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Edward Bulwer Lytton Lytton**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TOMLINSONIANA ***

TOMLINSONIANA

By Edward Bulwer-Lytton

OR, THE POSTHUMOUS WRITINGS OF THE CELEBRATED AUGUSTUS TOMLINSON, PROFESSOR OF
MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ——— ADDRESSSED TO HIS PUPILS, AND COMPRISING

I
*MAXIMS ON THE POPULAR ART OF CREATING, ILLUSTRATED BY TEN CHARACTERS,
BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO THAT NOBLE SCIENCE BY WHICH EVERY MAN MAY
BECOME HIS OWN ROGUE.*

II
BRACHYLOGIA; OR, ESSAYS CRITICAL, SENTIMENTAL, MORAL, AND ORIGINAL.

INTRODUCTION.

Having lately been travelling in Germany, I spent some time at that University in which Augustus Tomlinson presided as Professor of Moral Philosophy. I found that that great man died, after a lingering illness, in the beginning of the year 1822, perfectly resigned to his fate, and conversing, even on his deathbed, on the divine mysteries of Ethical Philosophy. Notwithstanding the little peccadilloes to which I have alluded in the latter pages of "Paul Clifford," and which his pupils deemed it advisable to hide from—

"The gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day,"

his memory was still held in a tender veneration. Perhaps, as in the case of the illustrious Burns, the faults of a great man endear to you his genius. In his latter days the PROFESSOR was accustomed to wear a light-green silk dressing-gown, and, as he was perfectly bald, a little black velvet cap; his small-clothes were pepper and salt. These interesting facts I learned from one of his pupils. His old age was consumed in lectures, in conversation, and in the composition of the little *morceaux* of wisdom we present to the public. In these essays and maxims, short as they are, he seems to have concentrated the wisdom of his industrious and honourable life. With great difficulty I procured from his executors the manuscripts which were then preparing for the German press. A valuable consideration induced those gentlemen to become philanthropic, and to consider the inestimable blessings they would confer upon this country by suffering me to give the following essays to the light, in their native and English dress, on the same day whereon they appear in Germany in the graces of foreign disguise.

At an age when, while Hypocrisy stalks, simpers, sidles, struts, and hobbles through the country, Truth also begins to watch her adversary in every movement, I cannot but think these lessons of Augustus Tomlinson peculiarly well-timed. I add them as a fitting Appendix to a Novel that may not inappropriately be termed a Treatise on Social Frauds; and if they contain within them that evidence of diligent attention and that principle of good in which the satire of Vice is only the germ of its detection, they may not, perchance, pass

wholly unnoticed; nor be even condemned to that hasty reading in which the Indifference of to-day is but the prelude to the Forgetfulness of to-morrow.

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MAXIMS

ON

THE POPULAR ART OF CHEATING,

ILLUSTRATED BY TEN CHARACTERS;

BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO THAT NOBLE SCIENCE BY WHICH EVERY MAN MAY BECOME HIS OWN ROGUE.

Set a thief to catch a thief.--Proverb.

I.

Whenever you are about to utter something astonishingly false, always begin with, "It is an acknowledged fact," etc. Sir Robert Filmer was a master of this method of writing. Thus, with what a solemn face that great man attempted to cheat! "It is a truth undeniable that there cannot be any multitude of men whatsoever, either great or small, etc., but that in the same multitude there is one man amongst them that in nature hath a right to be King of all the rest,—as being the next heir to Adam!"

II.

When you want something from the public, throw the blame of the asking on the most sacred principle you can find. A common beggar can read you exquisite lessons on this the most important maxim in the art of popular cheating. "For the love of God, sir, a penny!"

III.

Whenever on any matter, moral, sentimental, or political, you find yourself utterly ignorant, talk immediately of "The Laws of Nature." As those laws are written nowhere,—[Locke]—they are known by nobody. Should any ask you how you happen to know such or such a doctrine as the dictate of Nature, clap your hand to your heart and say, "Here!"

IV.

Yield to a man's tastes, and he will yield to your interest.

V.

When you talk to the half-wise, twaddle; when you talk to the ignorant, brag; when you talk to the sagacious, look very humble, and ask their opinion.

VI.

Always bear in mind, my beloved pupils, that the means of livelihood depend not on the virtues, but the vices of others. The lawyer, the statesman, the hangman, the physician, are paid by our sins; nay, even the commoner professions—the tailor, the coachmaker, the upholsterer, the wine-merchant—draw their fortunes, if not their existence, from those smaller vices, our foibles. Vanity is the figure prefixed to the ciphers of Necessity. Wherefore, oh my beloved pupils! never mind what a man's virtues are; waste no time in learning them. Fasten at once on his infirmities. Do to the One as, were you an honest man, you would do to the Many. This is the way to be a rogue individually, as a lawyer is a rogue professionally. Knaves are like critics,—[Nullum simile est quod idem.—EDITOR.]—"flies that feed on the sore part, and would have nothing to live on were the body in health."—[Tatler].

VII.

Every man finds it desirable to have tears in his eyes at times,—one has a sympathy with humid lids. Providence hath beneficially provided for this want, and given to every man, in its divine forethought, misfortunes painful to recall. Hence, probably, those human calamities which the atheist rails against! Wherefore, when you are uttering some affecting sentiment to your intended dupe, think of the greatest misfortune you ever had in your life; habit will soon make the association of tears and that melancholy

remembrance constantly felicitous. I knew, my dear pupils, a most intelligent Frenchman, who obtained a charming legacy from an old poet by repeating the bard's verses with streaming eyes. "How were you able to weep at will?" asked I (I was young then, my pupils). "Je pensois," answered he, "a mon pauvre pere, qui est mort." The union of sentiment with the ability of swindling made that Frenchman a most fascinating creature!

VIII.

Never commit the error of the over-shrewd, and deem human nature worse than it is. Human nature is so damnably good that if it were not for human art, we knaves could not live. The primary elements of a man's mind do not sustain us; it is what he owes to "the pains taken with his education," and "the blessings of civilized society!"

IX.

Whenever you doubt, my pupils, whether your man be a quack or not, decide the point by seeing if your man be a positive asserter. Nothing indicates imposture like confidence. Volney saith well, "that the most celebrated of charlatans—[Mahomet]—and the boldest of tyrants begins his extraordinary tissue of lies by these words, "There is no doubt in this book!"

X.

There is one way of cheating people peculiar to the British Isles, and which, my pupils, I earnestly recommend you to import hither,—cheating by subscription. People like to be plundered in company; dupery then grows into the spirit of party. Thus one quack very gravely requested persons to fit up a ship for him and send him round the world as its captain to make discoveries; and another patriotically suggested that £10,000 should be subscribed—for what?—to place him in parliament! Neither of these fellows could have screwed an individual out of a shilling had he asked him for it in a corner; but a printed list, with "His Royal Highness" at the top, plays the devil with English guineas. A subscription for individuals may be considered a society for the ostentatious encouragement of idleness, impudence, beggary, imposture, and other public virtues!

XI.

Whenever you read the life of a great man, I mean a man eminently successful, you will perceive all the qualities given to him are the qualities necessary even to a mediocre rogue. "He possessed," saith the biographer, "the greatest address [namely, the faculty of wheedling]; the most admirable courage [namely, the faculty of bullying]; the most noble fortitude [namely, the faculty of bearing to be bullied]; the most singular versatility [namely, the faculty of saying one thing to one man, and its reverse to another]; and the most wonderful command over the mind of his contemporaries [namely, the faculty of victimizing their purses or seducing their actions]." Wherefore, if luck cast you in humble life, assiduously study the biographies of the great, in order to accomplish you as a rogue; if in the more elevated range of society, be thoroughly versed in the lives of the roguish: so shall you fit yourself to be eminent!

XII.

The hypocrisy of virtue, my beloved pupils, is a little out of fashion nowadays; it is sometimes better to affect the hypocrisy of vice. Appear generously profligate, and swear with a hearty face that you do not pretend to be better than the generality of your neighbours. Sincerity is not less a covering than lying; a frieze great-coat wraps you as well as a Spanish cloak.

XIII.

When you are about to execute some great plan, and to defraud a number of persons, let the first one or two of the allotted number be the cleverest, shrewdest fellows you can find. You have then a reference that will alone dupe the rest of the world. "That Mr. Lynx is satisfied," will amply suffice to satisfy Mr. Mole of the honesty of your intentions! Nor are shrewd men the hardest to take in; they rely on their strength: invulnerable heroes are necessarily the bravest. Talk to them in a business-like manner, and refer your design at once to their lawyer. My friend John Shamberry was a model in this grand stroke of art. He swindled twelve people to the tune of some thousands, with no other trouble than it first cost him to swindle—whom do you think?—the Secretary to the Society for the Suppression of Swindling!

XIV.

Divide your arts into two classes,—those which cost you little labour, those which cost much. The first,—flattery, attention, answering letters by return of post, walking across a street to oblige the man you intend to ruin; all these you must never neglect. The least man is worth gaining at a small cost. And besides, while you are serving yourself, you are also obtaining the character of civility, diligence, and good-nature. But the arts which cost you much labour—a long subservience to one testy individual; aping the semblance of a virtue, a quality, or a branch of learning which you do not possess, to a person difficult to blind,—all these never begin except for great ends, worth not only the loss of time, but the chance of detection. Great pains for small gains is the maxim of the miser. The rogue should have more *grandeur d'ame!*—[Greatness of soul].

XV.

Always forgive.

XVI.

If a man owe you a sum of money—pupils though you be of mine, you may once in your lives be so silly as to lend—and you find it difficult to get it back, appeal, not to his justice, but to his charity. The components of justice flatter few men! Who likes to submit to an inconvenience because he ought to do it,—without praise, without even self—gratulation? But charity, my dear friends, tickles up human ostentation deliciously. Charity implies superiority; and the feeling of superiority is most grateful to social nature. Hence the commonness of

charity, in proportion to other virtues, all over the world; and hence you will especially note that in proportion as people are haughty and arrogant, will they laud almsgiving and encourage charitable institutions.

XVII.

Your genteel rogues do not sufficiently observe the shrewdness of the vulgar ones. The actual beggar takes advantage of every sore; but the moral swindler is unpardonably dull as to the happiness of a physical infirmity. To obtain a favour, neglect no method that may allure compassion. I knew a worthy curate who obtained two livings by the felicity of a hectic cough, and a younger brother who subsisted for ten years on his family by virtue of a slow consumption.

XVIII.

When you want to possess yourself of a small sum, recollect that the small sum be put into juxtaposition with a great. I do not express myself clearly—take an example. In London there are sharpers who advertise £70,000 to be advanced at four per cent; principals only conferred with. The gentleman wishing for such a sum on mortgage goes to see the advertiser; the advertiser says he must run down and look at the property on which the money is to be advanced; his journey and expenses will cost him a mere trifle,—say, twenty guineas. Let him speak confidently; let the gentleman very much want the money at the interest stated, and three to one but our sharper gets the twenty guineas,—so paltry a sum in comparison to £70,000 though so serious a sum had the matter related to halfpence!

XIX.

Lord Coke has said: "To trace an error to its fountainhead is to refute it." Now, my young pupils, I take it for granted that you are interested in the preservation of error; you do not wish it, therefore, to be traced to its fountain head. Whenever, then, you see a sharp fellow tracking it up, you have two ways of settling the matter. You may say, with a smile, "Nay, now, sir, you grow speculative,—I admire your ingenuity;" or else look grave, colour up, and say, "I fancy, sir, there is no warrant for this assertion in the most sacred of all authorities!" The Devil can quote Scripture, you know; and a very sensible Devil it is too!

XX.

Rochefoucauld has said: "The hate of favourites is nothing else but the love of favour." The idea is a little cramped; the hate we bear to any man is only the result of our love for some good which we imagine he possesses, or which, being in our possession, we imagine he has attacked. Thus envy, the most ordinary species of hate, arises from our value for the glory, or the plate, or the content we behold; and revenge is born from our regard for our fame that has been wounded, or our acres molested, or our rights invaded. But the most noisy of all hatreds is hatred for the rich, from love for the riches. Look well on the poor devil who is always railing at coaches and four! Book him as a man to be bribed!

XXI.

My beloved pupils, few have yet sufficiently studied the art by which the practice of jokes becomes subservient to the science of swindlers. The heart of an inferior is always fascinated by a jest. Men know this in the knavery of elections. Know it now, my pupils, in the knavery of life! When you slap yon cobbler so affectionately on the back, it is your own fault if you do not slap your purpose into him at the same time. Note how Shakspeare (whom study night and day,—no man hath better expounded the mysteries of roguery!) causes his grandest and most accomplished villain, Richard III., to address his good friends, the murderers, with a jocular panegyric on that hardness of heart on which, doubtless, those poor fellows most piqued themselves,—

*"Your eyes drop millstones, where fools' eyes drop tears—
I like you, lads!"*

Can't you fancy the knowing grin with which the dogs received this compliment, and the little sly punch in the stomach with which Richard dropped those loving words, "I like you, lads!"

XXII.

As good-nature is the characteristic of the dupe, so should good-temper be that of the knave; the two fit into each other like joints. Happily, good-nature is a Narcissus, and falls in love with its own likeness. And good-temper is to good-nature what the Florimel of snow was to the Florimel of flesh,—an exact likeness made of the coldest materials.

XXIII.

BEING THE PRAISE OF KNAVERY.

A knave is a philosopher, though a philosopher is not necessarily a knave. What hath a knave to do with passions? Every irregular desire he must suppress; every foible he must weed out; his whole life is spent in the acquisition of knowledge: for what is knowledge?—the discovery of human errors! He is the only man always consistent yet ever examining; he knows but one end, yet explores every means; danger, ill-repute, all that terrify other men, daunt not him; he braves all, but is saved from all: for I hold that a knave ceaseth to be the knave—he hath passed into the fool—the moment mischief befalls him. He professes the art of cheating; but the art of cheating is to cheat without peril. He is *teres et rotundas*; strokes fly from the lubricity of his polish, and the shiftings of his circular formation. He who is insensible of the glory of his profession, who is open only to the profit, is no disciple of mine. I hold of knavery, as Plato hath said of virtue, "Could it be seen incarnate, it would beget a personal adoration!" None but those who are inspired by a generous enthusiasm will benefit by the above maxims, nor (and here I warn you solemnly from the sacred ground, till your head be uncovered, and your feet be bared in the awe of veneration) enter with profit upon the following descriptions of character,—that Temple of the Ten Statutes, wherein I have stored and consecrated the most treasured

relics of my travelled thoughts and my collected experience.

TEN CHARACTERS.

I.

The mild, irresolute, good-natured, and indolent man. These qualities are accompanied with good feelings, but no principles. The want of firmness evinces also the want of any peculiar or deeply rooted system of thought. A man conning a single and favourite subject of meditation grows wedded to one or the other of the opinions on which he revolves. A man universally irresolute has generally led a desultory life, and never given his attention long together to one thing. This is a man most easy to cheat, my beloved friends; you cheat him even with his eyes open. Indolence is dearer to him than all things; and if you get him alone and put a question to him point blank, he cannot answer, No.

II.

The timid, suspicious, selfish, and cold man. Generally a character of this description is an excellent man of business, and would at first sight seem to baffle the most ingenious swindler. But you have one hope,—I have rarely found it deceive me,—this man is usually ostentatious. A cold, a fearful, yet a worldly person has ever an eye upon others; he notes the effect certain things produce on them; he is anxious to learn their opinions, that he may not transgress; he likes to know what the world say of him; nay, his timidity makes him anxious to repose his selfishness on their good report. Hence he grows ostentatious, likes that effect which is favourably talked of, and that show which wins consideration. At him on this point, my pupils!

III.

The melancholy, retired, sensitive, intellectual character. A very good subject this for your knaveries, my young friends, though it requires great discrimination and delicacy. This character has a considerable portion of morbid suspicion and irritation belonging to it,—against these you must guard; at the same time its prevailing feature is a powerful but unacknowledged vanity. It is generally a good opinion of himself, and a feeling that he is not appreciated by others, that make a man reserved; he deems himself unfit for the world because of the delicacy of his temperament, and the want of a correspondent insensibility in those he sees! This is your handle to work on. He is peculiarly flattered, too, on the score of devotion and affection; he exacts in love, as from the world, too much. He is a Lara, whose females must be Medoras; and even his male friends should be extremely like Kaleds! Poor man! you see how easily he can be duped. Mem.—Among persons of this character are usually found those oddities, humours, and peculiarities which are each a handle. No man lives out of the world with impunity to the solidity of his own character. Every new outlet to the humour is a new inlet to the heart.

IV.

The bold, generous, frank, and affectionate man,—usually a person of robust health. His constitution keeps him in spirits, and his spirits in courage and in benevolence. He is obviously not a hard character, my good young friends, for you to deceive; for he wants suspicion, and all his good qualities lay him open to you. But beware his anger when he finds you out! He is a terrible Othello when his nature is once stung. Mem.—A good sort of character to seduce into illegal practices; makes a tolerable traitor or a capital smuggler. You yourselves must never commit any illegal offence,—aren't there cat's-paws for the chestnuts? As all laws are oppressions (only necessary and often sacred oppressions, which you need not explain to him), and his character is especially hostile to oppression, you easily seduce the person we describe into braving the laws of his country. Yes! the bold, generous, frank, and affectionate man has only to be born in humble life to be sure of a halter!

V.

The bold, selfish, close, grasping man will in all probability cheat you, my dear friends. For such a character makes the master-rogue, the stuff from which Nature forms a Richard the Third. You had better leave such a man quite alone. He is bad even to serve. He breaks up his tools when he has done with them. No, you can do nothing with him, my good young men!

VI.

The eating, drinking, unthoughtful, sensual, mechanical man,—the ordinary animal. Such a creature has cunning, and is either cowardly or ferocious; seldom in these qualities he preserves a medium. He is not by any means easy to dupe. Nature defends her mental brutes by the thickness of their hide. Win his mistress if possible; she is the best person to manage him. Such creatures are the natural prey of artful women; their very stolidity covers all but sensuality. To the Samson—the Delilah.

VII.

The gay, deceitful, shrewd, polished, able man,—the courtier, the man of the world. In public and stirring life this is the fit antagonist,—often the successful and conquering rival of Character V. You perceive a man like this varies so greatly in intellect—from the mere butterfly talent to the rarest genius, from the person you see at cards to the person you see in Cabinets, from the ——— to the Chesterfield, from the Chesterfield to the Pericles—that it is difficult to give you an exact notion of the weak points of a character so various. But while he dupes his equals and his superiors, I consider him, my attentive pupils, by no means a very difficult character for an inferior to dupe. And in this manner you must go about it. Do not attempt hypocrisy; he will see through it in an instant. Let him think you at once, and at first sight, a rogue. Be candid on that matter yourself; but let him think you a useful rogue. Serve him well and zealously; but own that you do so, because you consider your interest involved in this. This reasoning satisfies him; and as men of this character are usually generous, he will acknowledge its justice by throwing you plenty of sops, and stimulating you with bountiful cordials. Should he not content you herein, appear contented; and profit in betraying him (that is the best way to cheat him), not by his failings, but by opportunity. Watch not his character, but your time.

The vain, arrogant, brave, amorous, flashy character. This sort of character we formerly attributed to the French, and it is still more common to the Continent than that beloved island which I shall see no more! A creature of this description is made up of many false virtues; above others, it is always profuse where its selfishness is appealed to, not otherwise. You must find, then, what pleases it, and pander to its tastes. So will ye cheat it,—or ye will cheat it also by affecting the false virtues which it admires itself,—rouge your sentiments highly, and let them strut with a buskined air; thirdly, my good young men, ye will cheat it by profuse flattery, and by calling it in especial “the mirror of chivalry.”

IX.

The plain, sensible, honest man,—a favourable, but not elevated specimen of our race. This character, my beloved pupils, you may take in once, but never twice. Nor can you take in such a man as a stranger; he must be your friend or relation, or have known intimately some part of your family. A man of this character is always open, though in a moderate and calm degree, to the duties and ties of life. He will always do something to serve his friend, his brother, or the man whose father pulled his father out of the Serpentine. Affect with him no varnish; exert no artifice in attempting to obtain his assistance. Candidly state your wish for such or such a service, sensibly state your pretensions, modestly hint at your gratitude. So may you deceive him once, then leave him alone forever!

X.

The fond, silly, credulous man, all impulse and no reflection,—how my heart swells when I contemplate this excellent character! What a Canaan for you does it present! I envy you launching into the world with the sanguine hope of finding all men such! Delightful enthusiasm of youth,—would that the hope could be realized! Here is the very incarnation of gullibility. You have only to make him love you, and no hedgehog ever sucked egg as you can suck him. Never be afraid of his indignation; go to him again and again; only throw yourself on his neck and weep. To gull him once is to gull him always; get his first shilling, and then calculate what you will do with the rest of his fortune. Never desert so good a man for new friends; that would be ungrateful in you! And take with you, by the way, my good young gentlemen, this concluding maxim: Men are like lands; you will get more by lavishing all your labour again and again upon the easy than by ploughing up new ground in the sterile! Legislators,—wise, good, pious men,—the Tom Thumbs of moral science, who make giants first, and then kill them,—you think the above lessons villanous. I honour your penetration. They are not proofs of my villiany, but of your folly! Look over them again, and you will see that they are designed to show that while ye are imprisoning, transporting, and hanging thousands every day, a man with a decent modicum of cunning might practise every one of those lessons which seem to you so heinous, and not one of your laws could touch him!

BRACHYLOGIA;

OR,

ESSAYS, CRITICAL, SENTIMENTAL, MORAL, AND ORIGINAL.

ADDRESSED TO HIS PUPILS

BY AUGUSTUS TOMLINSON.

The irony in the preceding essays is often lost sight of in the present. The illness of this great man, which happened while composing these little gems, made him perhaps more in earnest than when in robust health.—Editor's Note.

ON THE MORALITY TAUGHT BY THE RICH TO THE POOR.

As soon as the urchin pauper can totter out of doors, it is taught to pull off its hat, and pull its hair to the quality. “A good little boy,” says the squire; “there’s a ha’penny for you.” The good little boy glows with pride. That ha’penny instils deep the lesson of humility. Now goes our urchin to school. Then comes the Sunday teaching,—before church, which enjoins the poor to be lowly, and to honour every man better off than themselves. A pound of honour to the squire, and an ounce to the beadle. Then the boy grows up; and the Lord of the Manor instructs him thus: “Be a good boy, Tom, and I’ll befriend you. Tread in the steps of your father; he was an excellent man, and a great loss to the parish; he was a very civil, hard-working, well-behaved creature; knew his station;—mind, and do like him!” So perpetual hard labour and plenty of cringing make the ancestral virtues to be perpetuated to peasants till the day of judgment! Another insidious distillation of morality is conveyed through a general praise of the poor. You hear false friends of the people, who call themselves Liberals and Tories, who have an idea of morals half chivalric, half pastoral, agree in lauding the unfortunate creatures whom they keep at work for them. But mark the virtues the poor are always to be praised for,—industry, honesty, and content. The first virtue is extolled to the skies, because industry gives the rich everything they have; the second, because honesty prevents an iota of the said everything being taken away again; and the third, because content is to hinder these poor devils from ever objecting to a lot so comfortable to the persons who profit by it. This, my pupils, is the morality taught by the rich to the poor!

EMULATION.

The great error of emulation is this: we emulate effects without inquiring into causes. When we read of the great actions of a man, we are on fire to perform the same exploits, without endeavouring to ascertain the precise qualities which enabled the man we imitate to commit the actions we admire. Could we discover these, how often might we discover that their origin was a certain temper of body, a certain peculiarity of constitution, and that, wish we for the same success, we should be examining the nature of our bodies rather than sharpening the faculties of our minds,—should use dumbbells, perhaps, instead of books; nay, on the

other hand, contract some grievous complaint rather than perfect our moral salubrity. Who should say whether Alexander would have been a hero had his neck been straight; or Boileau a satirist, had he never been pecked by a turkey? It would be pleasant to see you, my beloved pupils, after reading "Quintus Curtius," twisting each other's throat; or, fresh from Boileau, hurrying to the poultry-yard in the hope of being mutilated into the performance of a second "Lutrin."

CAUTION AGAINST THE SCOFFERS OF "HUMBUG."

My beloved pupils, there is a set of persons in the world, daily increasing, against whom you must be greatly on your guard; there is a fascination about them. They are people who declare themselves vehemently opposed to humbug,—fine, liberal fellows, clear-sighted, yet frank. When these sentiments arise from reflection, well and good,—they are the best sentiments in the world; but many take them up second hand. They are very inviting to the indolence of the mob of gentlemen who see the romance of a noble principle, not its utility. When a man looks at everything through this dwarfing philosophy, everything has a great modicum of humbug. You laugh with him when he derides the humbug in religion, the humbug in politics, the humbug in love, the humbug in the plausibilities of the world; but you may cry, my dear pupils, when he derides what is often the safest of all practically to deride,—the humbug in common honesty! Men are honest from religion, wisdom, prejudice, habit, fear, and stupidity; but the few only are wise; and the persons we speak of deride religion, are beyond prejudice, unawed by habit, too indifferent for fear, and too experienced for stupidity.

POPULAR WRATH AT INDIVIDUAL IMPRUDENCE.

You must know, my dear young friends, that while the appearance of magnanimity is very becoming to you, and so forth, it will get you a great deal of ill-will if you attempt to practise it to your own detriment. Your neighbours are so invariably, though perhaps insensibly, actuated by self-interest—self-interest—[Mr. Tomlinson is wrong here; but his ethics were too much narrowed to Utilitarian principles.—EDITOR.]—is so entirely, though every twaddler denies it, the axis of the moral world—that they fly into a rage with him who seems to disregard it. When a man ruins himself, just hear the abuse he receives; his neighbours take it as a personal affront!

DUM DEFLUAT AMNIS.

One main reason why men who have been great are disappointed, when they retire to private life, is this: Memory makes a chief source of enjoyment to those who cease eagerly to hope; but the memory of the great recalls only that public life which has disgusted them. Their private life hath slipped insensibly away, leaving faint traces of the sorrow or the joy which found them too busy to heed the simple and quiet impressions of mere domestic vicissitude.

SELF-GLORIFIERS.

Providence seems to have done to a certain set of persons—who always view their own things through a magnifying medium, deem their house the best in the world, their gun the truest, their very pointer a miracle—as Colonel Hanger suggested to economists to do; namely, provide their servants each with a pair of large spectacles, so that a lark might appear as big as a fowl, and a twopenny loaf as large as a quartern.

THOUGHT ON FORTUNE.

It is often the easiest move that completes the game. Fortune is like the lady whom a lover carried off from all his rivals by putting an additional lace upon his liveries.

WIT AND TRUTH.

People may talk about fiction being the source of fancy, and wit being at variance with truth. Now, some of the wittiest things in the world are witty solely from their truth. Truth is the soul of a good saying. "You assert," observes the Socrates of modern times, "that we have a virtual representation; very well, let us have a virtual taxation too!" Here the wit is in the fidelity of the sequitur. When Columbus broke the egg, where was the wit? In the completeness of conviction in the broken egg.

AUTO-THEOLOGY.

Not only every sect but every individual modifies the general attributes of the Deity towards assimilation with his own character: the just man dwells on the justice, the stern upon the wrath; the attributes that do not please the worshipper he insensibly forgets. Wherefore, O my pupils, you will not smile when you read in Barnes that the pygmies declared Jove himself was a pygmy. The pious vanity of man makes him adore his own qualities under the pretence of worshipping those of his God.

GLORIOUS CONSTITUTION.

A sentence is sometimes as good as a volume. If a man ask you to give him some idea of the laws of England, the answer is short and easy: In the laws of England there are somewhere about one hundred and fifty laws by which a poor man may be hanged, but not one by which he can obtain justice for nothing!

*ANSWER TO THE POPULAR CANT THAT
GOODNESS IN A STATESMAN IS
BETTER THAN ABILITY.*

As in the world we must look to actions, not motives, so a knave is the man who injures you; and you do not inquire whether the injury be the fruit of malice or necessity. Place, then, a fool in power, and he becomes unconsciously the knave. Mr. Addington stumbled on the two very worst and most villanous taxes human malice could have invented,—one on medicines, the other on justice. What tyrant's fearful ingenuity could afflict us more than by impeding at once redress for our wrongs, and cure for our diseases? Mr. Addington was the fool *in se*, and therefore the knave in office; but, bless you! he never meant it!

COMMON-SENSE.

Common-sense,—common-sense,—of all phrases, all catchwords, this is often the most deceitful and the most dangerous. Look, in especial, suspiciously upon common-sense whenever it is opposed to discovery. Common-sense is the experience of every day. Discovery is something against the experience of every day. No wonder, then, that when Galileo proclaimed a great truth, the universal cry was, "Pshaw! common-sense will tell you the reverse." Talk to a sensible man for the first time on the theory of vision, and hear what his common-sense will say to it. In a letter in the time of Bacon, the writer, of no mean intellect himself, says: "It is a pity the chancellor should set his opinion against the experience of so many centuries and the dictates of common-sense." Common-sense, then, so useful in household matters, is less useful in the legislative and in the scientific world than it has been generally deemed. Naturally, the advocate for what has been tried, and averse to what is speculative, it opposes the new philosophy that appeals to reason, and clings to the old which is propped by sanction.

LOVE, AND WRITERS ON LOVE.

My warm, hot-headed, ardent young friends, ye are in the flower of your life, and writing verses about love,—let us say a word on the subject. There are two species of love common to all men and to most animals,—[Most animals; for some appear insensible to the love of custom]—one springs from the senses, the other grows out of custom. Now, neither of these, my dear young friends, is the love that you pretend to feel,—the love of lovers. Your passion, having only its foundation (and that unacknowledged) in the senses, owes everything else to the imagination. Now, the imagination of the majority is different in complexion and degree in every country and in every age; so also, and consequently, is the love of the imagination. As a proof, observe that you sympathize with the romantic love of other times or nations only in proportion as you sympathize with their poetry and imaginative literature. The love which stalks through the "Arcadia" or "Amadis of Gaul" is to the great bulk of readers coldly insipid or solemnly ridiculous. Alas! when those works excited enthusiasm, so did the love which they describe. The long speeches, the icy compliments, expressed the feeling of the day. The love madrigals of the time of Shenstone, or the brocade gallantries of the French poets in the last century, any woman now would consider hollow or childish, imbecile or artificial. Once the songs were natural, and the love seductive. And now, my young friends, in the year 1822, in which I write, and shall probably die, the love which glitters through Moore, and walks so ambitiously ambiguous through the verse of Byron; the love which you consider now so deep and so true; the love which tingles through the hearts of your young ladies, and sets you young gentlemen gazing on the evening star,—all that love too will become unfamiliar or ridiculous to an after age; and the young aspirings and the moonlight dreams and the vague fiddle-de-dees which ye now think so touching and so sublime will go, my dear boys, where Cowley's Mistress and Waller's Sacharissa have gone before,—go with the Sapphos and the Chloes, the elegant "charming fairs," and the chivalric "most beauteous princesses!" The only love-poetry that stands through all time and appeals to all hearts is that which is founded on either or both the species of love natural to all men,—the love of the senses, and the love of custom. In the latter is included what middle-aged men call the rational attachment, the charm of congenial minds, as well as the homely and warmer accumulation of little memories of simple kindness, or the mere brute habitude of seeing a face as one would see a chair. These, sometimes singly, sometimes skilfully blended, make the theme of those who have perhaps loved the most honestly and the most humanly; these yet render Tibullus pathetic, and Ovid a master over tender affections; and these, above all, make that irresistible and all-touching inspiration which subdues the romantic, the calculating, the old, the young, the courtier, the peasant, the poet, the man of business, in the glorious love-poetry of Robert Burns.

THE GREAT ENTAILED.

The great inheritance of man is a commonwealth of blunders. One race spend their lives in botching the errors transmitted to them by another; and the main cause of all political, that is, all the worst and most general, blunders is this,—the same rule we apply to individual cases we will not apply to public. All men consent that swindling for a horse is swindling,—they punish the culprit and condemn the fault. But in a State there is no such unanimity. Swindling, Lord help you! is called by some fine name; and cheating grows grandiloquent, and styles itself "Policy." In consequence of this there is always a battle between those who call things by their right names and those who pertinaciously give them the wrong ones. Hence all sorts of confusion. This confusion extends very soon to the laws made for individual cases; and thus in old States, though the world is still agreed that private swindling is private swindling, there is the Devil's own difficulty in punishing the swindling of the public. The art of swindling now is a different thing to the art of swindling a hundred years ago; but the laws remain the same. Adaptation in private cases is innovation in public; so, without repealing old laws, they make new. Sometimes these are effectual, but more often not. Now, my beloved pupils, a law is a gun which if it misses a pigeon always kills a crow; if it does not strike the guilty, it hits some one else. As every crime creates a law, so in turn every law creates a crime; and hence we go on multiplying sins and evils, and faults and blunders, till society becomes the organized disorder for picking pockets.

THE REGENERATION OF A KNAVE.

A man who begins the world by being a fool often ends it by becoming a knave; but he who begins as a knave, if he be a rich man (and so not hanged), may end, my beloved pupils, in being a pious creature. And this is the wherefore: "a knave early" soon gets knowledge of the world. One vice worn out makes us wiser than fifty tutors. But wisdom causes us to love quiet, and in quiet we do not sin. He who is wise and sins not can scarcely fail of doing good; for let him but utter a new truth, and even his imagination cannot conceive the limit of the good he may have done to man!

STYLE.

Do you well understand what a wonderful thing style is? I think not; for in the exercises you sent me, your styles betrayed that no very earnest consideration had been lavished upon them. Know, then, that you must pause well before you take up any model of style. On your style often depends your own character,—almost

always the character given you by the world. If you adopt the lofty style,—if you string together noble phrases and swelling Sonora,—you have expressed, avowed, a frame of mind which you will insensibly desire to act up to; the desire gradually begets the capacity. The life of Dr. Parr is Dr. Parr’s style put in action; and Lord Byron makes himself through existence unhappy for having accidentally slipped into a melancholy current of words. But suppose you escape this calamity by a peculiar hardihood of temperament, you escape not the stamp of popular opinion. Addison must ever be held by the vulgar the most amiable of men, because of the social amenity of his diction; and the admirers of language will always consider Burke a nobler spirit than Fox, because of the grandeur of his sentences. How many wise sayings have been called jests because they were wittily uttered! How many nothings swelled their author into a sage, ay, a saint, because they were strung together by the old hypocrite nun,—Gravity!

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TOMLINSONIANA ***

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