirit with which to commune. I know well what is that sense of loneliness which comes over the unbeliever, the desolateness of soul under which he is oppressed: but I will not attempt to describe it.

I say, then, it is not infidelity that gives the leader of the infidel party success. It is his defence of free inquiry and of democracy. In vindicating his own right to disbelieve Christianity, he has [Pg 405] vindicated the rights of the mind, proved that all have a right to inquire fully into all subjects, and to abide by the honest convictions of their own understandings. In doing this he has met the wants of a large portion of the community, and met them as no church has ever yet been able to meet them. I say not that he himself is a free inquirer, but he proclaims free inquiry as one of the rights of man; and in doing this, he has proclaimed what thousands feel, though they may not generally dare own it. The want to inquire, to ascertain what is truth, what and wherefore we believe, is becoming more and more urgent; we may disown, unchurch, anathematise it, but suppress it we cannot. It is too late to stay the progress of free inquiry. The dams and dykes we construct to keep back its swelling tide are but mere resting-places, from which it may break forth in renovated power, and with redoubled fury. It is sweeping on; and, I say, let it sweep on, let it sweep on; the truth has nothing to fear.

Next to the want to inquire, to philosophise, the age is distinguished by its tendency to democracy, and its craving for social reform. Be pleased or displeased as we may, the age is unquestionably tending to democracy; the democratic spirit is triumphing. The millions awake. The masses appear, and every day is more and more disclosed

"The might that slumbers in a peasant's arm."

The voice of the awakened millions rising into new and undreamed-of importance, crying out for popular institutions, comes to us on every breeze, and mingles in every sound. All over the christian world a contest is going on, not as in former times between monarchs and nobles, but between the people and their masters, between the many and the few, the privileged and the unprivileged—and victory, though here and there seeming at first view doubtful, everywhere inclines to the party of the many. Old distinctions are losing their value; titles are becoming less and less able to confer dignity; simple tastes, simple habits, simple manners are becoming [Pg 406] fashionable; the simple dignity of man is more and more coveted, and with the discerning it has

already become more honourable to call one simply a MAN than a gentleman.

Now it is to this democratic spirit that the leader of the infidel party appeals, and in which he finds a powerful element of his success. Correspondents of his paper attempt even to identify atheism and democracy. I myself once firmly believed that there could be no social progress, that man could not rise to his true dignity without the destruction of religion; I really believed that religious institutions, tastes, and beliefs were the greatest, almost the sole, barrier to human improvement: and what I once honestly believed, is now as honestly believed by thousands, who would identify the progress of humanity with the progress of infidelity.

It is, I own, a new state of things, for infidelity to profess to be a democrat. Hobbes, one of the fathers, if not the father, of modern infidelity, had no sympathy with the masses; Hume and Gibbon dreamed of very little social progress, and manifested no desire to elevate the low, and loosen the chains of the bound. Before Thomas Paine, no infidel writer in our language, to my knowledge, was a democrat, or thought of giving infidelity a democratic tendency. Since his times, the infidel has been fond of calling himself a democrat, and he has pretty generally claimed to be the friend of the masses, and the advocate of progress. He now labours to prove the church aristocratic, to prove that it has no regard for the melioration of man's earthly mode of being. Unhappily, in proportion as he succeeds, the church furnishes him with new instruments of success. In proportion as he seems to identify his infidelity and the democratic spirit, the church disowns that spirit, and declares it wholly opposed to the faith. When, some years since, the thought passed through my head, that there were things in society which needed mending, and I dreamed of being a social reformer I found my bitterest opponents, clergyman as I was among the clergy, and those who were most zealous for the faith. That I erred in the inference I drew from this fact, as unbelievers now err in theirs, I am willing to own; but the fact [Pg 407] itself *has* the appearance of proving that religion and religion's advocates are unfriendly to social progress.

These are the principal reasons why infidelity succeeds. Its advocates meet two great wants, that of free inquiry, and that of social progress—two wants which are at the present time, and in this country, quite urgent—and meet them better than they are met by any of our churches. We need not, then, ascribe their success to any peculiar depravity of the heart, nor to an peculiar obtuseness of the understanding. They are right in their vindication of the rights of the mind, and in advocating social progress. They are wrong only in supposing that free inquiry and the progress of society are elements of infidelity, when they are only, in fact, its accidents. They constitute, in reality, two important elements of religion; as such I own them, accept them, and assure the religious everywhere that they too must accept them, or see religion for a time wholly obscured, and infidelity triumphant.

Infidels are wrong in pretending that infidelity can effect the progress of mankind. Infidelity has no element of progress. The purest morality it enjoins is selfishness. It does not pretend to offer man any higher motives of action than that of self-interest. But self-interest can make no man a reformer. No great reforms are ever effected without sacrifice. In labouring for the benefit of others, we are often obliged to forget ourselves, to expose ourselves, without fear and without regret, to the loss of property, ease, reputation, and sometimes of life itself. He who consults only his own interest will never consent to be so exposed. Or admitting that we could convince men, that to labour for a universal regeneration of mankind is for the greatest ultimate good of each one, the experience of every day proves that no one will do it, when a small, immediate good intervenes which it is necessary to abandon. A small, immediate, present good always outbalances the vastly greater, but distant good. The only principle of reform on which we can [Pg 408] rely is love. We must love the human race in order to be able to devote ourselves to their greatest good, to be able to do and to dare everything for their progress. But we cannot love what does not appear to us *loveable*. We cannot love mankind unless we see something in them which is worthy to be loved. But infidelity strips man of every quality which we can love. In the view of the infidel, man is nothing more than an animal, born to propagate his species and die. It is religion that discloses man's true dignity, reveals the soul, unveils the immortality within us, and presents in every man the incarnate God, before whom he may stand in awe, whom he may love and adore. Infidelity cannot, then, effect what its friends assert that it can. It cannot make us love mankind: and not being able to make us love them, it is not able to make us labour for their amelioration.

But I say this, without meaning to reproach infidels. I do and must condemn infidelity; but I have taught myself to recognise in the infidel a man, an equal, a brother, one for whom Jesus died, and for whom I, too, if need were, should be willing to die. I have no right to reproach the infidel, no right to censure him for his speculative opinions. If those opinions are wrong, as I most assuredly believe they are, it is my duty to count them his misfortune, not his crime, and to do all in my power to aid him to correct them. We wrong our brother, when we refuse him the same tolerance for his opinions which we would have him extend to ours. We wrong Christianity, whenever we censure, ridicule, or treat with the least possible disrespect any man for his honest opinions, be they what they may. We have often done violence to the gospel in our treatment of those who have, in our opinion, misinterpreted or disowned it. We have not always treated their opinions, as we ask them to treat ours. We have not always been scrupulous to yield to others the rights we claim for ourselves. We have been unjust, and our injustice has brought, as it always must, reproach upon the opinions we avow, and the cause we profess. There was, there is, no need of [Pg 409] being unjust, nor uncharitable to unbelievers. We believe we have the truth. Let us not so wrong the truth we advocate as to fear it can suffer by any encounter with falsehood. Let us adopt one rule for judging all men, infidels and all; not that of their speculative opinions, but their real

moral characters.

I prefer to meet the infidel on his own ground; I freely accept whatever I find him advocating which I believe true, and just as freely oppose whatever he supports which I believe to be false and mischievous. I think him right in his vindication of free inquiry and social progress. I accept them both, not as elements of infidelity, but as elements of Christianity. Should it now be asked, as it has been, what I mean by the new dispensation of Christianity, the new form of religion, of which I have often spoken in this place and elsewhere, I answer, I mean religious institutions, and modes of dispensing religious truth and influences, which recognise the rights of the mind, and propose social progress as one of the great ends to be obtained. In that New Church of which I have sometimes dreamed, and I hope more than dreamed, I would have the unlimited freedom of the mind unequivocally acknowledged. No interdict should be placed upon thought. To reason should be a christian, not an infidel, act. Every man should be encouraged to inquire, and to inquire not a little merely, within certain prescribed limits; but freely, fearlessly, fully, to scan heaven, air, ocean, earth, and to master God, nature, and humanity, if he can. He who inquires for truth honestly, faithfully, perseveringly, to the utmost extent of his power, does all that can be asked of him; he does God's will, and should be allowed to abide by his own conclusions, without fear of reproach from God or man.

In asserting this I am but recalling the community to Christianity. Jesus reproved the Jews for not of themselves judging what is right, thus plainly recognising in them, and if in them in us, both the right and the power to judge for themselves. "If I do not the works of my Father," says Jesus, [Pg 410] "believe me not;" obviously implying both man's right and ability to determine what are, and what are not, "works of the Father:" that is, in other words, what is or what is not truth. An apostle commands us to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," "to prove all things," and to "hold fast that which is good." In fact, the very spirit of the gospel is that of freedom; it is called a "law of liberty," and its great end is to free the soul from all restraint, but that of its obligation to do right. They wrong it who would restrain thought, and hand-cuff inquiry; they doubt or deny its truth and power who fear to expose it to the severest scrutiny, the most searching investigation; and, were I in an accusing mood, I would bring the charge of infidelity against every one who will not or dare not inquire, who will not or dare not encourage inquiry in others.

I have said that social progress must enter into the church I would have established, as one of the ends to be gained. Social progress holds a great place in the sentiments of this age. Infidels seize upon it; find in it one of the most powerful elements of their success. I too would seize upon it, give it a religious direction, and find in it an element of the triumph of Christianity. I have a right to it. As a Christian, I am bound to rescue social progress, or if you please, the democratic spirit, from the possession of the infidel. He has no right to it; he has usurped it through the negligence of the church. It is a christian spirit. Jesus was the man, the teacher of the masses. They were fishermen, deemed the lowest of his countrymen, who were his apostles; they were the "common people," who heard him gladly; they were the Pharisee and Sadducee, the chief priest and scribe, the rich and the distinguished, in one word the aristocracy of that age, who conspired against him, and caused him to be crucified between two thieves. He himself professed to be anointed of God, *because* he was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to proclaim liberty to them that are bound, and to let the captive go free. To John he expressly assigns the kindling fact, that the [Pg 411] poor had the gospel preached unto them, as the most striking proof of his claims to the Messiahship.

And what was this gospel which was preached to the poor? Was it a gospel suited to the views of the Autocrat of the Russias, such as despots ever love? Did it command the poor, in the name of God, to submit to an order of things of which they are the victims, to be contented to pine in neglect, and die of wretchedness? No, no: Jesus preached no such tyrant-pleasing and tyrant-sustaining gospel. The gospel which he preached, was the gospel of human brotherhood. He preached the gospel, the holy evangile, good news to the poor, when he proclaimed them members of the common family of man, when he taught that we are all brethren, having one and the same Father in heaven; he preached the gospel to the poor, when he declared to the boastingly religious of his age, that even publicans and harlots would go into the kingdom of heaven sooner than they; when he declared that the poor widow, who out of her necessities, cast her two mites into the treasury of the Lord, cast in more than all the rich; and whoever preaches the universal fraternity of the human race, preaches the gospel to the poor, though he speak only to the rich.

There is power in this great doctrine of the universal brotherhood of mankind. It gives the reformer a mighty advantage. It enables him to speak words of an import, and in a tone, which may almost wake the dead. Hold thy hand, oppressor, it permits him to say, thou wrongest a brother! Withhold thy scorn, thou bitter satirist of the human race, thou vilifiest thy brother! In passing by that child in the street yesterday, and leaving it to grow up in ignorance and vice, notwithstanding God had given thee wealth to train it to knowledge and virtue, thou didst neglect thy brother's child. Oh, did we but feel this truth, that we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same parent, we should feel that every wrong done to a human being, was violence done to our own flesh!

I say again, that Jesus was emphatically the teacher of the masses; the prophet of the working [Pg 412] men if you will; of all those who "labour and are heavy laden." Were I to repeat his words in this city or elsewhere, with the intimation that I believed they meant something; were I to say, as he said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the

kingdom of heaven," and to say it in a tone that indicated I believed he attached any meaning to what he said, you would call me a "radical," an "agrarian," a "trades unionist," a "leveller," a "disorganiser," or some other name equally barbarous and horrific. It were more than a man's reputation for sanity, or respectability as a *Christian*, is worth, to be as bold even in these days in defence of the "common people" as Jesus was.

I say still again, that Jesus was emphatically the teacher of the masses, the prophet of the people. Not that he addressed himself to any one description of persons to the exclusion of another, not that he sought to benefit one portion of the human race at another's expense; for if any one thing more than another distinguished him, it was, that he rose above all the factitious distinctions of society, and spoke to universal man, to the universal mind, and to the universal heart. I call him the prophet of the people, because he recognised the rights of humanity; brought out, and suffered and died to establish principles, which in their legitimate effect, cannot fail to bring up the low and bowed down, and give to the many, who, in all ages, and in all countries, have been the tools of the few, their due rank and social importance. His spirit, in its political aspect, is what I have called the democratic spirit; in its most general aspect, it is the spirit of progress, in the individual and in the race, towards perfection, towards union with God. It is that spirit which for eighteen hundred years has been at work in society, like the leaven hidden in three measures of meal; before which slavery, in nearly all Christendom, has disappeared; which has destroyed the warrior aristocracy, nearly subdued the aristocracy of birth, which is now struggling with the [Pg 413] aristocracy of wealth, and which promises, ere long, to bring up and establish the true aristocracy—the aristocracy of merit.

If it be now asked, as it has been asked, to what denomination I belong, I reply, that I belong to that denomination, whose starting point is free inquiry, which acknowledges in good faith, and without any mental reservation, the rights of the mind, and which proposes the melioration of man's earthly mode of being, as one of the great ends of its labours. I know not that such a denomination exists. I know, in fact, of no denomination, which, *as a denomination*, fully meets the wants of the times. Yet let me not be misinterpreted. I am not here to accuse, or to make war upon, any existing denomination; I contend with no church; I have no controversy with my Calvinistic brother, none with my Arminian, Unitarian, or Trinitarian brother. Every church has its idea, its truth; and more truth, much more, I believe, than any one church will admit of in those from which it differs. For myself, I delight to find truth in all churches, and I own it wherever I find it; but still I must say, I find no church which owns, as its central truth, the great central truth of Christianity—a truth which may now be brought out of the darkness in which it has remained, and which it is now more than ever necessary to reinstate in its rights.

Let me say, then, that though I am here for an object, which is not, to my knowledge, the special object of any existing church, I am not here to make war upon any church, nor to injure any one in the least possible degree. I would that they all had as much fellowship for one another, as I have for them all! I interfere with none of them. I am here for a special object, but one so high, one so broad, they may all cooperate in gaining it. My creed is a simple one. Its first article is, free, unlimited inquiry, perfect liberty to enjoy and express one's own honest convictions, and perfect respect for the free and honest inquirer, whatever be the results to which he arrives. The second article is social progress. I would have it a special object of the society I would collect, to labour to perfect all social institutions, and raise every man to a social position, which will give [Pg 414] him free scope for the full and harmonious development of all his faculties. I say, *perfect*, not destroy, all social institutions. I do not feel that God has given me a work of destruction. I would improve, preserve, whatever is good, and remedy whatever is defective, and thus reconcile the Conservator and the Radical. My third article is, that man should labour for his soul in preference to his body. Man has a soul; he is not mere body. He has more than animal wants. He has a soul, which is in relation with the absolute and the Infinite—a soul, which is for ever rushing off into the unknown, and rising through a universe of darkness up to the "first Good and the first Fair." This soul is immortal. To perfect it is our highest aim. I would encourage inquiry; I would perfect society, not as ultimate ends, but as means to the growth and maturity of man's higher nature—his soul.

These are my views, and views which, I believe, meet the wants of the times. They make war upon no sect of Christians. They are adopted in the spirit of love to humanity, and they can be acted upon only in the spirit of peace. They threaten no hostility, except to sin: with that, indeed, they call us to war. We must fight against all unrighteousness, against spiritual wickedness in high places, and in low places; but the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. We must go forth to the battle in faith and love, go forth to vindicate the rights of the mind, to perfect society, to make it the abode of all the virtues, and all the graces, to clothe man in his native dignity, and enable him to look forth in the image of his Maker upon a world of beauty.

This is my object. I am not here to preach to working men, nor to those who are not working men, in the interests of aristocracy, nor of democracy. I am here for humanity; to plead for universal man; to unfurl the banner of the cross on a new and more commanding position, and call the human race around it. I am here to speak to all who feel themselves human beings; to all whose [Pg 415] hearts swell at the name of man; to all who long to lessen the sum of human misery, and increase that of human happiness; to all who have any perception of the Beautiful and Good, and a craving for the Infinite, the Eternal, and Indestructible, on whom to repose the wearied soul and find rest—to all such is my appeal: to them I commit the object I have stated, and before which I stand in awe, and entreat them by all that is good in their natures, holy in religion, or desirable in the joy of a regenerated world, to unite and march to its acquisition, prepared to dare with the hero, to

suffer with the saint, or to die with the martyr.

F.

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"Independently of the disinterestedness, simplicity, and humility of woman's character, in all matters relating to religion, they naturally reverence and cling to those who show them respect and deference. The clergy, from understanding this point in their nature, possess great and deserved influence over them; and they have only to interest their feelings, to insure success to any clerical or charitable purpose. Look at a woman's zeal in foreign or domestic missions, not only devoting her time at home, but leaving her friends and her comforts, to assist in establishing them in a distant land. And is it ever pretended that a woman has not *more* than equalled a man in these duties? And will she not toil for days, scarcely raising her eyes from the work, to assist in purchasing an organ, a new altar-cloth, or in cleaning and painting a church?

So great is the tax, now, on a woman's time, for these and for other religious purposes, such as the "educating young men for the ministry," that the amount is frightful and scandalous. If the funds of a religious congregation be low, which can only happen where the men are poor in [Pg 416] spirit, and wanting in religious fervour, a woman is allowed to exert herself beyond her means; for well we know that she cannot endure a want of neatness and order, in a house where God is to be worshipped. To be sure, it may be said, that no one compels her to this unequal share of labour; but we know how the thing operates.

She ought, and she does, and nobly does her share, in educating poor children, both during the week and on Sunday. She searches out the widow and the fatherless, the orphan, the sick and the poor, the aged and the unhappy. All this, although it amount to a great deal, and certainly much more than men can ever do, it is her duty to do, and she performs the duty cheerfully. As she considers it incumbent on her thus to exert herself, and as it gives her pleasure, there can be no objection on our part, to let her do all the good in this way that she can; but do not let us exact too much of a willing mind and tender conscience. Confiding in her spiritual directors, she may be brought to do more than is proper for her to do. This "educating of young men, this preparing them for a theological seminary," is *not* part of a woman's duty, and it is not only contemptible, but base, to allow such a discipline of their minds, as to make them imagine it to be their duty.

Look at the young men who are to be educated? What right have they, with so many sources open to them, what right have they to allow women to tax themselves for their maintenance? Poor credulous woman! she can be made to think anything a duty. How have we seen her neglecting her health, her comfort, her family, the poor, and, above all, neglecting the improvement of her own mind, that she might earn a few dollars towards educating a young man, who is far more able to do it himself, and who, nine times in ten, laughs in his sleeve at her. What right, we again ask, have these young men to the labours of a woman? Are they not as capable of working as she is? What should hinder them from pursuing some handicraft, some employment, during their term of study?

If a woman were to be educated gratis, in this way, would any set of young men associate and [Pg 417] work for her maintenance? No, that they would not; she would not only have to labour for herself, but her labour would be unaided even by sympathy. Now, very few women are aware, that they are, *in a manner*, manœuvred into thus spending their precious time; we mean for the education of young men that have a desire to enter the theological seminary. Many of them are not conscious of being swayed by other motives; indeed, some have no other motive, than that of pure christian love, when they thus assist in raising funds for educating young men. They feel a disposition to follow on, in any scheme proposed to them; and when the thing is rightly managed, the project has the appearance of originating with themselves. Men understand the mode of doing this.

The spirit of piety and charity is very strong in the bosom of a woman; she feels the deepest reverence and devotion towards her spiritual pastor, and is naturally, therefore, disposed to do good, in the way he thinks best. If it were not for this reverence and submission, if they were left unbiassed by hint, persuasion, or by some unaccountable spell which they cannot break through, their charities would find another and a more suitable channel. Their good sense would show them the impropriety of giving up so much of their time, for a purpose that belongs exclusively to the care of men: they would soon see the truth, as it appears to others, that the scheme must be a bad one, which enables young men to live in idleness, during the time that they are getting through with their classical studies:—such a "getting through," too, as it generally is.

We do not set forth the following plan, as the very best that can be offered, but it is practicable, and would be creditable. It is that every theological seminary should have sufficient ground attached to it, that each student might have employment in raising vegetables and fruit. There should likewise be a workshop connected with it, wherein he might pursue some trade; so that if he did not find it his vocation to preach, when his religious education was finished, he might not [Pg 418] be utterly destitute, as too many are. In fact, it ought to be so much the part of a clergyman's education, to be acquainted with certain branches of horticulture, that he should not receive a call to a country or village church, if he were ignorant of it.

So far from degrading, it would be doing these young men a kindness. In the first place, they would hold fast that spirit of independence which is so necessary to a man's prosperity, and to his usefulness as a clergyman. He would be of the greatest consequence to his parishioners, for horticulture is an art but little known to them; and even if they go to a great distance as missionaries, of what great service would his horticultural knowledge be to the poor people, whose souls he hopes to save! We all know how immediately civilisation follows the cultivation of the soil; and we may rest assured, that the sacred object which the young missionary has in view, will meet with fewer obstacles, if his lessons are connected with attention to the bodily wants of his charge.

It is really disgusting to those who live in the neighbourhood of religious institutions, to see the frivolous manner in which young men pass their time, when not in actual study. We do not say that they are dissipated, or vicious, in the common sense of the word, but that they lounge about, trifle, and gossip, retailing idle chit-chat and fooleries.

At the very time when they are thus happily amusing themselves, the women who assist in giving them a classical education allow themselves scarcely any respite from their labours. We have known some of them to sew,—it is all they can do,—from sunrise till nine o'clock at night; and all for this very purpose.

It is quite time to put a stop to this, and let indigent young men educate themselves. Why do they not form societies to create funds for the purpose,—not as is usually done whenever they have attempted a thing of this kind, by carrying about a paper to collect money, but *by extra labour of their own, as women do*? Let those who live in cities write for lawyers or clerks in chancery, or [Pg 419] make out accounts for poor shopkeeping women, who will never cheat them out of a cent, nor refuse them a just compensation. If it be said that they cannot write well enough for any of these purposes, then they must go to the free-school again. There are a hundred modes by which they could earn at least twenty-five cents a day,—which is the average of what a woman makes when she is employed in sewing for this purpose. Those who live in the country,—where, in fact, all students, rich or poor, ought to be, on account of health,—should raise fruit, vegetables, we mean assist in this, work at some trade, write for newspapers, teach the children of the families at extra hours; in short, a lad of independent spirit could devise ways and means enough to pay for his board and clothing while he is learning Latin and Greek. This plan of proceeding would raise a young man twice as much in the opinion of the public, and a thousand times as much in his own.

But this is not a time to dwell on such a subject; it was too important, however, to remain untouched. We intend to discuss it amply at some future period. Our object, at present, is to assist women. They who are always so willing to assist others, to their own detriment, should now, in turn,—for their wants loudly call for it,—be assisted and encouraged to strike out a new path, by which they could assist themselves.

The first step for us to take in order to effect our intentions, is to prove to them that they should attend to their own wants exclusively; work for their own sons, if those sons can bear to see it; but to let young men, unconnected with them, and who are destined for the ministry, educate themselves, as the poor young men of other professions do.

When do we ever hear that a lawyer or a doctor owed their education to the industry or the alms of women?

We have said all this before, and in nearly the same words; and we shall say it again and again. There must be a change for the better in the affairs of poor women; they are degraded by their [Pg 420] poverty; and their degradation is the cause of nearly all the crime that is committed."—*Aladdin's Lamp. New York, 1833.*

FOOTNOTES:

[38] Uneasy.

[39] Potatoes.

THE END.

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