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A. D. Fraser

ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PELHAM," "DEVEREUX," "EUGENE ARAM," &c.

Lytton Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Bar.

"Ordine gentis
Mores, et studia, et populos, et prælia dicam."—*Virgil.*

"Every now and then we should examine ourselves; self-amendment is the offspring of self-knowledge. But foreigners do not *examine* our condition; they only glance at its surface. Why should we print volumes upon other countries, and be silent upon our own? Why traverse the world, and neglect the phenomena around us? Why should the spirit of our researches be a lynx in Africa and a mole in England? Why, in one word, should a nation be never criticised by a native?"—*Montagu.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BOOK THE FOURTH.

VIEW OF THE INTELLECTUAL SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

INSCRIBED TO

J. D'ISRAELI, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "THE CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE," AND "THE LITERARY CHARACTER," ETC.

VIEW OF THE INTELLECTUAL SPIRIT OF THE TIME.

CHAPTER I.

The Influence of the Press—Is the Influence rather of Opinion than of Knowledge—Its Voice more true with respect to Things than Persons—The Duke of Wellington's Horse *versus* Lord Palmerston's—The Press represents—Whom?—Those who buy it!—Important Deduction from this Fact—Not the Poor, but the Hangers-on of the Rich who buy the Scurrilous Papers—The Valet and the Mechanic—If one Part of the Press *represents*, another Part *originates* Opinion—The Preservation of the anonymous in Periodicals—Its Effects—Difference between a French Editor and an English—Why is the Press anti-aristocratic?—Effects of removing the Newspaper Duties—The Influence of the Press—The Intellectual Spirit of the Times—Eastern Tradition.

PERMIT me, my dear sir, to honour with your name that section of my various undertaking, which involves an inquiry into the Intellectual Spirit of the Time. I believe that you employ the hours of a serene and dignified leisure in the composition of a work that, when completed, will fill no inconsiderable vacuum in English Literature; namely, the History of English Literature itself. Of the arrival of that work, you wish us to consider those classical and most charming essays you have already given to the world, merely as precursors,—specimens of a great whole,—which ought, in justice to your present reputation, to add a permanent glory to the letters of your country. It will therefore, perhaps, afford to you a pleasurable interest, to survey the literary aspect of these times,

into which your chronicle must merge, and to wander, even with an erring guide, beside those Rivers of Light, which you have tracked to their distant source, with all the perseverance of the antiquarian, and all the enthusiasm of the scholar.

Before, however, I can invite you to the more attractive part of my subject;—before we can rove at will among the gardens of Poesy, or the not less delightful mazes of that Philosophy which to see is to adore; before the domains of Science and of Art can receive our exploring footsteps, we must pause awhile to examine the condition of that mighty, though ambiguous power by which the times receive their more vivid impressions, and convey their more noisy opinions. As a preliminary to our criticisms on the productions of the Press, we will survey the nature of its influence;—and propitiate with due reverence the sibyl who too often commits

> Her prophetic mind
> To fluttering leaves, the sport of every wind,

ere we can gain admittance to the happy souls,

> In groves who live, and lie on mossy beds,
> By crystal streams that murmur through the meads;
>
> ——————Choro pæana canentes
> Inter odoratum lauri nemus.

Hitherto I have traced, in the various branches of my inquiry, the latent and pervading influence of an aristocracy. I am now about to examine the nature of that antagonist power which is the only formidable check that our moral relations have yet opposed to it. Much has been said in a desultory manner about the influence of the Press; but I am not aware of any connected and systematic essay on the subject. "Vous l'allez comprendre, j'espère, si vous m'écoutez, —il est fête, et nous avons le temps de causer."—I shall go at once to the heart of the question, and with

your permission, we will not throw away our time by talking much on the minor considerations.

It is the habit of some persons more ardent than profound, to lavish indiscriminate praises on the press, and to term its influence, the influence of Knowledge —it is rather the influence of Opinion. Large classes of men entertain certain views on matters of policy, trade, or morals. A newspaper supports itself by addressing those classes; it brings to light all the knowledge requisite to enforce or illustrate the views of its supporters; it imbodies also the prejudice, the passion, and the sectarian bigotry that belong to one body of men engaged in active opposition to another. It is therefore the organ of opinion; expressing at once the truths and the errors, the good and the bad of the prevalent opinion it represents.

Thus it is impossible to expect the newspaper you consider right in regard to sentiments, to be fair in regard to persons. Supposing it expresses the *facts* which belong to knowledge, they are never stated with the *impartiality* that belongs to knowledge.—"Heavens! my dear sir! have you heard the report? The Duke of Wellington's horse has run over a poor boy!" A whig paper seizes on the lamentable story—magnifies, enlarges on it—the Duke of Wellington is admonished—indifference to human life is insinuated. The tory paper replies: it grants the fact, but interprets it differently: the fool of a boy was decidedly in the way—the brute of a horse had a mouth notoriously as hard as a brick-bat—the rider himself was not to blame—what unheard-of malignity, to impute as a reproach to the Duke of Wellington, a misfortune only to be attributed to the eyes of the boy, and the jaw-bone of the horse. But, bless me! a new report has arisen:—it was not the Duke of Wellington's horse that ran over the boy; it was Lord Palmerston's. It is now the tory journal's opportunity to triumph. What perversion in the lying whig paper!—and what atrocity in Lord Palmerston! All the insinuations that were so shameful against the duke are now pro-

fusely directed against the viscount. The very same interpretations that the tory paper so magisterially condemned, are now by the tory paper unreservedly applied. The offence of distortion is equally continued—it is only transferred from one person to another. This is a type of the power of the press: its very enforcement of opinions prevents its being just as to persons. Facts, indeed, are stated, but the interpretation of facts is always a matter of dispute. And thus to the last chapter, it is easier to obtain a just criticism of the merits of the drama than of the qualities of the actors. Long after the public mind has decided unanimously with respect to measures, it remains doubtful and divided with regard to the characters of men. In this the press is still the faithful record of Opinion, and the ephemeral Journal is the type of the everlasting History!

Newspapers being thus the organ of several opinions, the result is, the influence of opinion, because, that newspaper sells the best which addresses itself to the largest class; it becomes influential in proportion to its sale, and thus, the most popular opinion grows, at last, into the greatest power.

But from this arises a profound consideration, not hitherto sufficiently enforced. The newspaper represents opinion; but the opinion of whom?—*those persons among whom it chiefly circulates.* What follows? —why, that the price of the newspaper must have a considerable influence on the expression of opinion; because, according to the price would be the extent of its circulation; and, according to the opinion of the majority of its supporters, would be the current opinion of the paper.

Supposing it were possible to raise the price of all the daily newspapers to two shillings each, what would be the consequence?—that a vast number of the poorer subscribers would desert the journal, that the circle of its supporters would become limited to those who could afford its price. It would then be to the opinions and interests of this small and wealthy class,

that it could alone address itself; if it did not meet their approbation it could not exist; their opinion would be alone represented, the opinion of the mass would be disregarded; and a newspaper, instead of being the organ of *public* opinion, would be the expression of the *olighargical*. Although the aggregate of property in England is, perhaps, equally divided among the whigs and tories, the *greater number* of reading persons, possessing property, is alleged to be tory. Suppose the calculation to be true, the influence of the press would, by our supposed increase of price, be at once transferred to the tories; and *The Standard* and *The Albion* would be the most widely circulated of the daily journals.

If this principle be true with respect to an increased price, the converse must be true if the price were lowered. If the sevenpenny paper were therefore to sell for twopence, what would be the result? Why, the sale being extended from those who can afford sevenpence to those who can afford twopence, a new majority must be consulted, the sentiments and desires of poorer men than at present must be addressed; and thus a new influence of opinion would be brought to bear on our social relations and our legislative enactments.

As the extension of the electoral franchise gave power to the middle classes, so the extended circulation of the press will give power to the operative. To those who uphold the principle that government is instituted for the good of the greatest number, it is, of course, a matter of triumph that the interests of the greatest number should thus force themselves into a more immediate voice.*

* In removing the stamp duties, which check one part of the influence of the press, it would, however, be conservative policy to let new sources of enlightenment commence with the new sources of power. At present, what are called the taxes on knowledge are, in reality, as we have seen before, taxes on opinion. To make opinion knowledge, its foundation must be laid in instruction. The act which opens the press should be immediately followed by an act to organize national education; and while the people are yet warm with

It is manifest that when the eyes of the people shall be taught steadily to regard their own interests, the class of writing most pleasing to them will not be that of demagogues; it is probable, indeed, that the cheapest papers will seem to the indolent reader of the higher ranks the most dry and abstruse. For a knowledge of the principles of trade, and of the truths of political economy, is of so vital an importance to the poor, that those principles and truths will be the main staple of the journals chiefly dedicated to their use. Not engaged in the career of mere amusement that belongs to the wealthy,—frivolity, scandal, and the unsatisfying pleasure derived from mere declamation are not attractive to them. All the great principles of state morals and state policy are derived from one foundation, the *true direction of labour*;—what theme so interesting and so inexhaustible to those "who by labour live?" We may perceive already, by *The Penny Magazine*, what will be the probable character of the cheap newspapers addressed to the working classes. The operative finds *The Penny Magazine* amusing; to the rich man it is the most wearisome of periodicals.

So much for the proud cry of the aristocrat, that the papers to please the rabble must descend to pander the vulgar passions. No! this is the vice of the aristocratic journals, that are supported alone by the excrescences of aristocracy, by gambling-houses, demireps, and valets. The industrious poor purchase no *Satirist*, and subscribe to no *Age*.

A nobleman's valet entertained on a visit his brother,

gratitude for the new boon, and full of confidence to those who give it, care should be taken to secure for the first teachers of political morals, honest and enlightened men;—men, too, who, having the competent knowledge, will have the art to express it popularly; not mere grinders of saws and aphorisms, the pedants of a system. By this precaution, the appealers to passion will be met by appealers to interest; and the people will be instructed as well as warmed. Meanwhile, the system of education, once begun, proceeds with wonderful rapidity; and, ere the operative has lost his confidence in the wise government that has granted him the boon of sifting the thoughts of others, his children will have learned the art of thinking for themselves.

two was a mechanic from Sheffield. The nobleman, walking one Sunday by a newspaper-office in the Strand, perceived the two brothers gazing on the inviting announcements on the shopboard that proclaimed the contents of the several journals; the crowd on the spot delayed him for a moment, and he overheard the following dialogue:

"Why, Tom," said the valet, "see what lots of news there is in *The Satirist!*—'Crim. con. extraordinary between a lord and a parson's wife.' 'Jack ——'s' (Jack is one of our men of fashion, you know, Tom) 'adventure with the widow—scene at Crocky's.' Oh, what fun! Tom, have you got sevenpence? I've nothing but gold about *me;* let's buy *The Satirist.*"

"Lots of news!" said Tom, surlily; "d'ye call that news? What do I care for your lords and your men of fashion? Crocky! What the devil is Crocky to me? There's much more for my money in this here big sheet: 'Advice to the Operatives—Full report of the debate on the Property Tax—Letter from an emigrant in New South Wales.' That's what I calls news."

"Stuff!" cried the valet, astonished.

My lord walked on, somewhat edified by what he had heard.

The scandal of the saloon is news in the pantry; but it is the acts of the legislature that constitute news at the loom.

But, while the main characteristic of the influence of the press is to *represent* opinion, it is not to be denied that it possesses also the nobler prerogative of *originating* it. When we consider all the great names which shed honour upon periodical literature; when we consider, that scarcely a single one of our eminent writers has not been actively engaged in one or other of our journals:—when we remember that Scott, Southey, Brougham, Mackintosh, Bentham, Mill, Macculloch, Campbell, Moore, Fonblanque (and I may add Mr. Southern, a principal writer in the excellent *Spectator*, whose writings obtain a reputation which,

thanks to the custom of the anonymous, is diverted from the writer himself), have, year after year, been pouring forth in periodical publications, the rich hoard of their thoughts and knowledge; it is impossible not to perceive that the press, which they thus adorned, only represented in one part of its power the opinions originated in another.

But it is in very rare instances that a daily paper has done more than represent opinion; it is the Reviews, quarterly or monthly (and, in two instances, weekly journals) which have aspired to *create* it. And this for an obvious reason: the daily paper looks only to sale for its influence; the capital risked is so enormous, the fame acquired by its contribution so small and evanescent, that it is mostly regarded as a mere mercantile speculation. Now *new* opinions are not popular ones; to swim with the tide, is the necessary motto of opinions that desire to sell: while the majority can see in your journal the daily mirror of themselves, their prejudices, and their passions, as well as their sober sense and their true interests, they will run to look upon the reflection. Hence it follows, that the journal which most represents, least originates opinion, that the two tasks are performed by two separate agents, and that the more new doctrines a journal promulgates, the less promiscuously it circulates among the public.*

In this the moral light resembles the physical, and while we gaze with pleasure on the objects which reflect the light, the eye shrinks in pain from the orb which creates it.

A type of this truth in the history of letters, which declares that the popularity of a writer consists not in proportion to his superiority over the public, but in pro-

* This is observable even in the Quarterly Journals, the *Quarterly Review* puts forth the fewest new opinions, it sells the most number of copies; the *Westminster*, the most, and it sells the least. The *Edinburgh*, hovering between, rather modifies opinion, than changes its form, and it sells accordingly, a little less than the first-named journal, and greatly more than the last.

portion to their sympathy with his sentiments, may be found in the story of Dante and the buffoon. Both were entertained at the court of the pedantic Scaliger, the fool sumptuously, the poet sparely:—"When will you be as well off as I am?" asked the fool, triumphantly. —"Whenever," was Dante's caustic reply, "I shall find a patron who resembles *me* as much as Prince Scaliger resembles you."

An originator of opinion precedes the time; you cannot both precede and reflect it. Thus, the most popular journals are plagiarists of the past; they live on the ideas which their more farsighted contemporaries propagated ten years before. What then was Philosophy is now Opinion.

A great characteristic of English periodicals is the generally strict preservation of secrecy as to the names of the writers. The principal advantages alleged in favour of this regard to the anonymous are three: First, that you can speak of public men with less reserve; secondly, that you can review books with more attention to their real merits, and without any mixture of the personal feelings that, if you were known to the author, might bias the judgment of impartial criticism; thirdly, that many opinions you yourself consider it desirable that the public should know, peculiar circumstances of situations, or private checks of timidity and caution, might induce you to withhold, if your name were necessarily attached to their publication. I suspect that these advantages are greatly exaggerated on the one hand, and that their counterbalancing evils have been greatly overlooked on the other.

In regard to the first of these advantages, it is clear that if you can speak of public men with less reserve, you may speak of them also with less regard to truth. In a despotic country, where chains are the reward of free sentiments, the use of the anonymous may be a necessary precaution; but what in this country should make a public writer shrink from the open discharge of his duty? If his writings be within the pale of

the laws, he has nothing to fear from an avowal of his name; if without the law, the use of the anonymous does not screen him. But were your name acknowledged, you could not speak of public men with the same vehement acerbity; you could not repeat charges and propagate reports with the same headlong indifference to accuracy or error. There is more shame in being an open slanderer than a concealed one: you would not, therefore, were your name on the newspaper, insert fragments of "*news*" about persons without ascertaining their foundation in truth: you would not, day after day, like so circulate the stories, which, day after day, you would have the ludicrous task of contradicting.

All this I grant; but, between you and me, dear sir, where is the harm of it? It is well to speak boldly of public men; but to speak what boldly?—Not falsehood, but the truth. If the political writer ordinarily affixed his name to his lucubration, he would be brought under the wholesome influence of the same public opinion that he affects to influence or to reflect; he would be more consistent in his opinions,* and more cautious in examination. Papers would cease to be proverbial for giving easy access to the current slander and the diurnal lie; and the boldness of their tone would not be the less, because it would be also honest. I have said, to make power safe and constitutional, it must be made responsible; but anonymous power is irresponsible power.

And now, with regard to the second advantage alleged to belong to the use of the anonymous—the advantage in literary criticism: You say that, being anonymous, you can review the work more impartially than if the author, perhaps your friend, were to know you to be his critic. Of all arguments in favour

* Many of the political writers, screened by the anonymous, shift and turn from all opinions, with every popular breath. The *paper* may be abused for it, but the paper is insensate: no one abuses the *unseen writer* of the paper. Thus, there is no shame, because there is no exposure; where there is no shame, there is no honesty.

of the anonymous, this is the most popular and the most fallacious. Ask any man once let behind the curtain of periodical criticism, and you will find that the very partiality and *respect* to *persons*, which the custom of the anonymous was to prevent, the anonymous especially shields and insures. Nearly all criticism at this day is the public effect of private acquaintance. When a work has been generally praised in the reviews, even if deservedly, nine times out of ten the author has secured a large connexion with the press. Good heavens! what machinery do we not see exerted to get a book tenderly nursed into vigour! I do not say that the critic is dishonest in this partiality: perhaps he may be actuated by feelings that, judged by the test of private sentiments, would be considered fair and praiseworthy.

"Ah, poor So-and-so's book: well, it is no great things; but So-and-so is a good fellow, I must give him a helping hand."

"C—— has sent me an early copy of his book for reviewing: that's a bore, as it's devilish bad; but he knows I shall be his critic—I must be civil."

"What, D.'s poems? it would be d—d unhandsome to abuse them, after all his kindness to me—after dining at his house yesterday."

Such, and a variety of similar private feelings which it may be easy to censure, and which the critic himself will laughingly allow you to blame, colour the tone of the great mass of reviews. This veil, so complete to the world, is no veil to the friends of the person who uses it. *They* know the hand which deals the blow, or lends the help; and the critic willingly does a kind thing by his friend because it is never known that in so doing he has done an unjust one by the public. The anonymous, to effect the object which it pretends, must be thoroughly sustained. But in how few cases is this possible! We have but one Junius in the world. At the present day there is not a journal existing in which, while the contributors are concealed indeed from the world at large, they are

not known to a tolerably wide circle of publishing friends. Thus, then, in a critical point of view, the advantages supposed to spring from the anonymous vanish into smoke. The mask is worn, not to protect from the petitions of private partialities, but *to deceive the public as to the extent to which partiality is carried*; and the very evils which secrecy was to prevent, it not only produces, but conceals, and *by* concealment defrauds of a remedy. It is clear, on more than a superficial consideration, that the bias of private feelings would be far less strong upon the tenor of criticism if the name of the critic was known; in the first place, because the check of public opinion would operate as a preventive to any reviewer of acknowledged reputation from tampering with his own honesty; in the second place, because there are many persons in the literary world who would at once detect and make known to the public the chain of undue motive that binds the praise or censure of the critic to the book. Thus you would, indeed, by the publication of the reviewer's name, obtain either that freedom from private bias, or that counterbalance to its exercise, of which, by withholding the name, the public have been so grossly defrauded. Were a sudden revelation of the mysteries of the craft now to be made, what, oh! what would be the rage, the astonishment of the public!* What men of straw in the rostra, pro-

* The influence of certain booksellers upon certain Reviews is a cry that has been much raised by Reviews in which *those* booksellers had no share. The accusation is as old as Voltaire's time. He complains that booksellers in France and Holland guided the tone of the periodical Reviews: with us, at present, however, the abuse is one so easily detected that I suspect it has been somewhat exaggerated. I know one instance of a celebrated and influential weekly journal, which was accused, by certain of its rivals, of favouring a bookseller who had a share in its property; yet, accident bringing me in contact with that bookseller, I discovered that it was a matter of the most rankling complaint in his mind that the editor of the journal (who had an equal share himself in the journal, and could not be removed), was so anxious not to deserve the reproach as to be unduly harsh to the books he was accused of unduly favouring; and, on looking over the Review, with my curiosity excited to see which party was right, I certainly calculated that a greater proportion of books belonging to the bookseller in question

nouncing fiats on the immortal writings of the age; what guessers at the difference between a straight line and a curve, deciding upon the highest questions of art; what stop-watch gazers lecturing on the drama; what disappointed novelists, writhing poets, saleless historians, senseless essayists, wreaking their wrath on a lucky rival; what Damons heaping impartial eulogiums on their scribbling Pythiases; what presumption, what falsehood, what ignorance, what deceit;

had been severely treated than was consistent with the ratio of praise and censure accorded to the works appertaining to any other publisher. In fact, the moment a journal becomes influential, its annual profits are so considerable that it would not be worth while in any bookseller who may possess a share in it to endanger its sale by a suspicion of dishonesty. The circumstance of his having that share in it is so well known, and the suspicion to which it exposes him so obvious, that I imagine the necessary vigilance of public opinion a sufficient preventive of the influence complained of. The danger to which the public are exposed is more latent; the influence of acquaintance is far greater and more difficult to guard against than that of booksellers. On looking over certain Reviews, we shall find instances in which they have puffed most unduly; but it is more frequently the work of a contributor than the publication of the bookseller who promulges the Review. The job is of a more secret character than that which a titlepage can betray. It is surprising indeed to see how readily the slightest and most inferior works of a contributor to one of the Quarterlies obtains a review, while those of a stranger, however important or popular, are either entirely overlooked or unnoticed until the favour of the public absolutely forces them on the reluctant journal. It often happens that a successful writer has been most elaborately reviewed in all the other periodicals of the civilized world, and his name has become familiar to the ears of literary men throughout the globe, before the Quarterly Reviews of this country bestow the slightest notice upon him, or condescend even to acknowledge an acquaintance with his very existence. This is a wretched effect of influence, for it attempts to create a monopoly of literature: nor is that all,—it makes the judges and the judged one body, and a Quarterly Review a mere confederacy of writers for the purpose of praising each other at all opportunities, and glancing indifferently towards the public when the greater duties of self-applause allow them leisure for the exertion. Great men contribute to these journals, and are praised—nothing more just!—but *little* men contribute also; and the jackal has his share of the bones as well as the lion. It is obvious, that if Reviews were not written anonymously, the public would not be thus cheated. If contributors put their names to their articles, they could not go on scratching each other at so indecent a rate; there would be an end to the antic system of these literary *simiæ*, who, sitting aloft on the tree of criticism, first take care to stuff themselves with the best of the fruit, and then, with the languid justice of satiety, chuck the refuse on the gazers below!

what malice in censure, what dishonesty in praise! Such a revelation would be worthy a Quevedo to describe.

But this would not be the sole benefit the public would derive from the authority of divulged names. They would not only know the motives of reviewers, but their capacities also; they would see if the critic were able to judge honestly, as well as willing. And this upon many intricate matters; some relating to the arts, others to the sciences; on which the public in general cannot judge for themselves, but may be easily misled by superficial notions, and think that the unknown author must be a great authority;—this, I say, in such cases would be an incalculable advantage, and would take the public at once out of the hands of a thousand invisible pretenders and impostors.

An argument has been adduced in favour of anonymous criticism so truly absurd, that it would not be worth alluding to, were it not so often alleged, and so often suffered to escape unridiculed. It is this: that the critic can thus take certain liberties with the author with impunity; that he may be witty or severe, without the penalty of being shot. Now, of what nature is that criticism which would draw down the anthor's cartel of war upon the critic?—it is not an age of duels on light offences and vague grounds. An author would be laughed at from one end of the kingdom to the other, for calling out a man for merely abusing his book; for saying that he wrote bad grammar, and was a wretched poet; if the author *were* such a fool as, on mere literary ground, to challenge a critic, the critic would scarcely be such a fool as to go out with him. "Ay," says the critic, "if I only abuse his book; but what if I abuse his person? I may censure his work safely—but supposing I want to insinuate something against his character?" True, now we understand each other; that is indeed the question. I turn round at once from you, sir, the critic—I appeal to the public. I ask them where is the benefit, what the advantage of attacking a man's

person, not his book—his character, not his composition? Is criticism to be the act of personal vituperation? then, in God's name, let us send to Billingsgate for our reviewers, and have something racy and idiomatic at least in the way of slang. What purpose salutary to literature is served by hearing that Hazlitt had pimples on his face? How are poor Byron's errors amended, by filthily groping among the details of his private life—by the insinuations and the misconstructions—by the muttered slanders—by the broad falsehoods, which filled the anonymous channels of the press? Was it not this system of espionage more than any other cause which darkened with gloomy suspicion that mind, originally so noble? Was not the stinging of the lip the result of the stung heart? Slandered by others, his irritable mind retaliated by slander in return; the openness visible in his early character hardened into insincerity, the constant product of suspicion; and instead of correcting the author, this species of criticism contributed to deprave the man.

What did the public gain by this result of the convenience of open speaking from invisible tongues?—nothing. But why, my dear sir (you who have studied the literary character so deeply and portrayed the calamities of authors, can perhaps tell me)—why is the poor author to be singled out from the herd of men (whom he seeks to delight or to instruct) for the sole purpose of torture? Is his nature so much less sensitive and gentle than that of others, that the utmost ingenuity is necessary to wound him? Or why is a system to be invented and encouraged, for the sole sake of persecuting him with the bitterest rancour and the securest impunity? Why are the rancour and the impunity to be modestly alleged as the main advantages of the system? Why are all the checks and decencies which moderate the severity of the world's censure upon its other victims to be removed from censure upon him? Why is he to be thrust out of the pale of ordinary self-defence?—and the decorum and

the fear of consequences which make the intercourse of mankind urbane and humanized, to be denied to one, whose very vanity can be only fed, whose very interests can be only promoted, by increasing the pleasures of the society which exiles him from its commonest protection—yes! by furthering the civilization which rejects him from its safeguards?

It is not very easy, perhaps, to answer these questions; and I think, sir, that even your ingenuity can hardly discover the justice of an invention which visits with all the most elaborate and recondite severities that could be exercised against the enemy of his kind, the unfortunate victim who aspires to be their friend. Shakspeare has spoken of detraction as less excusable than theft; but there is yet a nobler fancy among certain uncivilized tribes, viz., that slander is a greater moral offence than even murder itself; for, say they, with an admirable shrewdness of distinction, "when you take a man's life, you take only what he *must*, at one time or the other, have lost; but when you take a man's reputation, you take that which he might otherwise have retained for ever: nay, what is yet more important, your offence in the one is bounded and definite. Murder cannot travel beyond the grave—the deed imposes at once a boundary to its own effects; but in slander, the tomb itself does not limit the malice of your wrong: your lie may pass onward to posterity, and continue, genetraion after generation, to blacken the memory of your victim."

The people of the Sandwich Islands murdered Captain Cook, but they pay his memory the highest honours which their customs acknowledge; they retain his bones (those returned were supposititious) which are considered sacred, and the priest thanks the gods for having sent them so great a man. Are you surprised at this seeming inconsistency? Alas! it is the manner in which we treat the great! We murder them by the weapons of calumny and persecution, and then we declare the relics of our victim to be sacred!

But there is a third ground for deeming the preser-

vation of the anonymous advantageous in periodicals; namely, that there may be opinions you wish to give to the world upon public events or public characters, which private checks of circumstance or timidity may induce you to withhold from the world, if the publication of your name be indispensably linked with that of your opinions.

Now if, from what I have said, it is plain the anonymous *system* is wrong; then the utmost use you can make of this argument would only prove that there are occasional exceptions to the justness of this rule; and this I grant readily and at once. He is but a quack who pretends that a general rule excludes all exceptions, and how few are the exceptions to *this* rule; how few the persons upon whom the checks alluded to legitimately operate! I leave to them the right of availing themselves of the skreen they consider necessary;—there will always be channels and opportunities enough for them to consult the anonymous, supposing that it were accordant with the *general* system of periodicals to give the public the names of the contributors.*

I have elsewhere, but more cursorily, put forth my opinions with regard to the customary use of the anonymous in periodicals: they have met with but little favour from periodical writers, who have continued to reiterate the old arguments which I had already an-

* It is also obvious that the arguments I have adduced in favour of the latter plan, do not apply to authors publishing separate works, more especially fiction, as in the instance of Sir Walter Scott and his novels: there, no one is injured by the affectation of concealment—there is no third party (no party attacked or defended) between the author and the public: I speak solely of the periodical press, which is the most influential department of the press, and how it may be most honest and most efficient towards the real interests of the community. Consequently the reader will remark in any reply that may be put forth to these opinions, first—that it will be no answer to the justice of the rule I assert, to enumerate the exceptions I allow: secondly—that it will be no answer to my proposition relating to the periodical press to revert to the advantages of the anonymous to authors whose writings do not come under that department. With this I leave it to the public, deeply interested in the matter, to see that I am answered, not misinterpreted.

swered rather than to attack my replies. In fact, journalists misled by some vague notions of the convenience of a plan so long adopted and so seldom questioned, contend against a change which would be of the most incalculable advantage to themselves and their profession. It is in vain to hope that you can make the press so noble a profession as it ought to be in the eyes of men, as long as it can be associated in the public mind with every species of political apostacy and personal slander; it is in vain to hope that the many honourable exceptions will do more than win favour for themselves; they cannot exalt the character of the class. Interested as the aristocracy are against the moral authority of the press, and jealous as they are of its power, they at present endeavour to render odious the general effects of the machine, by sneering down, far below their legitimate grade, the station and respectability of the operatives. It is in vain to deny that a newspaper-writer, who, by his talents, and the channel to which they are applied, exerts a far greater influence on public affairs than almost any peer in the realm, is only of importance so long as he is in the back parlour of the printing-house; in society he not only runs the risk of being confounded with all the misdemeanours past and present, of the journal he has contributed to purify and exalt, but he is associated with the general fear of *espionage* and feeling of insecurity which the custom of anonymous writing necessarily produces: men cannot avoid looking upon him as one who has the power of stabbing them in the dark—and the libels—the lies—the base, prying, filthy turpitude of certain of the Sunday papers, have an effect of casting upon all newspaper-writers, a suspicion from which not only the honourable, but the able* among them are

* For to the honour of literature be it said, that the libellous Sunday papers are rarely supported by any literary men; they are conducted chiefly by broken-down sharpers, *ci-devant* markers at gambling-houses, and the very worst description of uneducated blackguards. The only way, by-the-by, to check these gentlemen in their career of slander, is to be found in the first convenient opportunity of inflicting upon them that personal chastisement which is the per-

utterly free—as at Venice, every member of the secret council, however humane and noble, received some portion of the odium and the fear which attached to the practice of unwitnessed punishment and mysterious assassination. In short, the unhappy practice of the anonymous is the only reason why the man of political power is not also the man of social rank. It is a practice which favours the ignorant at the expense of the wise, and screens the malignant by confounding them with the honest; a practice by which talent is made obscure, that folly may not be detected, and the disgrace of vice may be hidden beneath the customs which degrade honour.

In a Spanish novel, a cavalier and a swindler meet one another.

"Pray, sir, may I ask why you walk with a cloak?" says the swindler.

"Because I do not wish to be known for what I am," answers the gentleman. "Let me ask you the same question."

"Because I wish to be taken for *you*," answered the swindler, dryly.

The custom of honest men is often the shelter of rogues.

It is quite clear that if every able writer affixed his name to his contributions to newspapers, the importance of his influence would soon attach to himself—

> ——"Hæc Phœbo gratior ulla est
> Quam sibi quæ Vari præscripsit pagina nomen."

He would no longer be confused with a herd—he would become marked and individualized—a public man as well as a public writer: he would exalt his

quisite of bullies. Pooh! you say, they are not worthy the punishment. Pardon me, they are not worth the denying ourselves the luxury of inflicting it. You should wait, however, the convenient opportunity. In the spirit of Dr. Johnson's criticism on the Hebrides, "they are worth seeing" (said he), "but not worth going to see"—these gentlemen are worth kicking, but not worth *going* to kick.

profession as himself—the consideration accorded to him would, if he produced the same effect on his age, be the same as to a poet, a philosopher, or a statesman; and now, when an entrance into public life may be the result of popular esteem, it may be the readiest way of rendering men of principle and information personally known to the country, and of transferring the knowledge which, in order to be efficient public writers, they must possess on public affairs, to that active career in which it may be the most serviceable to the country, and the most tempting to men of great acquirements and genius. Thus the profession of the press would naturally attract the higher order of intellect—power would become infinitely better directed, and its agents immeasurably more honoured. These considerations, sooner or later, must have their due weight with those from whom alone the necessary reform can spring—the journalists themselves. It is not a point in which the legislature can interfere; it must be left to a moral agency, which is the result of conviction. I am firmly persuaded, however opposed I may be now, that I shall live to see (and to feel that I have contributed to effect) the change.

Such is my hope for the future; meanwhile, let me tell you an adventure that happened the other day to an acquaintance of mine.

D—— is a sharp clever man, fond of studying character, and always thrusting his nose into other people's affairs. He has wonderful curiosity, which he dignifies by the more respectable name of "a talent for observation." A little time ago D—— made an excursion of pleasure to Calais. During his short but interesting voyage, he amused himself by reconnoitring the passengers whom Providence had placed in the same boat with himself. Scarcely had his eye scanned the deck before it was irresistibly attracted towards the figure of a stranger, who sat alone, wrapped in his cloak and his meditations. My friend's curiosity was instantly aroused; there was an inscrutable dignity in the air of the stranger; something mysterious, moodful,

and majestic. He resolved to adventure upon satisfying the hungry appetite for knowledge that had sprung up in his breast: he approached the stranger, and, by way of commencing with civility, offered him the newspaper. The stranger glanced at him for a moment, and shook his head. "I thank you, sir, I have seen its contents already." *The contents*—he did not say *the paper*, thought D——, shrewdly; the words were not much, but the air! The stranger was evidently a great man, perhaps a diplomatist. My friend made another attempt at a better acquaintance; but about this time the motion of the steam vessel began to affect the stranger,

And his soul sickened o'er the heaving wave.

Maladies of this sort are not favourable to the ripening of acquaintance. My friend, baffled and disappointed, shrank into himself; and soon afterward, amid the tumult of landing, he lost sight of his fellow-passenger. Following his portmanteau with a jealous eye, as it rolled along in a foreign wheelbarrow, D—— came at last into the court-yard of M. Dessein's hotel, and there, sauntering leisurely to and fro, he beheld the mysterious stranger. The day was warm; it was delightful to bask in the open air. D—— took a chair by the kitchen door, and employed himself on the very same newspaper that he had offered to the stranger, and which the cursed sea winds had prevented his reading on the deck at that ease with which our national sense of comfort tells us that a newspaper ought to be read. Ever and anon, he took his eyes from the page, and beheld the stranger still sauntering to and fro, stopping at times to gaze on a green britska with that paternal look of fondness which declared it to be an appropriation of his own.

The stranger was visibly impatient: now he pulled out his watch—now he looked up to the heavens—now he whistled a tune—and now he muttered, "Those d—d Frenchmen." A gentleman with a mincing air,

and a quick gait, entered the yard. You saw at once that he was a Frenchman. The eyes of the two gentlemen met; they recognised each other. You might tell that the Englishman had been waiting for the new comer, the "*Bon jour, mon cher*" of the Frenchman, the "How do you do" of the Englishman, were exchanged; and D—— had the happiness of overhearing the following conversation:—

French Gentleman. "I am ravished to congratulate you on the distinguished station you hold in Europe."

English Gentleman (bowing and blushing). "Let me rather congratulate you on your accession to the peerage."

French Gentleman. "A bagatelle, sir, a mere bagatelle; a natural compliment to my influence with the people. By-the-way, you of course will be a peer in the new batch that *must* be made shortly."

English Gentleman (with a constrained smile, a little in contempt and more in mortification). "No, monsieur, no; *we* don't make peers quite so easily."

French Gentleman. "Easily! why have they not made Sir George B—— and Mr. W—— peers? the one a mere *elegant*, the other a mere *gentilhomme de province.* You don't compare their claims with your great power and influence in Europe!"

English Gentleman. "Hum—hi—hum; they were men of great birth and landed property."

French Gentleman (taking snuff). "Ah! I thought you English were getting better of those aristocratic prejudices: *Virtus est sola nobilitas.*"

English Gentleman. "Perhaps those prejudices are *respectable.* By-the-way, to speak frankly, we were a little surprised in England at *your* elevation to the peerage."

French Gentleman. "Surprised!—*diable!*—why?"

English Gentleman. "Hum—really—the editor of a newspaper—ehum!—hem!"

French Gentleman. "Editor of a newspaper! why, who *should* get political rank, but those who wield political power? Your newspaper, for instance, is

more formidable to a minister than any duke. Now you know, with us M. de Lalot, M. Thier, De Villele, Chateaubriand, and, in short, nearly all the great men you can name, write for the newspapers."

English Gentleman. "Aha! but do they *own* it?"

French Gentleman. "Own it, to be sure; they are too proud to do so: how else do they get their reputation?"

English Gentleman. "Why, with us, if a member of parliament sends us an article, it is under a pledge of the strictest secrecy. As for Lord Brougham, the bitterest accusation ever made against him was, that he wrote for a certain newspaper."

French Gentleman. "And *did* Lord Brougham write for that newspaper?"

English Gentleman. "Sir, that is a delicate question."

French Gentleman. "Why so reserved? In France the writers of our journals are as much known as if they put their names to their articles; which, indeed, they very often do."

English Gentleman. "But supposing a great man is known to write an article in my paper, all the other papers fall foul on him for demeaning himself: even *I*, while I write every day for it, should be very angry if the coxcombs of the clubs accused me of it to my face."

French Gentleman (laying his finger to his nose). "I see, I see, you have not a pride of class with you, as we have. The nobleman with us is proud of showing that he has power with those who address the people; the plebeian writer is willing to receive a certain respectability from the assistance of the nobleman: thus each class gives consequence to the other. But you all write under a veil; and such a quantity of blackguards take advantage of the concealment, that the respectable man covets concealment as a screen for himself. This is the reason that you have not, pardon me, monsieur, as high a station as you ought to have; and why you astonish me, by thinking it odd

that I, who, vanity apart, can sway the minds of thousands every morning, should receive" (spoken with dignified disdain) "the trumpery honour of a peerage!"

"*Messieurs*, the dinner is served," said the *garçon*; and the two gentlemen walked into the *salon*, leaving D—— in a fever of agitation.

"*Garçon, garçon*," said he, under his breath, and beckoning to the waiter, "who is that English gentleman?"

"Meestare ——, the—vat you call him, le redacteur of—de editor of de —— paper."

"Ha! and the French gentleman?"

"Monsieur Bertin de V——, pair de France, and editor of de *Journal des Debats*."

"Bless me!" said D—, "what a *rencontre!*"

Such is the account my friend D—— has given me of a dialogue between two great men. It is very likely that D——'s talents for observation may be eclipsed by his talent of invention; I do not, therefore, give it you as a true anecdote. Look upon it, if you please, as an imaginary conversation, and tell me whether, supposing it *had* taken place, it would not have been exceedingly natural. You must class it among the instances of the *vraisemble*, if you reject it from those of the *vrai*.

But the custom of the anonymous would never have so long sustained itself with us, had it not been sanctioned by the writers of the aristocracy—it is among the other benefits literature owes to them. It is a cloak more convenient to a man moving in a large society, than to the scholar, who is mostly centred in a small circle. The rich man has no power to gain by a happy criticism, but he may have much malice to gratify by a piquant assault. Thus the aristocratic contributors to a journal have the most insisted upon secrecy, and have used it to write the bitterest sallies on their friends. The unfortunate Lord Dudley dies, and we learn that one of his best compositions was a most truculent attack, in a Quarterly Review, upon his

intimate companion—of course he was anxious not to be known. There are only two classes of men to whom the anonymous is really desirable. The perfidious gentleman who fears to be cut by the friends he injures,* and the lying blackguard who dreads to be caned by the man he maligns.

With one more consideration I shall conclude this chapter. I intimated at the commencement of it, that the influence of the press was the great antagonist principle to that of the aristocracy. This is a hackneyed assertion, yet it is pregnant with many novel speculations.

The influence of the press is the influence of opinion; yet, until very lately, the current opinion was decidedly aristocratic: the class mostly addressed by the press is the middle class; yet, as we have seen before, it is among the middle class that the influence of the English aristocracy has spread some of its most stubborn roots.

How then has the press become the antagonist principle of the aristocratic power? In the first place, that portion of the press which *originates* opinion has been mostly anti-aristocratic, and its reasonings, unpopular at first, have slowly gained ground. In the second place, the anonymous system which favours all personal slander, and which, to feed the public taste, must slander distinguished, and not obscure, station, has forwarded the progress of opinion against the aristocratic body by the most distorted exaggeration of the individual vices or foibles of its members. By the mere details of vulgar gossip, a great wholesale principle of indignation at the privileged order has been at work; just as in ripening the feelings that led to the first French revolution, the tittle-tattle of antechambers did more than the works of philosophers.

* Thus the anonymous is the most carefully preserved for the aristocratic contributors of a Quarterly Journal—and the skulking cowards of "Frazer," and the "Age." If the higher class would exert the moral influence they possess, beneficially, and set the example of acknowledging what they write—to be an anonymous writer, would soon be another word for a base one.

The frivolity and vices of the court provoked a bitterer contempt and indignation by well-coloured anecdotes of individual courtiers, than the elaborate logic of Diderot, or the polished sarcasms of Voltaire.* And wandering for one moment from the periodical press to our lighter fictions, it is undeniable that the novels which of late have been so eagerly read, and which profess to give a description of the life of the higher circles, have, in our own day, nauseated the public mind with the description of men without hearts, women without chastity, polish without dignity, and existence without use.

A third reason for the hostility of the press to the aristocracy is to be found in the circumstances of those who write for it. They live more separated from sympathy with aristocratic influences than any other class; belonging chiefly to the middle order, they do not, like the middle order in general, have any dependence on the custom and favour of the great; literary men, they are not, like authors in general, courted as lions, who, mixing familiarly with their superiors, are either softened by unmeaning courtesies, or imbibe the veneration which rank and wealth personally approached instil into the human mind, as circumstances at present form it. They mostly regard the great aloof and at a distance; they see their vices, which are always published, and rarely the virtues or the amenities which are not known beyond the threshold. The system strikes them, unrelieved by any affection for its component parts. I have observed, with much amusement, the effect often produced on a periodical writer by being merely brought into contact with a man of considerable rank. He is charmed with his urbanity—astonished at his want of visible pride—he no longer sees the pensioned and titled apostate, but the agreeable man; and his next article

* And it is difficult to say who was the least conscious of the effect he was producing on the public mind—a D'Angeau or a Voltaire. The last, full of bitterness against the effects of a court, was full of veneration for its courtiers.

becomes warped from its severity in despite of himself. One of the bitterest assailants of Lord Eldon, having occasion to wait on that nobleman, was so impressed with the mild and kindly bearing of the man he had been attacking, that he laid it down as a rule never afterward to say a syllable against him. So shackled do men become in great duties by the smallest conventional incidents.

But the ordinary mass of newspaper writers, being thus a peculiar and separate body, untouched by the influence which they examine, and often galled themselves by the necessary effects of the anonymous system, have been therefore willing to co-operate to a certain and limited extent with the originators of opinion. And thus, in those crises which constantly occur in political affairs, when the Popular Mind, as yet undetermined, follows the first adviser in whom it has been accustomed to confide—when, in its wavering confusion, either of two opinions may be reflected, the representative portion of the press has usually taken that opinion which is the least aristocratic; pushing the more popular, not to its full extent, but to as great an extent as was compatible with its own interest in representing, rather than originating, opinion. There are certain moments in all changes and transits of political power, when it makes all the difference *which* of the unsettled doubts in the public mind is expressed the first, and hastened into decision.

To these causes of the anti-aristocratic influence of the press we must add another, broader and deeper than all. The newspaper not only discusses questions, but it gives in its varied pages the results of systems; proceedings at law—convictions before magistrates—abuses in institutions—unfairness in taxation—all come before the public eye: thus, though many see not how grievances are to be redressed, all allow that the grievance exists. It is in vain to deny that the grievance is mostly on the side of the unprivileged. Any preponderating power in a state cannot exist for many years, without (unconsciously, perhaps,

and far from dishonestly) favouring itself. We have not had an aristocratic government, without having had laws passed to its own advantage—without seeing the spirit of the presiding influence enter into our taxation, bias our legislature, and spread its fangs into our pension-lists; the last, though least really grievous of all, yet the most openly obnoxious to a commercial and overburdened people. Nor must it be forgotten, that while the abuses of any system are thus made evident and glaring, the reasons for supporting that system in spite of abuses are always philosophical and abstruse: so that the evil is glaring, the good unseen. This, then, is the strongest principle by which the press works against the aristocracy—the principle most constantly and most powerfully enforced. A plain recital affects more than reasoning, and seems more free from passion; and the press, by revealing facts, exerts a far more irresistible, though less noisy sway, than by insisting on theories: in the first it is the witness, in the last the counsel.

And yet this spirit of revelation is the greatest of all the blessings which the liberty of the press confers; it is of this which philosophers speak when they grow warm upon its praises—when wisdom loses its measured tone of approval, and reasoning itself assumes the language of declamation. As the nature of evidence is the comparison of facts, so to tell us all things on all sides is the sole process by which we arrive at truth. From the moment an abuse is published, sooner or later we are certain the abuse will be cured. In the sublime language of a great moralist, "Errors cease to be dangerous when it is permitted to contradict them; they are soon known to be errors; they sink into the abyss of Forgetfulness, and Truth alone swims over the vast extent of Ages." This publicity is man's nearest approach to the omniscience of his great Creator; it is the greatest result of union yet known, for it is the expression of the universal mind. Thus are we enabled, knowing what *is* to be effected, to effect according to our knowledge

—for to knowledge power is proportioned. Omnipotence is the necessary consequence of omniscience. Nor can we contemplate without a deep emotion, what may be the result of that great measure, which must shortly be granted by the legislature, and which, by the destruction of the stamp duty on periodicals, will extend to so unbounded a circle this sublime prerogative of publicity—of conveying principles—of expressing opinion—of promulging fact. So soon as the first confusion that attends the sudden opening of a long monopoly is cleared away—when it is open to every man, rich or poor, to express the knowledge he has hoarded in his closet, or even at his loom; when the stamp no longer confines to a few the power of legitimate instruction; when all may pour their acquirements into the vast commonwealth of knowledge —it is impossible to calculate the ultimate results to human science and the advancement of our race. Some faint conjecture may be made from a single glance at the crowded reports of a parliamentary committee; works containing a vast hoard of practical knowledge, of inestimable detail, often collected from witnesses who otherwise would have been dumb for ever; works now unread, scarce known, confined to those who want them least, by them not rendered profitable: when we recollect that in popular and familiar shapes that knowledge and those details will ultimately find a natural vent, we may form some slight groundwork of no irrational guesses towards the future; when the means of knowledge shall be open to all who read, and its expression to all who think. Nor must we forget, that from the mechanic, the mechanic will easier learn; as it has been discovered in the Lancaster schools, that by boys, boys can be best instructed. Half the success of the pupil depends on his familiarity and sympathy with the master. Reflections thus opened to us expand into hopes, not vague, not unfounded, but which no dreams of imaginary optimism have yet excelled. What triumph for him who, in that divine spirit of prophecy which

foresees in future happiness the result of present legislation, has been a disciple—a worker for the saving truth, that enlightenment furthers amelioration—who has built the port and launched the ship, and suffered the obstacles of nature and the boundaries of the world to be the only bar and limit to the commerce of the mind: he may look forward into time, and see his own name graven upon a thousand landmarks of the progress of the human intellect. Such men are to *all* wisdom, what Bacon was only to a part of it. It is better to allow philosophy to be universal, than to become a philosopher. The wreath that belongs to a fame of this order will be woven from the best affections of mankind: its glory will be the accumulated gratitude of generations. It is said, that in the Indian plain of Dahia, the Creator drew forth from the loins of Adam his whole posterity: assembled together in the size and semblance of small ants, these pre-existent nations acknowledged God, and confessed their origin in his power. Even so in some great and living project for the welfare of mankind—the progenitor of benefits, uncounted and unborn—we may trace the seeds of its offspring even to the confines of eternity; we may pass before us, though in a dwarfed and inglorious shape, the mighty and multiplied blessings to which it shall give birth, all springing from one principle, all honouring HIM, who of that principle was the Vivifier and the Maker!

CHAPTER II.

Observation of a German—Great Writers and no great Works—The Poverty of our present Literature in all Departments save the Imaginative—History—Political Composition—The Belles-lettres peculiarly barren—Remarks on the Essays of D'Israeli, Hazlitt, and Charles Lamb—Causes of the Decline of the Belles-lettres, and the undiminished Eminence of Fictitious Literature alone—The Revolution that has been wrought by Periodicals—The Imaginative Faculty has reflected the Philosophy of the Age—Why did Scott and Byron represent the Mind of their Generation?—The Merit of Lord Byron's earlier Poems exaggerated—Want of Grandeur in their Conception—The Merit of his Tragedies undervalued—Brief Analysis in support of these Opinions—Why did the Tragedies disappoint the World?—The Assertion that Byron wanted Variety in Dramatic Character contradicted—The Cause of the Public Disappointment—The Age identified itself with him *alone*—Recollections of the Sensations produced by his Death—Transition of the Intellectual Spirit of the Period from the Ideal to the Actual—Cause of the Craving for Fashionable Novels—Their Influence—Necessity of cultivating the Imagination—Present Intellectual Disposition and Tendency of the Age.

"THIS is a great literary epoch with your nation," said a German to me the other day. "You have magnificent *writers* among you at this day; their names are known all over Europe; but (putting the poets out of the question) where, to ask a simple question, are their writings—which are the great prose works of your contemporaries that you recommend me to read? What, especially, are the recent masterpieces in criticism and the *belles-lettres?*"

This question, and the lame answer that I confess I gave to it, set me upon considering why we had undoubtedly at this day many great writers in the Humane Letters, and yet very few great books. For the last twenty years the intellectual faculties have been in full foliage, but have borne no fruit, save on one tree, one alone; the remarkable fertility of which forcibly contrasts the barrenness of the rest, and may be considered among the most startling of the literary

phenomena of the times—I mean the faculty of the imagination. I am asked for the great books we have produced during the last twenty years, and my memory instantly reverts to the *chef-d'œuvres* of poets and writers of fiction. The works of Byron, Wordsworth, Southey, Scott, Moore, Shelley, Campbell, rush at once to my tongue: nay, I should refer to later writers in imaginative literature, whose celebrity is, as yet, unmellowed, and whose influence limited, long ere the contemporary works of a graver nature would force themselves on my recollection: debar me the imaginative writings, and I could easier close my catalogue of great works than begin it.

In imaginative literature, then, we are peculiarly rich; in the graver letters we are as singularly barren.

In History we have surely not even secondary names; commentators on history, rather than historians: and the general dimness of the atmosphere may be at once acknowledged when we point, as luminaries, to a **** and a ****.†

In Moral Philosophy, a subject which I shall reserve for a separate chapter, the reputation of one or two high names does not detract from the general sterility. Few indeed are the works in this noble department of knowledge that have been, if published, made known to the public for a period inconceivably long, when we consider that we live in an age when the tone of moral philosophy is so popularly affected.

In that part of political literature which does not embrace political economy, we are also without any great works; but yet, singularly enough, not without many perhaps unequalled writers—Southey, Wilson, Cobbett, Sidney Smith, the profound and vigorous editor of the *Examiner*, the original and humorous

† But if we cannot boast of men capable of grasping the events of past ages, we have at least one who, in the spirit of ancient history, has painted with classic colours the scenes in which he himself was an actor; and has left to posterity the records of a great war, written with the philosophy of Polybius, and more than the eloquence, if less than the simplicity, of Cæsar. I need scarcely add, that I refer to the *History of the Peninsular War*, by Colonel Napier.

author of the *Corn Law Catechism*, and many others whom I can name (but that almost every influential paper betrays the eminent talent that supports it), are men who have developed some of the highest powers of composition, in a series of writings intended only for the hour. In miscellaneous literature, or what is commonly termed the *belles-lettres*, we have not very remarkably enriched the collection bequeathed to us by the Johnsonian era. The name of one writer I cannot, however, help singling from the rest, as that of the most elegant gossip upon the learned letters, not only of his time, but, perhaps, his country; and I select it the more gladly, because, popular as he is, I do not think he has ever obtained from criticism a fair acknowledgment of the eminent station he is entitled to claim. The reader has already discovered that I speak of yourself, the author of *The Curiosities of Literature*, *The Calamities of Authors*, and, above all, the *Essay upon the Literary Character*. In the two first of these works you have seemed to me to be to literature what Horace Walpole was to a court; drawing from minutiæ, which you are too wise to deem frivolities, the most novel deductions, and the most elaborate moral; and seeming to gossip, where in reality you philosophize. But you have that which Horace Walpole never possessed—that which is necessary to the court of letters, but forbidden to the court of kings: a deep and tender vein of sentiment runs, at no unfrequent times, through your charming lucubrations; and I might instance, as one of the most touching yet unexaggerated conceptions of human character that even a novelist ever formed, the beautiful *Essay upon Shenstone*. That, indeed, which particularly distinguishes your writings, is your marvellous and keen sympathy with the literary character in all its intricate mazes and multiplied varieties of colour. You identify yourself wholly with the person on whom you speculate; you enter into their heart, their mind, their caprices, their habits, and their eccentricities; and this quality, so rare even in a dramatist, is entirely new in an

essayist. I know of no other lucubrator who possesses it: with a subtile versatility you glide from one character to another, and by examination re-create;—drawing from research all those new views and bold deductions which the poet borrows from imagination. The gallant and crafty Raleigh, the melancholy Shenstone, the antiquarian Oldys—each how different, each how profoundly analyzed, each how peculiarly the author's own! Of the least and lowest, as of the greatest, you say something new. Your art is like that which Fontaine would attribute to a more vulgar mastery:

> ———Un roi, prudent et sage,
> ces moindres sujets fait tirer quelque usage.

But the greatest of all your works, to my mind, is the *Essay on the Literary Character;* a book which he who has once read ever recurs to with delight: it is one of those rare works in which every part is adorned, yet subordinate to the whole—in which every page displays a beauty, and none an impertinence.

You recollect the vigorous assault made at one time against a peculiar school of writers; years have passed, and on looking back over the additions those years have brought to our *belles-lettres*, the authors of that calumniated school immediately occur to us. It is not that they are the most eminent writers in the *belles-lettres;* they are almost the only ones, in their day, of any eminence at all. The first of these writers is Mr. Hazlitt, a man of nervous and original mind, of great powers of expression, of a cool reason, of a warm imagination, of imperfect learning, and of capricious and unsettled taste. The chief fault of his essays is, that they are vague and desultory; they leave no clear conclusion on the mind; they are a series of brilliant observations, without a result. If you are wiser when you have concluded one of them, it seems as if you were made so by accident: some aphorism half an impertinence, in the middle of the essay, has struck on the truth, which the peroration, probably, will again carefully wrap in obscurity. He often reasons deeply,

but not with precision; he is one of those who have much wisdom, yet little logic. But, despite this, and all his faults, William Hazlitt is a name that will brighten with time. He has said too many new, and too many true things, for oblivion to reach. You may find fault with the setting, but rarely with the jewels; and in literature, as in fashion, the setting soon grows out of date, but the jewels never. He has aspired to be the universal critic; he has commented on art and letters, philosophy, manners, and men; in the last, for my own part, I would esteem him a far more questionable authority than upon the rest; for he is more occupied in saying shrewd things of character than of giving you the character itself. He wanted, perhaps, a various and actual experience of mankind in all its grades; and if he had the sympathy which compensates for experience, it was not a catholic sympathy, it was bestowed on particular tenets and their professors, and was erring, because it was sectarian. But in letters and in art, prejudice blinds less than it does in character; and in these the metaphysical bias of his mind renders him often profound, and always ingenious; while the constant play of his fancy redeems and brightens even the occasional inaccuracy of his taste.

Mr. Leigh Hunt's Indicator contains some of the most delicate and subtle criticisms in the language. His kindly and cheerful sympathy with Nature—his perception of the minuter and more latent sources of the beautiful—spread an irresistible charm over his compositions,—but he has not as yet done full justice to himself in his prose writings, and must rest his main reputation upon those exquisite poems which the age is beginning to appreciate.

The Essays of Elia, in considering the recent additions to our *belles-lettres*, cannot be passed over in silence. Their beauty is in their delicacy of sentiment. Since Addison, no writer has displayed an equal refinement of humour; and if no single one of Mr. Lamb's conceptions equals the elaborate paintings

of Will Honeycomb and Sir Roger de Coverley (the last has in it something of Cervantes), yet his range of character is more extensive than Addison's, and in his humour there is a deeper pathos. His compositions are so perfectly elaborate, and so minutely finished, that they partake rather of the polish of poetry than prose; they are as perfect in their way as the Odes of Horace, and at times, as when commencing his invocation to "the Shade of Elliston" he breaks forth with

"Joyousest of once-imbodied spirits, whither at length hast thou flown," &c.

we might almost fancy that he had set Horace before him as a model.

But the most various, scholastic, and accomplished of such of our literary contemporaries as have written works as well as articles, and prose as well as poetry—is, incontestibly, Dr. Southey. "The Life of Nelson" is acknowledged to be the best biography of the day. "The Life of Wesley" and "The Book of the Church," however adulterated by certain prepossessions and prejudices, are, as mere compositions, characterized by an equal simplicity and richness of style,—an equal dignity and an equal ease. No writer blends more happily the academical graces of the style of the last century, with the popular vigour of that which distinguishes the present. His Colloquies are, I suspect, the work on which he chiefly prides himself, but they do not seem to me to contain the best characteristics of his genius. The work is overloaded with quotation and allusion, and, like Tarpeia, lies crushed beneath the weight of its ornaments; it wants the great charm of that simple power which is so peculiarly Southeian. Were I to do justice to Southey's cast of mind—to analyze its properties and explain its apparent contradictions, I should fill the two volumes of this work with Southey alone. Suffice it *now* (another occasion to do him ampler justice may occur else-

where), to make two remarks in answer to the common charges against this accomplished writer. He is alleged to be grossly inconsistent in politics, and wholly unphilosophical in morals. I hold both these charges to spring from the coarse injustice of party. If ever a man wrote a complete vindication of himself —that vindication is to be found in Southey's celebrated Letter to a certain Member of Parliament; the triumphant dignity with which he puts aside each successive aspersion—the clearness with which, in that Letter, his bright integrity shines out through all the mists amid which it voluntarily passes, no dispassionate man can mark and not admire. But he is not philosophical? —No,—rather say he is not logical; his philosophy is large and learned, but it is all founded on hypothesis, and is poetical, not metaphysical. What I shall afterward say of Wordsworth would be equally applicable to Southey had the last been less passionate and less of a political partisan.

It would be no unpleasant task to pursue yet further the line of individual criticism; but in a work of this nature, single instances of literary merit are only cited as illustrations of a particular state of letters; and the mention of authors, must be regarded merely in the same light as quotations from books, in which some compliment is indeed rendered to the passage quoted, but assuredly without disrespect to those which do not recur so easily to our memory, or which seem less apposite to our purpose.

Still recurring to my first remark, we cannot but feel impressed, while adducing some names in the non-inventive classes of literature, with the paucity of those who remain. It is a great literary age—we have great literary men—but where are their works? a moment's reflection gives us a reply to the question; we must seek them not in detached and avowed and standard publications, but in periodical miscellanies. It is in these journals that the most eminent of our recent men of letters have chiefly obtained their renown—it is here that we find the sparkling and sarcastic Jeffrey—

the incomparable humour and transparent logic of Sidney Smith—the rich and glowing criticism of Wilson—the nervous vigour and brilliant imagination of Macauley (who, if he had not been among the greatest of English orators, would have been among the most commanding of English authors); and here too we must look for many of the most beautiful evidences of Southey's rich taste and antique stateliness of mind. Nay, even a main portion of the essays, which, now collected in a separate shape,* have become a permanent addition to our literature, first appeared amid a crowd of articles of fugitive interest in the journals of the day, and owe to the accident of republication their claims to the attention of posterity. From this singular circumstance, as the fittest fact whereon to build our deductions, we may commence our survey of the general Intellectual Spirit of the Time.

The revolution that has been effected by Periodical Literature, is, like all revolutions, the result of no immediate causes; it commenced so far back as the reign of Anne. The success of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* opened a new field to the emulation of literary men,† and in the natural sympathy between literature and politics, the same channels into which the one was directed afforded equal temptation to the other; men of the highest intellect and rank were delighted to resort to a constant and frequent means of addressing the public; the political opinions of Addison, Steele, Swift, Bolingbroke, and the fitful ambition of Wharton himself, found vent in periodical composition. The fashion once set, its advantages were too obvious for it not to continue; and thus the examples of Chesterfield and Pulteney, of Johnson, Goldsmith, and Mackenzie, sustained the dignity of this species of writing, so unpretending in its outward appearance, and demanding

* Elia, many of the Essays of Hazlitt, &c.

† The "Review" of De Foe, commencing in 1704 and continued till 1713, embraced not only matters on politics and trade, but also what he termed a *scandal club*, which, treating on poetry, criticism, &c., contained the probable germ of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*.

therefore so much excellence to preserve its importance. The fame acquired by periodical essays gave consequence and weight to periodical miscellanies—criticism became a vocation as books multiplied. The *Journal des Sçavans* of the French begat imitators in England; similar journals rose and increased in number and influence, and the reviewers soon grew a corporate body and a formidable tribunal. The abuses consequent, as we have shown, on an anonymous system, began to be early apparent in these periodicals, which were generally feeble in proportion to their bulk, and of the less value according to their greater ostentation. The public sickened of *The Monthly Review*, and the *Edinburgh Quarterly* arose. From the appearance of this latter work, which was the crown and apex of periodical reviews, commences the deterioration of our standard literature;—and the dimness and scantiness of isolated works on politics, criticism, and the *belles-lettres*, may be found exactly in proportion to the brilliancy of this new focus, and the rapidity with which it attracted to itself the talent and knowledge of the time. The effect which this work produced, its showy and philosophical tone of criticism, the mystery that attached to it, the excellence of its composition, soon made it an honour to be ranked among its contributors. The length of time intervening between the publication of its numbers was favourable to the habits and taste of the more elaborate and scholastic order of writers; what otherwise they would have published in a volume, they willingly condensed into an essay; and found for the first time in miscellaneous writings, that with a less risk of failure than in an isolated publication, they obtained, for the hour at least, an equal reputation. They enjoyed indeed a double sort of fame, for the article not only obtained praise for its own merit, but caught no feeble reflection from the general esteem conferred upon the Miscellany itself; add to this the high terms of pecuniary remuneration, till then unknown in periodicals, so tempting to the immediate wants of the younger order

of writers, by which an author was sure of obtaining for an essay in the *belles-lettres* a sum almost equal to that which he would have gleaned from a respectable degree of success if the essay had been separately given to the world; and this by a mode of publication which saved him from all the chances of loss, and the dread of responsibility;—the certain anxiety, the probable mortification. In a few years the *Quarterly Review* divided the public with the *Edinburgh*, and the opportunities afforded to the best writers of the day to express, periodically, their opinions, were thus doubled. The consequence was unavoidable; instead of writing volumes, authors began pretty generally to write articles, and a literary excrescence monopolized the nourishment that should have extended to the whole body: hence talent, however great—taste, however exquisite—knowledge, however enlarged, were directed to fugitive purposes. Literary works, in the magnificent thought of Bacon, are the Ships of Time; precious was the cargo wasted upon vessels which sunk for ever in a three-months' voyage! What might not Jeffrey and Sidney Smith, in the vigour of their age, have produced as authors, if they had been less industrious as reviewers. The evil increased by degrees; the profoundest writers began to perceive that the period allotted to the duration of an article was scarcely sufficient inducement to extensive and exhausting labour (even in a quarterly review the brilliant article dazzled more than the deep, for true wisdom requires time for appreciation); and, though still continuing the mode of publication which proffered so many conveniences, they became less elaborate in their reasonings and less accurate in their facts.

Thus, by a natural reaction, a temporary form of publication produced a bias to a superficial order of composition; and, while intellectual labour was still attracted towards one quarter, it was deteriorated, as monopolies are wont to be, by the effects of monopoly itself. But, happily, there was one faculty of genius which these miscellanies could not materially attract,

and that was the IMAGINATIVE. The poet and the novelist had no temptation to fritter away their conceptions in the grave and scholastic pages of the Quarterly Journals; they were still compelled, if they exceeded the slender limits allotted to them in magazines, to put forth separate works; to incur individual responsibility; to appeal to Time, as their tribunal; to meditate—to prepare—to perfect. Hence, one principal reason, among others, why the Imaginative Literature of the day has been so much more widely and successfully cultivated than any other branch of intellectual exertion. The best writers in other branches write the reviews, and leave only the inferior ones to write the books.

The Imaginative Faculty thus left to its natural and matured tendencies, we may conceive that the spirit and agitation of the age exercised upon the produce of that faculty their most direct and permanent influence. And it is in the poetry and the poetic prose of our time that we are chiefly to seek for that sympathy which always exists between the intellectual and the social changes in the prevalent character and sentiment of a people.

There is a certain period of civilization, ere yet men have begun to disconnect the principles to be applied to future changes from a vague reference to former precedents; when amendment is not orthodox, if considered a novelty; and an improvement is only imagined a return to some ancient and dormant excellence. At that period all are willing to listen with reverential interest to every detail of the past; the customs of their ancestors have for them a superstitious attraction, and even the spirit of innovation is content to feed itself from the devotion to antiquity. It was at this precise period that the genius of Walter Scott brought into vivid portraiture the very images to which Inquiry was willing to recur, satisfied the half-unconscious desire of the age, and represented its scarcely expressed opinion. At that period, too, a distaste to the literature immediately preceding the

time had grown up; a vague feeling that our poetry, become frigid and tame by echoed gallicisms, required some return to the national and more primitive tone. Percy's *Ballads* had produced a latent suspicion of the value of reworking forgotten mines: and, above all, perhaps purer and deeper notions of Shakspeare had succeeded the vulgar criticism that had long depreciated his greatest merits; he had become studied, as well as admired; an affection had grown up not only for the creations of his poetry, but the stately and antique language in which they were clothed. These feelings in the popular mind, which was in that state when both Poetry and Philosophy were disposed to look favourably on any able and deliberate recurrence to the manners and the spirit of a past age, Sir Walter Scott was the first vividly and *popularly* to represent; and, therefore, it is to his pages that the wise historian will look not only for an epoch in poetical literature, but the reflection of the moral sentiment of an age. The prose of that great author is but a continuation of the effect produced by his verse, only cast in a more familiar mould, and adapted to a wider range; a reverberation of the same tone, carrying the sound to a greater distance.

A yet more deep and enduring sentiment of the time was a few years afterward imbodied by the dark and meditative genius of Byron; but I apprehend that Criticism, amid all the inquiries it directed towards the causes of the sensation produced by that poet, did not give sufficient importance to those in reality the most effective.*

Let us consider:—

* I do not here stop to trace the manner in which the genius of Scott or Byron was formed by the writings of less popular authors: Wordsworth and Coleridge assisted greatly towards the ripening of those feelings which produced the Lay of the Last Minstrel and Childe Harold;—my present object is, however, merely to show the sentiment of the age as imbodied in the most *popular* and acknowledged shapes. If my limits allowed me to go back to an earlier period, I should trace the first faint origin of our modern Romantic Poetry to a more remote founder than Coleridge, who is usually considered its parent.

In the earlier portion of this work, in attempting to trace the causes operating on the National Character of the English, I ascribed to the peculiar tone and cast of our aristocracy much of that reserved and unsocial spirit which proverbially pervades all classes of our countrymen. To the same causes, combined with the ostentation of commerce, I ascribed also much of that hollowness and glitter which belong to the occupations of the great world, and that fretfulness and pride, that uneasy and dissatisfied temper, which are engendered by a variety of small social distinctions, and the eternal *vying*, and consequent mortifications, which those distinctions produce. These feelings, the slow growth of centuries, became more and more developed as the effects of civilization and wealth rendered the aristocratic influences more general upon the subordinate classes. In the indolent luxuries of a court, what more natural than satiety among the great, and a proud discontent among their emulators? The peace just concluded, and the pause in continental excitement, allowed these pampered, yet not unpoetical springs of sentiment, to be more deeply and sensibly felt; and the public, no longer compelled by War and the mighty career of Napoleon to turn their attention to the action of life, could give their sympathies undivided to the first who should represent their thoughts. And these very thoughts, these very sources of sentiment—this very satiety—this very discontent—this profound and melancholy temperament, the result of certain social systems—the firs two cantos of *Childe Harold* suddenly appeared to represent. They touched the most sensitive chord in the public heart—they expressed what every one felt. The position of the author once attracting curiosity, was found singularly correspondent with the sentiment he imbodied. His rank, his supposed melancholy, even his reputed beauty, added a natural interest to his genius. He became the Type, the Ideal of the state of mind he represented, and the world willingly associated his person with his works, because they

thus seemed actually to incorporate, and in no undignified or ungraceful shape, the principle of their own long-nursed sentiments and most common emotions. Sir Philip Sidney represented the popular sentiment in Elizabeth's day,—Byron that in our own. Each became the poetry of a particular age put into action,—each, incorporated with the feelings he addressed, attracted towards himself an enthusiasm which his genius alone did not deserve. It is in vain, therefore, that we would now coolly criticise the merits of the first Cantos of *Childe Harold*, or those Eastern Tales by which they were succeeded, and in which another sentiment of the age was addressed, namely, that craving for adventure and wild incident which the habit of watching for many years the events of a portentous war, and the meteoric career of the modern Alexander, naturally engendered. We may wonder, when we now return to those poems, at our early admiration at their supposed philosophy of tone and grandeur of thought. In order to judge them fairly, we must recall the feelings they addressed. With nations, as with individuals, it is necessary to return to past emotions in order to judge of the merits of past appeals to them. We attributed truth and depth to Lord Byron's poetry in proportion as it expressed our own thoughts; just as in the affairs of life, or in the speeches of orators, we esteem those men the most sensible who agree the most with ourselves—embellishing and exalting only (not controverting) our own impressions. And in tracing the career of this remarkable poet, we may find that he became less and less popular in proportion, not as his genius waned, but as he addressed more feebly the prevalent sentiment of his times: for I suspect that future critics will agree that there is in his tragedies, which were never popular, a far higher order of genius than in his Eastern Tales or the *first* two cantos of *Childe Harold*. The highest order of poetical genius is usually evinced by the conception rather than the execution; and this often makes the main difference between

Melodrame and Tragedy. There is in the early poems of Lord Byron scarcely any clear conception at all; there is no harmonious plan, comprising one great, consistent, systematic whole; no epic of events artfully wrought, progressing through a rich variety of character, and through the struggles of contending passions, to one mighty and inevitable end. If we take the most elaborate and most admired of his tales, *The Corsair*, we shall recognise in its conception an evident want of elevation: a pirate taken prisoner—released by a favourite of the harem—escaping—and finding his mistress dead; there is surely nothing beyond melodrame in the design of this story, nor do the incidents evince any great fertility of invention to counterbalance the want of greatness in the conception. In this too, as in all his tales, though full of passion—and this is worth considering, since it is for his delineations of passion that the vulgar laud him—we may observe that he describes a passion, not the *struggles* of passions. But it is in this last that a master is displayed: it is contending emotions, not the prevalence of one emotion, that call forth all the subtle comprehension, or deep research, or giant grasp of man's intricate nature, in which consists the highest order of that poetic genius which works out its result by character and fiction. Thus the struggles of Medea are more dread than the determination; the conflicting passions of Dido evince the most triumphant effect of Virgil's skill; to describe a murder is the daily task of the melodramatist—the irresolution, the horror, the *struggle* of Macbeth, belong to Shakspeare alone. When Byron's heroes commit a crime, they march at once to it: we see not the pause—the self-counsel—the agony settling into resolve; he enters not into that delicate and subtile analysis of human motives which excites so absorbing a dread, and demands so exquisite a skill. Had Shakspeare conceived a Gulnare, he would probably have presented to us in terrible detail her pause over the couch of her sleeping lord: we should have seen the wo-

man's weakness contesting with the bloody purpose; she would have remembered, though even with loathing, that on the breast she was about to strike her head had been pillowed; she would have turned aside —shrunk from her design—again raised the dagger: you would have heard the sleeping man breathe—she would have quailed—and, quailing, struck! But the death-chamber—that would have been the scene in which, above all others, Shakspeare would have displayed himself—is barred and locked to Byron. He gives us the crime, and not all the wild and fearful preparation to it. So again in Parisina: from what opportunities of exercising his art does the poet carefully exclude himself! With what minute, and yet stern analysis, would Sophocles have exhibited the contest in the breast of the adulteress!—the love—the honour—the grief—the dread—the horror of the incest, and the violence of the passion!—but Byron proceeds at once to the guilty meeting, and the tragic story is, as much as can be compatible with the materials, merged into the amorous fragment. If Byron had, in his early poems, conceived the history of Othello, he would have given us the murder of Desdemona, but never the interviews with Iago. Thus, neither in the conception of the plot, nor the fertile invention of incident, nor, above all, in the dissection of passions, can the early poems of Lord Byron rank with the higher masterpieces of Poetical Art.

But at a later period of his life more exalted and thoughtful notions of his calling were revealed to him, and I imagine that his acquaintance with Shelley induced him to devote his meditative and brooding mind to those metaphysical inquiries into the motives and actions of men, which lead to deep and hidden sources of character, and a more entire comprehension of the science of poetical analysis.

Hence his tragedies evince a much higher order of conception, and a much greater mastery in art, than his more celebrated poems. What more pure or more lofty than his character of Angiolina, in *The Doge of*

Venice! I know not in the circle of Shakspeare's women one more true, not only to nature—that is a slight merit—but to the highest and rarest order of nature. Let us pause here for one moment; we are in no hackneyed ground. The character has never yet been fully understood. An insulting libel on the virtue of Angiolina, by Steno, a young patrician, is inscribed on the ducal throne: the Doge demands the head of the libeller; the Tribunal of the Forty award a month's imprisonment. What are Angiolina's feelings on the first insult? Let her speak for herself:

"I heed it not
For the rash scorner's falsehood in itself,
But for the effect, the deadly deep impression
Which it has made upon Faliero's soul.
* * * * *

MARIANA.
Assuredly
The Doge cannot suspect you.

ANGIOLINA.
Suspect me!—
Why Steno dared not!—
* * * * *

MARIANA.
'Twere fit
He should be punished grievously.

ANGIOLINA.
He is so!

MARIANA.
What is the sentence passed—is he condemned?

ANGIOLINA.
I know not that—*but he has been detected!*
* * * * *

MARIANA.
Some sacrifice is due to slander'd virtue.

ANGIOLINA.
Why, what is virtue if it needs a victim;
Or, if it must depend upon men's words?
The dying Roman said 'twas but a name;—
It were indeed no more, if human breath
Could make or mar it,——

What deep comprehension of the dignity of virtue! Angiolina will not even conceive that she *can* be suspected; or, that an insult upon her should need other justice than the indignation of opinion! Mariana subsequently asks, if when Angiolina gave her hand to the Doge,

> With this strange disproportion in your years,
> And let me add, disparity of tempers,

she yet loved her father's friend—her spouse; if,

> Previous to this marriage, had your heart
> Ne'er beat for any of the noble youth,
> Such as in years had been more meet to match
> Beauty like yours? or, since have you ne'er seen
> One, who, if your fair hand were still to give,
> Might now pretend to Loredano's daughter.

ANGIOLINA.

> I answered your *first* question when I said
> I married.

MARIANA.

> And the second?

ANGIOLINA.

Needs no answer!

Is not this conception even equal to that of "the gentle lady wedded to the Moor." The same pure, serene, tender, yet scarce impassioned heart, that loves the abstract, not the actual; that like Plato, incorporates virtue in a visible shape, and then allows it no rival; yet this lofty and proud woman has no sternness in her nature; she forgives Steno, not from the calm haughtiness of her high chastity alone.—"Had," she says to the angry Doge,

> "Oh! had this false and flippant libeller,
> Shed his young blood for his absurd lampoon,
> Ne'er from this moment could this breast have known,
> A joyous hour, or dreamless slumber more."

Here the reader will note with how delicate an art the sex's tenderness and charity relieve and warm the snowy coldness of her ethereal superiority. What a

union of woman's best qualities! the pride that disdains reproach, the meekness that forgives it! Nothing can be more simply grand than the whole of this character, and the history which it exalts. The old man of eighty years, wedded to the young wife; her heart never wandering, no episode of love disturbing its serene orbit, no impure or dishonouring jealousy casting its shadow upon her bright name; she moves through the dread scene, all angelic in her qualities, yet all human in the guise they assume. In his earlier years Byron would, as he intimates, have lowered and hackneyed the antique dignity of this Ideal, by an imitation of the Moor's jealousy: nay, *in yet* earlier years he would, I believe, have made Angiolina guilty; he would have mingled, perhaps, more passionate interest with the stern pathos of the story; but interest of how much less elevated a cast! Who can compare the ideal of Parisina with that of Angiolina? I content myself with merely pointing out the majesty and truth with which the character of the Doge himself is conceived; his fiery and headlong wrath against the libeller, frozen at once by the paltry sentence on his crime; and transferred to the tribunal that adjudged it; his ire at the insult of the libel, merged in a deeper passion at that of the punishment; his patrician self-scorn at his new fellowship with plebeian conspirators; his paternal and patriarchal tenderness for Angiolina—devoid of all uxoriousness and doting; the tragic decorum with which his love is invested; and the consummate and even sublime skill, which, allowing equal scope for passion with that manifested in Othello, makes the passion yet more lofty and refined; for in the Moor, the human and the sexual are, perhaps, too strongly marked: in the Doge they seem utterly merged.

Again, what beautiful conception in the tale of the *Foscari!* how original, how tender, the love of soil in Jacopo—Greek in his outline, but Ausonian in its colouring: you see the very patriotism natural to the sweet south—the heart

Which never beat
For Venice, but with such a yearning as
The dove has for her distant nest—

the conception of this peculiar patriotism, which is for the air, the breath of Venice; which makes a bodily and visible mistress of the sea-girt city; which courts torture, death, dishonour, for one hour alone of her presence—all this is at once thoroughly original and deeply tragic. In vain they give him life—he asks for liberty; in vain they give him liberty, he asks for Venice—he cannot dissociate the two:

I could endure my dungeon, for 'twas Venice.
I could support the torture; there was something
In my native air that buoy'd my spirit up.
* * * * *
but afar—
My very soul seemed mouldering in my bosom!

In vain, Mariana, the brave, the passionate wife, exclaims

This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil,
Is passion and not patriotism.—

In this truth is the originality and Euripidean pathos of the conception. In vain she reminds him of the "lot of millions"

The hereditary exiles that have been.

He answers,

Who can number
The hearts which broke in silence of that parting,
Or, after that departure, of that malady
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep?
* * * * *
You call this weakness; it is strength!
I say—the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his country, can love nothing.

In vain again, with seemingly unanswerable logic, Mariana replies,

Obey her, then, 'tis *she* that puts thee forth!

with what sudden sinking of the heart he replies,

Ay, there it is,—'tis like a mother's curse
Upon my soul!

Mark, too, how wonderfully the character of the austere old father, hardened and marbled by the peculiar and unnatural systems of Venetian policy, contrasts that of the son: in both patriotism is the ruling passion; yet how differently developed!

First at the board in this unhappy process,
Against his last and only son!—

But what glimpses reveal to you the anguish of the father! With what skill your sympathy is enlisted in his behalf; and repugnance at his severity converted into admiration of his devotion!

MARIANA.
What shall I say
To Foscari, from his father?

DOGE.
That he obey
The laws.

MARIANA.
And nothing more?—will you not see him
Ere he depart?—it may be the last time.

DOGE.
The last!—my boy—the last time I shall see
My last of children!—*tell him I will come.*

The same deep and accurate knowledge of the purest sources of effect which taught the great poet to relieve the sternness of the father, makes him also elevate the weakness of the son. Jacopo hath no cowardice, save in leaving Venice. Torture appals him not; he smiles at death. And how tragic *is* the death!

Enter an Officer and Guards.
Signor, the boat is at the shore, the wind
Is rising—we are ready to attend you.

JACOPO FOSCARI.
Am I to be attended?—Once more, father,
Your hand—

DOGE.
Take it—alas, how thine own trembles!

JACOPO FOSCARI.
No—you mistake, 'tis yours that shakes, my father:
Farewell!

DOGE.
Is there aught else?

JACOPO FOSCARI.
No, nothing.
Lend me your arm, good signor (*to the officer*).

OFFICER.
You turn pale,
Let me support you—paler—ho! some aid there,
Some water.

MARIANA.
Ah! he is dying!

JACOPO FOSCARI.
Now I am ready.
My eyes swim strangely—where's the door?

MARIANA.
Away!
Let *me* support him—my best love! O God!
How faintly beats this heart—this pulse—

JACOPO FOSCARI.
The light!
Is it the light!—I'm faint—
[*Officer presents him with water.*

OFFICER.
He will be better
Perhaps in the air.

JACOPO FOSCARI.
I doubt not.—Father—wife—
Your hands.

MARIANA.
There's death in that cold clammy clasp.
Oh, God! my Foscari, how fare you?

JACOPO FOSCARI.
Well! [*He dies.*

He dies; but where? In Venice—in the light of that beloved sky—in the air of that delicious climate! He dies; but when? At the moment he is about to

leave that climate, that sky, for ever! He might have said with another and a less glorious patriot of a later age, "Il mio cadavere almeno non cadrà fra braccia straniere; . . . . . e le mie ossa poseranno su la terra de' miei padri." Mark now, how the pathos augments by the agency of the bereft survivors.

OFFICER.
He's gone.

DOGE.
He's free!

MARIANA.
No, no! he is not dead:
There must be life yet in that heart; he could not
Thus leave me.

DOGE.
Daughter!—

MARIANA.
Hold thy peace, old man.
I am no daughter now, thou hast no son.
Oh, Foscari!

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

And how deadly the whole force of the catastrophe is summed up, a few lines afterward, when, amid the wailings of the widowed mother the old Doge breaks forth—

My unhappy children!

MARIANA.
What!
You feel it then at last—*you*—Where is now
The Stoic of the State?

How you thrill at the savage yet natural taunt!—how visibly you see the start of the wife!—how audibly you hear the wild laugh and the bitter words—

What!
——————————— Where is now
The Stoic of the State?

And how entirely the character of the Doge is re-

vealed; how utter and dread becomes the anguish of the scene in the next *one* word:

DOGE (*throwing himself down by the body*)
HERE!

And at that word I doubt if the tragedy should not have been concluded. The vengeance of Loredano—the completion of which makes the catastrophe—is not so grand a termination as the broken heart of the patriot exile, and the broken pride of the patriot judge.

The same high notions of art which characterize these great dramas, are equally evinced in the *Cain* and the *Sardanapalus:* the first, which has more of the early stamp of Byron's mind, is, for that reason perhaps, so well known, and its merits so universally allowed, that I shall not delay the reader by praising the Hercules none have blamed. One word only on the *Sardanapalus*.

The genius developed in this tragedy is more gorgeous and varied than in any other of Byron's works: the magnificent effeminacy, the unsettled courage, the regal generosity of Sardanapalus; the bold and hardy fervour of Arbaces the soldier, and the hoary craft of Beleses the priest, exhibit more extensive knowledge, and afford more glowing contrasts, than even the classic stateliness of Marino Faliero, or the deep pathos of the Foscari: And this drama, above all the rest Byron's plays, is fitted for representation on the stage: the pomp of scene, the vitality and action of the plot, would, I am confident, secure it success among the multitude, who are more attracted by the external than the latent and less vivid sources of interest. But the chief beauty of this play is in the conception of Myrrha's character. This Greek girl, at once brave and tender, enamoured of her lord, yet yearning to be free; worshipping alike her distant land and the soft barbarian:—what new, and what dramatic combinations of feeling! It is in this *struggle* of emotions, as I have said before, that the master-hand paints with the happiest triumph.

"Why," says Myrrha, reasoning with herself—

> Why do I love this man?—my country's daughters
> Love none but heroes!—*but I have no country!*
> The slave hath lost all but her bonds—I love him:
> And that's the heaviest link in the long chain,
> To love whom we esteem not. * *
> * * * * * * *
> He loves me, and I love him—the slave loves
> Her master—and would free him from his vices;
> If not I have a means of freedom still,
> And if I cannot teach him how to reign,
> May show him how alone a king can leave
> His throne!

The heroism of this fair Ionian is never above nature, yet always on its highest verge. The proud melancholy that mingles with her character, recalling her father-land—her warm and generous love, "without self-love—her passionate and Greek desire to elevate the nature of Sardanapalus, that she may the better justify her own devotion—the grave and yet sweet sternness that pervades her gentler qualities, exhibiting itself in fidelity without fear, and enabling her to hold with a steady hand the torch that shall consume on the pyre (made sacred to her religion by the memory of its own Alcides), both the Assyrian and the Greek; all these combinations are the result of the purest sentiment and the noblest art. Her last words at the pyre sustain the great conception of her character. With the natural yearning of the Achaian, her thoughts in that moment revert to her distant clime, recalled, however, at once to her perishing lord beside her, and uniting, almost in one breath, the two contending affections.

> Farewell, thou earth,
> And loveliest spot of earth—farewell, Ionia!
> Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
> Aloof from desolation. My last prayer
> Was for thee; my last thoughts, save one, were of thee.
>
> SARDANAPALUS.
>
> And that——
>
> MYRRHA.
>
> *Is yours.*

The plot of the drama is worthy the creation of its Heroine. The fall of a mighty empire; the vivid portraiture of a dark and remote time; the primeval craft of the priest conspiring with the rough ambition of the soldier (main origin of great changes in the world's earlier years); the splendid and august catastrophe; the most magnificent suicide the earth ever knew!—what a field for genius! what a conception worthy of its toils!

No charge has been more constantly made against Byron than that accusing him of want of variety in character. Every criticism tells us that he never paints but one person, in whatever costume; that the dress may vary, but the figure remains the same. Never was any popular fallacy more absurd! It is true that the dogma holds good with the early poems, but is entirely contradicted in the later plays. Where, in the whole range of fiction, are there any characters more strongly contrasted, more essentially various and dissimilar, than Sardanapalus the Assyrian king, and Marino Faliero the Venetian Doge;—than Beleses the rugged priest, cut out of the marble of nature; and Jacopo Foscari, moulded from the kindliest of the southern elements;—than the passionate Mariana, the delicate and queenly Angiolina, the heroic Myrrha—the beautiful incarnation of her own mythology? To name these is sufficient to refute an assertion hitherto so credulously believed, and which may serve as an illustration of the philosophy of popular criticism. From the first works of an author the standard is drawn by which he is compared; and in no instance are the sins of the parents more unfortunately visited on the children.

Yet why, since the tragedies evince so mature and profound a genius, are they so incalculably less popular than the early poems? It may be said, that the dramatic form itself is an obstacle to popularity; yet scarcely so, for I am just old enough distinctly to remember the intense and universal curiosity with which the public awaited the appearance of *The Doge of*

Venice; the eagerness with which it was read, and the disappointment which it occasioned. Had the dramatic form been the cause of its unpopularity, it would have occasioned for it at the first a cool and lukewarm reception: the welcome which greeted its announcement is a proof that the disappointment was occasioned by the materials of the play, and not *because* it was a play. Besides, *Manfred*, one of the most admired of all Byron's works, was cast in the dramatic mould. One cause of the comparative unpopularity of the play is, perhaps, that the *style* is less rich and musical than that of the poems; but the principal cause is *in that very versatility, that very coming out from self, the want of which has been so superficially complained of.* The characters were beautifully conceived; but they represented not that character which we expected, and yearned to see. That mystic and idealized shape, in which we beheld ourselves, had receded from the scene—we missed that touching egotism which was the expression of the Universal Heart; across the enchanted mirror new shadows passed, but it was our own likeness that we desired—the likeness of those deep and cherished feelings with which the poet had identified himself! True, that he still held the glass to human nature; but it was no longer to that aspect of nature which we most coveted to behold, and to which custom had not yet brought satiety. This was the true cause of our disappointment. Byron now addressed the passion, and the sentiment, and the thought, common to *all* time, but no longer those peculiar to the temper of the age—

"Our friend was to the dead,
To us he died when first he parted from us.
* * * * *

"He stood beside us, like our youth
Transformed for us the real to a dream,
Clothing the palpable and the familiar
With golden exhalations of the dawn.†

† Coleridge's *Wallenstein.*

The disappointment we experienced when Byron departed from the one ideal image, in which alone our egotism loved to view him, is made yet more visible in examining his character than in analyzing his works. We grow indignant against him in proportion, not as we find him unworthy as a man, but departing from the attributes in which our imagination had clothed him. He was to the public as a lover to his mistress, who forgives a crime easier than a foible, and in whom the judgment becomes acute only in proportion as the imagination is undeceived. Had the lives, the sketches, the details, which have appeared subsequent to his early and poetical death, but sustained our own illusions—had they preserved "the shadow and the majesty" with which we had enveloped him, they might have represented him as far more erring than he appears to have been, and we should have forgiven whatever crimes were consistent with the dark but lofty nature we ascribed to him. But weakness, insincerity, the petty caprice, the womanish passion, the vulgar pride, or even the coarse habit—these we forgave not, for they shocked and mocked our own self-love; they were as sardonic reproaches on the blind fallacy of our own judgment; they lowered the ideal in our own breasts; they humbled the vanity of our own nature; we had associated the poet with ourselves; we had felt *his* emotions as the refining, the exalted expression of *ours*, and whatever debased our likeness, debased ourselves! through his foibles our self-love was wounded: he was the great representative of the poetry of our own hearts; and, wherever he seemed unfaithful to his trust, we resented it as a treason to the majesty of our common cause.

But perhaps the hour in which we most deeply felt how entirely we had wound and wrapt our own poetry in himself, was that in which the news of his death reached this country. Never shall I forget the singular, the stunning sensation, which the intelligence produced. I was exactly at that age, half man and half boy, in which the poetical sympathies are most keen—

among the youth of that day a growing diversion from Byron to Shelley and Wordsworth had just commenced—but the moment in which we heard he was no more, united him to us at once, without a rival. We could not believe that the bright race was run. So much of us died with him, that the notion of his death had something of the unnatural, of the impossible. It was as if a part of the mechanism of the very world stood still:—that we had ever questioned—that we had ever blamed him, was a thought of absolute remorse, and all our worship of his genius was not half so strongly felt as our love for himself.

When he went down to dust it was as the abrupt close of some history of deep passion in our actual lives—the interest—the excitement of years came to a gloomy pause—

> His last sigh
> Dissolved the charm—the disenchanted earth
> Lost all her lustre—where her glittering towers,
> Her golden mountains, where? all darkened down
> To naked waste—a dreary vale of years,
> THE GREAT MAGICIAN'S DEAD!*

Exaggerated as this language may seem to our children, our contemporaries know that all words are feeble to express the universal feeling of England at that lonely death-bed in a foreign land, amid wild and savage strangers, far from the sister, the wife, the child, whose names faltered on the lips of the dying man,—closing in desolation a career of sadness—rendering his latest sigh to the immemorial land which had received his earliest song,—and where henceforth and for ever

> Shall Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep.

Even now, at this distance of time, all the feelings that then rushed upon us, melt upon me once more—dissenting as I now do from much of the vague admiration his more popular works receive, and seeing in

* Young.

himself much that virtue must lament, and wisdom must condemn, I cannot but think of him as of some early friend associating with himself all the brightest reminiscences of youth, burying in his grave a poetry of existence that can never be restored, and of whom every harsh sentence, even while not unfaithful to truth, is dishonouring to the fidelity of love—

"THE BEAUTIFUL IS VANISHED AND RETURNS NOT."

I have dwelt thus much upon Byron, partly because though the theme is hackneyed, it is not exhausted*—partly, because I perceive an unjust and indiscriminate spirit of depreciation springing up against that great poet (and I hold it the duty of a critic to oppose zealously the caprice and change of mere fashions in opinion)—and principally, because, in reviewing the intellectual spirit of the age, it is necessary to point out at some length the manner in which its most celebrated representative illustrated and identified it with himself.

But while my main task is with the more popular influences of the intellectual spirit of the present day, I must not pass over in silence that deep under-current which in all ages is formed by some writers whose influence floats not on the surface. The sound of their lyres, not loud to the near listener, travels into distance, enduring, deep, and through prolonged vibrations, buoying itself along the immeasurable waves of space. From amid writers of this class I single out but two, Wordsworth and Shelley. I believe that both these poets have been influential to a degree perfectly unguessed by those who look only to their popularity; and, above all, I believe that of Wordsworth, especially, to have been an influence of a more noble and purely

* In advancing, too, the new doctrine, that his Dramas are better than his early poems, it was necessary to go somewhat into the conception of those Dramas.

intellectual character than any writer of our age and nation has exercised. Wordsworth's genius is peculiarly German. This assertion may startle those who have been accustomed to believe the German genius only evinced by extravagant tales, bombastic passion, and mystical *diableries*. Wordsworth is German from his singular householdness of feeling—from the minute and accurate manner with which he follows his ardour for Nature into the smaller links and harmonies which may be considered as her details. He has not, it is true, "the many-sidedness" of Göthe; but he closely resembles a *certain* portion of Göthe's mind, viz., the reverential, contemplative, self-tasking disposition to the study of all things appertaining to THE NATURAL: his ideas, too, fall into that refined and refining *toryism*, the result of a mingled veneration for the past—of a disdain for the pettier cries which float over that vast abyss which we call the public, and of a firm desire for Peace as the best nurse to high and undiurnal thoughts, which so remarkably distinguishes the great artist of Tasso and Wilhelm Meister. This toryism —(I so call it for want of a better name)—is one of which only very high minds are capable; it is the product of a most deep if untrue philosophy: no common Past-worshippers can understand or share it, just as no vulgar skeptics can comprehend the etherial skepticism of a Spinosa. That Wordsworth's peculiar dogmas should lead him into occasional, and, to my taste, frequent error, is saying of him what we must say of every man of enthusiasm who adopts a system; but, be it observed, it only misleads him in that part of his writings which arrogate "simplicity," and in which, studying to be simple, he becomes often artificial; it never misleads him in his advances to "sublimity:" here he is always natural; he rises without effort, and the circumfusing holiness of his mind bathes with a certain religious grandeur the commonest words and the most familiar thoughts. But what portion of the spirit of the times does Wordsworth represent, and in what is he a teacher? Let us reflect. Whenever

there is a fierce contest between opposing parties, it usually happens that to each party there is a small and scarce-calculated band inspired and led by far more spiritualized and refining thoughts than the rest, who share not the passion, nor the feud, nor the human and coarser motives which actuate the noisier herd. Of one of these parties Wordsworth is the representative; of the other, Shelley. Wordsworth is the apostle, the spiritualizer of those who cling to the most idealized part of things that are—Religion and her houses, Loyalty and her monuments—the tokens of the Sanctity which overshadows the Past: these are of him, and he of them. Shelley, on the other hand, in his more impetuous, but equally intellectual and unworldly mind, is the spiritualizer of all who forsake the past and the present, and, with lofty hopes and a bold philanthropy, rush forward into the future, attaching themselves not only to things unborn, but to speculations founded on unborn things. Both are representatives of a class of thought, refined, remote, belonging to the age, but not to the louder wranglers of the age. Scott and Byron are poets representing a philosophy resulting from the passions, or at least, the action, of life; Shelley and Wordsworth represent that which arises from the intellect, and belongs to the Contemplative or the Ideal. It is natural that the first two should have a large audience, and the two latter a select one; for so far have they (the last) gone into the remoter and more abstract ideas, and wrought poetry from science, that they may be said to appeal to us less as poets than as metaphysicians, and have therefore obtained the homage and the circle which belong to the reasoner rather than the wider worship of the bard; but each appertains emphatically to a time of visible and violent transition—the one preserving all the beauty of the time past, the other with a more youthful genius bodying forth the beauty of a time to be. Each is an equal servitor to knowledge, if we may trust to the truth of Wordsworth's image, the sublimest in recent poetry—

"Past and Future are the wings
On whose support harmoniously conjoin'd,
Moves the great Spirit of Human Knowledge."

But I think, of the two, that Wordsworth has exercised on the present day the more beneficial influence; for if, as I have held, and shall again have occasion to repeat,

"The world is too much with us,"

if the vice of the time leans to the Material, and produces a low-born taste and an appetite for coarse excitement, Wordsworth's poetry is of all existing in the world the most calculated to refine—to etherealize—to exalt;—to offer the most correspondent counterpoise to the scale that inclines to earth. It is for this that I consider his influence mainly beneficial. His poetry has repaid to us the want of an immaterial philosophy—it *is* philosophy, and it is of the immaterial school. No writer more unvulgarizes the mind. His circle is small—but for that very reason the votaries are more attached. They preserve in the working-day world the holy sabbath of his muse—and doubtless they will perpetuate that tranquillizing worship from generation to generation, till the devotion of the few shall grow into the custom of the many.

Shelley, with a more daring and dramatic* genius, with greater mastery of language, and the true Lucretian soul, for ever aspiring *extra flammantia mœnia mundi*, is equally intellectual in his creations; and despite the young audacity which led him into denying a God, his poetry is of a remarkably ethereal and spiritualizing cast. It is steeped in veneration—it is

* Had Shelley lived, I understand from his friends that he would probably have devoted himself especially to the drama. The Cenci is the only one of his writings which contains human interest—and if Shelley's metaphysical flights had been once tamed down to the actual flesh and blood characters which the drama exacts, there is little doubt but that as his judgment improved in the choice of subject and the conception of plot, he would have been our greatest dramatist since Shakspeare. But

"Gemuit sub pondere cymba."

for ever thirsting for the Heavenly and the Immortal—and the Deity he questioned avenges Himself only by impressing His image upon all that the poet undertook. But Shelley at present has subjected himself to be misunderstood; he has become the apologist for would-be mystics, and dreamers of foolish dreams,—for an excellent master may obtain worthless disciples, just as the young voluptuaries of the Garden imagined vice was sanctioned by Epicurus, and the juvenile casuists of schools have learned Pyrrhonism from Berkeley. The blinding glitter of his diction, the confusion produced on an unsteady mind by the rapid whirl of his dazzling thoughts, have assisted in the formation of a false school of poetry,—a school of sounding words and unintelligible metaphysics—a school of crude and bewildered jargonists, who talk of "the everlasting heart of things," and the "genius of the world," and such phrases, which are the terms of a system with Shelley, and are merely fine expressions with his followers. An imitator of Wordsworth must come at once to Nature: he may be puerile, he may be prosaic—but he cannot go far from the Natural. The yearning of Wordsworth's genius is like the patriotism of certain travellers, who in their remotest wanderings carry with them a portion of their native earth. But Shelley's less settled and more presuming faculty deals little with the Seen and Known—it is ever with the spectral images of things, chasing the invisible Echo, and grasping at the bodiless Shadow. Whether he gives language to Pan, to Asia, to Demiurgus, or song to the Cloud, or paints the river love of Alpheus for Arethusa, or follows, through all the gorgeous windings of his most wondrous diction, the spirit of Poesy in Alastor, or that of Liberty in the Revolt of Islaam—he is still tasking our interest for things that are not mundane or familiar—things which he alone had power to bind to Nature, and which those who imitate him leave utterly dissevered from her control. They, too, deal with demigods and phantoms—the beautiful Invisibles of creation; but they forget the

chain by which the Jupiter of their creed linked each, the highest to the lowest, in one indissoluble connexion, that united even the highest heaven to the bosom of our common earth.

I think, then, that so far as this age is considered (although for posterity, when true worshippers are substituted for false disciples, it may be otherwise), Shelley's influence, both poetical and moral, has been far less purifying and salutary than Wordsworth's. But both are men of a purer, perhaps a higher, intellectual order than either Byron or Scott, and although not possessing the same mastery over the more daily emotions, and far more limited in their range of power than their rival "Kings of Verse," they have yet been the rulers of more unworldly subjects, and the founders of a more profound and high-wrought dynasty of opinion.

It seems, then, that in each of these four great poets the Imaginative Literature has arrogated the due place of the Philosophical.

In the several characters of their genius, imbodying the truth of the time, will the moral investigator search for the expression of those thoughts which make the aspect of an era, and while they reflect the present age, prepare the next. It is thus, that from time to time, the Imagination assumes the natural office of the Reason, and is the parent of Revolutions, because the organ of Opinion: And to this, the loftiest moral effect of imaginative literature, many of its superficial decriers have been blind. "The mind," saith the Stagyrite, "has over the body the control which a master exercises over his slave: but the Reason has over the Imagination that control which a magistrate possesses over a freeman"—"who," adds Bacon in his noble comment on the passage, "*may come to rule in his turn.*" At the same time that Lycurgus reformed Sparta, he introduced into Greece the poems of Homer;—which act was the more productive of heroes?—which wrought the more important results upon the

standard of legislative morals or exercised the more permanent influence upon the destiny of states?

I return to the more wide, and popular, and important impression, made upon the time. Göthe has told us, that when he had written *Werther*, he felt like a sinner relieved from the burden of his errors by a general confession; and he became, as it were, inspired with energy to enter on a new existence. The mind of a great writer is the type of the general mind. The public, at certain periods, oppressed with a peculiar weight of passion, or of thought, require to throw it off by expression; once expressed, they rarely return to it again: they pass into a fresh intellectual gradation; they enter with Göthe into a new existence; hence, one reason of the ill-success of imitators—they repeat a tone we no longer have a desire to hear. When Byron passed away, the feeling he had represented craved utterance no more. With a sigh we turned to the actual and practical career of life: we awoke from the morbid, the passionate, the dreaming, "the moonlight and the dimness of the mind," and by a natural reaction addressed ourselves to the active and daily objects which lay before us. And this with the more intenseness, because, the death of a great poet invariably produces an indifference to the art itself. We can neither bear to see him imitated, nor yet contrasted; we preserve the impression, but we break the mould. Hence that strong attachment to the Practical, which became so visible a little time after the death of Byron, and which continues (unabated, or rather increased) to characterize the temper of the time. Insensibly acted upon by the doctrine of the Utilitarians, we desired to see Utility in every branch of intellectual labour. Byron, in his severe comments upon England, and his satire on our social system, had done much that has not yet been observed, in shaking off from the popular mind certain of its strongest national prejudices; and the long peace, and the pressure of financial difficulties, naturally in-

clined us to look narrowly at our real state; to examine the laws we had only boasted of, and dissect the constitution we had hitherto deemed it only our duty to admire. We were in the situation of a man who, having run a certain career of dreams and extravagance, begins to be prudent and saving, to calculate his conduct, and to look to his estate. Politics thus gradually and commonly absorbed our attention, and we grew to identify ourselves, our feelings, and our cause, with statesmen and economists, instead of with poets and refiners. Thus, first Canning, and then Brougham, may be said, for a certain time, to have represented, more than any other individuals, the common Intellectual Spirit; and the interest usually devoted to the imaginative was transferred to the real.

In the mean while the more than natural distaste for poetry that succeeded the death of Byron had increased the appetite for prose fictions; the excitement of the fancy, pampered by the melo-dramatic tales which had become the rage in verse, required food even when verse grew out of fashion. The new career that Walter Scott had commenced tended also somewhat to elevate with the vulgar a class of composition that, with the educated, required no factitious elevation; for, with the latter, what new dignity could be thrown upon a branch of letters that Cervantes, Fielding, Le Sage, Voltaire, and Fenelon had already made only less than Epic. It was not, however, as in former times, the great novel alone that was read among the more refined circles, but novels of all sorts. Unlike poetry, the name itself was an attraction. In these works, even to the lightest and most ephemeral, something of the moral spirit of the age betrayed itself. The novels of fashionable life illustrate feelings very deeply rooted, and productive of no common revolution. In proportion as the aristocracy had become social, and fashion allowed the members of the more mediocre classes a hope to outstep the boundaries of fortune, and be quasi-aristocrats themselves, people eagerly sought for representations of the manners which they

aspired to imitate, and the circles to which it was not impossible to belong. But as with emulation discontent also was mixed, as many hoped to be called and few found themselves chosen, so a satire on the follies and vices of the great gave additional piquancy to the description of their lives. There was a sort of social fagging established, the fag loathed his master, but not the system by which one day or other he himself might be permitted to fag. What the world would not have dared to gaze upon, had it been gravely exhibited by a philosopher (so revolting a picture of the aristocracy would it have seemed), they praised with avidity in the light sketches of a novelist. Hence the three-years' run of the fashionable novels was a shrewd sign of the times: straws they were, but they showed the upgathering of the storm. Those novels were the most successful which hit off one or the other of the popular cravings—the desire to dissect fashion or the wish to convey utility—those which affected to combine both, as the novels of Mr. Ward, were the most successful of all.

Few writers ever produced so great an effect on the political spirit of their generation as some of these novelists, who, without any other merit, unconsciously exposed the falsehood, the hypocrisy, the arrogant and vulgar insolence of patrician life. Read by all classes, in every town, in every village, these works, as I have before stated, could not but engender a mingled indignation and disgust at the parade of frivolity, the ridiculous disdain of truth, nature, and mankind, the self-consequence and absurdity which, falsely or truly, these novels exhibited as a picture of aristocratic society. The Utilitarians railed against them, and they were effecting with unspeakable rapidity the very purposes the Utilitarians desired.

While these light works were converting the multitude, graver writers were soberly confirming their effect, society itself knew not the change in feeling which had crept over it; till a sudden flash, as it were, revealed the change electrically to itself. Just at the

time when with George the Fourth an *old* era expired, the excitement of a popular election at home concurred with the three days of July in France, to give a decisive tone to the *new*. The question of Reform came on, and to the astonishment of the nation itself, it was hailed at once by the national heart. From that moment, the intellectual spirit hitherto partially directed to, became *wholly* absorbed in, politics; and whatever lighter works have since obtained a warm and general hearing, have either developed the errors of the social system, or the vices of the legislative. Of the first, I refrain from giving an example; of the last, I instance as a sign of the times, the searching fictions of Miss Martineau, and the wide reputation they have acquired.

A description of the mere frivolities of fashion is no longer coveted; for the public mind, once settled towards an examination of the aristocracy, has pierced from the surface to the depth; it has *probed* the wound, and it now desires to *cure*.

It is in this state that the Intellectual Spirit of the age rests, demanding the Useful, but prepared to receive it through familiar shapes: a state at present favourable to ordinary knowledge, to narrow views, or to mediocre genius; but adapted to prepare the way and to found success for the coming triumphs of a bold philosophy, or a profound and subtile imagination. Some cause, indeed, there is of fear, lest the desire for immediate and palpable utility should stint the capacities of genius to the trite and familiar truths. But as Criticism takes a more wide and liberal view of the true and unbounded sphere of the Beneficial, we may trust that this cause of fear will be removed. The passions of men are the most useful field for the metaphysics of the imagination, and yet the grandest and the most inexhaustible. Let us take care that we do not, as in the old Greek fable, cut the wings of our bees and set flowers before them, as the most sensible mode of filling the Hives of Truth!

But the great prevailing characteristic of the present intellectual spirit is one most encouraging to human

hopes; it is Benevolence. There has grown up among us a sympathy with the great mass of mankind. For this we are indebted in no small measure to the philosophers (with whom Benevolence is, in all times, the foundation of philosophy); and that more decided and emphatic expression of the sentiment which was common, despite of their errors, to the French moralists of the last century, has been kept alive and applied to immediate legislation by the English moralists of the present. We owe also the popularity of the growing principle to the writings of Miss Edgeworth and of Scott, who sought their characters among the people, and who interested us by a picture of (and not a declamation upon) their life and its humble vicissitudes, their errors and their virtues. We owe it also, though unconsciously, to the gloomy misanthropy of Byron; for proportioned to the intenseness with which we shared that feeling, was the reaction from which we awoke from it; and among the more select and poetical of us, we owe it yet more to the dreaming philanthropy of Shelley, and the patriarchal tenderness of Wordsworth. It is this feeling that we should unite to sustain and to develop. It has come to us pure and bright from the ordeal of years—the result of a thousand errors—but born, if we preserve it, as their healer and redemption.

Diodorus Siculus tells us, that the forest of the Pyrenean mountains being set on fire, and the heat penetrating to the soil, a pure stream of silver gushed forth from the earth's bosom, and revealed for the first time the existence of those mines afterward so celebrated.

It is thus from causes apparently the most remote, and often amid the fires that convey to us at their first outbreaking, images only of terror and desolation, that we deduce the most precious effects, and discover the treasures to enrich the generations that are to come!

CHAPTER III.

Cheap Works—Diffusion of Knowledge—Its necessary Consequences—Writers are less profound in proportion as the public are more numerous—Anecdote of Dr. ——.—Suggestions how to fill the Fountain while we diffuse the Stream—Story of the Italian Master.

I THINK, sir, that when our ingenious countryman, Joshua Barnes; gave us so notable an account of the Pigmies, he must, in the spirit of prophecy, have intended to allegorize the empire of the Penny Periodicals. For, in the first place, these little strangers seem, Pigmy-like, of a marvellous ferocity and valour; they make great head against their foes—they spread themselves incontinently—they possess the land—they live but a short time, yet are plenteously prolific; they owe much to what the learned Joshua terms, "the royal Lescha," viz: a certain society (evidently the foretype of that lately established under the patronage of my Lord Brougham)—set up as he showeth "for the increase and propagation of experimental knowledge;" above all, and a most blissful peculiarity it is, "*for taxes they are wholly unacquainted with them!*" they make vigilant war against the cranes, whom I take it are palpably designed for tax-gatherers in general—*quocunque gaudentes nomine*—a fact rendered clear to the plainest understanding by the following description of these predatory birds.

"The cranes being the only causers of famine in the land, by reason they are so numerous that they can devour the most plentiful harvest, both by eating the seeds beforehand, and then picking the ears that remain."

Certes, however, these little gentry seem of a more general ambition than their Pigmæan types; for the latter confined themselves to a limited territory "from Gadazalia to Elysiana;" but these, the pigmies of our

time, overrun us altogether, and push, with the rude insolence of innovation, our most venerable folios from their stools. The rage for cheap publications is not limited to Penny Periodicals; family libraries of all sorts have been instituted, with the captivating profession of teaching all things useful—bound in cloth, for the sum of five shillings a month! Excellent inventions, which, after showing us the illimitable ingenuity of compilation, have at length fallen the prey of their own numbers, and buried themselves among the corpses of the native quartoes which they so successfully invaded.

Cheap publications are excellent things in themselves. Whatever increases the reading public tends necessarily to equalize the knowledge already in the world; but the process by which knowledge is equalized is not altogether that by which the degree of knowledge is heightened. Cheap publications of themselves are sufficient for the *diffusion* of knowledge, but not for its *advancement*. The schoolmaster equalizes information, by giving that which he possesses to others, and for that very reason can devote but little time to increasing his own stock.

Let me make this more familiar by telling you an anecdote of our friend Dr. ——. You know that he is a man of the highest scientific attainments. You know also that he is not overburdened with those same precious metals on the history of which he can so learnedly descant. He took a book some months ago to a publisher of enterprise and capital: it was full of the profoundest research; the bookseller shook his head, and—

"Pray, sir," said he, musingly, "how many persons in England are acquainted with the ultimate principles by which you come to your result?"

"Not fifty, sir," cried the doctor, with all the enthusiasm of a discoverer.

"And how many can understand the elementary principles which occupy your first chapter?"

"Oh!" said the doctor with indifference, "*those*

principles are merely plain truths in mechanics, which most manufacturers ought to know, and which many literary dandies think it shows learning to allude to; perhaps, therefore, several thousands may be familiar with the contents of the first chapter; but, I assure you, sir, you don't get far before"—

"Pardon me, doctor," interrupted the bookseller, shortly—"if you address the fifty persons, you must publish this work on your own account; if you address the thousands, why it is quite another matter. Here is your MS.; burn all but the first chapter: as a commercial speculation, the rest is mere rubbish; if you will then spin out the first chapter into a volume, and call it *The Elements of —— Familiarly Explained* —why, I think, sir, with your name, I could afford you three hundred pounds for it."

Necessity knows no law. *The Elements* are published to teach new thousands what other thousands knew before, and the *Discoveries* lie in the doctor's desk, where they will only become lucrative, when some richer man shall invent and propagate them, and the public will call on the poor doctor "to make them familiar."

Now observe a very curious consequence from this story: Suppose a certain science is *only* cultivated by five hundred men, and that they have all cultivated the science to a certain height. A book that should tell them what they knew already, they would naturally not purchase, and a book that told them more than they knew they would eagerly buy; in such a case, the doctor's position would have been reversed, and his *Discoveries* would have been much more lucrative to him than his *Elements*.—Thus we may observe, that the tone of knowledge is usually more scholastic in proportion as the circle of readers is confined. When scholars are your audience, you address them after the fashion of a scholar. Hence, formerly, every man thought it necessary when he wrote a book, to bestow upon its composition the most scrupulous care; to fill its pages with the product of a studious life; to

polish its style with the classic file, and to ornament its periods with the academical allusion. He knew that the majority of those who read his work would be able to appreciate labour or to detect neglect; but, as the circle of readers increased, the mind of the writer became less fastidious; the superficial readers had outnumbered the profounder critics. He still addressed the majority, but the taste of the majority was no longer so scrupulous as to the fashion of the address. Since the Revival of Letters itself, the more confined the public, the more laborious the student. Ascham is more scholastic than Raleigh; Raleigh than Addison: and Addison than Scott.

The spirit of a popular assembly can enter into the crowd you write for, as well as the crowd you address; and a familiar frankness, or a superficial eloquence, charm the assembly when full, which a measured wisdom, and a copious knowledge were necessary to win, when its numbers were scattered and select.

It is natural that writers should be ambitious of creating a sensation: a sensation is produced by gaining the ear, not of the few, but of the many: it is natural, therefore, that they should address the many; the style pleasing to the many becomes, of course, the style most frequently aimed at: hence the profusion of amusing, familiar, and superficial writings. People complain of it as if it were a proof of degeneracy in the knowledge of authors—it is a proof of the increased number of readers. The time is come when nobody will fit out a ship for the intellectual Columbus to discover new worlds, but when every body will subscribe for his setting up a steamboat between Calais and Dover You observe then, sir (consequences which the fine talkers of the day have wholly overlooked), that the immense superficies of the public operates two ways in deteriorating from the profundity of writers: in the first place, it renders it no longer necessary for an author to make himself profound before he writes; and in the next place, it encourages those authors who *are* profound, by every inducement, not of lucre alone,

but of fame, to exchange deep writing for agreeable writing: the voice which animates the man ambitious of wide fame, does not, according to the beautiful line in Rogers, whisper to him "ASPIRE," but "DESCEND." "He stoops to conquer." Thus, if we look abroad, in France, where the reading public is less numerous than in England,* a more elevated and refined tone is more fashionable in literature; and in America, where it is infinitely larger, the tone of literature is infinitely more superficial. It is possible, that the high-souled among literary men, desirous rather of truth than fame, or willing to traverse their trial to posterity, are actuated, *unconsciously*, by the spirit of the times; but actuated they necessarily are, just (to return to my former comparison) as the wisest orator, who uttered only philosophy to a thin audience of sages, mechanically abandons his refinements and his reasonings, and expands into a louder tone and more familiar manner as the assembly increases;—the temper of the popular meeting is unavoidably caught by the mind that addresses it.†

From these remarks we may perceive then, that in order to increase the height of knowledge, it is not sufficient to diffuse its extent; nay, that in that very diffusion there is a tendency to the superficial, which requires to be counteracted. And this, sir, it seems to me that we can only thoroughly effect by the Endowments of which I have before spoken. For since the government of knowledge is like that of states, and instituted not for the power of the few, but the enjoyment of the many, so this *diffusion* of information among the world is greatly to be commended and

* In France, the proportion of those educated in schools is but one in twenty-eight.

† M. Cousin, speaking of professors who in despair of a serious audience, wish at least for a numerous one, has well illustrated this principle. "Dans ce cas c'en est fait de la science, car on a beau faire, on se proportionne à son auditoire. Il y a dans les grandes foules je ne sais quel ascendant presque magnetique, qui subjugue les ames les plus fermes, et tel qui eût été un professeur scieux et instructif pour une centaine d'etudiens attentifs, devient leger et superficiel avec un auditoire superficiel et leger."

encouraged, even though it operate unfavourably on the *increase* of information among the learned. We ought not, therefore, to resist, even were we able, which we are not, the circulation of intelligence; but by other means we should seek to supply the reservoirs, from which, aloft and remote, the fertilizing waters are supplied. I see not that this can be done by any other means than the establishment of such professorships, and salaries for the cultivators of the highest branches of literature and science, as may be adequate, both in the number and in the income allotted to each, to excite ambition. Thus a tribunal for high endeavour will be established, independent of the court of the larger public, independent indeed, yet each acting upon the other. The main difficulty would be that of appointing fit electors to these offices. I cannot help thinking, that there should, for the sake of emulation, and the prevention of corruption or prejudice, be different electoral bodies, that should promote to vacancies in rotation; and these might be the three branches of the legislature, the different national universities, and above all (though the notion may seem extravagant at first sight), foreign academies, which being wholly free from sectarian, or party prejudices, would, I am convinced, nine times out of ten (until at least they had aroused our emulation by exciting our shame), choose the most fitting persons. For foreign nations are to the higher efforts of genius, the Representatives of Posterity itself. This, to be sure, is not a scheme ever likely to be realized; neither, I confess, is it wholly free from objections; but unless some such incitement to the loftier branches of knowledge be devised, the increasing demand will only introduce adulteration in the supply. So wide a popularity, and so alluring a remuneration, being given to the superficial, whoever is ambitious, and whoever is poor, will naturally either suit his commodity to the market, or renounce his calling altogether. At present, a popular instructer is very much like a certain master in Italian, who has thriven prodigiously upon a new experi-

ment on his pupils. J—— was a clever fellow, and full of knowledge which nobody wanted to know. After seeing him in rags for some years, I met him the other day most sprucely attired, and with the complacent and sanguine air of a prosperous gentleman:—

"I am glad to see, my dear sir," said I, "that the world wags well with you."

"It does."

"Doubtless, your books sell famously."

"Bah! no bookseller will buy them: no, sir, I have hit on a better *metier* than that of writing books—I am giving lessons in Italian."

"Italian! why I thought, when I last saw you, that you told me Italian was the very language you knew nothing about."

"Nor did I, sir; but directly I had procured scholars, I began to teach myself. I bought a dictionary; I learnt that lesson in the morning, which I taught my pupils at noon. I found I was more familiar and explanatory, thus *fresh from knowing little*, than if I had been confused and over deep by knowing much. I am a most popular teacher, sir;—and my whole art consists in being just one lesson in advance of my scholars!"

CHAPTER IV.

STYLE.

More clear, natural and warm than formerly,—but less erudite, and polished—More warm, but more liable to extravagance—Cause of the success of fiction—Mr. Starch and his dogmas—Every great writer corrupts his language—The Classic School and the Romantic—*Our* writers have united the two.

If the observations in my last chapter be correct, and books become less learned in proportion as the reading community becomes more numerous, it is evi-

dent that in the same proportion, and for the same cause, style will become less elaborate and polished than when the author, addressing only the scholastic few, found a critic in every reader. Writings addressed to the multitude must be clear and concise: the style of the present day has therefore gained in clearness what it has lost in erudition.

A numerous audience require also, before all things a natural and frank manner in him who addresses them; they have no toleration for the didascalic affectations in which academicians delight. "Speak out, and like a man!" is their first exclamation to one who seems about to be mincing and pedantic in his accost, or set and prepared in the fashion of his periods. Style, therefore, at the present day, is generally more plain and straightforward than heretofore, and tells its unvarnished tale with little respect to the balanced cadence and the elaborate sentence. It has less of the harmony of the prepared, and more of the vigour of the extempore. At the same time it is to be regretted that the higher and more refining beauties should be neglected—the delicate allusion—the subtle grace. It would be well could we preserve *both* the simplicity and the richness—aiming at an eloquence like that of the Roman orator, which while seeming to flow most freely, harmonizes every accent to an accompanying music.

From the same cause which gives plainness to the modern style, it receives also warmth, and seems entirely to have escaped from the solemn frigidity of Johnson, and the silver fetters that clanked on the graceful movements of Goldsmith, or the measured elegance of Hume. But, on the other hand, this warmth frequently runs into extravagance, and as the orator to a crowd says that with vehemence which to a few he would say with composure, so the main fault of the present style, especially of the younger writers, is often in an exaggerated tone and a superfluous and gratuitous assumption of energy and passion. It is this failing, carried with them to a greater extent than

it is with us, which burlesques the romantic French writers of the present day, and from which *we* are only preserved by a more manly and sturdy audience.

As with the increase of the crowd, appeals to passion become more successful, so in the enlargement of the reading public I see one great cause of the unprecedented success of fiction. Some inconsiderate critics prophesy that the taste for novels and romances will wear itself out; it is, on the contrary, more likely to increase as the circle of the public widens. Fiction, with its graphic delineation and appeals to the familiar emotions, is adapted to the crowd—for it is the oratory of literature.

You are acquainted with Mr. Starch. He is a man who professes a vast regard for what he calls *the original purity of the language*. He is bitterly opposed to new words. He hath made two bugbears to his mind:—the one hight 'Latinity,' the other 'Gallicism.' He seeth these spectres in every modern composition. He valueth himself upon writing Saxon, and his style walketh about as naked as a Pict. In fact nothing can be more graceless and bald than his compositions, and yet he calls *them* only "the true English." But he is very much mistaken; they are not such English as any English writer, worth reading at least, ever wrote? At what period, sir, would the critics of Starch's order, stop the progress of our language? to what elements would they reduce it? The language is like the land, restore it to what it was for the aboriginals, and you would reduce beauty, pomp and fertility to a desert. Go beyond a certain point of restitution, and to restore is to destroy. Every great literary age with us has been that in which the language has the most largely borrowed from the spirit of some foreign tongue—a startling proposition, but borne out by facts. The spirit of Ancient Letters passing into our language, as yet virgin of all offspring, begat literature itself. In Elizabeth's day, besides Greek and Latin, we borrowed most largely from the Italian. The genius of that day is Italian poetry

transfused, and sublimed by the transition, into a rougher tongue. In the reign of Queen Anne we were equally indebted to the French, and nothing can be more Gallic than the prose of Addison and the verse of Pope. In the day immediately preceding our own, besides returning to our old writers, viz. the borrowers from the Italian and French, we have caught much of the moonlight and dreamy character of romance—much of the mingled chivalry and mysticism that marked the favourite productions of the time, from the masterpieces of Germany.* In fact, I suspect that every great writer of a nation a little corrupts its tongue. His knowledge suggests additions and graces from other tongues; his genius applies and makes them popular. Milton was the greatest poet of our country, and there is scarcely an English idiom which he has not violated, or a foreign one which he has not borrowed. Voltaire accuses the simple La Fontaine of having corrupted the language; the same charge was made against Voltaire himself. Rousseau was yet more open to the accusation than Voltaire. Chateaubriand and De Stael are the corruptors of the style of Rousseau, and Courier has grafted new licenses on the liberties arrogated by Voltaire. Nothing could be more simple and unpretending than the style of Scott, yet he is perpetually accused of having tainted the purity of our idioms; so that the language may be said to acquire its chief triumphs by those who seem the least to have paid deference to its forms.

* It is not often very easy to trace the manner in which an author is indebted to the spirit of a foreign literature, and which he may not even know in the original. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott, knew German, and their knowledge is manifest in their own writings. Byron was unacquainted with German; yet he was deeply imbued with the German intellectual spirit. A vast number of German fictions had been translated at the beginning of the century. They ran the round of the circulating libraries, and coloured and prepared the minds of the ordinary reading public, unknowingly to themselves, for the favourable reception of the first English writer in a similar school. I have heard from a relation of Byron's, that he had read these fictions largely in his youth, and that which swayed his mind in its cast of sentiment, laid the train in the general mind for the effect that he produced.

It is some comfort, amid the declamations of Starch, to think that the system of intellectual commerce with foreign languages is somewhat like the more vulgar trade, and if it corrupts, must be allowed at least to enrich.

You know, my dear sir, that in France, that lively country, where they always get up a dispute for the amusement of the spectators;—where the nobles encouraged a democracy, for the pleasurable excitement of the controversy; and religion itself has been played like a game at shuttlecock, which is lost the moment the antagonists cease their blows;—in France, the good people still divert themselves with disputing the several merits of the Classical School, and the Romantic. They have the two schools, that is certain —let us be permitted to question the excellence of the scholars in either.

The English have not disputed on the matter, and the consequence is, that their writers have contrived to amalgamate the chief qualities of both schools. Thus, the style of Byron is at once classical and romantic; and the Edinburgh reviewers have well observed, may please either a Gifford or a Shelley. And even a Shelley, whom some would style emphatically of the Romantic, has formed himself on the model of the Classic. His genius is eminently Greek: he has become romantic, by being peculiarly classical.*

Thus while the two schools abroad have been declaring a union incompatible, we have united them quietly, without saying a word on the matter. Heaven only knows to what extremes of absurdity we should have gone in the spirit of emulation, if we had thought fit to set up a couple of parties, to prove which was best!

The question of the difference between the Romantic School and the Classic, has been merely that

* This observation will extend even to Keates himself, the last of the new school. Endymion and Saturn are both modelled from the casts of antiquity.

of forms. What in the name of common sense, signify disputes about the Unities and such stuff,—the ceremonies of the Muses? The Medea would have been equally Greek if all the unities had been disregarded. The Faust equally romantic, if all the unities had been preserved. It is among the poems of Homer and Pindar, of Æschylus and Hesiod, that you must look for the spirit of antiquity; but these gentlemen look to the rules of Aristotle: it is as if a sculptor, instead of studying the statue of the Apollo, should study the yard measure that takes its proportions.

CHAPTER V.

THE DRAMA.

The Public do not always pay for their Amusement—The State of the French Theatre—The French Drama murders and the English robs—Vulgar Plagiarism from the old Dramatists—Jack Old Crib The Influence of the Laws—Want of able Dramas but not of dramatic Talent—Should Political Allusions be banished from the Stage?—Inquiry into what should be the true Sources of Dramatic Interest—The Simple and the Magnificent—The Simple consider Kings no longer the fitting agents of the Tragic emotions—Ancient Rules of Tragic Criticism are therefore not applicable to Modern Times—Second Source of Dramatic Interest—The Magnificent considered—In Melo-drame are the Seeds of the new Tragedy, as in Ballads lay the Seeds of Modern Poetry.

"One may always leave the amusements to the care of the public; they are sure to pay for *those* well:" thus said a mathematician to me, the other day, with the air of a man who wished benevolently to insinuate, that one made too much by one's novels, and that the king ought to give such a good mathematician as he was, five thousand a year at the least.

"The deuse you may, sir!—What then do you say to the drama?—Actors, authors, managers, singers, painters, jugglers, lions and elephants from Siam, all

are working night and day to amuse you. And I fancy that the theatres are nevertheless but a poor speculation."

"Yes, but in this country—monopoly; no protection to the authors;—theatres too big;—free trade," mumbled the mathematician.

"Certainly, you are quite right—but look to France. No legislature can be more polite to the drama, than is the legislature of France. Authors protected, a Dramatic Board, plenty of theatres, no censor; and yet the poor Drama is in a very bad way even there. The government are forced to allow the theatres several thousands a year; without that assistance they would be shut up. Messieurs the Public pay something to the piper, but not all the requisite salary; so that you see it is not quite true, that the public will always pay well for their own amusements."

If this be the case in France, I fear it must be still more the case in England. For in France amusement is a necessary, while here it is scarcely even a luxury. "L'amusement est un des besoins de l'homme," said Voltaire; *Oui, Monsieur de Voltaire—de l'homme François!* In England, thanks to our taxes, we have not yet come to reckon amusements among our *absolute* wants.

But everywhere throughout Europe the glory of the theatre is beginning to grow dim, as if there were certain arts in the world which blaze, and have their day, and then die off in silence and darkness, like an exhausted volcano. In France it is not only that the theatre is not prosperous, but that, with every advantage and stimulus, the talent for the theatre is degenerate. The French authors have started a new era in Art, by putting an end to Nature. They now try only to write something eccentric. They want to excite terror, by showing you bugbears that cannot exist. When Garrick wished to awe you, he had merely to change the expression of his countenance; a child wishing to terrify you, puts on a mask. The French authors put on a mask.

The French dramatists have now pretty nearly run through the whole catalogue of out-of-the-way crimes, and when that is completed, there will be an end of their materials. After the *Tour de Nesle*, what more can they think of in the way of atrocity. In this play, the heroine poisons her father, stabs and drowns all the lovers she can get (number unknown); intrigues with one son, and assassinates the other! After such a selection from the fair sex, it is difficult to guess, from what female conception of the Beautiful the French poets will form their next fashionable heroine!

The French Theatre is wretched; it has been made the field for the two schools to fight in, and the combatants have left all their dead bodies on the stage.

If the French Theatre lives upon murders, the English exists upon robberies; it steals every thing it can lay its hands upon; to-day it filches a French farce, to-morrow it becomes sacrilegious and commits a burglary on the Bible. The most honest of our writers turn up their noses at the rogues who steal from foreigners, and with a spirit of lofty patriotism confine their robberies to the literature of their own country. These are they, who think that to steal old goods is no theft: they are the brokers of books, and their avowed trade is second-hand. They hunt among the Heywoods and Deckers, pillage a plot from Fletcher or Shirley; and as for their language, they steal *that* everywhere; these are they who fill every page with "go to" and "peradventure." If a lady asks her visiters to be seated, it is

"Pray ye, sit down, good gentles;"

if a lover admires the fashion of his mistress's gown; —she answereth:—

"Aye, by my faith, 'tis quaint!"

if a gentleman complains of a wound,

"It shall be looked to, sir, right heedfully."

A dramatic author of this nature is the very Autolycus of plagiarists; "an admirable conceited fellow, and

hath ribands of all the colours of the rainbow;" he sayeth, indeed, that he derives *assistance only* from the elder dramatists—he robbeth not; no! he *catcheth the spirit!* verily this he doth all in the true genius of Autolycus, when he assists himself with the Clown, as thus:—

CLOWN.

How now! Can'st stand?

AUTOLYCUS.

Softly, dear sir (*picks his pocket*): good sir, softly. You ha' done me a charitable office.

Jack Old Crib is a dramatic author of this class; you never heard a man so bitter against the frivolity of those who filch from the French vaudevilles. Their want of magnanimity displeases him sadly. He is mightily bitter on the success of Tom Fribble, who lives by translating one-act farces from Scribe; he calls *that* plagiarism: meanwhile, Jack Old Crib steals with all the loftiness of a five-act poet, and, worse than Fribble—does not even acknowledge the offence. *No*; he steals plot, character, diction, and all, from Dodsley's Collection, but calls *that*, with a majestic smile, "reviving the Ancient Drama."

Certainly there have been many reasons for the present deterioration of dramatic literature to be ascribed solely to the state of the laws. In the first place, what men that can write popularly any thing else, would write for the stage, so long as, while they were damned if they might fail, they could get nothing if they succeeded. Does any fruit, even a crab-apple, flourish in that land where there is no security for property? The drama has been that land. In the second place, the two large theatres, having once gorged the public with show, have rendered themselves unfit for dignified comedy and sober entertainments, because they have created a public unfit to relish them. The minor theatres being against the law, few persons of capital have been disposed to embark property in illegal speculations. The sites of many of these theatres, too, are ill-chosen, and the

audience not sufficiently guided in their tastes by persons of literary refinement. Some of these evils we may hope to reform. You know, sir, that I have introduced into parliament two bills, one of which will give protection to authors, and the other encourage competition in theatres. The first has received the royal assent, and become law. I trust for the same good fortune for the second. Doubtless these improvements in legislation may be extremely beneficial in their ultimate consequences.

But there are causes of deterioration which the law cannot control; and, looking to the state of the drama abroad, while our experiment ought to be adventured, we must confess its success to be doubtful. Still more doubtful is it when we recollect that, if the state of the law were the only cause of the deterioration of the drama, by removing the cause, you cannot always remove the effect which the cause has engengendered. The public being once spoiled by show, it is not easy to bring them back to a patient love of chaste composition. The public, also, being once rendered indifferent to the drama, it is not easy to restore the taste. "Tardiora sunt remedia quam mala, et, ut corpora lente augescunt, cito extinguuntur, sic ingenia studiaque oppresseris, facilius quam revocaris." A very profound remark, which means simply that when the Drama has once gone to the dogs, it will be a matter of time to heal the marks of their teeth. It is easier to create a taste than to revive one. Most of us, how simple men soever, can beget life without any extraordinary exertion; but it requires a very able physician to restore the dying. At present let us remove the obstacles to the operations of nature, and trust that *she* will be the physician at last. And, at least, we must admit that the present age has shown no lack of dramatic talent. Of dramatic talent suited to *the taste of the day*, it assuredly has; but not of dramatic talent examined by the criteria of high art. I have already spoken of the magnificent tragedies of Byron: I may add to these the stern and terrible con-

ception of the Cenci. Nor ought we to forget the Mirandola of Barry Cornwall, or the Evadne of Sheil —both works that, if written at an earlier period, would have retained a permanent and high station on the stage. The plays of Mr. Knowles, though at one time overlauded by the critics, and somewhat perhaps disfigured by imitations of the elder dramatists, testify considerable mastery of effect, and, with the exception of Victor Hugo's *chef d'œuvres*, are undeniably superior to the contemporaneous dramas of France.

The greater proportion of prose fictions among us, too, have been written by the dramatic rules, rather than the epic, and evince an amplitude of talent for the stage, had their authors been encouraged so to apply to it. In fine, then, the theatre wants good dramas; but the age shows no want of dramatic ability. Let us hope for the best, but not expect too speedy a realization of the hope. The political agitation of the times is peculiarly unfavourable to the arts: when people are busy, they are not eager to be amused. The great reason why the Athenians, always in a sea of politics, were nevertheless always willing to crowd the theatre, was this—*the theatre with them was political;* tragedy imbodied the sentiment, and comedy represented the characters, of the times. Thus theatrical performance was to the Athenian a newspaper as well as a play. We banish the Political from the stage, and we therefore deprive the stage of the most vivid of its actual sources of interest. At present the English, instead of finding politics on the stage, find their stage in politics. In the testimony of the witnesses examined before the Dramatic Committee, it is universally allowed that a censor is not required to keep immorality from the stage, but to prevent political allusions. I grant that in too great a breadth of political allusions there is a certain mischief: politics addressed to the people should not come before the tribunal of their imagination, but that of their reason; in the one you only excite by convincing—in the other you begin at the wrong end, and

convince by exciting. At the same time, I doubt if the drama will become thoroughly popular, until it is permitted to imbody the most popular emotions. In these times the public mind is absorbed in politics, and yet the stage, which should represent the times, especially banishes appeals to the most general feelings. To see our modern plays, you would imagine there were no politicians among us: the national theatre, to use a hackneyed but appropriate jest, is like the play of Hamlet, "with the part of Hamlet left out by the particular desire"—of the nobility!

But as the censor will be retained, and politics will still be banished from the stage, let us endeavour to content ourselves with the great benefits that, ere another year, I trust we shall have effected for the advancement of the stage. By the one law already enacted, authors will have nothing material to complain of; a successful and standard play, bestowing on them some emolument every time it is performed, will be a source of permanent income. Some of the best writers of the age (for the best are often the poorest) will therefore be encouraged to write, and to write not for the hour only, but for permanent fame. By the second law, which I trust will soon be passed, every theatre will be permitted to act the legitimate drama: there will therefore be no want of competition in the number of theatres, no just ground of complaint as to their disproportionate size. There will be theatres enough, and theatres of all dimensions. I imagine the two large theatres will, however, continue to be the most important and influential. Monopoly misguided their efforts,—emulation will rectify the direction. These are great reforms. Let us make the most of them, and see, if despite the languor of the drama abroad, we cannot revive its national vigour at home.

And to effect this restoration, let us examine what are the true sources of dramatic interest which belong to this age. Let us borrow the divining rod, and see to what new fountains it will lead us.

Heaven and yourself, dear sir, know how many years ago it is since the members of the poetical world cried out, "Let us go back to the old poets." Back to the old poets accordingly they went; the inspiration revived them. Poetry bathed in the youth of the language, and became once more young. But the most sacred inspiration never lasts above a generation or two, and the power of achieving wonders wears itself out after the death of the first disciples. Just when the rest of the literary world began to think the new poets had made quite enough out of the old, just when they had grown weary of transfusing the spirit of chivalry and ballads into the genius of modern times, just when they had begun to allow that what was a good thing once, was beginning to grow too much of a good thing now, up starts our friend the Drama, with the wise look of a man who has suddenly perceived the meaning of a *bon mot*, that all the rest of the company have already admired and done with, and says, "Go back to the old poets. What an excellent idea!" The Drama, which ought to be the first intellectual representative to reflect every important change in the literary spirit of the world, has with us been the last, and is now going back to Elizabeth's day for an inspiration which a more alert species of poetry has already exhausted of the charm of freshness. It seizes on what is most hackneyed, and announces its treasure as most new. When we are all palled with the *bon mot*, it begins to din into our ears as a capital new story. This will never do. To revive the Stage we must now go forwards, the golden bridge behind us is broken down by the multitude of passengers who have crossed it. The darkness closes once more over the lovely Spirit of the departed Poetry, and like the fairy of her own wells and waterfalls, the oftener she has revisited the earth, the fainter has become her beauty, and the less powerful her charm.

> "Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
> On its own folded wings and wavy hair
> The spirit of the earth is laid asleep!"

There are two sources from which we should now seek the tragic influence, viz. the Simple and the Magnificent. Tales of a household nature, that find their echo in the hearts of the people—the materials of the village tragedy, awaking an interest common to us all; intense yet homely, actual—earnest—the pathos and passion of everyday life; such as the stories of Jeannie Deans or of Carwell, in prose fiction; —behold one great source of those emotions to which the dramatic author of this generation ought to apply his genius! Originally the personages of tragedy were rightly taken from the great. With a just propriety, kings stalked the scenic boards; the heroine was a queen, the lover a warrior:—*for in those days there was no people!* Emotions were supposed to be more tragic in proportion as the station of their victims was elevated. This notion was believed in common life, and to represent it was therefore natural and decorous to the Stage. But we have now learned another faith in the actual world, and to that faith, if we desire to interest the spectator, we must appeal upon the stage. We have learned to consider that emotions are *not* the most passionately experienced in a court; that the feelings of kings are not more intense than those of persons who are more roused by the stern excitements of life, nor the passions of a queen less freed from frivolity, than the maiden of humbler fortunes, who loves from the depths of a heart which hath no occupation but love. We know the great now as persons assuredly whom it is wise and fitting to respect; incarnations of the august ceremonies in which a nation parades its own grandeur, and pleases its own pride. For my part I do not profess a vulgar intolerance of belief that kings must be worse than other men;* but we know at least, amid a round of forms, and an etiquette of frivolities

* Nay, if they were so, they would be—terrible scourges it is true to the world; but *quelquechose de bon* for the Stage. It really is because kings are now so rarely guilty of gigantic crime, that they cease to awe and terrify us on the stage.

that their souls cannot be so large, nor their passions so powerful, nor their emotions so intensely tragic as those of men in whom the active enterprises of life constantly stimulate the desires and nerve the powers. The passions are the elements of tragedy. Whatever renders the passions weak and regulated is serviceable to morals, and unfitted for the Stage. A good man who never sins against reason is an excellent character, but a tame hero. But morals alone do not check the passions; frivolities check them also. And the nature of a king is controlled and circumscribed to limits too narrow for the Tragic (which demands excess), not perhaps by the virtues that subdue, but the ceremonies which restrain, him. Kings of old were the appropriate heroes of the stage; for all the vastest of human ideas circled and enshrined them. The heroic and the early Christian age alike agreed in attributing to the Crowned Head a mysterious and solemn sanctity. Delegates of supernatural agents, they were the gods or demons of the earth; the hearts of mankind were compelled to a dread and irresistible interest in their actions. They were the earthly repositories of human fate; when their representatives appeared upon the stage, habited and attended as *they* were, it was impossible that the interest of the spectator so highly wrought at the reality, should not be prepared to transfer itself to the likeness. Then indeed that interest itself assumed a grand and tragic dignity. What vivid and awful emotions must those have experienced who surveyed the fate of beings who were the arch dispensers of the fates themselves.*

The belief which attached to a Sovereign something of the power and the sanctity of a god, necessarily beheld a superhuman dignity in his love, and a terrible sublimity in his wo. The misfortunes that happened to the monarch were as punishments upon

* "Princes are like to heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times."—BACON.

the people; the spectators felt themselves involved in the consequences of his triumph or his fall. Thus kings were the most appropriate heroes of the tragic muse, because their very appearance on the stage appealed to the Sublime—the superstition of the beholder stamped a gigantic grandeur on the august sufferer—and united with the pathos of human interest the awe of religion itself. The habits of monarchy in the elder age strengthened this delusion. For both in the remote classic and the later feudal time, the people did not represent themselves so much as they were represented in their chief. And when Shakspeare introduces Henry V. upon the stage, the spectators beheld not a king only, but the type of their own triumphs—the breathing incarnation of the trophies of Agincourt, and the abasement of France. To add yet more to the interest that encircled the tragic hero—the people, as I have just said, were *not*—Wisdom, Education, and Glory were alike the monopoly of the great. Then knowledge had not taught to the mass of mankind the mighty sources of interest which lay, untouched by the poet, in their own condition. The popular heart was only known in its great convulsions—it was the high-born and the knightly who were alone represented as faithful in love—generous in triumph—and magnanimous in adversity. The people were painted as a mob—fickle, insolent, and cruel; perhaps in that state of civilization they were nothing more. It may be that the great, being the best educated, were really the noblest part of the community.

In former times then, there were reasons which do not exist at present—that rendered the Great the fitting heroes of the tragic stage. Kings do not awaken the same awful and mysterious emotions that they once inspired—if not without the theatre, neither will they within its walls. You may go back to the old time, you may present to us an Œdipus or an Agamemnon, a Richard or a Henry; but you will not revive in us the same feelings with which their repre-

sentatives were once beheld. Our reason tacitly allows that these names were clothed with associations different from those which surround modern Sovereigns. But our feelings do not obey our reason—we cannot place ourselves in the condition of those who would have felt their blood thrill as the crowned shadows moved across the stage. We cannot fill our bosoms with the emotions that sleep in the dust of our departed fathers. We gaze upon the purple of past kings with the irreverent apathy of modern times. Kings are no longer Destinies. And the interest they excited has departed with their power. Whither?—to the People! Among the people, then, must the tragic author invoke the genius of Modern Tragedy, and learn its springs.

If this principle be true, down falls at once all the old fabric of criticism upon the tragic art! Down falls the pile of reasonings built to tell us why Kings, Princes, Generals, and "the nobility in general" must be the characters of a true tragedy! Down go the barriers which so rigidly shut out from the representation of elevated nature—the classes in which her elements are the most impassioned and their operations the most various! A new order of things has arisen in the actual world, and the old rules* instituted for the purpose of illustrating the actual world by the ideal, crumble to the dust!

In Shelley's noble thought, the Spirit of Power and Poesy passes into the Universal heart:

> "It interpenetrates the granite mass;"

beings are called forth "less mighty but more mild," and

* I grant that the stage must not only represent, but ennoble Nature—its likenesses must be spiritualized; but this it can effect equally from whatever grade its characters are drawn. Clarissa Harlowe is taken from the middle ranks—could the character of any queen have been more spiritualized. Goldsmith's Country Clergyman is nature—but nature ennobled. Faust is a German scholar; but partakes more largely of the grand ideal than any Prince (save Hamlet) idealized by the magic of Shakspeare himself.

"Familiar acts grow beautiful through Love!"

The SIMPLE, then, is one legitimate (and I hold the *principal*) source of the modern tragedy—its materials being woven from the woes—the passions—the various and multiform characters—that are to be found in the different grades of an educated and highly civilized people;—materials a thousand times more rich, subtle, and complex, than those sought only in the region of royal existence, the paucity of which we may perceive by the monotonous sameness of the characters into which, in the regal tragedy they are moulded. The eternal prince, and his eternal confidant; the ambitious traitor, and the jealous tyrant; the fair captive, and her female friend!—We should not have had these *dramatis personæ* so often, if authors had not conceived themselves limited to the intrigues, the events, and the creations of a court.

Another and totally distinct source of modern tragedy may be sought in the MAGNIFICENT. True art never rejects the materials which are within its reach. The Stage has gained a vast acquisition in pomp and show—utterly unknown to any period of its former history. The most elaborate devices of machinery, the most exquisite delusions of scene, may indeed be said to snatch us

"From Thebes to Athens when and where you will."

The public have grown wedded to this magnificence. Be it so. Let the dramatist effect, then, what Voltaire did under a similar passion of the public, and* marry the scenic pomp "to immortal verse." Instead of abusing and carping at the public for liking the more gorgeous attractions, be it the task of our dramatists to elevate the attractions themselves. Let them borrow all they can from the sister arts (in this

* Helvetius complains, however, that in his day, their full effect could not be given to magnificence and display, on account of the fashion of the spectators to crowd the stage.

they have the advantage of other poets, who must depend on the one art alone), but let them make their magnificent allies subservient to the one great art they profess. In short, let them employ an equal gorgeousness of effect; but instead of wasting it on a spectacle, or a melodrame, make it instrumental to the achievements of tragedy herself. The astonishing richness and copiousness of modern stage illusion opens to the poet a mighty field, which his predecessors could not enter. For him are indeed "the treasures of earth, and air, and sea." The gorgeous Ind with her mighty forests, and glittering spires; "Fanatic Egypt and her priests;" the stern superstitions of the North—its wizard pine glens—its hills of snow and lucid air

"Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars:—"

whatever Nature hath created, whatever history hath bequeathed, whatever fancy can devise—all now are within the power of the artist to summon upon the Stage. The poet of the drama hath no restrictions on his imagination from the deficiency of skill, to imbody corporeally his creations, and that which the epic poet can only describe by words, the tragic poet can fix into palpable and visible life. The MAGNIFICENT, then, is the second source of modern dramatic inspiration, combining all the attractions of scenery, embracing the vastest superstitions and most glowing dreams of an unbounded imagination. We may see that these two are the real sources of modern dramatic art by the evidence, that even performances below the mediocre which have resorted to either source, have been the most successful with the public,—have struck the most powerfully on the sentiment of the age. The play of "The Gamblers," or "The Soldier's Wife," or of "Clari," or the "Maid and the Magpie" —all, however, differing each from each, partake of the one attribute of the popular or domestic tragedy; and though of a very inferior order of poetical talent,

invariably excite a vivid emotion in the audience. So, on the other hand, the splendour of an Easter spectacle, or the decorations of an almost pantomimic melodrame, produce an admiration which wins forgiveness to the baldness of the dialogue and the absurdity of the plot. How then would performances of either class attract, supposing their effect were aided by proportionate skill in the formation of character, the melody of language, and the conception of design;—by the witchery of a true poet, and the execution of a consummate artist! Not then by pondering over inapplicable rules,—not by recurring to past models,—not by recasting hackneyed images, but by a bold and masterly adaptation of modern materials to modern taste, will an author revive the glories of the drama. In this, he will in reality profit by the study of Shakspeare, who addresses *his* age, and so won the future. He will do as all the master-minds of his own day have done in other regions of poetry. Byron and Scott, Göthe and Schiller, all took the germ of a popular impulse, and breathed into it a finished and glorious life, by the spirit of their own genius. Instead of decrying the public opinion which first manifested itself in a love for the lower and more frivolous portion of a certain taste, those great masters cultivated that taste to the highest, and so at once conciliated and exalted the mind. What the ballads of Monk Lewis were to Scott, the melo-drames, whether simple or gorgeous, should be to the future Scott of the drama.

A true genius, however elevated, is refreshed by the streams that intersect the popular heart, just as by the mysterious attraction of Nature, high peaks and mountains draw up, through a thousand invisible tubes, the waters that play amid the plains below!

CHAPTER VI.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Each great movement has its philosophy—The philosophy of our time is that of the Economists—Moralists not silenced but affected by the tone of general speculative research—Ours are therefore of the material school—Bailey—Mill—Hazlitt—Bentham—Character of Benthamic Philosophy, &c.—Bentham greater as a Legislator than Moralist—Insufficiency of the greatest happiness principle—Singular that no ideal school has sprung up among us—Professorships the best means to advance those studies which the public cannot reward.

EVERY great movement in a civilized age has its reflection—that reflection is the Philosophy of the period. The Movement which in England commenced by the Church Reformation, and slowly progressed during the reign of Elizabeth and James, till it acquired energy for the gigantic impulse and mighty rush of the Republican Revolution, had (as the consequence of the *one* part of its progress, and the prophet of the *other*) its great philosophical representative—in the profound, inquisitive, and innovating soul of Bacon. The Movement which restored Charles II. to the throne, which filled the Court—whose threshold had been so lately darkened by the sombre majesty of Cromwell,—with men without honour and women without shame—demanded a likeness of itself; it exacted its own philosophy; a moral mirror of the growing reaction from the turbulence of a fanatical freedom to the lethargy and base contentment of a profligate despotism; a system that should invent slavery as the standard of legislation, and selfishness as the criterion of morals—that philosophy, that reflection, and that system had their representative in Hobbes. The Leviathan which charmed the Court, and was even

studied by the King, was the moral of the Restoration —it imbodied the feelings that first produced and afterward coloured that event. A sterner era advanced. A bolder thought demanded a new likeness—the Movement advanced from the Restoration to the Revolution—the Movement once more required its philosophy, and received that philosophy in Locke. In his mind lay the type of the sentiments that produced the Revolution—in his philosophy, referring all things to Reason only, its voice was heard. As diverted from the theory of governments—the Spirit of Research was stimulated by a multiplied and increasing commerce, as the middle class increased into power; and the activity of trade, disdaining the theories of the closet, demanded a philosophy for the mart, a more extensive if less visible movement in civilization required also its reflection, and the representative of the new movement was the author of the Wealth of Nations.

Each philosophy, vast and profound enough to represent its epoch, endures for a certain time, and entails upon us a succession of spirits more or less brilliant, that either by attacking or defending, by imitating, or illustrating that peculiar philosophy, continue its influential prevalence among us for a longer or shorter period—when at last it darkens away from the actual and outer world, banished like the scenes of a by-gone play from the glare of the lamps and the gaze of the audience, falling into the silence of neglected lumber, and replaced by some new system, which a new necessity of the age has called into existence. We as yet live under the influence of the philosophy of Adam Smith. The minds that formerly would have devoted themselves to metaphysical and moral research, are given up to inquiries into a more material study. Political economy replaces ethics; and we have treatises on the theory of rents, instead of essays on the theory of motives. It is the age of political economists; and while we see with regret the lamp of a purer naphtha almost entirely extinct in England, we must confess that foreigners have been unjust to us

when they contend that for the last half century we have been producing little or nothing to the service of the human mind. We have produced Ricardo! When they accuse us of the want of speculative industry, let us confront them with the pamphlets upon pamphlets that issue monthly from the press, upon speculative points alone. As in the three célebrated springs in Iceland, the stream rushes at once into one only, leaving the others dry; so the copiousness of investigation upon Political Science, leaves exhausted and unrefreshed the fountains of Metaphysics and of Ethics. The spirit of the age demands political economy now, as it demanded moral theories before. Whoever will desire to know hereafter the character of our times, must find it in the philosophy of the Economists.

But the influence of a prevailing monoply of speculative inquiry, while it deadens the general tendency towards the other branches of intellectual commerce, cannot wholly silence the few devoted and earnest minds which refuse to follow in the common current, and pursue apart and alone their independent meditations. It cannot silence—but I apprehend it will *affect* them; the fashion of materialism in one branch of inquiry will materialize the thought that may be exercised in another. Thus all our *few* recent English moralists are of the Material School. Not touching now upon the *Scotch* schools, from which the spirit of Adam Smith has (comparatively speaking) passed, and grown naturalized with us; nor commenting on the beautiful philosophizing rather than philosophy of Dugald Stewart—the most exquisite critic upon the systems of others that our language has produced—fulfilling to philosophy the office that Schlegel fulfilled to literature,—I shall just point out, in my way to the most celebrated moralist of the time, the few that have best dignified similar pursuits. Mr. Bailey of Sheffield, has produced some graceful speculations upon Truth, and the Formation of Opinions written in a liberal spirit and a style of peculiar purity. Mr. Mill has, in

a work of so compressed and Spartan a form that to abridge it would be almost to anatomize a skeleton—followed out certain theories of Hartley into a new analysis of the Human Mind. His work requires a minute and painful study—it partakes of the severe logic of his more famous treatises on Government and Education; it is the *only* purely metaphysical book attracting any notice, which to my knowledge has been published in England for the last fifteen years.*

Mr. Hazlitt has also left behind him an early work, entitled "An Essay on the Principles of Human Action;" little known, and rarely to be met with, but full of original remarks, and worthy a diligent perusal.†

In the science of jurisprudence, Mr. Austen has thrown considerable light upon many intricate questions, and has illustrated a steril subject with passages of a lofty eloquence—another proof, be it observed, of the value of Professorships;—the work is the republication of lectures, and might never have been composed in these days, but for the *necessity* of composing it.

But in legislative and moral philosophy, Bentham must assuredly be considered the most celebrated and influential teacher of the age.

The same causes which gave so great a fertility to the school of the Economists, had their effect upon the philosophy of Bentham; they drew his genius mainly towards examinations of men rather than of man—of the defects of Law, and of the hypocrisies and fallacies of our Social System; they contributed to the material form and genus of his code, and to

* See some additional remarks upon this eminent writer in Appendix C.

† I do not here comment upon Mr. Godwin, because his writings and the influence they have exercised over others, belong rather to the last century than the present. Nor can I do more than refer to a posthumous work by the author of Anastasius, in which it is not easy to say whether the style or the sense be the worse. Lady Mary Shepherd has shown no ordinary acuteness in her essay upon "The Relation of Cause and Effect."

those notions of Utility which he considered his own invention, but which had been incorporated with half the systems that had risen in Europe since the sensualism of Condillac had been grafted upon the reflection of Locke. But causes far more latent, and perhaps more powerful, contributed also to form the mind and philosophy of Bentham. He had preceded the great French Revolution—the materials of his thoughts had been compounded from the same foundations of opinion as those on which the more enlightened advocates of the Revolution would have built up that edifice which was to defy a second deluge, and which is but a record of the confusion of the workmen. With the philosophy of the eighteenth century, which first adopted what the French reasoners term the Principle of Humanity (that is, the principle of philanthropy—a paramount regard for multitudes rather than for sectarian interests), the whole mind of Bentham was imbued and saturate. He had no mercy, no toleration for the knots and companies of men whom he considered as interrupters or monopolists of the power of the many—to his mind they were invariably actuated by base and designing motives, and such motives, according to his philosophy, they were even *compelled* to entertain. His intellect was as the aqueduct which bore aloft, and over the wastes and wrecks below, the stream of the philosophy of one century to the generations of the other. His code of morals, original in its results, is in many parts (unconsciously to himself) an eclecticism of nearly all the best doctrines in the various theories of a century. "The system of Condillac required its '*moral*' code, and Helvetius supplied it." The moral code of Helvetius required its legislative, and in Bentham it obtained it. I consider, then, that two series of causes conspired to produce Bentham—the one national, the other belonging to all Europe; the same causes on the one hand which produced with us the Economists—the same causes on the other hand which produced in France Helvetius and Diderot, Volney, Condorcet, and

Voltaire. He combined what had not been yet done, the spirit of the Philanthropic with that of the Practical. He did not declaim about abuses; he went at once to their root; he did not idly penetrate the sophistries of Corruption; he smote Corruption herself. He was the very Theseus of legislative reform —he not only pierced the labyrinth—he destroyed the monster.

As he drew his vigour from the stream of Change, all his writings tended to their original source. He collected from the Past the scattered remnants of a defeated innovation, and led them on against the Future. Every age may be called an age of transition—the passing on, as it were, from one state to another never ceases; but in our age the transition is *visible*, and Bentham's philosophy is the philosophy of a visible transition. Much has already happened, much is already happening every instant, in this country—throughout Europe—throughout the world, which might not have occurred if Bentham had not been; yet of all his works, none have been read by great numbers; and most of them, from their difficulties of style and subject, have little chance of ever being generally popular. He acted upon the destinies of his race by influencing the thoughts of a minute fraction of the few who think—from them the broad principles travelled onward—became known—(their source unknown)—became familiar and successful. I have said that we live in an age of visible transition—an age of disquietude and doubt—of the removal of time-worn landmarks, and the breaking up of the hereditary elements of society—old opinions, feelings—ancestral customs and institutions are crumbling away, and both the spiritual and temporal worlds are darkened by the shadow of change. The commencement of one of these epochs—periodical in the history of mankind—is hailed by the sanguine as the coming of a new Millennium—a great iconoclastic reformation, by which all false gods shall be overthrown. To me such epochs appear but as the dark passages in the appointed progress of mankind—the

times of greatest unhappiness to our species—passages into which we have no reason to rejoice at our entrance, save from the hope of being sooner landed on the opposite side. Uncertainty is the greatest of all our evils. And I know of no happiness where there is not a firm unwavering belief in its duration.

The age, then, is one of *destruction!* disguise it as we will, it must be so characterized; miserable would be our lot were it not also an age of preparation for reconstructing. What has been the influence of Bentham upon his age?—it has been twofold—he has helped to destroy and also to rebuild. No one has done so much to forward, at least in this country, the work of destruction, as Mr. Bentham. The spirit of examination and questioning has become through him, more than through any one person besides, the prevailing spirit of the age. For he questioned all things. The tendencies of a mind at once skeptical and systematic (and little in the utmost possible degree), made him endeavour to trace all speculative phenomena back to their primitive elements, and to reconsider not only the received conclusions, but the received premises. He treated all subjects as if they were virgin subjects, never before embraced or approached by man. He never set up an established doctrine as a thesis to be disputed about, but put it aside altogether, commenced from first principles, and deliberately tasked himself systematically to discover the truth, or to re-discover it if it were already known. By this process, if he ever annihilated a received opinion, he was sure of having something either good or bad to offer as a substitute for it; and in this he was most favourably distinguished from those French philosophers who preceded and even surpassed him, as destroyers of established institutions on the continent of Europe. And we shall owe largely to one who reconstructed while he destroyed, if our country is destined to pass more smoothly through this crisis of transition than the nations of the Continent, and to lose less of the good it already enjoys in working itself

free from the evil; his be the merit, if, while the wreck of the old vessel is still navigable, the masts of the new one, which brings relief, are dimly showing themselves above the horizon. For it is certain, and will be seen every day more clearly, that the initiation of all the changes which are now making in opinions and in institutions, may be claimed chiefly by men who have been indebted to his writings, and to the spirit of his philosophy, for the most important part of their intellectual cultivation.

I had originally proposed in this part of my work to give a slight sketch of the principal tenets of Bentham, with an exposition of what I conceive to be his errors; pointing out at once the benefits he has conferred, and also the mischief he has effected. But slight as would be that sketch, it must necessarily be somewhat abstract; and I have therefore, for the sake of the general reader, added it to the volume in the form of an appendix.* I have there, regarding him as a legislator and a moralist, ventured to estimate him much more highly in the former capacity than the latter; endeavouring to combat the infallibility of his application of the principle of Utility, and to show the dangerous and debasing theories which may be, and are, deduced from it. Even, however, in legislation, his greatest happiness principle is not so clear and undeniable as it is usually conceded to be. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" is to be our invariable guide! Is it so?—the greatest happiness of the greatest number of men living, I suppose, not of men to come; for if of all posterity, what legislator can be our guide? who can prejudge the future? Of men living, then?—well—how often would *their* greatest happiness consist in concession to their greatest errors.

In the dark ages (said once to me very happily the wittiest writer of the day, and one who has perhaps done more to familiarize Bentham's general doctrines

* See Appendix B.

to the public than any other individual), in the dark ages it would have been for the greatest happiness of the greatest number to burn the witches; it must have made the greatest number (all credulous of wizardry) very uncomfortable to refuse their request for so reasonable a conflagration; they would have been given up to fear and disquietude—they would have imagined their safety disregarded and their cattle despised—if witches were to live with impunity, riding on broomsticks, and sailing in oyster-shells; *their happiness* demanded a bonfire of old women. To grant such a bonfire would have been really to consult the greatest happiness of the greatest number; yet ought it to have been the principle of wise, nay, of perfect (for so the dogma states), of unimpugnable legislation? In fact, the greatest happiness principle is an excellent general rule, but it is not an undeniable axiom.

We may observe, that whatever have been the workings of English philosophy in this age, they have assumed as their characteristic a *material* shape. No new idealizing school has sprung up among us, to confute and combat with the successors of Locke; to counterbalance the attraction towards schools, dealing only with the unelevating practices of the world—the science of money-making, and the passionate warfare with social abuses. And this is the more remarkable, because both in Scotland and in Germany the light of the Material schools has already waxed dim and faint, and Philosophy directs her gaze to more lofty stars, out of the reach of this earth's attraction.

But what is it that in Germany sustains the undying study of pure ethical philosophy? and what is it that in Scotland has kept alive the metaphysical researches so torpid here? It is the system of professorships and endowments. And, indeed, such a system is far more necessary in the loud and busy action of a free commercial people, than it is in the deep quiet of a German state. With us it is the sole means by which we shall be able to advance a science that *cannot* by any possible chance remunerate or maintain its poorer dis-

ciples in all its speculative dignity, preserved from sinking into the more physical or more material studies which to greater fame attach greater rewards. Professorships compel a constant demand for ethical research, while they afford a serene leisure for its supply; insensibly they *create* the taste upon which they are *forced*, and maintain the moral glories of the nation abroad, while they contribute to rectify and to elevate its character at home.*

CHAPTER VII.

PATRONAGE.

Patronage as influencing Art and Science—Two sorts of Patronage—that of Individuals, that of the State—Individual Patronage in certain cases pernicious—Individual Patronage is often subservient to Individual Taste—Domestic Habits influence Art—Small Houses—The Nobleman and his two Pictures—Jobbing—What is the Patronage of a State? That which operates in elevating the People, and so encouraging Genius—The qualities that obtain Honours are the Barometers of the respect in which Intellect, Virtue, Wealth, or Birth are held—The Remark of Helvetius—Story of a Man of Expectations—Deductions of the Chapter summed up.

BEFORE touching upon the state of science and the state of art in England, it may be as well to settle one point, important to just views of either. It is this—what is the real influence of patronage? Now, sir, I hold that this question has not been properly considered. Some attribute every efficacy to patronage, others refuse it all; to my judgment, two distinct sorts of patronage are commonly confounded; there is the

* Since writing the above, I have had great pleasure in reading a Petition from Glasgow, praying for endowed Lectureships in Mechanics' Institutes. I consider such a Petition more indicative of a profound and considerate spirit of liberalism than almost any other which, for the last three years, has been presented to the Legislative Assembly

patronage of individuals, and there is the patronage of the State. I consider the patronage of individuals hurtful *whenever it is neither supported nor corrected by diffused knowledge among the public at large—but that of the State is usually beneficial.* In England, we have no want of patronage, in art at least, however common the complaint: we have abundant patronage, but it is all of one kind; it is individual patronage · the State patronises nothing.

Now, sir, I think that where the public is supine, the patronage of individuals is injurious; first, because wherever, in such a case, there is individual patronage, must come the operation of individual taste. George the Fourth (for with us a king is as an individual, not as the State) admired the Low Dutch school of painting, and boors and candlesticks became universally the rage. In the second place, and this has never been enough insisted upon, the domestic habits of a nation exercise great influence upon its arts. If people do not live in large houses, they cannot ordinarily purchase large pictures. The English aristocracy, wealthy as they are, like to live in angular drawing-rooms thirty feet by twenty-eight; they have no vast halls and long-drawn galleries: if they buy large pictures, they have no place wherein to hang them. It is absurd to expect them to patronise the grand historical school until we insist upon their living in grand historical houses. Commodiousness of size is therefore the first great requisite in a marketable picture. Hence one very plain reason why the Historical School of painting does not flourish among us. Individuals are the patrons of painting, individuals buy pictures for private houses, as the State would buy them for public buildings. An artist painted an historical picture for a nobleman, who owned one of the few large houses in London; two years afterward the nobleman asked him to exchange it for a little cabinet picture, half its value. "Your Lordship must have discovered some great faults in my great picture," said the piqued artist. "Not in the least," replied

the nobleman very innocently; "but the fact is, *I have changed my house.*"

There was no longer any room for the historical picture, and the ornament in one house had become lumber in the other.

Individual patronage in England is not therefore at this time advantageous to high art: we hear artists crying out for patronage to support art; they have had patronage enough, and it has crippled and attenuated art as much as it possibly could do; add to this, that individual patronage leads to jobbing; the fashionable patron does every thing for the fashionable artist. And the job of the Royal Academy at this day claims the National Gallery as a jobbing appendix to itself! Sir Martin Shee asks for patronage, and owns, in the same breath, that it would be the creature of "interest or intrigue." But if it promote jobbing among fashionable artists, individual patronage is likely to pervert the genius of great ones—it commands, it bows, it moulds its protége to whims and caprices; it set Michael Angelo to make roads, and employed Holbein in designs for forks and salt-cellars.

No! individual patronage is not advantageous to art, but there is a patronage which *is*—the patronage of the State, and this only to a certain extent. Supposing there were in the mass of this country a deep love and veneration for art or for science, the State could do nothing more than attempt to perpetuate those feelings; but if that love and veneration do not exist, the State can probably assist to create or impel them. The great body of the people must be filled with the sentiments that produce science or art, in order to make art and science become thoroughly naturalized among us. The spirit of a State can form those sentiments among its citizens. This is the sole beneficial patronage it can bestow. How is the favour of the people to be obtained? By suiting the public taste. If therefore you demand the public encouragement of the higher art and loftier science, you must accordingly train up the public taste. Can kings effect

this—can individual patrons? They can at times, when the public taste has been long forming, and requires only development or an impetus; not otherwise. It has been well observed, that Francis I., a true patron of art, preceded his time; he established patronage at the court, but could diffuse a taste among the people; therefore his influence withered away, producing no national result; fostering foreigners, but not stimulating the native genius. But a succession of Francis the Firsts—that is, the perpetuating effect and disposition of a *State*—would probably have produced the result at last of directing the public mind towards an admiration of art; and that admiration would have created a discriminating taste which would have made the people *willing* to cultivate whatever of science or art should appear among them.

Art is the result of inquiry into the Beautiful, Science into that of the True. You must diffuse throughout a people the cultivation of Truth and the love of Beauty before science and art will be generally understood.

This would be the natural tendency of a better and loftier education—and education will thus improve the influence of patronage, and probably act upon the disposition of the State. But if what I have said of endowments be true, viz. that men must be courted to knowledge—that knowledge must be obtruded on them—it is true also that Science should have its stimulants and rewards. I do not agree with Mr. Babbage, that places in the Ministry would be the exact rewards appropriate to men of science. I should be sorry to see our Newtons made Secretaries for Ireland, and our Herschels turned into whippers-in of the Treasury. I would rather that honours should grow out of the natural situation in which such men are placed, than transplant them from that situation to one demanding far less exertion of genius in general, and far less adapted in itself to the peculiar genius they have displayed. What I assert is this,—that the State should not seem insensible to the services

and distinction of any class of men—that it should have a lively sympathy with the honour it receives from the triumphant achievements either of art or science,—and that if it grant reward to any other species of merit, it should (not for the sake of distinguishing immortality, but for the sake of elevating public opinion) grant honours to those who have enforced the love of the beautiful, or the knowledge of the true. I agree with certain economists, that patronage alone cannot produce a great artist or a great philosopher; I agree with them that it is only through a superficial knowledge of history, that seeing at the same time an age of patrons and an age of art and science, vain enthusiasts have asserted that patronage produced the art; I agree with them that Phidias was celebrated through Greece *before* he was honoured by Pericles; I agree with them that to make Sir Isaac Newton Master of the Mint was by no means an advancement to Astronomy; I agree with them that no vulgar hope of patronage can produce a great discovery or a great picture; that so poor and mercenary an inspiration is not even present to the conceiving thought of those majestic minds that are alone endowed with the power of creation. But it is not to produce a few great men, but to diffuse throughout a whole country a respect and veneration for the purer distinctions of the human mind, that I desire to see a State bestowing honours upon promoters of her science and art; it is not for the sake of stimulating the lofty, but refining the vulgar, mind, that we should accustom ourselves to behold rank become the natural consequence of triumphant intellect. If it were the custom of this country to promote and honour art and science, I believe we should probably not create either a Newton or a Michael Angelo; but we should by degrees imbue the public mind with a respect for the unworldly greatness which yet acquires worldly distinction; for it is the wont of the commercial spirit to regard most those qualities which enable the possessor to get on the most in the world; and we should diffuse throughout

the community a respect for intellect, just as, if we honoured virtue, we should diffuse throughout a community a respect for virtue. That Humboldt should be a Minister of State has not produced new Humboldts, but it has created throughout the circles around him (which, in their turn act upon general society) an attention to and culture of the science which Humboldt adorns. The King of Bavaria is attached to art: he may not make great artists, but he circulates through his court a general knowledge of art itself. I repeat, the true object of a State is less to produce a few elevated men than to diffuse a respect for all principles that serve to elevate. If it were possible, which in the present state of feeling must be merely a philosophical theory and suggestion, to confer peerages merely for life upon men of eminent intellectual distinction, it would gradually exalt the character of the peerage; it would popularize it with the people, who would see in it a reward for all classes of intellect, and not for military, legal, and political adventurers only; it would diminish, in some respect, the vulgar and exclusive veneration for mere birth and mere wealth, and though it would not stimulate the few self-dependent minds to follow art or science for itself, it would create among the mass (which is a far more important principle of the two) that general cultivation of art and science which we find is ever the consequence of affixing to any branch of human acquirement high worldly rewards.* The best part of the celebrated book of Helvetius is that which proves that the honours of a State direct the esteem of the people, and that according to the esteem of the people

* "Oh, but," say some, "these peerages would become the result of mere Court favour." I doubt it. Wherever talent forces itself into our aristocracy, not having wealth to support it, the talent, however prostituted, is usually the most eminent of its class. Whatever soldiers, whatever sailors, whatever lawyers, or whatever orators, climbing, not buying their way upward, ascend to the Upper House, are usually the best soldiers, sailors, lawyers, and orators of the day. This would probably be yet more the case with men whose intellect dabbles less in the stirring interests of the world, and of whose merits Europe is the arbiter.

is the *general* direction of mental energy and genius: "the same desire of glory," says the philosopher, "which in the early ages of the Republic produced such men as Curtius and Decius, must have formed a Marius and Octavius when glory, as in the latter days of the Republic, was only connected with tyranny and power; the love of esteem is a diminutive of the love of glory;" the last actuates the few, the first the multitude. But whatever stimulates in a nation the love of glory, acts also on the love of esteem, and the honours granted to the greater passion direct the motives of the lesser one.

A Minister was asked why he did not promote merit: "Because," replied the statesman, dryly, "merit did not promote *me!*" It is ridiculous to expect honours for men of genius in states where honours are showered upon the men of accident,—men of accident indeed among us especially,—for it is not to be high-born alone that secures the dignified emoluments of state,—but to be born in *a certain set.* A gentleman without a shilling proposed the other day to an heiress. Her father delicately asked his pretensions.

"I have little at present," said he, "but my expectations are very great."

"Ah! indeed—expectations!"

"Yes; you may easily conceive their extent, when I tell you that I have one cousin a Grenville and another a Grey."

To conclude, it seems, then, that the patronage of wealthy individuals (when the public is so far unenlightened that it receives a fashion without examining its merits), a patronage which cannot confer honours, but only confers money, is not advantageous to art or science,—that the patronage of the State is advantageous, not in creating great ornaments in either, but in producing a general taste and a public respect for their cultivation: for the minds of great men in a civilized age are superior to the influence of laws and customs; they are not to be made by ribands and titles—their

world is in themselves, and the only openings in that world look out upon immortality. But it is in the power of law and custom to bring those minds into more extensive operation; to give a wider and more ready sphere to their influence; not to create the orators, but to enlarge and still the assembly, and to conduct, as it were, through an invisible ether of popular esteem, the sound of the diviner voices amidst a listening and reverent audience.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STATE OF SCIENCE.

The Public only reward in Science that which is addressed to their Wants—The higher Science cannot, therefore, be left to their encouragement—Examples of one Man accomplishing the Invention of another, often through want of Mechanical Means in the Inventor—If the Public cannot reward the higher Sciences, the State should—How encouraged here—Comparison between the Continent and England in this respect—Three Classes of Scientific Men: the First nothing can discourage; the Last the Public reward; the intermediate Class disheartened by indifference—Aristocratic Influence deleterious by means of the Royal Society—Number of lesser Societies on *Branches* of Knowledge—The Nature of Ambition—Its Motive and Objects common to Philosophers as to other Men.

I SHALL follow out through this chapter a principle advanced in the last.

Whatever is addressed to man's wants, man's wants will pay for; hence the true wisdom of that doctrine in political economy which leaves the useful to be remunerated by the public.

Because, 1st. Those who consume the article are better judges of its merit than a Government.

2d. The profit derived from the sale of the commodity is proportioned to the number of persons who derive advantage from it. It is thus naturally remunerated according to its utility.

3d. The inventor will have a much greater induce-

ment to improve his invention, and adapt it to the taste or want of his customers than he would have were he rewarded by a Government which pays for the invention, but not for each subsequent improvement. Whatever, therefore, addresses the necessities of the people, the Government may safely trust to the public requital.

But it so happens that that part of science which addresses itself to immediate utility is not the highest. Science depends on some few great principles of a wide and general nature; from these arise secondary principles, the partial application of whose laws to the arts of life improves the factory and creates the machine. The secondary principles are therefore the parents of the Useful.

For the comprehension, the discovery, or the full establishment of the primary and general principles, are required habits of mind and modes of inquiry only obtained by long years of profound thought and abstract meditation. What the alchymist imagined of the great secret applies to all the arcana of nature. "The glorified spirit," "the mastery of masterships," are to be won but by that absorbed and devout attention of which the greater souls are alone capable; and the mooned loveliness and divinity of Nature reveals itself only to the rapt dreamer upon lofty and remote places.

But minds of this class are rare—the principles to which they are applied are few. No national encouragement could perhaps greatly increase the number of such minds or of such principles.

There is a second class of intellect which applies itself to the discovery of less general principles.

There is a third class of intellect which applies successfully principles already discovered to purposes of practical utility. For this last a moderate acquaintance with science, aided by a combining mind, and a knowledge of the details of the workshop, joined perhaps to a manual dexterity in mechanic or chymical arts, are, if essential, commonly sufficient.

The third class of intellect is rarely joined to the

second, still more rarely to the first; but *though the lowest, it is the only one that the public remunerate, and the only one therefore safely to be left to public encouragement.*

Supposing, too, a man discover some striking and most useful theory, the want of capital, or the imperfect state of the mechanical arts, may render it impossible for him to apply his invention to practical purposes. This is proved by the whole history of scientific discovery. I adduce a few examples.

The doctrine of latent heat, on which the great improvement of the steam-engine rested, was the discovery of a chymist, Dr. Black. Its successful application to the steam-engine required vast mechanical resources, and was reserved for the industry of Watt and the large capital of Mr. Boulton.

The principle of the hydrostatic paradox was known for two centuries before it was applied to the practical purposes of manufactures.

The press of Bramah, by which almost all the great pressures required in our arts are given, was suggested by that principle; but the imperfect state of the art of making machinery prevented its application until very recently.

The gas called chlorine was discovered by a Swedish chymist about the year 1770. In a few years another philosopher found out that it possessed the property of destroying infection, and it has since formed the basis of most of the substances employed for disinfecting. In later times another philosopher found out its property of whitening the fibre of linen and woollen goods; and it shortly became in the hands of practical men a new basis of the art of bleaching.

The fact that fluids will boil at a lower temperature in a vacuum then when exposed to the pressure of the air, has long been known, but the application of that principle to boiling sugar produced a fortune to its inventor.

It is needless to multiply similar instances; they are of frequent occurrence.

The application of science to useful purposes may then be left to the public for reward; not so the *discovery* of the theories on which the application is founded. Here, then, there should be something in the constitution of society or the State, which, by honouring science in its higher grades, shall produce a constant supply to its practical results in the lower. What encouragement of this nature is afforded to Englishmen? Let us consider.

In every wealthy community, a considerable number of persons will be found possessed of means sufficient to command the usual luxuries of their station in society, without the necessity of employing their time in the acquisition of wealth. Pleasures of various kinds will form the occupations of the greater part of this class, and it is obviously desirable to direct, as far as possible, that which constitutes the pleasures of one class to the advantage of all. Among the occupations of persons so situated, literature and science will occasionally find a place, and the stimulus of vanity or ambition will urge them to excel in the line they have chosen. The cultivators of the lighter departments of literature will soon find that a profit arises from the sale of their works, and the new stimulus will convert that which was taken up as an amusement into a more serious occupation. Those who pursue science will find in the demand for elementary books a similar source of profit, although to a far less extent. But it is evident that the highest walks both in literature and science can derive no stimulus from this source. In the mean time, the profits thus made will induce a few persons of another class to enter the field. These will consist of men possessing more moderate means, whose tastes are decidedly and strongly directed either to literature or to science, and who thus hope to make some small addition to their income. If any institutions exist in the country, such as lectureships or professorships, or if there are any official situations which are only bestowed on persons possessing literary or scientific

reputation, then there will naturally arise a class of persons whose education is directed towards fitting them for such duties; and the number of this class will depend in some measure on the number of those official situations, and on the fairness with which they are filled up. If such appointments are numerous, and if they lead to wealth or rank in society, then literature or science, as the case may be, will be considered as a profession. In England, the higher departments of science are pursued by a few who possess independent fortune, by a few more who hope to make a moderate addition to an income itself but moderate, arising from a small private fortune, and by a few who occupy the very small number of official situations dedicated to the abstract sciences; such are the chairs at our universities: but in England the cultivation of science is not a profession. In France, the institutions of the country open a considerable field of ambition to the cultivators of science; in Prussia the range of employments is still wider, and the policy of the state, as well as the personal disposition of the sovereign, gives additional effect to those institutions. In both those countries science is considered a profession; and in both its most successful cultivators rarely fail to be rewarded with wealth and honours.

The contrast between England and the Continent is in one respect most singular. In our own country, we occasionally meet with persons in the station of private gentlemen, ardently pursuing science for its own sake, and sometimes even acquiring a European reputation, while scarcely a similar instance can be produced throughout the Continent.

As the annual income received by men of science in France has been questioned, I shall select the names of some of the most eminent, and give, from official documents, the places they hold, and the salaries attached to them. Alterations may have taken place, but about two years ago this list was correct.

M. Le Baron Cuvier (Pair de France).

	Francs.	Pounds.
Conseiller d'Etat	10,000	400
Membre du Conseil Royal	12,000	480
Professeur de College de France	5,000	200
Professeur Jardin des Plantes, with a house	5,000	200
Secretaire Perpetuel de l'Academie des Sciences	6,000	240
Directeur des Cultes Protestants	unknown	
	38,000	1520

M. Le Baron Thenard (Pair de France).

	Francs.	Pounds.
Membre du Conseil Royal	12,000	480
Professeur à l'Ecole Polytechnique	5,000	200
Doyen de la Faculté des Sciences	6,000	240
Professeur au College de France	5,000	200
Membre du Comite des Arts et Manufactures	2,400	96
Membre de L'Institût	1,500	60
	31,900	1276

M. Gay Lussac,

	Francs.	Pounds.
Professeur à l'Ecole Polytechnique	5,000	200
Professeur à la Faculte	4,500	180
Professeur au Tabacs	3,000	120
Membre du Comite des Arts et Manufactures	2,400	96
Membre du Conseil des Poudres et Salpetres, with a house at the Arsenal	4,000	160
Essayeur à la Monnoie	20,000	800
Membre de l'Institût	1,500	60
	40,400	1616

M. Le Baron Poisson,

	Francs.	Pounds.
Membre du Conseil Royal	12,000	480
Examinateur à l'Ecole Polytechnique	6,000	240
Membre du Bureau des Longitudes	6,000	240
Professeur de Mecanique à la Faculte		
Membre de l'Institût	1,500	60
	25,500	1020

These are the fixed sources of income of some of the most eminent men of science in France; they receive some additions from being named as members of various temporary commissions, and it appears that these four persons were two years back paid annually 5432*l.*, and that two of them had houses attached to their offices.

Without meaning to compare their merits with those of our countrymen, let us take four names well

known in England for their discoveries in science, Professor Airey, Mr. Babbage, Sir David Brewster, and Sir John Herschel: without entering into detail, the amount of the salaries of all the official situations which any of them hold is 700*l.*;—and a residence is attached to one of the offices!*

Having thus contrasted the pecuniary encouragement given to science in the two countries, let us glance at the social position it enjoys in each. The whole tone of public opinion in the two countries is different upon the subject of science. In France, two of the persons alluded to were peers, and in the late law relative to the peerage, among the classes out of whom it must be recruited, members of the Institute who are distinguished by their discoveries are included. The legion of honour is also open to distinguished merit, in the sciences as well as in civil life, and the views of Napoleon in the institutions of that order are remarkable as coming from the military head of a nation whose attachment to military glory is proverbial.

The following extracts from the speech of the First Consul in 1802, to the council of State, deserve attention:—

"La découverte de la poudre à canon eut aussi une influence prodigieuse sur le changément du système militaire et sur toutes les conséquences qu'il entraîna. Depuis cette révolution, qui est ce qui a fait la force d'un général? Ses qualités civiles, le coup-d'œil, le calcul, l'esprit, les connaissances administratives, l'éloquence, non pas celle du jurisconsulte, mais celle qui convient à la tête des armées, et enfin la connaissance des hommes: tout cela est civil. Ce n'est pas maintenant un homme de cinq pieds dix pouces qui fera de

* The sordid and commercial spirit of our aristocracy may be remarked in the disposition of its honours. It is very likely that a numerous creation of peers will be shortly made. In France, such a creation would be rendered popular and respectable, by selecting the most distinguished men of the necessary politics; *here*, neither the minister nor the public would ever dream of such a thing—we shall choose the *richest men!*

grandes choses. S'il suffisait pour être général d'avoir de la force et de la bravoure, chaque soldat pourrait prétendre au commandement. Le général qui fait de grandes choses est celui qui réunit les qualités civiles. C'est parce qu'il passe pour avoir le plus d'esprit, que le soldat lui obéit et le respecte. Il faut l'entendre raisonner au bivouac; il estime plus le général qui sait calculer que celui qui a le plus de bravoure. Ce n'est pas que le soldat n'estime la bravoure, car il mépriserait le général qui n'en aurait pas. Mourad-Bey était l'homme le plus fort et le plus adroit parmi les Mamelucks; sans cela il n'aurait pas été Bey. Quand il me vit, il ne concevait pas comment je pouvais commander à mes troupes; il ne le comprit que lorsqu'il connut notre système de guerre. * * * Dans tous les pays, la force cède aux qualités civiles. Les baïonnettes se baissent devant le prêtre qui parle au nom du Ciel, et devant l'homme qui en impose par sa science. * * * Ce n'est pas comme général que je gouverne, mais parceque la nation croit que j'ai les qualités civiles propres au gouvernement; si elle n'avait pas cette opinion, le gouvernement ne se soutiendrait pas. Je savais bien ce que je faisais, lorsque, général d'armée, je prenais la qualité de *membre de l'Institût;* j'étais sûr d'être compris, même par le dernier tambour.

"Le propre des militaires est de tout vouloir des potiquement; celui de l'homme civil est de tout soumettre à la discussion, à la vérité, à la raison. Elles ont leurs prismes divers, ils sont souvent trompeurs: cependant la discussion produit la lumière. Si l'on distinguait les hommes en militaires et en civils, on établirait deux ordres, tandis qu'il n'y a qu'une nation. Si l'on ne décernait des honneurs qu'aux militaires, cette préférence serait encore pire, car dès-lors la nation ne serait plus rien."

It is needless to remark, that these opinions are quite at variance with those which prevail in England, and that military or political merit is almost the only kind which our institutions recognise.

Neither then by station nor by wealth does the practice and custom of the State reward the English student of the higher sciences; the comparison between England and the Continent in this point is startling and decisive. Two consequences follow:—the one is, that science is the most cultivated by the first order of mind, which no discouragement can check; and by the third order of intellect which, applied merely to useful purposes, or the more elementary and popular knowledge, is rewarded sufficiently by the necessities of the Public; by that intermediate class of intellect which pursues the discovery of the lesser speculative principles, science is the most disregarded. On men of this class the influences of society have a natural operation; they do not follow a pursuit which gives them neither a respected station nor the prospect even of a decent maintenance. The second consequence is, that theoretical science among us has great luminaries, but their light is not generally diffused; science is not higher on the Continent than with us, but being more honoured, it is more generally cultivated. Thus, when we hear some complaining of the decline of science in England, others asserting its prosperity, we have only to keep these consequences in view, in order to reconcile the apparent contradiction. We have great names in science: a Babbage, a Herschel, a Brewster, an Airey, prove that the highest walks of science are not uncultured; the continuous improvement in machinery adapted to the social arts proves also that practical and popular science is not disproportioned to the wants of a great commercial people. But it is nevertheless perfectly true, that the circle of *speculative* science is narrowand contracted; and that useful applications of science would be far more numerous if theoretical speculators were more common. This deficiency we can repair only (in my mind) by increasing the number and value of endowed professorships, and by that vigilant respect from the honours of the State, which improves and elevates the tone of public opinion, makes science a

profession, and allures to its rewards a more general ambition by attaching to them a more external dignity.

We may observe, too, that the aristocratic influence in England has greatly adulterated the destined Reservoir of science, and the natural Fountain of its honorary distinctions,—I speak of the Royal Society. In order to make the Society "respectable"—it has been considered, in the first place, necessary to pay no trifling subscription for admission. "It should be observed," says Mr. Babbage, "that all members contribute equally, and that the sum now required is fifty pounds; it used until lately to be ten pounds on entrance, and four pounds annually." Now men of science have not yet found the philosopher's stone, and many whom the society ought most to seek for its members would the most shrink from its expense. In the second place, to make it "respectable," the aristocratic spirit ordains that we should crowd the society as full as possible with men of rank and property. Imagine seven hundred and fourteen fellows of the Royal Society! How can it possibly be an honour to a man of science to be one of seven hundred and fourteen men;* five-sixths of whom, too, have never contributed papers to the Transactions! the number takes away emulation, the admittance of rank and station indiscriminately, and for themselves alone, lowers and vulgarizes the standard whereby merit is judged. Mr. Davies Gilbert is a man at most of respectable endowments, but he is of large fortune —the Council declare him "*by far* the most fit person for president." An agreeable compliment to the great men in that society, to whom Mr. Gilbert in science was as a child! But perhaps you may imagine it an honour to the country that so many men of rank are desirous of belonging to a scientific society? Per-

* But the most remarkable thing, according to Mr. Babbage, is, that a candidate of moderate scientific distinction is pretty sure of being black-balled, while a gentleman of good fortune perfectly unknown is sure to be accepted. Thus is a society of science the mimic of a fashionable club.

haps you may deem it a proof, that they cultivate science? as well might you say they cultivate fish-selling, because by a similar courtesy they belong to the Fishmonger's Company; they know as much of science as of fishmongery: judge for yourself. In 1827, out of one hundred and nine members *who had contributed to* the Transactions, there were how many peers think you? there was—one,

"A sunbeam that had gone astray!"

I have said that the more popular and useful sciences are encouraged among us, while speculations in the higher and more abstruse are confined only to the few, whom in all ages no difficulties can discourage. A proof of this is in the number and flourishing state of societies which are supported chiefly by the middle classes, and which mere vanity could not suffice therefore to create. In the metropolis, even in provincial towns, numerous societies for cultivating Botany, Geology, Horticulture, &c., assemble together those of similar tastes; and elementary tracts, of all sizes, upon all sciences, are a part of fashionable literature. But what I have said of letters generally is applicable yet more to science,—viz. that encouragement to new, to lofty, and to abstruse learning is more than ever necessary, when the old learning becomes popularized and diffused.

Ambition is of a more various nature than the shallow suppose. All biography tells us that men of great powers will turn early from one pursuit not encouraged, to other pursuits that are. It is impossible to calculate how much science may lose if to all its own obstacles are added all social determents. Thus we find that the same daring inventor who has ennobled our age with the construction of the celebrated calculating machine,* after loudly avowing his dissatisfac-

* One word upon this,—the most remarkable discovery of the time.—The object of the calculating machine is, not to answer individual questions, but to produce multitudes of results following given laws. It differs remarkably from all former attempts of the kind in two points.

tion at the honours awarded to science, has proclaimed practically his discontent at those honours, by courting the votes of a metropolitan district. Absolute monarchs have been wise in gratifying the ambition that is devoted to *peaceful* pursuits; it diverts the ambition of many working and brooding minds from more stirring courses, and steeps in the contented leisure of philosophy the faculties that might otherwise have devoted the same process of intrepid questioning and daring thought to the more dangerous career of action.

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1. It proposes to construct mathematical tables by the *Method of Differences.*

2. It proposes to print on plates of copper the tables so computed.

It is not within my present plan to attempt, even briefly, any explanation of its mechanical principles, but the views which mechanism has thus opened respecting the future progress of mathematical science are too striking to be passed over.

In this first attempt at substituting the untiring efforts of machinery for some of the more simple but laborious exertions of the human mind, the author proposed to make an engine which should tabulate any function whose sixth difference is constant. Regarding it merely in this light, it would have been a vast acquisition, by giving to mathematical tables a degree of accuracy which might vainly have been sought by any other means; but in that small portion which has yet been put together, other powers are combined—tables can be computed by it having no difference constant; and other tables have been produced by it, so complicated in their nature, that mathematical analysis must itself be improved before it can grasp their laws. The existence of the engine in its present state gives just reason to expect that in its finished form, instead of tabulating the *single* equation of differences, which its author proposed, it will tabulate large classes of that species comprised in the general form of *linear equations with constant co-efficients.*

The future steps of machinery of this nature are not so improbable, now that we see realized before us the anticipations of the past. One extensive portion of mathematical analysis has already fallen within the control of wheels. Can it be esteemed visionary to suppose that the increasing demands of civilized man, and the constantly improving nature of the tools he constructs, shall ultimately bring within his power the whole of that most refined instrument of human thought—the pure analysis.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STATE OF THE ARTS.

Late rise of the art of Painting in England—Commencement of Royal Academy—Its infidelity to its objects—In two respects, however, it has been serviceable—Pictorial art higher in this Country, and more generally cultivated, than in any other—But there is an absence of sentiment in our Painters—The influence of the Material extends from Philosophy to Art—True cause of the inspiring effect of Religion upon Art—Sculpture—Chantrey—Gibson—Historical Painting—Haydon, &c.—Martin—His wonderful genius—New source of religious inspiration from which he draws—His early hardships—Portrait Painting—Its general badness—Fancy Pictures—Wilkie characterized—Landscape Painting—Turner—Miscellaneous—E. Landseer—Water Colours—Engraving—Arts applied to Manufactures—The caprices of Fashion—Silk-working—Anecdote of Court Patriotism—Architecture—Introduction of the Greek school; corrupted not corrected it—The unoriginal always the in appropriate in Architecture as in Poetry—We must find the first Principles in the first Monuments—Not of other Nations, but our own—Summing up of the above Remarks.

EVERY one knows that the Art of Painting cannot be said to have taken root among us before the last century; till then we believed ourselves to be deficient in the necessary imagination.—*We* who had produced a Milton and a Shakspeare! But the art, commencing with Thornhill, took a vigorous stride to perfection, and to popular cultivation, from the time of Hogarth; and, corrupted on the Continent during the eighteenth century, it found in that era its regeneration in England.

From 1734, the number of English artists increased with so great a rapidity, that in 1760 we far surpassed our contemporaries in Italy and France, both in the higher excellence of painting and the general cultivation of the art. The application of the fine arts to manufactures popularized and domesticated them among us. And the delft-ware manufactured by the celebrated Wedgewood carried notions of grace and

beauty to every village throughout the kingdom. Many of Flaxman's first designs were composed for Wedgewood; and, adapting his conceptions to the pure and exquisite shapes of Grecian art, he at once formed his own taste, and created that of the public. Never did art present fairer promise in any land than when Reynolds presided over portraiture, Barry ennobled the historical school, and Flaxman breathed its old and lofty majesty into Sculpture. Just at that time the Royal Academy (subsequent to the chartered Society of Artists) was established. I shall reiterate none of the just attacks which of late have been made against that institution. It is sufficient to state, that the Royal Academy was intended for the encouragement of historical paintings—that it is filled with landscapes and portraits; that it was intended to incorporate and to cheer on all distinguished students—that it has excluded and persecuted many of the greatest we possess, and that at this moment, sixty-five years after its establishment, our greatest living artists, with scarcely any exceptions, have *not* been educated at an academy, intended *of* course *to* educate genius, even more than to support it afterward!* With the assumption of a public body it has combined the exclusiveness of a private clique. I do not however agree with its assailants, that it has been very effectively injurious to art; on the contrary, I think in some respects art has been unconsciously assisted by it. In the first place, though it has not fostered genius, it has diffused through a large circle a respectable mediocrity, that is, it has made the standard of the mediocre several degrees higher than

* Martin was a pupil of Musso. Flaxman studied with his father, and at the Duke of Richmond's gallery. He studied, indeed, a short time at the Academy, where he was refused the gold medal. Chantrey learned carving at Sheffield; Gibson was a ship-carver at Liverpool. When Sir Thomas Lawrence became a probationer for admission to the schools of the Academy, his claims were not allowed. The Academy taught not Bonnington—no, nor Danby, nor Stanfield. Dr. Monro directed the taste of Turner.—See an article in the New Monthly Magazine on the Royal Academy, May, 1833.

it was before. And, secondly, its jealousy and exclusiveness, though in some instances repressing the higher art they refused to acknowledge, have nerved it in others to new flights by the creative stimulus of indignation. For nobly has Haydon said, though, alas! the aphorism is not universally just, "Look down upon genius and he will rise to a giant—attempt to crush him and he will soar to a god!"

The pictorial art is at this moment as high perhaps in this country as in any other, despite the rivalry of Munich and of Paris. I call to witness the names of Martin, Haydon, Wilkie, Landseer, Turner, Stanfield. It is also more generally cultivated and encouraged. Witness the number of artists and the general prices of pictures. It is rather a singular fact, that in no country abroad do you see many pictures in the houses of the gentry or lesser nobles. But with us they are a necessary part of furniture. A house-agent, taking a friend of mine over a London house the other day, and praising it to the skies, concluded with, "And when, sir, the dining-room is completely furnished—handsome red curtains, sir—and twelve good 'furniture pictures'—it will be a perfect nonpareil." The pictures were as necessary as the red curtains.

But as in the connexion between literature, art, and science, whatever affects the one affects also the other, so the prevalent characteristic of the English school of painting at this moment is the MATERIAL. You see bold execution and glaring colours, but there is an absence of sentiment—nothing raises, elevates, touches, or addresses the soul, in the vast majority of our artists. I attribute this, indeed, mainly to the little sway that Religion in these days exercises over the imagination. It is perfectly clear that Religion must, in painting and in sculpture, inspire the most ideal conceptions; for the artist seeking to represent the images of Heaven, must necessarily raise himself beyond the earth. He is not painting a mere mortal—he cannot look only to physical forms—he must darken the chamber of his mind, and in meditation and fancy image forth something

beyond the Visible and Diurnal. It is this which imparts the unutterable majesty to the Capitolian Jove, the voluptuous modesty to the Venus de Medici, and breathes over the angry beauty of the Apollo, the mystery and the glory of the god. Equally in the Italian schools, the sentiment of Religion inspired and exalted the soul of the artist, and gave the solemn terror to Michael Angelo, and the dreamlike harmony to Raffaelle. In fact, it is not Religion alone that inspires the sentiment, but it is the habit of rousing the thought, of nurturing the imagination, which he who has to paint some being not "of earth earthy" is forced to create and to sustain. And this sentiment, thus formed by the severe tasking of the intellect, is peculiarly intellectual; and once acquired, accompanies the artist even to more common subjects.* His imagination, having caught a glory from the sphere which it has reached, retains and reflects it everywhere, even on its return to earth. Thus, even in our time, the most striking and powerful painter we possess owes his inspiration to a deep and fervid sentiment of the Religious. And the dark and solemn shadow of the Hebrew God rests over the towers of Babylon, the valleys of Eden, and the awful desolation of the Universal Deluge.

If our houses are too small for the Historical School, they are yet still more unfitted for SCULPTURE: these two branches of art are necessarily the least generally encouraged. It is said, indeed, that sculpture is too cold for us,—it is just the reverse; *we* are too cold for sculpture! Among the sculptors of the present day, Chantrey and Gibson are pre-eminent: the first for portraits, the other for fancy subjects. The busts of Chantrey possess all those qualities that captivate the originals, and content their friends. He embellishes at once nature and art. If, however, the costume of his whole-length figures is, in most cases, appropriate

* Cicero has well expressed this truth—"Omnia profecto, cum se a cœlestibus rebus referet ad humanas, excelsius magnificentiusque et dicet et sentiet."

and picturesque (witness the statue of James Watt), the statue of Pitt, in Hanover-square, is a remarkable exception, in which commonplace drapery sits heavy on a disagreeable figure. It is much to be regretted that, since this eminent artist has been loaded with orders for portraits, the monuments that issue from his factory possess none of that simple beauty which distinguishes his early productions,—such as the Sleeping Children at Litchfield Cathedral, and the Lady L. Russell. The intention and execution of those performances raised him at once to a pitch of fame that *mere* portraits, however beautiful, cannot maintain. The highest meed of praise is, therefore, fast settling on Gibson, who now and then sends to our Exhibition, from Rome, the most classical specimens of sculpture that modern times have produced: they possess the grace, they sometimes approach the grandeur, of the Past. Next to the above, Gott and Campbell, at Rome, and Westmacott, Baily, Behnes, Carew, Nicholl, Lough, Pitts, and Rossi, in London, possess considerable talent.

In hurrying over the catalogue of names that have enriched the HISTORICAL department of PAINTING, I can only indicate, not criticise. The vehement action, the strength of colour, and the individualizing character of Haydon are well known. Hilton, more successful in pictures of half-size life than the colossal, exhibits in the former an unusual correctness of outline. A certain delicacy, and a romance of mind, are the characteristics of Westall. But too great a facility in composition, and a vagueness of execution, make us regret that very luck of the artist which, by too great a prosperity in youth, forced and forestalled the fruits his natural genius, by slow and more painful culture, would have produced. Etty, practised in the colours of the Venetian painters, if not strictly of the Historical School, can be classed in no other. His beauties are in a vigorous and fluent drawing, and bursts of brilliancy and light, amid an imitative affectation of the errors as well as excellence of the Venetian School.

But I hasten to Martin,—the greatest, the most lofty, the most permanent, the most original genius of his country, perhaps his age. I see in him, as I have before said, the presence of a spirit which is not of the world—the divine intoxication of a great soul lapped in majestic and unearthly dreams. He has taken a range, if not wholly new, at least rarely traversed, in the vast air of religious contemplation; he has gone back into the drear Antique; he has made the *Old* Testament, with its stern traditionary grandeur—its solemn shadows and ancestral terrors—his own element and appanage. He has looked upon "the ebon throne of Eld," and imbued a mind destined to reproduce what it surveyed, with

> "A mighty darkness
> Filling the Seat of Power—as rays of gloom
> Dart round."

Vastness is his sphere—yet he has not lost or circumfused his genius in its space; he has chained, and wielded, and measured it, at his will; he has transfused its character into narrow limits; he has compassed the Infinite itself with mathematical precision. He is not, it is true, a Raffaelle, delineating and varying human passion, or arresting the sympathy of passion itself in a profound and sacred calm; he is not a Michael Angelo, the creator of gigantic and preternatural powers, —the Titans of the ideal heaven. But he is more original, more self-dependent than either: they perfected the style of others; of Massaccio, of Signiorelli;—*they* perfected others;—Martin has borrowed from none. Alone and guideless, he has penetrated the remotest caverns of the past, and gazed on the primeval shapes of the gone world.

Look at his DELUGE—it is the most simple of his works,—it is, perhaps, also the most awful. Poussin had represented before him the dreary waste of inundation; but not the inundation of a world. With an imagination that pierces from effects to the ghastly and sublime agency, Martin gives, in the same picture, a

possible solution to the phenomenon he records, and in the gloomy and perturbed heaven, you see the conjunction of the sun, the moon, and a comet! I consider this the most magnificent alliance of philosophy and art of which the history of painting can boast. Look, again, at the Fall of Nineveh; observe how the pencil seems dipped in the various fountains of light itself: here the moon, there the electric flash; here torch upon torch, and there "the smouldering dreariment" of the advancing conflagration; the crashing wall—the rushing foe—the dismay of some, the resignation of others; in front, the pomp, the life, the brilliant assemblage, the doomed and devoted beauty gathered round the monarch, in the proud exultation of his immortalizing death! I stop not to touch upon the possible faults, upon the disproportionate height of these figures, or upon the theatrical effect of those; upon the want of some point of contrasting repose to augment the general animation, yet to blend with it a softer sympathy; or upon occasional errors in the drawing, so fiercely denounced by rival jealousies: I speak of the effect which the picture produces on all,—an effect derived from the sublimest causes,—the most august and authentic inspiration. They tell us of the genius that the Royal Institution may form—it thrust this man from its bosom: they tell us of the advantage to be found in the patronising smiles of aristocratic favour—let them ask the early history of Martin! If you would know the victorious power of enthusiasm, regard the great artist of his age immersed in difficulty, on the verge of starvation, prying in the nooks and corners of an old trunk for one remaining crust to satisfy his hunger, returning with unsubdued energy to his easel, and finding in his own rapt meditations of heaven and heaven's imagery every thing that could reconcile him to earth! Ask you why *he* is supported, and why the lesser genii droop and whine for the patronage of lords—it is because *they* have no rapt meditations!

I have heard that one of Martin's pictures was undertaken when his pecuniary resources could not bear

him through the expenses of the task. One after one his coins diminished; at length he came to a single bright shilling, which *from* its brightness he had, in that sort of playfulness which belongs to genius, kept to the last. The shilling was unfaithful as it was bright—it was taken with a sigh to the baker's, declared to be a counterfeit, and the loaf just grasped, plucked back from the hand of the immortal artist.

In PORTRAIT PAINTING—Lawrence, Owen, and Jackson are gone; the ablest of their successors (in oil) are Pickersgill and Phillips: but it may show the rottenness of individual patronage to note, that while this department is far the most encouraged, it has produced among us far fewer painters of worth and eminence. The habit, perhaps, of painting so many vulgar faces in white cravats, or velvet gowns, has toned down the minds of the artists to a correspondent vulgarity.

In FANCY PAINTING we have the light grace and romantic fancy of Parris; the high-wrought elegance and chaste humour of Leslie (that Washington Irving of the easel); the pleasant wit of Webster; the quick facility and easy charm of Newton. In Boxall, there is a tender and melancholy sentiment, which excels in the aspect of his women. Howard reminds us of Flaxman's compositions in a similar school—more the pity for Howard; and Clint, though employed in scenic representation, is dramatic—not theatrical. The most rising painter of this class is Mr. Macclise; his last picture, "Mokanna raising the Veil," is full of talent; but the face wants the sublimity of ugliness; it is grotesque, not terrible; it is the hideousness of an ape, not a demon.

But when touching on this department of the art, who does not feel the name of Wilkie rush to his most familiar thoughts? Who does not feel that the pathos and the humour of that most remarkable painter have left on him recollections as strong and enduring as the *chef d'œuvres* of literature itself; and that every new picture of Wilkie—in Wilkie's own vein—constitutes an era in enjoyment. More various, more extensive

in his grasp than even Hogarth, his genius sweeps from the dignity of history to the verge of caricature itself. Humour is the prevalent trait of all minds capable of variety in character; from Shakspeare and Cervantes, to Goldsmith and Smollett. But of what shades and differences is not humour capable? Now it loses itself in terror—now it broadens into laughter. What a distance from the Mephistopholes of Göthe to the Sir Roger de Coverley of Addison, or from Sir Roger de Coverley to Humphrey Clinker! What an illimitable space from the dark power of Hogarth to the graceful tenderness of Wilkie! And which can we say with certainty is the higher of the two? Can we place even the "Harlot's Progress" beyond the "Distraining for Rent," or the exquisite beauty of "Duncan Grey?" And if, indeed, upon mature and critical consideration, we must give at length the palm to the more profound, analytic, and epic grandeur of Hogarth's fearful humour, we have again to recollect that Wilkie reigns also in the graver domain to which Hogarth aspired only to record the limit of his genius. The Sigismunda of Hogarth, if not indeed so poor a performance as Lord Orford esteems it, is at least immeasurably beneath the fame of its wonderful artist. But who shall say that "Knox," if also below the breadth and truth of character which Wilkie carries into a more familiar school, is not, for boldness of conception, and skill in composition, an effort of which any master might be proud? Wilkie is the Goldsmith of painters, in the amiable and pathetic humour, in the combination of smiles and tears, of the familiar and the beautiful; but he has a stronger hold both over the more secret sympathies and the springs of a broader laughter than Goldsmith himself. If the Drama could obtain a Wilkie, we should hear no more of its decline. He is the exact illustration of the doctrine I have advanced—of the power and dignity of the popular school, in the hands of a master; dignified, for truth never loses a certain majesty, even in her most familiar shapes.

In LANDSCAPE PAINTING, England stands pre-eminent in the present age: for here no academic dictation, no dogma of that criticism which is born of plagiarism, the theft of a theft, has warped the tendency of genius, or interfered with the simple advice of Nature, *whose face teaches.* Turner, Danby, and Martin, Stanfield, Copley Fielding, Dewint, Collins, Lee, Callcott, John Wilson, Harding, and Stanley, are true pastoralists of the art. Turner was once without a rival; all that his fancy whispered his skill executed. Of late, he has forsaken the beautiful and married the fantastic. His genius meant him for the Wordsworth of description, he has spoiled himself to the Cowley! he no longer sympathizes with Nature, he coquets with her. In Danby, a soft transparency of light and shade floating over his pictures accords well with a fancy almost Spenserian in its cast of poetical creation. In Stanfield, who does not acknowledge the precision of sight, the power of execution, the amazing scope and variety of design?

In MISCELLANEOUS PAINTINGS I pass over the names of Roberts, Prout, Mackenzie, Challond, eminent for architectural drawings; of Lance and Derby, who almost rival the Dutch painters in the line of dead game, fruits, &c.; of Cooper, Hancock, Davis, distinguished in the line of Edwin Landseer, in order to come to Landseer himself. The extreme facility of this singular artist renders his inferior works too sketchy, and of a texture not sufficiently characteristic; but in his best, we have little if any thing to desire. He reminds us of those metaphysicians who have given animals a soul. He breathes into the brute world a spiritual eloquence of expression beyond all literary power to describe. He is worth to the "Voice of Humanity," all the societies in England. You cannot gaze on his pictures and ill use an animal for months afterward. He elevates your sympathies for them to the level of human interest. He throws a poetry over the most unpoetical; nay, he has given a pathos even to "a widowed duck;" he is a sort of link

to the genius of Wilkie, carrying down the sentiment of humane humour from man to man's great dependent family, and binding all creation together in one common sentiment of that affection whose wisdom comprehends all things. Wilkie and Landseer are the great benevolists of painting: as in the quaint sublimity of the Lexicon of Suidas, Aristotle is termed, "the Secretary of Nature, who dipped his pen in intellect," so each of these artists may be called, in his several line, the secretary also of nature, who dips his pencil in sympathy; for both have more, in their genius, of the heart's philosophy than the mind's.

PAINTING IN WATER COLOURS forms a most distinguishing part of English art. About the end of the last century, a new style of water-colour drawing or painting was adopted: till then, whatever talent was observable in the works of Sanby, Hearne, &c., there was no particular difference in their method and the works of foreign artists. At the period above mentioned, Dr. Monro, of the Adelphi, an eminent amateur in that peculiar line, invited several young men to study from the drawings in his valuable collection, and under his guidance: Turner, Gurtin, Varley, and others acquired a power of depicting nature in transparent water-colours that far outstrips every thing of the like manner previously produced. Depth of tone, without blackness; aerial distances, the "glow of sunshine and the cool of shade," have been accomplished in a surprising degree, not only by the three artists above mentioned, but also by Glover, Fielding, Barret, Heaphy, Richter, Stanfield, Cox, Holland, Harding, and the German and wild and mystic pencil of Cattermole. But in many respects, the large heads of expression, &c., by Sir Charles Bell are the most extraordinary works in this department; and it is not a little remarkable, that in this style a medical gentleman should have pointed the goal to excellence, and an anatomist have obtained it.

The art of ENGRAVING was in its infancy among us a century ago; in the course of a few years, Strange, Woollett, Earlom, and Sharp carried it to its utmost

vigour; but in our time, the application of machinery, and the system of division of labour, give to the practice perfection of line at the expense of sentiment and variety; the same means being applied on all occasions. This is observable in the annuals and other works by the majority of our engravers. The sacrifice of the nobler qualities to mechanism reduces engraving to a trade; for the higher denomination of art can only be allowed where the unconstrained mind pervades the whole, keeping each part subordinate to and in character with the subject. John Landseer, Doo, the elder Engleheart, &c. still, however, support engraving as an art. The like may be said of Reynolds the mezzotinto engraver. But this century may boast of having, in Bewick of Newcastle, brought wood-engraving to perfection; his pupil Harvey continues the profession with reputation.

One word on the ARTS applied to MANUFACTURES. There have for some time past been various complaints of a deficiency of artists, capable of designing for our manufactures of porcelain, silk, and other articles of luxury in general use: we are told, that public schools are required to supply the want. It may be so, yet Wedgewood, Rundel, and Hellicot the watchmaker, found no such difficulty, and now that a royal academy has existed sixty-five years, the complaint has become universal. One would imagine that the main capacity of such institutions were to create that decent and general mediocrity of talent which appeals to trade and fashion for encouragement. In truth, the complaint is not just. How did Wedgewood manage without a public school for designers? In 1760, our porcelain wares could not stand competition with those of France Necessity prompts, or, what is quite as good, allows the exertions of genius. Wedgewood applied chymistry to the improvement of the material of his pottery, sought the most beautiful and convenient specimens of antiquity, and caused them to be imitated with scrupulous nicety; he *then had recourse to the greatest genius of the day, for designs and advice.* He was of course

successful. But now the manufacturers of a far more costly material, without availing themselves of the example of Wedgewood, complain of want of talent in those whom they never sought, and whom they might as easily command, if they were as willing to reward. But the worst of fashion in its operation on art is its sudden caprices. China painting was at its height about 1806. Mr. Charles Muss, afterward celebrated for his enamelling, was at that time a painter on porcelain: this application of colours was then a fashion, and ladies willingly gave him a guinea or more per lesson for his instructions. Within three years the taste subsided; ladies not only purchased less, but to a fashion for painting on china had succeeded the fashion for painting on velvet. Thence the fair students progressed to japanning, and at length settled with incredible ardour on the more feminine mysteries of shoe-making.

"With varying vanities from every part,
They shift the moving toy-shop of the heart."

Trembling at his approaching fate, Muss by a vigorous effort turned from china to glass (the art of painting on which was then little cultivated or understood), but ere he could taste the fruits of his ingenuity his family was in want of bread. On a stormy night, drenched with rain, he anxiously pursued his way from Adam-street to Kensington, in hope of borrowing a shilling. His friend was in a nearly similar state of destitution; fortunately the latter, however, had still the blessed and English refuge of credit; and by this last remaining possession, he procured a loaf, with which the victim of these sudden reverses in feminine taste returned to his half-starved children. But, alas! the destinies of nations have their influence upon porcelain! Peace triumphed on the Continent, and

"The tottering china shook without a wind!"

Compared with the foreign ground of China, that on which we paint is too coarse to allow equal beauty,

whatever artist we employ: the fault is not with the painter, but in those who have not energy to ascertain and remedy the imperfection.

They, it is true, have however the excuse, that in fashion every thing is novelty; to-day all must be ponderous and massive ornament; to-morrow all must be filagreed and minute.

A man whose service of plate is refashioned every ten years will scarcely allow the silversmith to expend the same price for designing and modelling that was obtained when Rundel and Bridge, by employing the ablest designers in this country, supplanted competition. "Something handsome must be got up," and a meretricious and overloaded display is cheaper than exquisite execution: in some cases drawings have been sent abroad, to be there got up in metal at a cheaper rate.

With regard to silk-working: a few years ago a committee of gentlemen of rank and distinction, who took an active interest in the productions of British manufactures, obtained from France a sample of figured silk representing the departure of a young soldier; they felt confident that our own manufacturers could equal, or even surpass its excellence: but where could they procure a pattern with similar beauty and national interest? They applied to a foreign gentleman in London, who immediately called on an English artist whom he considered adequate to the performance. The subject undertaken was a young sailor returned from a successful cruise; he hears that an old and valued friend is in prison for debt; he hastens to the jail; he finds his friend tended by one only visiter (his young daughter), in sickness and despair. The composition gave great and general satisfaction; but will it be believed that the idea of a British tar in a prison (even though visiting it for so noble a purpose), appeared to our sages in silk to be shockingly ominous: they therefore wished the background to be changed into *a cottage!* The artist insisted very properly on the prison, and heard no

more of the patronage of the committee. It is also an anecdote that for many years an aristocratic feeling prevented Wilkie's "Distraining for Rent" being engraved—*lest it should excite an unpleasant feeling towards the country gentlemen!*

In nothing, sir, to my mind, is the material and unelevated character which belongs generally to the intellectual spirit of our times more developed than in our national ARCHITECTURE. A stranger in our streets is struck with the wealth, the gaud, the comfort, the bustle, the animation. But how rarely is he impressed with the vast and august simplicity that is the result in architecture, as in letters, of a lofty taste, and the witness of a people penetrated with a passion for the *great*. The first thing that strikes us in England is the lowness of all the public buildings—they appear incompleted; you would imagine a scythe had been drawn across them in the middle: they seem dedicated to St. Denis, after he had lost his head. The next thing that strikes you in them is the want of originality—they are odd, but unoriginal. Now, wherever an architecture is not original, it is sure to be inappropriate: we transplant what belongs to one climate to another wholly distinct from it—what is associated with one history of religion, to a site in which the history and religion are ludicrously opposed to it.

The celebrated Steuart, who sought to introduce among us the knowledge of the Grecian principles of architectural elegance, has in reality corrupted rather than corrected taste. Even he himself, laying down "The Appropriate," as a necessary foundation in the theory of architecture, neglects it in his practice. Look at yonder chapel—it is perfectly unconnected and inharmonious with the character of the building attached to it; assuredly it is the most elegant chapel we can boast of—but you would imagine it must be designed for the devotions of some fastidious literary institution, or the "daintie oratoire" of a queen. No! it is designed for our jolly tars, and the most refined temple is dedicated to the rudest wor-

shippers. The followers of Steuart have made this want of suiting the design to the purpose still more ridiculous. On a church dedicated to St. Philip, we behold the ox-heads typical of Jupiter; and on the frieze of a building consecrated to a quiet literary society, with whom prancing horses and panting riders have certainly no connexion, we see the bustling and fiery procession of a Grecian cavalcade. The Greek architecture, even in its purity, is not adapted to a gloomy and chilling climate; all our associations connect it with bright skies and "a garden life;" but when its grand proportions are omitted, and its minute details of alien and *unnaturalizable* mythology are carefully preserved, we cannot but think that we have adopted one at least of the ancient deities, and dedicated all our plagiarised blunders in stucco to—the Goddess of Laughter.

Few, indeed, amid the wilderness of houses in which common sense wanders distracted, are the exceptions of a better taste in imitation. But the portico of St. Pancras and the London University are beautiful copies from ancient temples, if nothing more, and it is impossible not to point out to the favour of foreigners the small Ionic chapel in North Audley Street, and the entrance to Exeter Hall, in which last there is even a lofty as well as an accurate taste.

But as a proof of the sudden progress which art makes, when divorced from imitation, I instance to you our bridges: Waterloo and Southwark bridges are both admirable in their way—they are English; we may reasonably be proud of them, for they are our own.

For my part I candidly confess, however I may draw down on myself the languid contempt of the would-be amateurs of the portfolio—that I think, in architecture as in poetry, we should seek the germ of beauty in the associations that belong to the peculiar people it is addressed to. Every thing great in art must be national. Wherever we are at a loss for invention, let us not go back to the past of other coun-

tries, but the past of our own—not to imitate, not to renew, but to adapt, to improve; to take the old spirit, but to direct it to new uses. If a great architectural genius were to rise among us, a genius that should combine the Beautiful with the Appropriate, satisfy the wants, suit the character, adapt itself to the life, and command, by an irresistible sympathy, the admiration of the people, I am convinced that his inspiration would be derived from a profound study of *our own* national monuments of architecture from the Saxon to the Elizabethan. He should copy neither, but produce a school from both,—allied at once to our history, our poetry, our religion, and our climate. Nothing is so essentially patriotic as the arts; they only permanently flourish among a people when they spring from an indigenous soil.

From this slight and rapid survey of the state of the arts in England, we may observe, first, that there is no cause to complain of their decline: secondly, that as those efforts of art most adapted to private favour have succeeded far more among us than those adapted to the public purposes of a state; so the absence of state encouragement, and the preponderance of individual patronage, have operated prejudicially on the grander schools. Even (with a few distinguished exceptions) our finest historical paintings, such as those of Martin, are on a small scale of size, adapted more for the private house than the public hall. And it is mostly on achievements which appeal not to great passions, or to pure intellect—but to the household and domestic interests—that our higher artists have lavished their genius. We see Turner in landscape, and Landseer in animals, Stanfield in scenes, and Wilkie, whose sentiment is purer, loftier, and deeper than all (save Martin's), addressing himself, in the more popular of his paintings, to the most fireside and familiar associations. The rarer and more latent, the more intellectual and immaterial sources of interest, are not those to which English genius applies itself. We may note also a curious coincidence be-

tween the Royal Academy for Art, and the Royal Academy for Science; both ridiculous for their pretensions, but eminent for their utility—the creatures of the worst social foibles of jealousy and exclusiveness—severe to genius, and uxorious to dotage upon the Mediocrity which has produced them so numerous a family.

But as I consider that the architecture of a nation is one of the most visible types of its prevalent character, so in that department all with us is comfortable and nothing vast. A sense of poetry is usually the best corrector and inspiration of prose—so a correspondent poetry in the national mind not only elevates the more graceful, but preserves also a noble and appropriate harmony in the more useful, arts. It is the POETRY OF MIND which every commercial people should be careful to preserve and to refresh.

CHAPTER X.

SUPPLEMENTARY CHARACTERS.

Lord Plume—Sneak—Mendlehon—St. Malo, the young Poet—His Opposite, Snap, the Philosopherling—Gloss Crimson, the Royal Academician.

LORD PLUME is one of those writers of the old school of whom so few are at present existing—writers who have a great notion of care in composition—who polish, who elaborate, who are hours over a sentence, which, after all, is, nine times out of ten, either a fallacy or a truism. He writes a stiff, upright hand, and values himself upon being a witty correspondent. He has established an unfortunate target in every court in Europe, at which he shoots a monthly despatch. He is deep read in memoirs, and has Grammont at his fingers' ends: he swears by Horace

Walpole, who would have made a capital butt of him. He reads the Latin poets, and styles himself F.R.S. He asks you how you would translate "*simplex munditiis*" and "*copia narium*"—takes out his handkerchief while you consider the novel question, sighs, and owns the phrases are indeed untranslatable. He is full of anecdotes and the by-gone scandal of our grandmothers: he will give you the history of every crim. con. which took place between a Whig and a farthingale. He passes for a man of most elegant mind—sets up for a Mecænas, and has a new portrait of himself painted every year, out of a tender mindfulness, I suppose, for the convenience of some future Grammont. Lord Plume has dabbled greatly in reviews—not a friend of his ever wrote a book that he did not write *to* him a letter of compliment, and *against* him an article of satire: he thinks he has the Voltaire turn, and can say a sharp thing or two. He looks out for every new book written by a friend with the alacrity of a wit looking out for a repartee. Of late years, indeed, he has not written much in the Quarterlies, for he was found out in a squib on his uncle, and lost a legacy in consequence: besides, he is editing memoirs of his own ancestors. Lord Plume thinks it elegant to write, but low to confess it; the anonymous, therefore, has great charms for him: he throws off his jealousy and his wit at the same time, and bathes in the Castalian stream with as much secrecy as if he were one of its nymphs. He believes, indeed, that it would be too great a condescension in his genius to appear in the glare of day—it would create too great a sensation—he thinks men would stop each other in the street to exclaim, "Good God! have you heard the news?—Plume has turned author!" Delightedly, then, in his younger day, crept he, nameless and secret, into the literary world. He is suspected of having written politics as well as criticism, and retailed all the tattle of the court, by way of enlightening the people. Plume is a great man.

From this gentle supporter of the anonymous press,

turn for one moment to gaze on the most dirty of its disgraces. Sneak "keeps a Sunday newspaper" as a reservoir for the filth of the week; he lets out a *cabinet d'aisance* for any man who wishes to be delivered of a lie. No trader of the kind can be more obliging or more ill-savoured: his soul stinks of his profession, and you spit when you hear his name. Sneak has run through all the circle of scoundrelism: whatever is most base, dastardly, and contemptible Sneak has committed. Is a lie to be told of any man? Sneak tells it. Is a countess to be slandered? Sneak slanders her. Is theft to be committed? Sneak writes to you—"Sir, I have received some anecdotes about you, which I would not publish for the world if you will give me ten pounds for them." Sneak would declare his own mother a drab, and his father a hangman, for sixpence-halfpenny. Sneak sets up for a sort of Beau Sneak—crawls behind the scenes, and chats with the candle-snuffer: when he gets drunk, Sneak forgets himself, and speaks to a gentleman; the gentleman knocks him down. No man has been so often kicked as Sneak—no man so often horsewhipped; his whole carcass is branded with the contumely of castigation:—methinks there is, nevertheless, another chastisement in reserve for him at the first convenient opportunity. It is a pity to beat one so often beaten—to break bones that have been so often broken; but why deny one's self a luxury at so trifling an expense—it will be some honour to beat him worse than he has been beaten yet. Sneak is at heart the most miserable of men; he is poisoned by the stench of his own disgrace: he knows that every man loathes him; he strives to buoy himself from "the graveolent abyss" of his infamy by grasping at some scamp of a lord. One lord, with one shred of character left to his back, promised to dine with him, and has been stark naked of character ever since. Sneak has stuck up a wooden box in a nursery garden between Richmond and London, exactly of that description of architecture you would suppose him to favour: it is for all the world

like the temple which a Cit erects to the Goddess of Sewers; here "his soul still sits at squat." The little house stares you in the face, and reminds you at once of the nightman its owner. In vain would ingenuity dissociate the name of Sneak from the thought of the scavenger. This beautiful effect of the anonymous system I have thus honoured with mention, in order that posterity may learn to what degree of rottenness rascality can be corrupted.

Mendlehon is a man of remarkable talent, and of that biting wit which tempts the possessor into satire. Mendlehon set up a journal, the vein of which ran into personal abuse, Mendlehon then went nowhere, and himself and his authorship were alike unknown: he became courted—he went into society, his journalism was discovered and avowed. Since then the gossips say that the journal has grown dull, for it runs no longer into scurrility. When the anonymous was dropped, the writer came under the eye of public opinion, and his respectability forbids him to be abusive.

Of all melancholy and disappointed persons, a young poet in this day is perhaps the most. Observe that pale and discontented countenance, that air at once shy and proud. St. Malo is a poet of considerable genius; he gives himself altogether up to the Muse—he is consumed with the desire of fame; the loud celebrity of Byron yet rings in his ears; he asketh himself, why he should not be equally famous; he has no pleasure in the social world: he feels himself not sufficiently made of: he thinketh "By-and-by they will run after my genius:" he is awkward and gloomy; for he lives not in the present: he plunges into an imaginary future never to be realized. He goes into the world thinking the world must admire him, and ask, "Who is that interesting young man?" He has no sympathy with other men's amusements, unless they either write poetry themselves or read *his* own: he expects all men to have sympathy with *him;* his ear and taste were formed early in the school of Byron; he has now advanced to the schools of Words-

worth and Shelley. He imitates the two last unconsciously, and then wonders why his books do not sell: if the original did not sell, why should the copy? He never read philosophy, yet he affects to write metaphysics, and gives with considerable enthusiasm in to the Unintelligible. Verse writing is the serious occupation of his life; he publishes his poems, and expects them in his heart to have an enormous sale. He cannot believe that the world has gone round, that every time has its genius; that the genius of *this* time is wholly antipoetic. He throws away thought and energy, and indomitable perseverance, and the enviable faculty of concentrating ambition, upon a barren and unprofitable pursuit. His talents whisper him "success,"—their direction ensures him "disappointment." How many St. Malos have I known!—but half of them, poor fellows, have married their first cousins, gone into the church, and are now cultivating a flower-garden!

But who is this dry and austere young man, with sneer on lip and spectacles on nose. He is the opposite to the poet—he is Snap, the academical *philosopherling*. Sent up to Cambridge to learn theology, he has studied Locke, and become materialist. I blame him not for that; doubtless he has a right to his opinion, but he thinks nobody else has a right to any *other* opinion than *his*: he says, with a sneering smile, "Oh, of course, Locke was too clever a man not to know what his principles must lead to; but he did not dare to speak out, for fear of the bigots." You demur—he curls his lip at you—he has no toleration for a believer; he comprehends not the vast philosophy of faith; he cannot get beyond Hume upon miracles; he looks down if you utter the word "soul," and laughs in his sleeve; he is the most intolerant of men; he cannot think how you can possibly believe what seems to him such evident nonsense. He carries his materialism into all his studies; he is very fond of political economy, and applies its principles to all things; he does not think that government should interfere with

education, because it should not interfere about money. He is incapable of seeing that men must be induced to be good, but that they require no inducement to get rich; that a poor man will strive for wealth, that an immoral man will *not* strive for morality; that an ignorant man will *not* run after knowledge; that governments should tempt to virtue, but human passions will tend to wealth. If our philosopherling enters the House of Commons, he sets up for a *man of business;* he begs to be put upon the dullest committees; he would not lose an hour of twaddle for the world; he affects to despise eloquence, but he never speaks without having learned every sentence by heart. And oh! such sentences, and such delivery! for the Snaps have no enthusiasm! It is the nature of the material philosophy to forbid that beautiful prodigality of heart; he unites, in his agreeable style, the pomp of apathy with the solemnity of dulness. Nine times out of ten our philosopherling is the son of a merchant; his very pulse seems to enter its account in the leger-book. Ah Plato! Ah Milton! did you mean the lute of philosophy for hands like these!

"And how, sir, do you like this engraving of Martin's?" Go, my dear reader, put that question to yon gentleman with the powdered head—that gentleman is a Royal Academician. I never met with an Academician who did not seem to think you insulted him by a eulogy on Martin. Mr. Gloss Crimson is one of those who measure all art by the Somerset-house Exhibition. He ekes out his talk from Sir Joshua Reynolds's discourses—he is very fond of insisting on the necessity of study and labour, and of copying the antique. "Sir," quoth he, one day, "painting is the synonyme of perseverance." He likes not the company of young artists; he is angry if invited to meet them; he calls them indiscriminately "shallow coxcombs." He is a great worshipper of Dr. Johnson, and tells you that Dr. Johnson extolled the project of the Academy. Alas, he little knows that the good doctor somewhere wonders what people can be thinking of to talk of such

trifles as an Academy for Painting! He is intensely jealous, and more exclusive than a second-rate Countess; he laments the decay of patronage in this country; he believes every thing in art depends upon lords; he bows to the ground when he sees an earl; and thinks of Pericles and Leo X. His colours are bright and gaudy as a Dutchman's flower-garden, for they are put on with an eye to the Exhibition, in which every thing goes by glare. He has a great notion of the dignity of portrait painting. He would like to say to you, "Sir, I have painted four earls this year, and a marchioness, and if that's not a high school of painting, tell me what is!" He has a great contempt for Haydon, and is sure the nobility won't employ him. He thinks the National Gallery a necessary perquisite of the Royal Academicians. "Lord, Sir," saith he, "if *we* did not manage the matter there would be no discrimination, and you might see Mr. Howard's pictures in no better a situation than—"

"Mr. Martin's—that *would* be a shame!"

And so much, dear sir, for characters that may serve to illustrate a few of the intellectual influences of the time.

END OF BOOK THE FOURTH.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

A VIEW OF OUR POLITICAL STATE.

INSCRIBED TO

THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

"Since the affairs of men rest still uncertain,
Let's reason with the worst that may befall."
SHAKSPEARE.

"Si quid novisti rectius istis
Candidus imperti—si non, his utere mecum."—HORAT.

CHAPTER I.

Address to the people—Resumé of the principal bearings of former portions of this work—Our social errors or abuses not attributable either to a Monarchy or an Established Church.

If, my dear countrymen, you can spare a few minutes from the very great bustle in which you all seem to be at present; if you can cease for awhile from the agreeable duties of abusing the ministry, reckoning up your bad debts, deploring the state of the markets, and wondering what is to become of you; if you can spare a few minutes to listen to your neighbour, who has your interest always at heart; he flatters himself that you will possibly find you have not entirely thrown away your time.

I inscribe to you this, my fifth, book, which comprehends a survey of our political state, because, between you and me, I shrewdly suspect that the condition of the country is more your concern than that of any one else. Certain politicians, it is true, are of opinion that patriotism is an oligarchical virtue, and that the people are only anxious to go to the devil as fast as they possibly can. To hear them, one must suppose that you are the greatest fools in existence, and that every piece of advice you are in the habit of giving to your rulers tends only to implore them to ruin you with all convenient despatch. For my part I do not believe these gentlemen; without thinking you either saints or sages, you have always seemed to me sensible good sort of persons, who have a very quick eye to your own interests, and seldom insist much upon any thing that, if granted, would operate greatly to your disadvantage. I inscribe this book to you, and we will now proceed to its contents.

I am obliged to suppose that you have read the preceding sections of the work—it is a bold hypothesis, I know, but we reasoners cannot get on without taking something for granted. Now, in all states, there is some one predominant influence, either monarchical, or sacerdotal, or popular, or aristocratic. What is the influence which, throughout the previous sections of this work, I have traced and proved to be the dominating influence of England; colouring the national character, pervading every grade of our social system, ruling our education, governing our religion, operating on our literature, our philosophy, our sciences, our arts? You answer at once, that it is the ARISTOCRATIC. It is so. Now then observe, many of your (perhaps inconsiderate) friends insinuate the disadvantages of a Monarchy and the vices of an Established Church—*those* are the influences which they assert to be hostile to your welfare. You perceive by the examination into which we have entered, that this is not the fact; whatever be the faults in any part of our moral, social, or intellectual system, we have not traced the causes of those faults to the monarchical influences. I grant that, in some respects (but those chiefly the effects of a clumsy machinery), we have something to complain of in certain workings of the Established Church. Tithes are unpleasant messengers between our pastors and ourselves, but, as we are about to substitute for these a more agreeable agency, we will not talk any longer of the old grievance: in the true English spirit, when the offence is over, we will forget and forgive. The custom of Squirearchical patronage in the Church, of making the cure of souls a provision for younger sons, gives us, as I have attempted to prove, many inactive and ineffective pastors. But this, you will observe, is not the necessary consequence of an establishment itself, but of the aristocratic influence which is brought to bear on the establishment: just as those vast expenses, which we have managed to incur, have not been the fault of the representative system, but of the aristocracy by which the system has been

corrupted: the two instances are parallel. In penetrating every corner of the island—in colonizing every village—with the agents of civilization, in founding schools, in enlightening squires, in operating unconsciously on the moral character and spiritual teaching of dissenters; in curbing to a certain limit the gloomy excesses of fanaticism—in all this you behold the redeeming effects of an ecclesiastical establishment, effects which are sufficient, let us acknowledge, to atone tenfold for all its abuses, and which even the aristocratic deteriorations have not been baneful enough to destroy.

It is not therefore, my friends, against a monarchy or against an ecclesiastical establishment, that it becomes us, as thinking and dispassionate men, to direct the liberalism of the age. No, it is against a very peculiar and all-penetrative organization of the aristocratic spirit! This is very important for us thoroughly to understand and fully to acknowledge. This is a first principle, to be firmly established if we do not desire to fight in the dark against imaginary thieves while the real marauders are robbing us with impunity.

Between ourselves, I see a certain portion of the aristocracy ready at any opportunity to throw the blame of their own misdeeds upon the king or the unfortunate bishops. Be on your guard against them!

CHAPTER II.

The King has no interest counter to that of the people—Corruption lucrative only to the Aristocracy—The last scarcely less enemies to the King than to the People—The loyalty of Lord Grey—The assertion, that to weaken the Aristocracy weakens the crown, contradicted—The assertion, that an Aristocracy protects the people from the crown, equally false—Ancient dogmas inapplicable to modern times—The Art of Printing divides, with a mighty gulf, the two great periods of civilization—A Republic in this country would be an unrelieved Aristocracy—The feeling of the People is Aristocratic—A certain Senator's boast—The destruction of titles would not destroy the aristocratic power—The advantage of monarchy.

In examining the national character and our various social system, we do not find the monarchical influence pernicious; I might venture to say more,—we shall generally find the monarch the most efficient check to the anti-popular interests. Look to our latter history! Do you not remark that, in all popular measures, the king has taken part with yourselves?—has taken part with the people? The concurrence of two branches of the legislature—the executive and representative—has compelled the reluctant assent of the hereditary chamber? What interest has a monarch in the perpetuation of abuses? He, unlike the aristocracy, has nothing to lose by concession to the popular advantage. What interest has he in the preservation of game laws and corn laws—of corporations and monopolies, or of the vast and complicated ramifications from which aristocratic nepotism raises a forest of corruption out of a single banyan?—an easy people makes a powerful king, but weak Noblesse. No, my friends, no—a king has nothing to gain by impoverishing his people; but every lord has a mortgage to pay off, or a younger son to provide for, and it is for the aristocracy, not the king, that corruption is a lucrative system. Compare at this moment, that

which your Premier "does for his family," with that which his royal master can do for his own. Heavens! what a storm was raised when the king's son obtained the appointment of the Tower! Was he not compelled to resign that petty command—so great was the popular clamour—so silent the ministerial eloquence? But, my Lord Grey! what son—what brother—what nephew—what cousin—what remote and unconjectured relative in the Genesis of the Greys, has not fastened his limpet to the rock of the national expenditure? Attack the propriety of these appointments, and what haughty rebukes from the Minister will you not receive? That eloquence so mute for the king's son, rolls in thunder about the revered heads of the unimpugnable Greyides. A king stands aloof and apart from the feuds and jealousies—the sordid avarice—the place-hunting ambition—which belong to those only a little above the people. The aristocracy have been no less his enemies than ours—they have crippled his power while they have encroached on our resources. For the nature of that freedom which results from a privileged order partakes rather of the pride of arrogance than the passion for liberty. Observe how natural a generous loyalty is to you, and how selfishness distorts the loyalty of an aristocracy. When the Reform Bill was at length to receive the royal assent, were you not all breathless with a hope that the king would assent to it *in person?*—were you not all anxious for an event, which should after an interval of doubt and jealousy, restore William the Reformer to your affections? You saw in so natural an opportunity for the king to proclaim his heartiness in your cause, a fitting and a solemn occasion for both king and people to renew an uninterrupted confidence; your loyalty expected—demanded this gratification; it was the loyalty of a generous people. But his majesty did *not* confirm the bill in person. Now, ask yourselves this question, ought not my Lord Grey, if unaffectedly and sincerely loyal—ought he not to have prevailed upon his majesty to win to himself such

golden opinions at so easy a price?—can we believe that he had not the power to prevail? When the king had assented to the creation of peers, if necessary, can we suppose that his majesty would have refused a concession so much more reasonable, had it been urged with an equal force? No. Lord Grey had the power, and he cared not to exert it. He ought to have resolved that his sovereign, who had borne the odium of one party, should receive the gratitude of the other: generously sinking his own pomp of popularity, he should have resolved that the king should appear first and prominent in the act of grace; he must have known that the appearance of a lukewarm consent was a sign of weakness in the crown—the appearance of zealous assent was a token of its magnanimity and its power. But Lord Grey loved to stand forth the prime agent of good; he was willing that the curtain should be drawn across the throne, and leave himself in the front-ground, unrelieved and alone, in all the stiffness of condescending ostentation; he was willing to monopolize the honours of reform, and to appear to have gained a victory over the king himself. My friends, see the loyalty of an aristocrat!

An aristocracy like ours is, I say, equally hostile to the king's just power and popularity as it is hostile to the welfare of the people. "Ah, but," cry some, "if you weaken the aristocracy, you weaken the crown." Is that necessarily the case? Is a powerful aristocracy necessary to the safety of the throne? Look round the world and see. Are not those monarchies the most powerful and the most settled in which the influence of the aristocracy is least strong, in which the people and the king form one state, and the aristocracy are the ornaments of the fabric, not the foundations? Look at Prussia, the best governed country in the world, and one in which the happiness of the people reconciles us to despotism itself. Believe me, my friends, where a people are highly educated, absolute monarchy is more safe and less corrupting than a grasping nobility.

Look again to the history of the states around you; so far from a king deriving strength from an aristocracy, it is the vices of an aristocracy, and not of a monarch, that usually destroys a kingdom: it is the nobles that take popularity from a court—their scandal and their gossip—their backstairs-creeping and gliding, their ridicule of their master behind his back, their adulation to his face—these are the causes that dim the lustre of royalty in man's eyes, and vulgarize the divinity that should hedge a king. Impatient of the abuses of authority, the people do not examine nicely from *what quarter of authority* the abuses proceed, and they concentrate on the most prominent object the odium which belongs of right to objects more subordinate and less seen. I say that an aristocracy, when corrupted, destroys, and does not preserve a monarchy, and I point to France for an example: had the French aristocracy been less strong and less odious, Louis XVI. would not have fallen a victim to that fearful glamoury of intoxicated passions which conjured a scaffold from a throne. That unfortunate king may justly be called a martyr;—he was a martyr to the vices of his *noblesse!*

I deny, then, that it is dangerous to weaken the aristocracy on the ground that by so doing we should weaken the monarchy. Henry VII. and Louis XI. may teach us wiser notions of the foundations of monarchical sway. I deny still more strongly that we require the undiminished power of the aristocracy as a check to the prerogative of the king. My good friends, you all know the old dogma, that a strong nobility prevents monarchical encroachment. Now, tell me candidly, do you not think we can take care of ourselves? Do we want these disinterested proxies to attend to our interests? For my part, I fear that we can but imperfectly afford such very expensive stewards. When we were minors in education, they might have been necessary evils; but now we are grown up, and can take care of our own concerns. Can you fancy, my dear friends, that if the aristocracy

were not, "if it had bowed the head and broke the stalk, and fallen into the portion of weeds and worn-out faces,"* can you fancy that you would not be equally vigilant against any very dangerous assumptions on the part of the monarch? Trust me, while the looms of Manchester are at work—while the forges of Sheffield ring upon our ears—while morning and night the PRESS unfolds her broad banner, visible from John o' Groats to the Land's-end, there is but little fear that the stout heart of England should fall into so lethargic a slumber that a king could gather armies without her consent, construct dungeons without her knowledge, raise taxes without her connivance, and wake her at last to behold a sudden tyranny, and mourn for the departed vigilance of incorruptible courtiers!

In truth, my friends, all those ancient arguments on the necessity of a strong aristocracy, to check the king on the one side, and the commons on the other, are utterly inapplicable now. The checking power is not content to be a check alone; it is like the sea, and gains in every place where it does not recede: as we have seen, it has entered, penetrated, suffused every part of the very influences which ought to have opposed it; and I tell you once for all, my friends, that most of the ancient maxims of polity dragged forth from garbled extracts of half-read classics—maxims of polity which were applicable to the world before the invention of printing, are for that very reason inapplicable now. Perfectly right, perhaps, were the statesmen of old in their scoffs and declamations against the people: the people were then uneducated, a mere brute physical force; but the magic of Guttenburg and Füst hath conjured a wide chasm between the past and the future history of mankind: the people of one side the gulf are not the people of the other; the physical force is no longer separated from the moral; mind has by slow degrees crept into the mighty mass—the

* Jeremy Taylor.

popular Cymon has received a soul! In the primal and restless consciousness of the new spirit, Luther appealed to the people—the first, since Christ so adventured. From that moment all the codes of classic dogmatists were worthless—the expired leases to an estate just let to new tenants, and upon new conditions.

There is an era in civilization, when an aristocracy may be safely allowed a disproportionate strength, because an aristocracy is then composed of the best educated men; and because their very haughtiness which fears liberty resists servitude.

In that era, men set apart from the baser drudgeries of life, and devoted to the pursuit of arms, which in all times, links itself with certain principles of honour, can scarcely fail of inspiring somewhat of refinement and of gallantry into the stubborn masses of an unenlightened society; their very ostentation promotes industry;—and industry, in diffusing wealth, expedites the progress of civilization. But, as it is profoundly laid down by Montesquieu, "there is a very great difference between a system which *makes* a State great, and a system which *preserves* its greatness." The era in which it is wise to promote a dominant aristocracy ceases when monarchs are not military chiefs, and the people of themselves can check whatever excess of power in the sovereign they may deem dangerous; it ceases when nobles become weak, but the spirit of aristocracy becomes strong (two consequences, the result of a *numerous* peerage, which leaves half of the order mendicants upon corruption, but confirms the spirit which the order has engendered, by insensibly extending its influence throughout the subordinate grades with which it seeks intermarriage, and from which it receives its supplies; at that time, chivalry has abandoned the nobles, and corruption has supplied its place);—it ceases when an aristocracy is no longer in advance of the people, and a king and his subjects require no obstacle to their confidence in each other.

Thus then, neither for the safety of king nor for

that of the people, is it incumbent upon us to prescrve undiminished and uncorrected the Aristocratic power. But while both people and king can do without an aristocracy, could you, my friends, do equally well without a king? Come, let us suppose that the wish of certain politicians were gratified; let us suppose that a republic were established to-morrow? I will tell you what would be the result—your republic would be the very worst of aristocracies!

Do not fancy, as some contend, that the aristocracy would fall if the king fell. Not a whit of it. You may sweep away the House of Lords if you like; you may destroy titles; you may make a bonfire of orb and ermine, and after all your pains the aristocracy would be exactly as strong as ever. For its power is not in a tapestried chamber, or in a crimson woolsack, or in ribands and stars, in coronets and titles; its power, my friends, is in yourselves; its power is in the aristocratic spirit and sympathy which pervades you all! In your own hearts while you shout for popular measures, you have a reverential notion of the excellence of aristocratic agents; you think rich people alone "respectable;" you have a great idea of station; you consider a man is the better for being above his fellows, not in virtue and intellect, but in the good things of life. The most eminent of your Representatives is accustomed to boast, "that he owes his station to his father's industry in cotton spinning:" you admire him when he does—it is but a few weeks since, that you rent the air when the boast was uttered; you fancied it democratic and truth-loving. It is just the reverse—the boast was very aristocratic (though in a vulgar mode of aristocracy) and very false. Owes his station to cotton spinning! Observe that the boast implies a pride of wealth, an aristocracy of feeling much more offensive than the pride of birth. Owes his station to cotton spinning! If a man did so owe it, to my mind there is nothing to boast of, nothing very ennobling in the process of cotton spinning. But what your Representative means to say, is this, that the industry of his

father in amassing an immense fortune is praiseworthy, and he is therefore proud of it; and you, my dear friends, being most of you employed in money getting, are very apt to be charmed with the compliment. But successful industry in amassing money, is a very poor quality in the eyes of men who cherish high notions of morality; it is compatible with the meanest vices, with the paltriest exertions of intellect, with servility, with cunning, with avarice, with overreaching! Compatible! Nay, it is by those very qualities, that nine times out of ten, a large fortune is made! They were doubtless not the failings of your Representative's father. I know nothing about that gentleman, now no more; he may have had every virtue under the sun; I will willingly suppose that he had; but, let us stick to the point; it was only of one virtue that the Senator boasted—namely, the virtue of making money. If this was an aristocratic boast, if it showed a poor comprehension of morality, so on the other hand it was not true in itself. And your Representative must have known it was not true while he uttered it. It is not true, that that distinguished man owes his station in the world to his father's industry; it is not true, that cotton spinning had anything at all to do with it; he owes his station to his own talents, to his own eloquence, to his own perseverance—these are qualities to be proud of; and a great man might refer to them with a noble modesty; but to please you, my dear friends, the crafty orator only talks of the *to kalon* of cotton spinning, and the *to prepon* of money-making.

Believe me, then, that if you were to institute a republic to-morrow, it would be an aristocratic republic; and though it would be just as bad if it were an aristocracy of shopkeepers as if it were an aristocracy of nobles, yet I believe on the whole it would be an aristocracy very much resembling the present one (*only without the control* which the king's prerogative at present affords him). And for one evident reason —namely, the *immense property* of our nobles and landed gentry! Recollect, that in this respect, they

differ from most other aristocracies, which are merely the shadows of a court and without substance in themselves. From most other aristocracies, sweep away the office, the order, and the title, and they themselves are *not*; but banish from court a Northumberland, a Lonsdale, a Cleveland, a Bedford, or a Yarborough; take away their dukedoms and their earldoms, their ribands and their robes, and they are exactly as powerful, with those broad lands and those mighty rent-rolls, as they were before. In any republic you can devise, men with this property will be *uppermost*; they will be still your rulers, as long as you yourselves think that property is the legal heir to respect.

I always suppose, my friends, in the above remarks, that you would not *take away* the property, as is recommended by some of the unstamped newspapers, to which our government will permit no reply, and which therefore enjoy a monopoly over the minds of the poor; I always imagine, that, republican or monarchical, you will still be English; I always imagine that, come what may, you will still be honest, and without honesty it is useless to talk of republics. Let possessions be insecure, and your republic would merge rapidly into a despotism. All history tells us, that the moment liberty invades property, the reign of arbitrary power is at hand; the flock fly to a shepherd to protect them from wolves. Better one despot, than a reign of robbers.

If we owe so much of our faults and imperfections to the aristocratic influence, need I ask you if you would like an unrelieved aristocracy? If not, my friends, let us rally round the Throne.

CHAPTER III.

The Monarchy shown to be less expensive than is believed—An excuse for defending what Whigs say no one attacks.

But the throne is expensive. Ah! hark to the popular cry:—

> 'That's the wavering Commons; for their love
> Lies in their purses, and whoso empties them
> By so much fills their hearts with deadly hate,
> Wherein the king stands generally condemned."*

The belief that the throne costs something quite enormous is generally received in the manufacturing towns—thanks again to the unstamped publications, to which Lord Althorpe (desiring a republic, I suppose) compels the poor,—never will I be weary of urging the government on that point!—And men, afraid to avow that republicanism is a good thing, delicately insinuate that it is an exceedingly cheap one. Let us see how far this is true; let us subject our constitution to the multiplication table; let us count up, my friends, what a king costs us.

The whole of our yearly expenditure, including our National Debt, is somewhat more than fifty millions; out of this vast sum you may reckon that a king costs as follows:—

Civil list (exclusive of pensions) . . .	411,800*l.*
Three regiments of Horse Guards . .	80,000
Pensions to Royal Family	220,000
For servants to different branches of the Royal Family	24,000
	735,800*l.*

These are the expenses of Royalty! I cannot find,

* Richard II.

by any ingenuity, that we can attach to it a much larger sum; but let us be liberal and reckon the whole at a million. What then? Why the king would only cost us just one-fiftieth part of our yearly outgoings, or one twenty-eighth part of our National Debt!

I think, indeed, the royal expenditure might be somewhat lessened without diminishing the royal dignity. I see not why we should have three regiments of Horse Guards; but let this pass. Suppose we do not cut down a shilling of the king's expenses, is it not idle to talk of the oppressive cost of a king when it amounts only to a fiftieth part of our yearly incumbrances?

Ah, say some, but supposing the king were not, we should be better able to cut down the other expenses. I fancy they are very much mistaken; those expenses are the expenses that have no connexion with monarchy—expenses that are solely for the convenience of the aristocracy.

Do you find that the king himself resists retrenchment? On the contrary, was not retrenchment the very principle established between himself and his ministers. Republics, I allow, are generally cheap: but then Republics have not generally run into debt as you have. I suppose, by being Republicans, we should not get whitewashed, and that we should be equally obliged to discharge our pecuniary obligations. But how was that debt incurred? My dear friends, that is quite another question; I am not arguing whether you might not be richer had you established a Republic a century ago (though I doubt it exceedingly, for I could prove your aristocracy, more than your monarchy, to blame for your debt), but whether you would be much richer *now* by establishing a Republic? It is cheaper to build a plain house than a fine one; but having once built your fine house, it is a false economy to take it down for the purpose of building a plain one.

Some one pulls me by the arm and asks me, why I defend a monarchy which the Whigs assure us that

nobody attacks. Hark you, my good friends, the reason is this,—I see much farther than the Whigs do, and I speak more conscientiously,—I hate the policy that looks not beyond the nose of the occasion. I love to look far and to speak boldly. I have no place to gain, no opinion to disguise—nothing stands between me and the Truth. I put it to you all, whether, viewing the temper of the age, the discontent of the multitude, the example of foreign states, the restlessness of France, the magnificent affluence of North America, the progress of an unthinking liberalism, the hatred against ostensible power—I put it to you all whether, unless some great and dexterous statesman arise, or unless some false notions are removed, some true principles are explained, you do not perceive slowly sweeping over the troubled mirror of the Time the giant shadow of the coming Republic?

CHAPTER IV.

The House of Lords not to be confounded with the Aristocracy—Caution against the Advice of Journalists—Objections to a numerous Creation of Peers—The People proved to be less strong than they imagine—The abolition of the House of Lords proved to be dangerous to the safe working of the Commons—A third mode of reforming a second chamber, but the people are not prepared for it.

But since it seems that our jealousy must be directed mainly against the aristocratic power, how shall we proceed in order to resist and diminish it? That is a question not easily answered. Do not, my friends, do not let us confound a House of Lords, which is but a part of the aristocracy, with the aristocracy itself: there is just as much aristocracy in the House of Commons as there is in the House of Lords, only at this moment you are very justly displeased with the Lords. If you were to destroy that assembly, it would

not be long before you would be quite as much displeased with the House of Commons!

Could I persuade you to take my advice, you would look with considerable suspicion on the leading articles of newspapers; especially when their writers seem very earnestly to take your view of the question. You know it is a common trick among thieves, when they see a greenhorn engaged in a broil, to affect to be all on his side: so in Roderick Random, an honest fellow offers very good-naturedly to hold Strap's coat for him, while Strap enjoys a comfortable round or two at reciprocal fisticuffs. When the battle is done, Strap's coat has disappeared! My dear friends, there are certain journalists who seem passionately in your favour—all willing to pat you on the back, and give you a knee, while you show your manhood on the House of Lords! but recollect poor Strap, and keep your coats on your shoulders. This is the homely advice of your friend and neighbour.

Yes! I see certain journalists strongly recommending a numerous creation of peers. Somehow or other, those journalists are very fond of the ministers: it is true they scold them now and then in a conjugal way, but they make it up on a pinch, because, like man and wife, the journalist and minister often have an interest in common. There was a time when I advocated a numerous creation of peers—a creation that should bring the two Houses of Parliament into tolerable concord: but that time is past. New objections have arisen to such a policy, and I confess that on my mind those objections have considerable weight. Are you willing, my compatriots, to give the Whig ministers such a majority in both houses that you will never be able, without revolution, to have any other administration? If so, then go on, clap your hands, and cry out with the Morning Chronicle for new peers! Do not fancy that measures would be more liberal if this creation were made! it is a delusion! What would be this creation? It would be a *Whig creation!* Ah! I see that sooner than such a creation, you would consent

to have chaos a little longer! You are right. Measures would not be more liberal; on the contrary, it is from the despair of pleasing the Lords that the only really liberal measure of the Whigs (the Reform Bill) was insisted upon! Do you not observe the moment the two Houses may be brought pretty nearly to the same temper, that the Whigs are willing to pare down and smooth away any popular proposition, so that it may glide quietly from one House through the other? If there were but little difference between the two chambers, depend upon it, in that little difference the people would invariably go to the wall. Do you not mark, that as the ministers now cannot govern by the House of Lords, so they *must* govern somewhat by the people? But suppose they had secured the House of Lords, the people would not be half so necessary to them. It is the very opposition of the Tory aristocracy that has compelled the Whigs to be liberal. Let them break that opposition entirely, and you will see the Whigs themselves rapidly hardening and incrusting into tories. There was a time, I say, when I thought a creation of peers desirable; but at that time I imagined we might safely trust the Whigs with so enormous a power. I think otherwise now. Give them the command of both the chambers, and you reduce the King to a cipher. You make a Whig aristocracy perpetual. "Oh!" cry some of the mob-orators, or our friends the journalists, "the people have now the power to get good government, and they will use it, let there be what ministry there may!" No such thing, my dear friends, no such thing! we have *not* that power. You have chosen your House of Commons it is true, and a pretty set of gentlemen you have chosen! "You talk," said one of the most enlightened of the ministers to a friend of mine, "you talk of our fear of a collision with the Lords if we should be very popular in our measures. Faith, in that case we should be equally afraid of a collision with the Commons. Look at the scatterlings of the Mountain Bench; run your eye over Mr. Hume's divisions;

count the number of Radicals in Parliament, and confess that we have *not* a House of Commons prepared to receive with joy any *very* popular propositions." Was not the minister right? Where, O English people! where are your friends—where your supporters—where those securers of good government that the coat-holders talk of! You few violent theorists, all quarrelling with each other, full of crotchets and paper-money chimeras—are *those* your friends? Yon ministerial benches, of whom, were it not for yells and groans which savour but little of humanity, one might apply the line once applied to the stoics—

"Rarus sermo in illis, et magna libido tacendi,"

are *they* your friends? "No," you say; "but if we had a dissolution!" Ah, *but in the meanwhile?*—the next five years? Are we to throw *those* years away by granting Whig measures a certain monopoly of the whole legislature? I think the experiment would be unwise in us! But between ourselves, I fear greatly that if parliament were dissolved next week, though you would return many more Tories, and a few more independent members, you would still under the present Reform Bill, return a sufficient majority of Whigs. The basis of the Reform Bill is property; your own minds incline to the representation of property; the Whigs possess the great proportion of that sort of property which is brought to bear in elections; their property will return them. So that were you to swamp the Lords, and then proceed to a new election, you would still perpetuate the Whig dynasty. It is true that you might pledge your representatives; but I think you have seen enough of pledges! Do you know an excellent pair of caricatures called "Before and after?" In the first caricature the lover is all ardour, in the second he is all frigidity. For a lover read a member—members' pledges are like lovers' oaths—possession destroys their value!

I beseech you then to pause well and long before you swell the cry for new peers, or before you are

cajoled into believing that to strengthen a Whig ministry is the best mode of weakening an aristocratic domination.

A second mode of dealing with the House of Lords has occurred to some bolder speculators—they propose not to swamp it, but to wash it away altogether. Mighty well! What would be the consequence? Why you would have all the Lords taking their seats in the House of Commons. You would have no popular assembly at all; you would transfer the Wellingtons, and the Winchelseas, and the Northumberlands, and the Exeters, and the Newcastles, to the Lower House, as the representatives of yourselves. Their immense property would easily secure their return, to the exclusion of poorer but more popular men, for the divided counties in which that property is situated; and all you would effect by destroying the existence of one chamber, would be a creation of a Tory majority in the other.

It was this which the sagacious mind of the Duke of Wellington foresaw, when he declared—as he is reported to have done in private—that he would rather the House of Lords were destroyed than swamped; and that in the former case he would be more powerful as Mr. Wellesley, than in the latter as the Duke of Wellington.

Trust me then, neither of these modes of treating the Lords will be found to our advantage: a third mode might be devised—but I think we are not yet prepared for it, viz:—the creation of an elective, not an hereditary senate, which might be an aristocracy in the true sense of the word—that is, an assembly of the best men—the selected of the country—selected from the honest as the rich, the intelligent as the ignorant—in which property would cease to be the necessary title, and virtue and knowledge might advance claims equally allowed. But I say no more on this point. For nothing could give rise or dignity to such an assembly, but that enlightened opinion among ourselves which legislation alone cannot effect!

CHAPTER V.

A reformed code of Opinion the best method of reforming the great errors of the Legislation.

It appears, then, upon the whole, that the only safe, practical, and uncharlatanic resistance you can offer to the influences which are so pernicious, is in a thorough understanding of the extent and nature of those influences—in a perpetual and consistent jealousy of their increase—in wise, unceasing, but gradual measures for their diminution. You have observed that the worst part of these influences is in a *moral* influence. This you can counteract by a *new* moral standard of opinion—once accustom yourselves to think that

> 'Rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The mon's the gowd for a' that;"

once learn to detach respectability from acres and rent-rolls—once learn indifference for fashion and fine people; for the "whereabouts" of lords and ladies; for the orations of men boasting of the virtue of making money; once learn to prize at their full worth a high integrity, and a lofty intellect—once find yourselves running to gaze, not on foreign princes and Lord Mayors' coaches, but on those who elevate, benefit, and instruct you, and you will behold a new influence pushing its leaves and blossoms from amid the dead corruption of the old. To counteract a bad moral influence, never let us omit to repeat that you must create a good moral influence. Reformed opinion precedes reformed legislation. Now is the day for writers and advisers; *they* prepare the path for true lawgivers; they are the pioneers of good; no reform is final, save the reform of mind. Hence it is that I have written this book, instead of devoting the same

time, like our philosopherling Mr. Snap, to the compilation of a score or two of speeches. The speeches would perish in a week; but the subject of this book must make it live, till its end be fulfilled. Others, with greater effect, because with higher genius, will follow in my track—"Je serais le mouche du coche qui se passera bien de mon bourdonnement. Il va, mes chers amis—et ne cesse d'aller. Si sa marche nous parait lente ce'st que nous vivons un instant. Mais que de chemin il a fait depuis cinq ou six siecles! A cette heure, en plaine roulant, rien ne le peut plus arrêter.*

CHAPTER VI.

THE STATE OF PARTIES.

The Tories; they are not extinct—Two great Divisions among them—Sir Robert Peel described—His very Merits displease one Division of this Party—That Division characterized—The Ultra Radicals—The Ministerial Party—Unity necessary to Government—The advantage of a new National Party.

HAVING defined, through the mists of political delusion, the outline of the hostile and the friendly encampments—having ascertained what powers we shall attack and what defend, let us approach somewhat closer to the actual field, and examine the state of those contending parties, who, not sharing our views, nor actuated by our motives, fight without knowing wherefore or for what end, save, perhaps, that to the vulgar mass of the soldiery there is some guiding and consolatory recollection that plunder is the perquisite of conquest.

THE STATE OF PARTIES: it is an interesting survey,

* Pamphlet des Pamphlets.

and you, my dear friends, ought to think it peculiarly interesting; for, as formerly men burned each other out of pure affection for God, so now they all attack each other like furies for no other motive in the world but a disinterested attachment to the people. Heaven grant that you may be better served by *your* fanatics than our good Maker has been by his!

Don't believe the coat-holders, my friends, when they tell you with so assured an air that the tories, as a party, are extinct. They are *not* extinct; the spirit of toryism never dies. "You may kill men," said a French friend of yours once, and the saying is full of the pith of that wit which is another word for truth, "you may kill men but you cannot kill things." The tories in a year or two hence will perhaps be as formidable as ever. It is true that Wetherell may wander seatless; it is true that Croker's sarcastic lip may no longer lavish compliments on the treasury benches; it is true that Gatton is a ghost, and Old Sarum a tradition; but, my dear friends, till the future itself is no more, the past will have its bigoted defenders, and the world will be in no want of a Wetherell. And what though Gatton be defunct? Trust me, the corruption of a Norwich will engender the same fungi that sprouted forth from the rottenness of Gatton. But the tories, even as a body of men so known and termed, are not extinct; they have a majority in the Lords, and in the Commons they are at least three times as numerous as the ultra radicals. Take the Tories at the lowest, there are an hundred and fifty of them in your own assembly; take the ultra radicals at the highest, and you cannot number above fifty. Better, therefore, might you say, that the radicals were extinct, than that the tories were extinct. The last, I grant you, seem lethargic enough at present; but, like, the hare, they sleep with their eyes open, and, like the snake, they are hoarding venom.

But the main feature of all parties at this moment is, that in every party there are divisions. The tories are weakened by bitter, though unacknowledged schisms among themselves: in the Commons they fall into two

main bands, the one following Sir Robert Peel, the other regarding him with suspicion, and half disposed to revolt from his side. "The following" of Sir Robert Peel are composed of men of a certain semi-enlightenment, of moderate passions, and a regard for peace above all things: they would rather retain the ministers than discard them; they have no desire for perilous experiments of tory rule; they have a horror of revolution, and possess more of the timorous prudence of merchants than the haughty courage of aristocrats. Whatever is tory among the "more respectable" of the metropolitan population—the bankers, the traders, the men who deem it a virtue in their fathers to make money by cotton-spinning—all these are with Sir Robert Peel; they extol his discretion and confide in his judgment; and, in truth, Sir Robert Peel is a remarkable man—confessedly a *puissance* in himself, confessedly the leading member of the representative, yes, even of your reformed, assembly; he is worth our stopping in our progress for a moment in order to criticise his merits.

It is a current mistake in the provinces to suppose that Sir Robert Peel is rather sensible than eloquent. If to persuade, to bias, to sooth, to command the feelings, the taste, the opinions of an audience, often diametrically opposed to his views—if *this* be eloquence, which I, a plain man, take it to be, then Sir Robert Peel is among the most eloquent of men. I am not one of those who think highly of the art of oratory; I laugh at the judgment of such as rank its successful cultivation among the great efforts of mind; it depends mainly upon physical advantages and a combination of theatrical tricks; a man may therefore have but ordinary intellectual powers, and yet be exceedingly eloquent to a popular assembly; nay we need only analyze calmly the speeches which have delighted an audience, to be aware of their ordinary lack of all eminently intellectual qualifications. That sentence which reads to you so tame, was made emphatic by the most dexterous pronunciation—that sarcasm which seems to you so poor, took

all its venom from the most significant smile—that fallacy which strikes you as so palpable, seemed candour itself by the open air of sincerity with which it was delivered. Pronunciation, smile, air! They are excellent qualities in an orator, but may they not be achieved without any wondrous depth of the reason, or any prodigious sublimity of the imagination? I am speaking, therefore, in admiration of Sir Robert Peel's eloquence, and not of his mind; though even in the latter he excels the capacity of orators in general.

Physical advantages are one component of successful oratory; these Sir Robert Peel possesses—a most musical voice—a tall and stately person—a natural happiness of delivery, which though not wholly void of some displeasing peculiarities, is more than ordinarily commanding and impressive. A combination of theatrical tricks is another component of successful oratory, and this also Sir Robert Peel has most dexterously acquired; by a wave of the hand, by a bow across the table, by an expression of lip, by a frankness of mien, he can give force, energy, wit, or nobility—to nothings! Oratory is an art—he is an elaborate artist. In the higher qualities of mind he must be considered a man of remarkable accomplishments. With a wide range of ornamental, he combines a vast hoard of practical knowledge; he is equally successful in a speech on the broadest principle, or on the narrowest detail. He has equally the information of a man of letters, and of a man of business. He is not philosophical, but he skims the surface of philosophy; he is as philosophical as the House will bear any *effective* orator to be. He is not poetical, but he can command the embellishments of poetry, and suits an assembly which applauds elegance, but recoils from imagination. In his deficiences, therefore—if we note the limit of the mind—we acknowledge the skill of the artist—he employs every tool necessary to his work, and no man with a more happy effect. To his skill as an orator, he adds certain rare qualities as a leader; he has little daring, it is true, but he has astonishing tact—he never jeopards

a party by any rash untowardness of phrase—he is free from the indiscretion habitual to an orator. Another eminent characteristic of his mind is accuracy. I do not remember ever to have heard him misstate a fact, and I have heard almost every other public speaker misstate a hundred facts. It is probably this constitution of mind which gifts him with his faculty for business. Assuredly no man who in times of wide and daring speculation, pertinaciously resolved to narrow his circle, and be

"Content to live in decencies for ever."

has been able to invest the existence with more dignity, and to hide with a better effect the limited circumference of his range. There seems to me little doubt but that this accomplished statesman is enthralled and hampered by the early ties which it is now and henceforth impossible for him, without worldly dishonor to break. His mind evidently goes beyond the tether of his companions—his arguments are not theirs—to illiberal conclusions he mostly applies liberal reasonings. He describes his narrow circle with compasses disproportionately large, and seems always to act upon that saying of Mirabeau's,—"La politique doit raisonner même sur des suppositions aux quelles elle ne croit pas." It is one of the phenomena of our aristocratic customs, that a man especially marked out by birth and circumstance to be the leader of the popular, should be the defender of the oligarchical party. Sprung from the people, he identifies himself with the patricians. His pure and cold moral character, untinctured by the vices, unseduced by the pursuits of an aristocracy, seems to ally him naturally to the decorous respectabilities of the great middle class to which his connexions attach him; and even ambition might suggest that his wealth would have made him the first of the one class, though it elevates him to no distinction in the other. Had he placed himself in his natural position among the ranks of the people, he would have been undeniably what he now

just fails of being—a GREAT MAN. He would not have been Secretary for Ireland at so early an age, but he would now have been prime minister, or what is a higher position, the leader and center of the moral power of England. As it is, he has knit himself to a cause which requires passion in its defenders, and is regarded with suspicion by his allies, because he supports it with discretion.

You observe then, my friends, that his good qualities themselves displease and disgust a large body of the Tories, and they would adhere to him more zealously if he were less scrupulous in his politics. For you will readily perceive that, by the more haughty, vehement, and aristocratic of the tories, *the whigs can never be forgiven!* Those who possessed boroughs, consider themselves robbed of their property; those who *zealously* loved the late form of government, deem themselves defrauded of a Constitution. Thus insulted self-interest in some, and even a wounded patriotism in others, carry the animosities of party into the obstinacy of revenge. This division of the tories care little for your threats of rebellion or fears of revolution; they are willing to hazard any experiment, so discontented are they with the Present. As the more prudent tories are chiefly connected with the trading interest, so the more daring tories are mainly connected with the agricultural; they rely on their numerous tenantry—on their strongholds of clanship and rustic connexions, with a confidence which makes them shrink little from even an armed collision with the people. Claiming among them many of that old indomitable band of high-born gentry—the true chivalric *noblesse* of the country (for to mere titles there are no ancestral recollections, but blood can bequeath warlike and exciting traditions), they are stimulated by the very apprehensions which disarm the traders. They are instinct with the Blackwood spirit of resistance, and in that perverted attachment to freedom which belongs to an aristocracy, they deem it equally servile to obey a people they despise, as to succumb

to a ministry they abhor. And of these, many are convinced, surrounded as they are in their visits to their estates by admiring subordinates, that their cause is less unpopular and more powerful in mere numerical force than it is represented. How can a Chandos, the idol of his county, full of courage and of pride, and equally respected and beloved by the great agricultural body he represents,—how can *he* believe you when you tell him that the tories are hated!—how can he listen with patience to the lukewarm concessions of Sir Robert Peel?—to the threats of the Journalists?—and to the self-laudatory assertion of the whigs, that order and society itself rest solely on their continuance in office? It is this party of which, though he appears but rarely, I consider Lord Chandos the legitimate and natural head, that Sir Robert Peel must perpetually disgust. Willing to hazard all things to turn out the ministry, they must naturally divide themselves from a leader who is willing to concede many things to keep the ministry in power.

Such is the aspect of the once united and solid Tory party,—such the character of its two great divisions, between which the demarkation becomes daily more visible and wide.

Turn your eyes now to the ultra radicals,—what a motley, confused, jarring miscellany of irreconcilable theorists? Do two of them think alike? What connexion is there between the unvarying Warburton and the contradictory Cobbett? What harmony betwixt the French philosophy of this man, and the English prejudices of that? here all is paper money and passion, there all frigidity and fundholding. Each man ensconced in his own crotchets, is jealous of the crotchets of the other. Each man is mad for popularity, and restless for position. Vainly would you hope to consolidate a great national party that shall embrace all these discordant materials; the best we can do, is to incorporate the more reasonable, and leave the rest as isolated skirmishers, who are rather useful to harass your enemy, than to unite with your friends.

For do not believe that all who call themselves your friends are so in reality; never cease to recollect poor Strap and the runaway coat-holder!

Turn next to the great ministerial party, with its body of gold and its feet of clay; what a magical chymistry is there not in a treasury-bench! What scattered particles can it not conglomerate! What antipathetic opposite does it not combine! A Palmerston and a Brougham, a Grant and an Althorp, the wavering indolence of a Melbourne, and the dogged energy of an Ellice! I have read in a quack's advertisement, that gold may be made the most powerful of cements —I look to the ministry and I believe it! The supporters are worthy of the cabinet; they are equally various and equally consolidated; they shift with the ministers in every turn;—bow, bend, and twist with every government involution—to-day they repeal a tax, to-morrow restore it; now they insist on a clause in the Irish Tithe Bill, as containing its best principle —and now they erase it as incontestably the most obnoxious; they reflect on the placid stream of their serene subservience every shadow in the April heaven of ministerial supremacy. But we shall find on a more investigating observation, that by the very loyalty of their followers, the ministers are injuring themselves; "*they are dragging their friends through the mire,*" they are directing against them the wrath of their constituents, they are attracting to every sinuosity of creeping complaisance, the indignation and contempt of the country;—in one homely sentence, *they are endangering the return of their present majority to the next Parliament!* That a whig majority of one sort or another will be for some years returned under the Reform Bill, I have before said that I cannot doubt; but the next majority will be less vast and less confiding than the present! The great failing of the ministers is want of unity,—the Reform Bill united them, and during its progress they were strong; the Reform Bill passed, they had no longer a rallying point; they seem divided upon every thing else, nay, they allow the misfortune.

What mysterious hints do you not hear from every minister, that he is not of the same mind as his brethren. Did not Mr. Stanley declare the other night, that on the principle of rendering church property at the disposal of Parliament, he would divide on one side, and some of his companions on the other? On what an important question are these declared divisions!

This want of unity betrays itself in all manner of oscillations, the most ludicrous and undignified! Now the ministerial pendulum touches the Mountain Bench; now it vibrates to the crimson seat of his Grace of Wellington. Planning and counter-planning, bowing, and explaining, saying and unsaying, bullying to-day and cringing to-morrow, behold the melancholy policy of men who clumsily attempt what Machiavel has termed the greatest masterpiece in political science, viz. "to content the people and to manage the nobles."

Pressed by a crowd of jealous and hostile suitors, the only resource of our political Penelopes is in the web that they weave to conciliate each, and unravel in order to baffle all! My friends, as long as a government lacks unity, believe me it will be ever weak in good, and adherent to mischief. A man must move both legs in order to advance; if one leg stands still he may flourish with the other to all eternity without stirring a step. We must therefore see if we cannot contrive to impart unity to the Government, should we desire really to progress. How shall we effect this object? It seems to me that we might reasonably hope to effect it in the formation of a new, strong, enlightened, and rational party, on which the Government, in order to retain office, must lean for support. If we could make the ministers as afraid of the House of Commons as they are of the House of Peers, you have no notion how mightily we should brighten their wits and spirit up their measures!

But the most singular infatuation in the present Parliament is, that while ministers are thus daily vacillating from every point in the compass, we are eternally told that we must place unlimited confidence

in them. My good friends, is it not only in something firm, steady, and consistent, that any man ever places confidence?—you cannot confide in a vessel that has no rudder, and which one wind drives out of sight, and another wind as suddenly beats back into port. I dare say the ministers are very honest men, I will make no doubt of it. God forbid that I should. I am trustful in human integrity, and I think honesty natural to mankind; but political confidence is given to men not only in proportion to their own honesty, but also in proportion to the circumstances in which they are placed. An individual may repose trust where there is the inclination to fulfil engagement; but the destinies of a people are too grave for such generous credulity. A nation ought only to place its trust where there is no *power* to violate the compact. The difference between confidence in a despotism, and confidence in a representative government is this: in the former we hope every thing from the virtues of our rulers; in the latter, we would leave nothing we can avoid leaving, to the chance of their errors.

This large demand upon our confidence in men who are never two days the same, is not reasonable or just. *You* have lost that confidence, why should your representatives sacrifice every thing to a shadow, which, like Peter Schemil's, is divorced from its bodily substance—yourselves?

CHAPTER VIII.

A Picture of the present House of Commons.

It seems then, that an independent party ought to be formed, strong enough in numbers and in public opinion, to compel the ministers to a firm, a consistent, a liberal, and an independent policy. If so compelled,

the Government would acquire unity of course, for those of their present comrades who shrank from that policy which, seemingly the most bold, is in troubled times really the most prudent, would naturally fall off as the policy was pursued. But does the present House of Commons contain materials for the formation of such a party? I think we have reason to hope that it may; there are little less than a hundred members of liberal opinions, yet neither tamely Whig nor fiercely Radical, a proportion of whom are already agreed as to the expediency of such a party, and upon the immediate principles it should attempt to promote. At the early commencement of the session (the first session of the reformed Parliament), such a party ought to have formed itself at once. But to the very name of Party, many had a superstitious objection. Others expected more from the Government than the Government has granted. Some asked who was to be leader, and some thought it a plan that might be *disagreeable to the feelings of Lord Althorpe!*

"Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis."

The stream of time has flowed on, and Rusticus, perhaps, thinks it advisable to wait no longer. As a theory, I dislike the formation of parties. I will show you, my good friends, why, if you wish that independent men shall be useful men, a party at this moment is necessary in practice.

Just walk with me into the House of Commons—there! mount those benches; you are under the Speaker's gallery. The debate is of importance—it is six o'clock—the debate has begun—it goes on very smoothly for an hour or two, during which time most of the members are at dinner, and half the remaining members are asleep. Aware of the advantage of seizing this happy season of tranquillity, some experienced prosers have got the ball of debate in their own hands, they mumble and paw, and toss it about, till near ten o'clock. The House has become full,

you resettle yourselves in your seats, you fancy *now* the debate will begin in earnest; those gentlemen who have just entered will give new life to the discussion, they are not tired with the prosing *you* have heard, they come fresh to the field, prepared to listen and applaud. Alas! you are much mistaken! these gentlemen do not come to improve the debate, but to put an end to it as soon as they possibly can. They cluster round the bar in a gloomy galaxy;—like the stars, "they have neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them." Hark! a low murmur of question, it creeps, it gathers, and now—a cough!—fatal sound! a general attack of phthisis seizes upon the House. All the pulmonary diseases of pathology seem suddenly let loose on the unfortunate senators. Wheezing and sneezing, and puffing and grunting, till at last the ripening symphony swells into one mighty diapason of simultaneous *groans!* You would think the whole assembly smitten with the plague. Sounds so mournful, so agonizing, so inhuman, and so ghastly, were never heard before! Now and then a solemn voice proclaims "order," a momentary silence succeeds, and then, with a tumultuous reaction, rush once more from nook to nook the unutterable varieties of discord:

"Venti velut agmine facto,
Quà data porta, ruunt, et terras turbine perflant."

But who is the intrepid and patient member who, at short and dreary intervals, you hear threading with wearied voice, the atmospherical labyrinth of noise. My good friends, it is an independent member; *he has no party to back him!* Exhausted and vanquished, the orator drops at length. Up starts a Tory, dull, slow, and pompous; the clamour recommences, it is stopped short by indignant cries of "hear, hear!" the sound of "order" grows stern and commanding.

"Rex Æolus antro
Luctantes ventos, tempestatesque sonoras,
Imperio premit,"

Minister and Tory look round, and by menacing looks enjoin attention from their followers "for an *old* member of *such* respectability!" The noisier of the Æolian group escape in sullen silence through the side doors.

> "Una Eurusque Notusque ruunt, creberque procellis
> Africus."

And for the next half hour the Tory orator, with uninterrupted authority, "vexes the dull ears of the drowsy men." To him succeeds a Whig, perhaps a Minister; the same silence, and the same security of prosing. Mark, my friends, both these gentleman had a party at their backs!

I assure you that I am a very impartial witness on these facts, and write not at all sorely; for being very well contented to be silent, save when I have any thing to say, I speak but seldom, as becomes a young member, and at the early part of the evening among the prosers, as becomes a modest one. It has never therefore been my lot to fall a victim to that ferocity of dissonance (*Bombalio*, *clangor*, *stridor*, *taratantara*, *murmur*), which I have attempted to describe. But members more anxious to display their eloquence than I am, have been made so sensible of the impossibility of addressing the House often, without any party to appeal to from the uproarious decisions of the bar, that I believe this cause more than any other, has driven speech-loving gentlemen into the idea of forming an independent national party. A second reason that has, no doubt, had its weight with them, is this; if a member, unsupported by others, brings forward any motion that he considers of importance, he is accused of preventing the business of the night,* and up rises my Lord Althorp, and benevolently puts it to

* In order to expedite business, it is a party custom to *count out* the House on an independent member's motion, and so lose a night to the nation. The other day, six gentlemen put off their motions one after another, in order "not to take up the time of the House at so late a period of the session." When all these had thus resigned their right in favour of ministers, what did the House do? proceed with the ministerial business? No, it adjourned till the next day!

him, whether he will persevere in his motion "against the general sense of the House?" Whereupon the gentlemen behind open their mouths, and emit a considerable cheer. Perhaps the member, if he be a very bold fellow, perseveringly proceeds, the House being excessively thin and excessively sulky. He sits down, the minister rises, and shuffles the whole question out of discussion, by observing that the honourable gentleman has brought it forward at a time so obviously unfavourable, that without giving a negative to the principle, he shall think it (*totidem verbis*) his duty to throw as much cold water upon it as he possibly can. The minister having thus discharged his bucket, every Whig member adds a thimbleful; the cry of question commences, by cockcrow, and the motion is washed out of the House as fast and as fearfully as if it were poison!

No wonder, my dear friends, that you have been complaining of silence and want of energy in your independent members; they must have been stubborn spirits indeed, the very Molochs of manhood, to resist such discouraging chills, and such powerful combinations. Depend upon it, that so far as energy and talk are concerned, the independent members will not displease you, if they once resolve to unite. For my part, I have great hopes, should this party be ever properly formed, that the stream will work itself tolerably clear from the muddiness of its source, and that your reformed Parliament, which disappoints you now, will in a year or two sufficiently content you.

CHAPTER IX.

Who should compose this party, and what should be its objects—The advantage and necessity of strong government—Only to be obtained by the *corps* policy, of merging People and Government in the name of *State*—the difference between the People and the Public—Obstacles to the formation of a National Party in the perils that threaten the country.

And what manner of men will they be who shall compose this national party?—My friends, they cannot be the aristocrats. The aristocracy on either side are pledged to old and acknowledged factions, one part to the Tories, another to the Whigs: the party to which I refer must necessarily consist chiefly of new members, and of men wedded to no hereditary affections. So far so well; and what objects will they embrace?—That is more than I can pretend to affirm; but I know what objects they *ought* to embrace.

In the first place, you may remember that in a previous section I observed, that of late years the intellectual spirit of the time has merged in the political spirit; so, still more lately, the political has merged in the economical—you only think at present of what you can save. Well, then, a party that shall obtain your opinion and represent your wishes, must consider economy before all things; not looking to niggard and miserly retrenchments alone, not converting themselves into savealls of candle-ends and graters of cheese-parings; but advocating a vigorous and large retrenchment, extending from the highest department of state to the lowest. Never mind what the ministers tell us, when they say they have done their possible, and can retrench no more. So said the Canning administration; and yet the Duke of Wellington retrenched some millions. So said the Duke of Wellington after his

retrenchment; and yet the Whigs have retrenched a few millions more. So say the Whigs now; I fancy, if we look sharp, and press them hard, that we shall again find some snug *terra incognita* in the map of economy—the whole of that chart is far from being thoroughly explored. Retrenchment should be the first object of this party, a retrenchment that shall permit the repeal of the most oppressive of the taxes, the assessed taxes, the malt-tax, the stamp duty on political knowledge. I say boldly RETRENCHMENT; for between you and me, my friends, I have little faith in the virtue of any commutation of taxes. I have studied the intricacies of our finance, I have examined the financial systems of other countries, and I cannot discover any very large *fiscal* benefit as the probable result of new combinations of taxation. I own to you that I think you are inclined to overrate the merits of a property-tax; depend upon it that, before such a tax existed three years, you would be as loud for its repeal as you are now for the house and window-taxes; *they* are property-taxes, of a less just nature, I grant, on the one hand, but of a less onerous and inquisitorial nature on the other:—an immense national debt renders direct taxation a dangerous experiment. No; I should vote for a property-tax, in lieu of other taxes, merely as a temporary expedient—as an expedient that would allow us time to breathe, to look round, to note well what retrenchments we can effect. In a year or two the retrenchments already made will come more into sensible operation; in a year or two (if your minds were made easy on your affairs), quiet and hope would increase our trade, and therefore our revenue; in a year or two new savings could be effected, and the property-tax, if imposed, be swept away: this is the sole benefit I anticipate from its imposition. I am for bold and rigid economy, not for its own sake alone, but because, I believe my friends, that, until you get this cursed money-saving out of your heads, until you are sensible that you are fairly treated, and can look at something else than your pockets, you will not be dis-

posed to examine into higher and better principles of government than its mere cheapness. In vain pleads the head till the stomach is satisfied; in vain shall we entreat you to regard your intellectual and moral advancement, till we set at rest your anxiety not to be ruined.

Economy, then, should be the first principle of such a party; but not at that point should its duties be limited. It is from a profound knowledge of the character of the people to whom legislation is to be applied that statesmen should legislate. I have said, in my first book, that the main feature of your character is industry; industry, therefore, should be supported and encouraged. I have said next that the *present* disposition of the aristocratic influence weakens and degrades you; that disposition should be corrected and refined. I have said, thirdly, that a monarchy is your best preservative from entire deliverance to the domination of brute wealth and oligarchical ascendency; the monarchy should be strengthened and confirmed. I have said, again, that an established church preserves you from fanaticism and the worst effects of your constitutional gloom: an established church should be jealously preserved; mark me, its preservation does not forbid—no, it necessitates its reform. I have said that a material and sordid standard of opinion has formed itself in the heart of your commercial tendencies; and this standard, by organized education, by encouraging that great national spirit, which of itself gives encouragement to literature, to science, and to art,—by a noble and liberal genius of legislation, we ought to purify and to exalt. This last object neither Whig nor Tory has ever dreamed of effecting. Lord Brougham, indeed, when the Whigs disowned him, comprehended its expediency, and pledged himself to its cause; but, since he has been the member of a cabinet, he seems to have slipped from his principles, and forgotten his pledge. These are the main objects which your national party should have in view. A more vast and more general object to which, I fear,

no party is yet prepared to apply itself, seems to me to be this, to merge the names of People and of Government, to unite them both in the word STATE. Wherever you see a good and a salutary constitution, *there* you see the great masses of the population wedded to and mingled with the state; there must be energy to ensure prompt and efficient legislation: energy exists not where unity is wanting: In Denmark and Prussia is the form of absolute monarchy; but nowhere are the people happier or more contented, because in those countries they are utterly amalgamated with the state, the state protects, and educates, and cherishes them all. In America you behold republicanism; but the state is equally firm as it is in Denmark or Prussia, the people equally attached to it, and equally bound up in its existence. In these opposite constitutions you behold equal energy, because equal unity. Ancient nations teach us the same truth; in Rome, in Athens, in Tyre, in Carthage, the people were strong and prosperous only while the people and the state were one. But away with ancient examples! let us come back to common sense. Can the mind surrender itself to its highest exertions while distracted by disquietude and discontent?—the mind of one individual reflects the mind of a people, and happiness in either results from the consciousness of security; but you are never secure while you are at variance with your government. In a well-ordered constitution, a constitution in harmony with its subjects, each citizen confounds himself with the state; he is proud that he belongs to it, the genius of the whole people enters into his soul; he is not one man only, he is inspired by the mighty force of the community; he feels the dignity of the nation in himself—he beholds himself in the dignity of the nation. To unite, then, the people and the government, to prevent that jealousy and antagonism of power which we behold at present, each resisting each to their common weakness, to merge, in one word, both names in the name of state, we must first advance the popular principle

to satisfy the people, and then prevent a conceding government by creating a directive one. At present, my friends, you only perceive the government when it knocks at your door for taxes; you couple with its name the idea not of protection, but of extortion; but I would wish that you should see the Government educating your children, and encouraging your science, and ameliorating the condition of your poor—I wish you to warm while you utter its very name, with a grateful and reverent sense of enlightenment and protection;—I wish you to behold all your great Public Blessings repose beneath its shadow;—I wish you to feel advancing towards that unceasing and incalculable amelioration which I firmly believe to be the common destiny of mankind, with a steady march and beneath a beloved banner; I wish that every act of a beneficent reform should seem to you neither conceded nor extorted;—but as a pledge of a sacred, a mutual love—the legitimate offspring of one faithful and indissoluble union between the Power of a People and the Majesty of a State. This is what I mean by a *directive* government; and a government so formed is always strong—strong not for evil, but for good. I know, that some imagine that a good government *should* be a weak government, and that so the people should sway and mould it at their will; you cannot have a weaker government than at present, and I do not see how you are the better for it! But you, the people, do *not* sway a feeble government—I should be delighted if you did; for the people are calm and reasoning, and have a profound sense of the universal interest. But you have a false likeness, my dear friends, a vile, hypocritical, noisy, swaggering fellow, that is usually taken for you, and whom the journalists invariably swear by, a creature that is called "THE PUBLIC." I know not a more pragmatical conceited animal than this said PUBLIC. You are immortal; but the PUBLIC is the grub of a day; he floats on the mere surface of time; he swallows down the falsest opinions; he spouts forth the noisiest fallacies; what he says one hour he unsays the next;

he is a thing of whims and caprices, of follies and of phrensies. And it is this wrangling and shallow pretender, it is the Public, and not the People, that dictates to a feeble government.

You have been misled if you suppose a strong Government is necessarily hostile to you; *coercive* Governments are not *strong* ones, Governments are never strong save when they suit the people, but a Government truly strong would be efficient in good; it would curb arrogance as well as licentiousness. Government was strong when it carried your Reform Bill through the House of Lords. Government was weak when it sacrificed to the Lords the marrow of the Irish Tithe Bill. A united State, and a strong Government, such should be the ulterior objects of a national party really wise and firmly honest. But the members of such a party should dismiss all petty ambition, all desire of office for themselves; they are not strong enough, for years they cannot be strong, without base and unnatural alliances, to nourish the hope of coming into power with the necessary effect. They should limit their endeavours to retain the best of the present ministers in office, and to compel them to a consistent and generous policy. They should rather imitate the watch-dog than to aspire to the snug cottage of the shepherd.

This, my friends, is the outline of what, in my poor opinion, a national party *ought* to be; but I own to you that when I look to the various component parts of such an association, when I reflect how difficult it will be to unite the scruples of some, and to curb the desires of others, I limit my present hopes to a small portion of the benefits it could attain. It is for you to widen the sphere of that benefit by a vigilance towards its efforts, and an approbation of its courage. Should it remain unformed after all—should its elements jar prematurely—should it dissolve of itself—should it accomplish none of its objects; and, for want of some such ground of support to good Government, and of fear to bad, should our present ministers continue their oscil-

latory politics, weakening the crown, irritating the people, declining to enlighten, and incapable to relieve; shifting from rashness to cowardice, and cowardice to rashness, I behold the most serious cause of apprehension and alarm. I look beyond the day! I see an immense expenditure, an impoverished middle class, an ignorant population; a huge debt, the very magnitude of which tempts to dishonesty.* I behold a succession of hasty experiments and legislative quackeries; feuds between the agriculturist and the fundholder; "scrambles" at the national purse, tamperings with the currency, and hazardous commutations of taxes, till having run through all the nostrums which Ignorance can administer to the impatience of Disease, we shall come to that last dread operation of which no man can anticipate the result!

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY.

And now, my dear friends, but little remains for me to say. Your welfare has ever been to me that object, which above all others has excited my ambition, and linked itself with my desires. From my boyhood to this hour, it is to the condition of great masses of men that my interest and my studies have been directed; it is for their amelioration and enlightenment that I have

* I firmly believe that if the National Debtor be ever in danger—the fatal attack will come less from the Radicals than the Country Gentlemen who are jealous of the fundholder, and crippled with mortgages. The day after the repeal of half the Malt-tax (leaving a large deficit in the Revenue) was carried, I asked one of its principal supporters, a popular and influential Country Gentleman, how he proposed to repair the deficit. "By a tax of two per cent.," quoth he, "upon Master Fundholder." "And if that does not suffice?" asked I. "Why then we must tax him *four* per cent.," was the honest rejoinder!

been a labourer and an enthusiast. Yes, I say, enthusiast; for when a man is sincere, enthusiasm warms him; when useful, enthusiasm directs. Nothing can sustain our hopes for mankind amid their own suspicion of our motives and misconstructions of our aims, amid the mighty obstacles that oppose every one who struggles with old opinion, and the innumerable mortifications, that are as the hostile winds of the soul, driving it back upon the haven of torpor and self-seeking; save that unconquerable and generous zeal which results from a hearty faith in our own honesty, and a steady conviction of that tendency and power TO PROGRESS, which the whole history, as well of philosophy as of civilization, assures us to be the prerogative of our race! If I have, in certain broad and determined opinions, separated myself from many of your false and many of your real friends; if I have not followed the more popular leaders of the day against our ecclesiastical establishment, or against a monarchical constitution of government, it is not because I believe that any minor interests should be consulted before your own; it is not because I see a sanctity in hereditary delusions, or in the solemn austerities of power; it is not because I deny that in some conditions of society a republic may be the wisest government,* or because I maintain that where certain standards of moral opinion be created, an endowed establishment is necessary to the public virtue; but it is, because I consider both institutions subordinate to *your* welfare; it is because I put aside the false mists and authorities of the past,

* Were I, in this work, giving myself up to the speculative and conjectural philosophy of politics, I should be quite willing to allow my conviction, that as yet we have scarce passed the threshold of the science of government, and that vast and organic changes will hereafter take place in the social condition of the world. But I suspect that those changes will be favourable to the concentration, not of *power*, but the executive *direction* of power into the fewest possible hands, as being at once energetic and responsible in proportion to such a concentration. I think then that the representative system itself, will not be found that admirable invention which it is now asserted to be. But these are distant theories, not adapted to this age, and must be reserved for the visions of the closet.—He now is the most useful politician who grapples the closest with the time.

and regard diligently the aspect of the present; it is because on the one hand I feel persuaded, viewing the tendencies which belong to our time, and the moral bias of the general feelings which, while often seeming to oppose an aristocracy, inclines equally, in its opposition, to aristocratic fallacies, whether of wealth or of station, that your republic would *not* be a true and sound democracy, but the perpetuator of the worst influences which have operated on your character and your laws;—and because on the other hand, I dread, that the effects of abolishing an endowed church would be less visible in the reform of superstitions, than in the gloomy advances of fanaticism. If I err in these opinions, it is for your sake that I err; if I am right, let us look with somewhat of prudent jealousy at the declamations and sarcasms which spring from a partial and limited survey of the large principles of practical polity; a survey which confounds every unpopular action of a king with the question of a monarchy; every failing of a priest with the consideration of an establishment; which to-day insinuates a republic because the king dines with a tory, and to-morrow denounces an establishment because a bishop votes against the whigs.* These are the cries of party, and have no right to response from the more deep and thoughtful sympathies of a nation. Believe me, once more, and once for all,

* Whether or not the bishops should have the privilege to vote in parliament is a question I shall not attempt to decide. For the sake of removing the establishment itself from the perpetual danger of jarring, in its ostensible heads, against the opinions and passions of the people, the privation of that privilege might be desirable, and tend even to the preservation and popularity of the church; but I beseech the reader to mark that nothing can be more unjust than the present cry against "the timeserving" and "servility" of the episcopal bench! What! when for the first time the prelates have refused all dictation from the government, have separated themselves wholly from ministerial temptation, have, with obstinate fidelity, clung fast to a falling party, which cannot for years longer than those which usually remain to men who have won to episcopal honours, be restored to power! what, *now* do you accuse them of timeserving and servility! Alas! it is exactly because they refuse to serve the time; exactly because they abjure servility to the dominant powers, that the public abuse and the ministers desert them?

if there be a pretender of whom the people should beware, it is that stage-mummer—the Public!

Come what may in the jar and conflict of momentary interests, it is with the permanent and progressive interest of the people, that the humble writer who addresses you stands or falls, desiring indeed to proportion your power to your knowledge, but only because believing that all acquisitions of authority, whether by prince or people, which exceed the capacity to preserve and the wisdom to direct, are brief and perilous gains; lost as soon as made; tempting to crude speculations, and ending possibly in ruin. Every imprudence of the popular power is a step to despotism, as every excess of the oligarchical power is the advance of the democratic.

Farewell, my dear friends. We part upon the crisis of unconjecturable events.

> "From this shoal and sand of time,
> We leap the life to come."

Gladly indeed would I pass from dealings with the policy of the present, to the more tempting speculations upon the future; but the sky is uncertain and overcast; and as, my friends, you may observe on a clouded night that the earth gathers no dew, even so it is not in these dim and unlighted hours that the prophetic thirst of Philosophy may attain to those heavenlier influences which result from a serener sky, and enable her to promise health and freshness to the aspect of the morrow.

APPENDIX.

(B)

REMARKS ON BENTHAM'S PHILOSOPHY.

It is no light task to give an abridged view of the philosophical opinions of one, who attempted to place the vast subjects of morals and legislation upon a scientific basis : a mere outline is all that can be attempted.

The first principles of Mr. Bentham's philosophy are these ; —that happiness, meaning by that term pleasure and exemption from pain, is the only thing desirable in itself; that all other things are desirable solely as means to that end : that the production, therefore, of the greatest possible happiness, is the only fit purpose of all human thought and action, and consequently of all morality and government ; and moreover, that pleasure and pain are the sole agencies by which the conduct of mankind is in fact governed, whatever circumstances the individual may be placed in, and whether he is aware of it or not.

Mr. Bentham does not appear to have entered very deeply into the metaphysical grounds of these doctrines ; he seems to have taken those grounds very much upon the showing of the metaphysicians who preceded him. The principle of utility, or as he afterward called it, "the greatest happiness principle," stands no otherwise demonstrated in his writings, than by an enumeration of the phrases of a different description which have been commonly employed to denote the rule of life, and the rejection of them all, as having no intelligible meaning, further than as they may involve a tacit reference to considerations of utility. Such are the phrases "law of nature," "right reason," "natural rights," "moral sense." All these Mr. Bentham regarded as mere covers for dogmatism ; excuses for setting up one's own *ipse dixit* as a rule to bind other people. "They consist, all of them," says he, "in so many contrivances for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard, and for prevailing upon the reader to accept the author's sentiment or opinion as a reason for itself."

This, however, is not fair treatment of the believers in other moral principles than that of utility. All modes of speech are employed in an ignorant manner, by ignorant people ; but no one who had thought deeply and systematically enough to be entitled to the name of a philosopher, ever supposed that his *own* private sentiments of approbation and disapprobation must

necessarily be well-founded, and needed not to be compared with any external standard. The answer of such persons to Mr. Bentham would be, that by an inductive and analytical examination of the human mind, they had satisfied themselves that what we call our moral sentiments, (that is, the feelings of complacency and aversion we experience when we compare actions of our own or of other people with our standard of right and wrong), are as much part of the original constitution of man's nature as the desire of happiness and the fear of suffering: that those sentiments do not indeed attach themselves to the same actions under all circumstances; but neither do they, in attaching themselves to actions, follow the law of utility; but certain other general laws, which are the same in all mankind, naturally, though education or external circumstances may counteract them, by creating artificial associations stronger than they. No *proof* indeed can be given that we ought to abide by these laws; but neither can any *proof* be given that we ought to regulate our conduct by utility. All that can be said is, that the pursuit of happiness is natural to us; and so, it is contended, is the reverence for, and the inclination to square our actions by, certain general laws of morality.

Any one who is acquainted with the ethical doctrines either of the Reid and Stewart school, or of the German metaphysicians (not to go further back), knows that such would be the answer of those philosophers to Mr. Bentham; and it is an answer of which Mr. Bentham's writings furnish no sufficient refutation. For it is evident, that these views of the origin of moral distinctions are *not*, what he says all such views are, destitute of any precise and tangible meaning; nor chargeable with setting up as a standard the feelings of the particular person. They set up as a standard what are assumed (on grounds which are considered sufficient) to be the instincts of the species, or principles of our common nature as universal and inexplicable as instincts.

To pass judgment on these doctrines, belongs to a profounder and subtler metaphysics than Mr. Bentham possessed. I apprehend it will be the judgment of posterity, that in his views of what in the felicitous expression of Hobbes may be called the *philosophia prima*, it has for the most part, even when he was most completely in the right, been reserved for others to *prove* him so. The greatest of Mr. Bentham's defects, his insufficient knowledge and appreciation of the thoughts of other men, shows itself constantly in his grappling with some delusive shadow of an adversary's opinions, and leaving the actual substance unharmed.

After laying down the principle of utility, Mr. Bentham is occupied through the most voluminous and the most permanently valuable part of his works, in constructing the outlines of practical ethics and legislation, and filling up some portions

of the latter science (or rather art) in great detail; by the uniform and unflinching application of his own greatest-happiness principle, from which the eminently consistent and systematic character of his intellect prevented him from ever swerving. In the writings of no philosopher, probably, are to be detected so few contradictions—so few instances of even momentary deviation from the principles he himself has laid down.

It is perhaps fortunate that Mr. Bentham devoted a much larger share of his time and labour to the subject of legislation, than to that of morals; for the mode in which he understood and applied the principle of utility, appears to me far more conducive to the attainment of true and valuable results in the former, than in the latter of these two branches of inquiry. The recognition of happiness as the only thing desirable in itself, and of the production of the state of things most favourable to happiness as the only rational end both of morals and policy, by no means necessarily leads to the doctrine of expediency as professed by Paley; the ethical canon which judges of the morality of an act or a class of actions, solely by the probable *consequences* of that particular kind of act, supposing it to be generally practised. This is a very small part indeed of what a more enlarged understanding of the "greatest happiness principle" would require us to take into the account. A certain kind of action, as for example, theft, or lying, would, if commonly practised, occasion certain evil consequences to society: but those evil consequences are far from constituting the entire moral bearings of the vices of theft or lying. We shall have a very imperfect view of the relation of those practices to the general happiness, if we suppose them to exist singly, and insulated. All acts suppose certain dispositions, and habits of mind and heart, which may be in themselves states of enjoyment or of wretchedness, and which must be fruitful in *other* consequences, besides those particular acts. No person can be a thief or a liar without being much else: and if our moral judgments and feelings with respect to a person convicted of either vice, were grounded solely upon the pernicious tendency of thieving and of lying, they would be partial and incomplete; many considerations would be omitted, which are at least equally "germane to the matter;" many which, by leaving them out of our general views, we may indeed teach ourselves a habit of overlooking, but which it is impossible for any of us not to be influenced by, in particular cases, in proportion as they are forced upon our attention.

Now, the great fault I have to find with Mr. Bentham as a moral philosopher, and the source of the chief part of the temporary mischief, which in that character, along with a vastly greater amount of permanent good, he must be allowed to have produced, is this; that he has practically, to a very great extent, confounded the principle of utility with the principle of

specific consequences; and has habitually made up his estimate of the approbation or blame due to a particular kind of action, from a calculation solely of the consequences to which that very action, if practised generally, would itself lead. He has largely exemplified, and contributed very widely to diffuse, a tone of thinking, according to which any kind of action or any habit, which in its own specific consequences cannot be proved to be necessarily or probably productive of unhappiness to the agent himself or to others, is supposed to be fully justified; and any disapprobation or aversion entertained towards the individual by reason of it, is set down from that time forward as prejudice and superstition. It is not considered (at least not habitually considered) whether the act or habit in question, though not in itself necessarily pernicious, may not form part of a *character* essentially pernicious, or at least essentially deficient in some quality eminently conducive to the "greatest happiness." To apply such a standard as this would indeed often require a much deeper insight into the formation of character, and knowledge of the internal workings of human nature, than Mr. Bentham possessed. But, in a greater or less degree, he, and every one else, judges by this standard: even those who are warped, by some partial view, into the omission of all such elements from their general speculations.

When the moralist thus overlooks the relation of an act to a certain state of mind as its cause, and its connexion through that common cause with large classes and groups of actions apparently very little resembling itself, his estimation even of the consequences of the very act itself, is rendered imperfect. For it may be affirmed with few exceptions, that any act whatever has a tendency to fix and perpetuate the state or character of mind in which itself has originated. And if that important element in the moral relations of the action, be not taken into account by the moralist as a cause, neither probably will it be taken into account as a consequence.

Mr. Bentham is far from having altogether overlooked this side of the subject. Indeed, those most original and instructive, though, as I conceive, in their spirit, partially erroneous chapters, on *motives* and on *dispositions*, in his first great work, the Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, open up a direct and broad path to these most important topics. It is not the less true that Mr. Bentham, and many others following his example, when they came to discuss particular questions of ethics, have commonly, in the superior stress which they laid upon the specific consequences of a class of acts, rejected all contemplation of the action in its general bearings upon the entire moral being of the agent, or have, to say the least, thrown those considerations so far into the background, as to be almost out of sight. And by so doing they have not only marred the value of many of their speculations, considered as

mere philosophical inquiries, but have always run the risk of incurring, and in many cases have in my opinion actually incurred, serious practical errors.

This incompleteness, however, in Mr. Bentham's general views, was not of a nature materially to diminish the value of his speculations through the greater part of the field of legislation. Those of the bearings of an action, upon which Mr. Bentham bestowed almost exclusive attention, were also those with which almost alone legislation is conversant. The legislator enjoins or prohibits an action, with very little regard to the general moral excellence or turpitude which it implies; he looks to the consequences to society of the particular kind of action; his object is not to render people incapable of *desiring* a crime, but to deter them from actually *committing* it. Taking human beings as he finds them, he endeavours to supply such inducements as will constrain even persons of the dispositions the most at variance with the general happiness, to practise as great a degree of regard to it in their actual conduct, as can be obtained from them by such means without preponderant inconvenience. A theory, therefore, which considers little in an action besides that action's *own* consequences, will generally be sufficient to serve the purposes of a philosophy of legislation. Such a philosophy will be most apt to fail in the consideration of the greater social questions; the theory of organic institutions and general forms of polity; for those (unlike the details of legislation) to be duly estimated, must be viewed as the great instruments of forming the national character; of carrying forward the members of the community towards perfection, or preserving them from degeneracy. This, as might in some measure be expected, is a point of view in which, except for some partial or limited purpose, Mr. Bentham seldom contemplates these questions. And this signal omission is one of the greatest of the deficiencies by which his speculations on the theory of government, though full of valuable ideas, are rendered, in my judgment, altogether inconclusive in their general results.

To these we shall advert more fully hereafter. As yet I have not acquitted myself of the more agreeable task of setting forth some part of the services which the philosophy of legislation owes to Mr. Bentham.

The greatest service of all, that for which posterity will award most honour to his name, is one that is his exclusively, and can be shared by no man present or to come; it is the service which can be performed only once for any science, that of pointing out by what method of investigation it may be *made* a science. What Bacon did for physical knowledge, Mr. Bentham has done for philosophical legislation. Before Bacon's time, many physical facts had been ascertained; and previously to Mr. Bentham, mankind were in possession of many just and valuable detached observations on the making of laws. But he was the

first who attempted regularly to deduce all the secondary and intermediate principles of law, by direct and systematic inference from the one great axiom or principle of general utility. In all existing systems of law, those secondary principles or dicta in which the essence of the systems resided, had grown up in detail, and even when founded in views of utility, were not the result of any scientific and comprehensive course of inquiry; but more frequently were purely technical; that is, they had grown out of circumstances purely *historical*, and not having been altered when those circumstances changed, had nothing left to rest upon but fictions, and unmeaning forms. Take for instance the law of real property; the whole of which continues to this very day to be founded on the doctrine of feudal tenures, when those tenures have long ceased to exist except in the phraseology of Westminster Hall. Nor was the *theory* of law in a better state than the practical systems; speculative jurists having dared little more than to refine somewhat upon the technical maxims of the particular body of jurisprudence which they happened to have studied. Mr. Bentham was the first who had the genius and courage to conceive the idea of bringing back the science to first principles. This could not be done, could scarcely even be attempted, without, as a necessary consequence, making obvious the utter worthlessness of many, and the crudity and want of precision of almost all, the maxims which had previously passed everywhere for principles of law.

Mr. Bentham, moreover, has warred against the errors of existing systems of jurisprudence, in a more direct manner than by merely presenting the contrary truths. The force of argument with which he rent asunder the fantastic and illogical maxims on which the various technical systems are founded, and exposed the flagrant evils which they practically produce, is only equalled by the pungent sarcasm and exquisite humour with which he has derided their absurdities, and the eloquent declamation which he continually pours forth against them, sometimes in the form of lamentation, and sometimes of invective.

This then was the first, and perhaps the grandest achievement of Mr. Bentham; the entire discrediting of all technical systems; and the example which he set of treating law as no peculiar mystery, but a simple piece of practical business, wherein means were to be adapted to ends, as in any of the other arts of life. To have accomplished this, supposing him to have done nothing else, is to have equalled the glory of the greatest scientific benefactors of the human race.

But Mr. Bentham, unlike Bacon, did not merely prophesy a science; he made large strides towards the creation of one. He was the first who conceived with anything approaching to precision, the idea of a Code or complete body of law, and the distinctive characters of its essential parts,—the Civil Law, the

Penal Law, and the Law of Procedure. On the first two of these three departments he rendered valuable service; the third he actually created. Conformably to the habits of his mind, he set about investigating *ab initio*, a philosophy or science for each of the three branches. He did with the received principles of each, what a good code would do with the laws themselves; —extirpated the bad, substituting others; re-enacted the good, but in so much clearer and more methodical a form, that those who were most familiar with them before, scarcely recognized them as the same. Even upon old truths, when they pass through his hands, he leaves so many of his marks, that often he almost seems to claim the discovery of what he has only systematized.

In creating the philosophy of Civil Law, he proceeded not much beyond establishing on the proper basis some of its most general principles, and cursorily discussing some of the most interesting of its details. Nearly the whole of what he has published on this branch of law is contained in the *Traités de Législation*, edited by M. Dumont. To the most difficult part, and that which most needed a master-hand to clear away its difficulties, the nomenclature and arrangement of the Civil Code, he contributed little, except detached observations and criticisms upon the errors of his predecessors. The "Vue Généralé d'un Corps Complet de Législation," included in the work just cited, contains almost all which he has given to us on this subject.

In the department of Penal Law, he is the author of the best attempt yet made towards a philosophical classification of offences. The theory of punishments (for which however more had been done by his predecessors, than for any other part of the science of law) he left nearly complete.

The theory of Procedure (including that of the constitution of the courts of justice) he found in a more utterly barbarous state than even either of the other branches; and he left it incomparably the most perfect. There is scarcely a question of practical importance in this most important department, which he has not settled. He has left next to nothing for his successors.

He has shown with the force of demonstration, and has enforced and illustrated the truth in a hundred ways, that by sweeping away the greater part of the artificial rules and forms which obtain in all the countries called civilized, and adopting the simple and direct modes of investigation, which all men employ in endeavouring to ascertain facts for their own private knowledge, it is possible to get rid of at least nine-tenths of the expense, and ninety-nine hundredths of the delay, of law proceedings; not only with no increase, but with an almost incredible diminution of the chances of erroneous decision. He has also established irrefragably the principles of a good judicial establishment: a division of the country into districts, with

one judge in each, appointed only for a limited period, and deciding all sorts of cases; with a deputy under him, appointed and removable by himself: an appeal lying in all cases whatever, but by the transmission of papers only, to a supreme court or courts, consisting each of only *one* judge, and stationed in the metropolis.

It is impossible within the compass of this sketch, to attempt any further statement of Mr. Bentham's principles and views on the great science which first became a science in his hands.

As an analyst of human nature (the faculty in which above all it is necessary that an ethical philosopher should excel) I cannot rank Mr. Bentham very high. He has done little in this department, beyond introducing what appears to me a very deceptive phraseology, and furnishing a catalogue of the "springs of action," from which some of the most important are left out.

That the actions of sentient beings are wholly determined by pleasure and pain, is the fundamental principle from which he starts; and thereupon Mr. Bentham creates a *motive*, and an *interest*, corresponding to each pleasure or pain, and affirms that our actions are determined by our *interests*, by the *preponderant* interest, by the *balance* of motives. Now if this only means what was before asserted, that our actions are determined by pleasure and pain, that simple and unambiguous mode of stating the proposition is preferable. But under cover of the obscurer phrase a meaning creeps in, both to the author's mind and the reader's, which goes much further, and is entirely false: that all our acts are determined by pains and pleasures *in prospect*, pains and pleasures to which we look forward as the *consequences* of our acts. This, as a universal truth, can in no way be maintained. The pain or pleasure which determines our conduct is as frequently one which *precedes* the moment of action as one which follows it. A man *may*, it is true, be deterred in circumstances of temptation, from perpetrating a crime, by his dread of the punishment, or of the remorse, which he fears he may have to endure *after* the guilty act; and in that case we may say with some kind of propriety, that his conduct is swayed by the balance of motives; or if you will, of interests. But the case *may* be, and is to the full as likely to be, that he recoils from the very thought of committing the act; the idea of placing himself in such a situation is so painful, that he cannot dwell upon it long enough to have even the physical power of perpetrating the crime. His conduct is determined by pain; but by a pain which precedes the act, not by one which is expected to follow it. Not only *may* this be so, but unless it be so, the man is not really virtuous. The fear of pain *consequent* upon the act, cannot arise, unless there be *deliberation;* and the man as well as "the woman who deliberates" is in imminent danger of being lost. With what propriety shrinking from an action without deliberation, can be

called yielding to an *interest*, I cannot see. *Interest* surely conveys, and is intended to convey, the idea of an *end*, to which the conduct (whether it be act or forbearance) is designed as the *means*. Nothing of this sort takes place in the above example. It would be more correct to say that conduct is *sometimes* determined by an *interest*, that is, by a deliberate and conscious aim; and sometimes by an *impulse*, that is, by a feeling (call it an association if you think fit) which has no ulterior end, the act or forbearance becoming an end in itself.

The attempt, again, to *enumerate* motives, that is, human desires and aversions, seems to me to be in its very conception an error. Motives are innumerable: there is nothing whatever which may not become an object of desire or of dislike by association. It may be desirable to distinguish by peculiar notice the motives which are strongest and of most frequent operation; but Mr. Bentham has not even done this. In his list of motives, though he includes sympathy, he omits conscience, or the feeling of duty: one would never imagine from reading him that any human being ever did an act merely because it is right, or abstained from it merely because it is wrong. In this Mr. Bentham differs widely from Hartley, who, although he considers the moral sentiments to be wholly the result of association, does not therefore deny them a place in his system, but includes the feelings of "the moral sense" as one of the six classes into which he divides pleasures and pains. In Mr. Bentham's own mind, deeply imbued as it was with the "greatest happiness principle," this motive was probably so blended with that of sympathy as to be undistinguishable from it; but he should have recollected that those who acknowledge another standard of right and wrong than happiness, or who have never reflected on the subject at all, have often very strong feelings of moral obligation; and whether a person's standard be happiness or any thing else, his attachment to his standard is not necessarily in proportion to his benevolence. Persons of weak sympathies have often a strong feeling of justice; and others, again, with the feelings of benevolence in considerable strength, have scarcely any consciousness of moral obligation at all.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the habitual omission of so important a spring of action, in an enumeration professing to be complete, must tend to create a habit of overlooking the same phenomenon, and, consequently, making no allowance for it, in other moral speculations. It is difficult to imagine any more fruitful source of gross error; though one would be apt to suppose the oversight an impossible one, without this evidence of its having been committed by one of the greatest thinkers our species has produced. How can we suppose him to be alive to the existence and force of the motive in particular cases, who omits it in a deliberate and comprehensive

enumeration of all the influences by which human conduct is governed?

In laying down as a philosophical axiom, that men's actions are always obedient to their interests, Mr. Bentham did no more than dress up the very trivial proposition, that all persons do what they feel themselves most disposed to do, in terms which appeared to him more precise, and better suited to the purposes of philosophy than those more familiar expressions. He by no means intended by this assertion to impute universal selfishness to mankind, for he reckoned the motive of sympathy as an *interest*, and would have included conscience under the same appellation, if that motive had found any place in his philosophy, as a distinct principle from benevolence. He distinguished two kinds of interests, the self-regarding and the social: in vulgar discourse the name is restricted to the former kind alone.

But there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that, because we may ourselves be perfectly *conscious* of an ambiguity in our language, that ambiguity therefore has no effect in perverting our modes of thought. I am persuaded, from experience, that this habit of speaking of all the feelings which govern mankind under the name of *interests*, is almost always in point of fact connected with a tendency to consider *interest* in the vulgar sense, that is, purely self-regarding interest, as exercising, by the very constitution of human nature, a far more exclusive and paramount control over human actions than it really does exercise. Such, certainly, was the tendency of Mr. Bentham's own opinions. Habitually, and throughout his works, the moment he has shown that a man's *selfish* interest would prompt him to a particular course of action, he lays it down without further parley that the man's interest lies that way; and, by sliding insensibly from the vulgar sense of the word into the philosophical, and from the philosophical back into the vulgar, the conclusion which is always brought out is, that the man will act as the selfish interest prompts. The extent to which Mr. Bentham was a believer in the predominance of the selfish principle in human nature, may be seen from the sweeping terms in which, in his Book of Fallacies, he expressly lays down that predominance as a philosophical axiom.

"In *every* human breast (rare and short-lived ebullitions, the result of some extraordinarily strong stimulus or excitement, excepted) self-regarding interest is predominant over social interest; each person's own individual interest over the interests of all other persons taken together." Pp. 392, 3.

In another passage of the same work (p. 363) he says, "Taking the whole of life together, there exists not, *nor ever can exist*, that human being in whose instance any public interest he can have had will not, in so far as depends upon himself, have been sacrificed to his own personal interest. Towards the advancement of the public interest, all that the most public-

spirited (which is as much as to say the most virtuous) of men can do, is to do what depends upon himself towards bringing the public interest, that is, his own personal share in the public interest, to a state as nearly approaching to coincidence, and on as few occasions amounting to a state of repugnance, as possible, with his private interests."

By the promulgation of such views of human nature, and by a general tone of thought and expression perfectly in harmony with them, I conceive Mr. Bentham's writings to have done and to be doing very serious evil. It is by such things that the more enthusiastic and generous minds are prejudiced against all his other speculations, and against the very attempt to make ethics and politics a subject of precise and philosophical thinking; which attempt, indeed, if it were necessarily connected with such views, would be still more pernicious than the vague and flashy declamation for which it is proposed as a substitute. The effect is still worse on the minds of those who are not shocked and repelled by this tone of thinking, for on them it must be perverting to their whole moral nature. It is difficult to form the conception of a tendency more inconsistent with all rational hope of good for the human species, than that which must be impressed by such doctrines upon any mind in which they find acceptance.

There are, there have been, many human beings in whom the motives of patriotism or of benevolence have been permanent steady principles of action, superior to any ordinary, and in not a few instances, to any possible, temptations of personal interest. There are, and have been, multitudes in whom the motive of conscience or moral obligation, has been thus paramount. There is nothing in the constitution of human nature to forbid its being so in all mankind. Until it is so, the race will never enjoy one-tenth part of the happiness which our nature is susceptible of. I regard any considerable increase of human happiness, through mere changes in outward circumstances, unaccompanied by changes in the state of the desires, as hopeless; not to mention that while the desires are circumscribed in self, there can be no adequate motive for exertions tending to modify to good ends even those external circumstances. No man's individual share of any public good which he can hope to realize by his efforts, is an equivalent for the sacrifice of his ease, and of the personal objects which he might attain by another course of conduct. The balance can be turned in favour of virtuous exertion, only by the interest of *feeling* or by that of *conscience*, those "social interests," the necessary subordination of which to "self-regarding" is so lightly assumed.

But the power of any one to realize in himself the state of mind, without which his own enjoyment of life can be but poor and scanty, and on which all our hopes of happiness or moral perfection to the species must rest, depends entirely upon his

having faith in the actual existence of such feelings and dispositions in others, and in their possibility for himself. It is for those in whom the feelings of virtue are weak, that ethical writing is chiefly needful, and its proper office is to strengthen those feelings. But to be qualified for this task, it is necessary, first to have, and next to show, in every sentence and in every line, a firm unwavering confidence in man's capability of virtue. It is by a sort of sympathetic contagion, or inspiration, that a noble mind assimilates other minds to itself; and no one was ever inspired by one whose own inspiration was not sufficient to give him faith in the possibility of making others feel what *he* feels.

Upon those who *need* to be strengthened and upheld by a really inspired moralist—such a moralist as Socrates, as Plato, or (speaking humanly and not theologically) as Christ, the effect of such writings as Mr. Bentham's, if they be read and believed and their spirit imbibed, must either be, hopeless despondency and gloom, or a reckless giving themselves up to a life of that miserable self-seeking, which they are there taught to regard as inherent in their original and unalterable nature.

Mr. Bentham's speculations on politics in the narrow sense, that is, on the theory of government, are distinguished by his usual characteristic, that of beginning at the beginning. He places before himself man in society without a government, and considering what sort of government it would be advisable to construct, finds that the most expedient would be a representative democracy. Whatever may be the value of this conclusion, the mode in which it is arrived at appears to me to be fallacious; for it assumes that mankind are alike in all times and all places, that they have the same wants and are exposed to the same evils, and that if the same institutions do not suit them, it is only because in the more backward stages of improvement, they have not wisdom to see what institutions are most for their good. How to invest certain servants of the people with the power necessary for the protection of person and property, with the greatest possible facility to the people of changing the depositories of that power, when they think it is abused; such is the only problem in social organization which Mr. Bentham has proposed to himself. Yet this is but a part of the real problem. It never seems to have occurred to him to regard political institutions in a higher light, as the principal means of the social education of a people. Had he done so, he would have seen that the same institutions will no more suit two nations in different stages of civilization, than the same lessons will suit children of different ages. As the degree of civilization already attained varies, so does the kind of social influence necessary for carrying the community forward to the next stage of its progress. For a tribe of North American Indians, improvement means, taming down their proud and solitary self-

dependence; for a body of emancipated negroes, it means accustoming them to be self-dependent, instead of being merely obedient to orders; for our semibarbarous ancestors it would have meant, softening them; for a race of enervated Asiatics it would mean hardening them. How can the same social organization be fitted for producing so many contrary effects?

The prevailing error of Mr. Bentham's views of human nature appears to me to be this—he supposes mankind to be swayed by only a part of the inducements which really actuate them; but of that part he imagines them to be much cooler and more thoughtful calculators than they really are. He has, I think, been, to a certain extent, misled in the theory of politics by supposing that the submission of the mass of mankind to an established government is mainly owing to a reasoning perception of the necessity of legal protection, and of the common interest of all in a prompt and zealous obedience to the law. He was not, I am persuaded, aware, how very much of the really wonderful acquiescence of mankind in any government which they find established, is the effect of mere habit and imagination, and, therefore, depends upon the preservation of something like continuity of existence in the institutions, and identity in their outward forms;—cannot transfer itself easily to new institutions, even though in themselves preferable; and is greatly shaken when there occurs any thing like a break in the line of historical duration—any thing which can be termed the end of the old constitution and the beginning of a new one.

The constitutional writers of our own country, anterior to Mr. Bentham, had carried feelings of this kind to the height of a superstition; they never considered what was best adapted to their own times, but only what had existed in former times, even in times that had long gone by. It is not very many years since such were the principal grounds on which parliamentary reform itself was defended. Mr. Bentham has done much service in discrediting, as he has done completely, this school of politicians, and exposing the absurd sacrifice of present ends to antiquated means; but he has, I think, himself fallen into a contrary error. The very fact that a certain set of political institutions already exist, have long existed, and have become associated with all the historical recollections of a people, is in itself, as far as it goes, a property which adapts them to that people, and gives them a great advantage over any new institutions in obtaining that ready and willing resignation to what has once been decided by lawful authority, which alone renders possible those innumerable compromises between adverse interests and expectations, without which no government could be carried on for a year, and with difficulty even for a week. Of the perception of this important truth, scarcely a trace is visible in Mr. Bentham's writings.

It is impossible, however, to contest to Mr. Bentham, on this

subject or on any other which he has touched, the merit, and it is very great, of having brought forward into notice one of the faces of the truth, and a highly important one. Whether on government, on morals, or on any of the other topics on which his speculations are comparatively imperfect, they are still highly instructive and valuable to any one who is capable of supplying the remainder of the truth; they are calculated to mislead only by the pretension which they invariably set up of being the whole truth, a complete theory and philosophy of the subject. Mr. Bentham was more a thinker than a reader; he seldom compared his ideas with those of other philosophers, and was by no means aware how many thoughts had existed in other minds which his doctrines did not afford the means either to refute or to appreciate.

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A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON MR. MILL.

MR. MILL has been frequently represented as the disciple of Bentham. With truth has he been so represented in this respect—he was one of the earliest in adopting—he has been one of the most efficient in diffusing many of the most characteristic of Bentham's opinions. He admits without qualification—he carries into detail with rigid inflexibility, the doctrine that the sole ground of moral obligation is *general utility*. But the same results may be reached by minds the most dissimilar: else why do we hope for agreement among impartial inquirers—else why do we hope to convert one another? Why not burn our lucubrations, or wait to establish a principle until we have found a prototype of ourselves.

In some respects Mr. Mill's mind assimilates to Bentham's, in others it differs from it widely. It is true that Mr. Mill's speculations have been influenced by impressions received from Bentham; but they have been equally influenced by those received from the Aristotelian logicians, from Hartley, and from Hobbes. He almost alone in the present age has revived the study of those writers—he has preserved, perhaps, the most valuable of their doctrines—he is largely indebted to them for the doctrines which compose, for the spirit which pervades his philosophy. The character of his intellect partakes as much of that of either of those three types of speculative inquiry, as it does of the likeness of Bentham.

As a searcher into original truths, the principal contribution which Mr. Mill has rendered to philosophy, is to be found in his most recent work, "The Analysis of the Phenomenon of the Human Mind." Nothnig more clearly proves what I have before asserted, viz. our indifference to the higher kind of philosophical investigation, than the fact, that no full account—no *criticism* of this work has appeared in either of our principal Reviews.

The doctrine announced by Hartley, that the ideas furnished by Sense, together with the law of association, are the simple elements of the mind, and sufficient to explain even the most mysterious of its phenomena, is also the doctrine of Mr. Mill. Hartley, upon this principle, had furnished an explanation of *some* of the phenomena. Mr. Mill has carried on the investigation into all those more complex psychological facts which had been the puzzle and despair of previous metaphysicians. Such,

for instance, as Time and Space—Belief—the Will—the Affections—the Moral Sentiments. He has attempted to resolve all these into Calls of Association. I do not pause here to contend with him—to show, or rather endeavour to show, where he has succeeded—where failed. It would be a task far beyond the limits of this Book—it *is* properly the task of future metaphysicians.

The moment in which this remarkable work appeared is unfortunate for its temporary success. Had it been published sixty years ago—or perhaps sixty years hence, it would perhaps have placed the reputation of its author beyond any of his previous writings.

There is nothing similar to these inquiries in the writings of Mr. Bentham. This indicates one principal difference between the two men. Mr. Mill is eminently a metaphysician; Bentham as little of a metaphysician as any one can be who ever attained to equal success in the science of philosophy. Every moral or political system must be indeed a corollary from some general view of human nature. But Bentham, though punctilious and precise in the premises he advances, confines himself, in that very preciseness, to a few simple and general principles. *He seldom analyzes*—he studies the human mind rather after the method of natural history than of philosophy. He enumerates, he classifies the facts—but he does not *account* for them. You read in his works an enumeration of pains and pleasures—an enumeration of motives—an enumeration of the properties which constitute the value of a pleasure or a pain. But Bentham does not even attempt to *explain* any of the feelings or impulses enumerated—he does not attempt to show that they are subject to the laws of any more elementary phenomena of human nature. Of human nature indeed in its rarer or more hidden parts, Bentham knows but little—wherever he attained to valuable results, which his predecessors had missed, it was by estimating more justly than they the action of some outward circumstance upon the more obvious and vulgar elements of our nature—not by understanding better than they the workings of those elements which are not obvious and not vulgar. Where but a moderate knowledge of these last was necessary to the correctness of his conclusions, he was apt to stray farther from the truth than even the votaries of commonplace. He often threw aside a trite and unsatisfactory truism, in order to replace it with a paradoxical error.

If, then, the power of analyzing a complex combination into its simple elements be in the mental sciences, as in the physical, a leading characteristic of the philosopher, Mr. Mill is thus far considerably nearer to the philosophic ideal than Mr. Bentham. This, however, has not made so great a difference as might have been expected in the practical conclusions at which they have arrived. Those powers of analysis which, by Mr. Bentham,

are not brought to bear upon the phenomena of our nature at all, are applied by Mr. Mill almost solely to our *common universal* nature, to the general structure which is the same in all human beings; not to the differences between one human being and another, though the former is little worthy of being studied except as a means to the better understanding of the latter. We seldom learn from Mr. Mill to understand any of the varieties of human nature; and, in truth, they enter very little into his own calculations, except where he takes cognizance of them as aberrations from the standard to which, in his opinion, all should conform. Perhaps there never existed any writer (except, indeed, the ascetic theologians), who conceived the excellence of the human being so exclusively under one single type, to a conformity with which he would reduce all mankind. No one ever made fewer allowances for original differences of nature, although the existence of such is not only compatible with, but a necessary consequence of, his view of the human mind, when combined with the extraordinary differences which are known to exist between one individual and another in the kind and in the degree of their nervous sensibility. I cannot but think that the very laws of association laid down by Mr. Mill, will hereafter, and in other hands, be found (while they explain the diversities of human nature) to show, in the most striking manner, how much of those diversities is inherent and inevitable; neither the effect of, nor capable of being reached by, education or outward circumstances.* I believe the natural and necessary differences among mankind to be so great, that any practical view of human life, which does not take them into the account, must, unless it stop short in generalities, contain at least as much error as truth; and that any system of mental culture recommended by such imperfect theory, in proportion as it is fitted to natures of one class, will be entirely unfitted for all others.

Mr. Mill has given to the world, as yet, on the subject of morals, and on that of education, little besides generalities: not "barren generalities," but of the most fruitful kind; yet of which the fruit is still to come. When he shall carry his speculations into the details of these subjects, it is impossible that an intellect like his should not throw a great increase of light upon them; the danger is that the illumination will be partial and narrow; that he will conclude too readily that whatever is suitable food for one sort of character, or suitable medicine for bringing it back, when it falls from its proper excellence, may be prescribed for *all*, and that what is *not* needful or useful to one of

* I venture to recommend to the notice of the Reader an able paper on the character of Dr. Priestley, published in several recent numbers of Mr. Fox's excellent Monthly Repository. To the last few pages of that article I may refer the Reader for a somewhat fuller, though still very concise explanation of the meaning which I am forced to be content with suggesting, or rather, barely to hint at, in the text.

the types of human nature is worthless altogether. There is yet another danger, that he will fail, not only in conceiving sufficient variety of excellence, but sufficiently *high* excellence; that the type to which he would reduce all natures is by no means the most perfect type; that he conceives the ideal perfection of a human being under *some* only of its aspects, not under all; or at least that he would frame his practical rules as if he so conceived it.

The faculty of drawing correct conclusions from evidence, together with the qualities of moral rectitude and earnestness, seem to constitute almost the whole of his idea of the perfection of human nature; or rather, he seems to think, that with all other valuable qualities mankind are already sufficiently provided, or will be so, by attending merely to these. We see no provision in his system, so far as it is disclosed to us, for the cultivation of any other qualities; and therefore (as I hold to be a necessary consequence), no *sufficient* provision for the cultivation even of these.

Now there are few persons whose notion of the perfection to which a human being may be brought, does not comprehend much more than the qualities enumerated above. Most will be prepared to find the practical views founded upon so narrow a basis of theory, rather fit to be used as part of the materials for a practical system, than fit in themselves to constitute one. From what cause, or combination of causes, the scope of Mr. Mill's philosophy embraces so partial a view only of the ends of human culture and of human life, it belongs rather to Mr. Mill's biographer than to his mere reader, to investigate. Doubtless the views of almost all inquirers into human nature are necessarily confined within certain bounds by the fact, that they can enjoy complete power of studying their subject only as it exists in themselves. No person can thoroughly appreciate that of which he has not had personal consciousness: but powers of metaphysical analysis, such as Mr. Mill possesses, are sufficient for the understanding and appreciation of all characters and all states of mind, as far as is necessary for practical purposes, and amply sufficient to divest our philosophic theories of every thing like narrowness. For this, however, it is necessary that those powers of analysis should be applied to the details, not solely to the outlines, of human nature: and one of the most strongly marked of the mental peculiarities of Mr. Mill, is, as it seems to us, impatience of details.

This is another of the most striking differences between him and Mr. Bentham. Mr. Bentham delighted in details, and had a quite extraordinary genius for them: it is remarkable how much of his intellectual superiority was of this kind. He followed out his inquiries into the minutest ramifications; was skilful in the estimation of small circumstances, and most sagacious and inventive in devising small contrivances. He went

even to great excess in the time and labour which he was willing to bestow on minutiæ, when more important things remained undone. Mr. Mill, on the contrary, shuns all nice attention to details; he attaches himself exclusively to great and leading points; his views, even when they cannot be said to be enlarged, are always on a large scale. He will often be thought by those who differ from him, to overlook or undervalue great things,—never to exaggerate small ones; and the former, partly from not being attentive *enough* to details, when these, though small, would have suggested principles which are great.

The same undervaluing of details has, I think, caused most of the imperfections, where imperfections there are, in Mr. Mill's speculations generally. His just contempt of those who are incapable of grasping a general truth, and with whom the grand and determining considerations are always outweighed by some petty circumstance, carries him occasionally into an opposite extreme: he so heartily despises those most obtuse persons who call themselves Practical Men, and disavow theory, as not always to recollect that, though the men be purblind, they may yet "look out upon the world with their dim-horn eyes" and see something in it, which lying out of his way he may not have observed, but which it may be worth while for him, who *can* see clearly, to note and *explain*. Not only a dunce may give instruction to a wise man, but no man is so wise that he can, in all cases, do without a dunce's assistance. But a certain degree of intellectual impatience is almost necessarily connected with fervour of character and strength of conviction. Men much inferior to Mr. Mill are quite capable of setting limitations to his propositions, where any are requisite; few in our own times, we might say in any times, could have accomplished what he has done.

Mr. Mill's principal works besides the "Analysis" already mentioned, are, 1. "The History of British India," not only the first work which has thrown the light of philosophy upon the people and upon the government of that vast portion of the globe, but the first, and even now the only work which conveys to the general reader even that knowledge of facts, which, with respect to so important a department of his country's affairs, every Englishman should wish to possess. The work is full of instructive comments on the institutions of our own country, and abounds with illustrations of many of the most important principles of government and legislation.

2. "Elements of Political Economy." Mr. Mill's powers of concatenation and systematic arrangement peculiarly qualified him to place in their proper logical connexion the elementary principles of this science as established by its great masters, and to furnish a compact and clear exposition of them.

3. Essays on Government, Jurisprudence, Education, &c. originally written for the Supplement to the Encyclopædia

Britannica; the most important of them have been several times reprinted by private subscription.

These little works, most of which are mere outlines to be filled up, though they have been both praised and animadverted upon as if they claimed the character of complete scientific theories, have been, I believe, more read than any other of Mr. Mill's writings, and have contributed more than any publications of our time to generate a taste for systematic thinking on the subject of politics, and to discredit vague and sentimental declamation. The Essay on Government, in particular, has been almost a text-book to many of those who may be termed the Philosophic Radicals. This is not the place to criticise either the treatise itself or the criticisms of others upon it. Any critical estimate of it, thoroughly deserving the name, it has not yet been my fortune to meet with; for Mr. Macauley—assuming, I suppose, the divine prerogative of genius—only entered the contest, in order to carry away the argument he protected in a cloud of words.

Mr. Mill's more popular writings are remarkable for a lofty earnestness, more stern than genial, and which rather flagellates or shames men out of wrong, than allures them to the right. Perhaps this is the style most natural to a man of deep moral convictions, writing in an age and in a state of society like that in which we live. But it seems, also, to be congenial to the character of his own mind; for he appears, on most occasions, much more strongly alive to the evil of what is evil in our destiny, than to the good of what is good. He rather warns us against the errors that tend to make us miserable, than affords us the belief that by any means we can attain to much positive happiness. He does not hope enough from Human Nature, something despondent and unelevating clings round his estimate of its powers. He saddens the Present by a reference to the Past. He does not console it by any alluring anticipations of the Future. He rather discontents us with Vice than kindles our enthusiasm for Virtue. He possesses but little of

"The vision and the faculty divine;"—

nor is it through his writings (admirable as they are) that we are taught

"To feel that we are greater than we know."

THE END.