LETTERS

TO A YOUNG MAN

AND OTHER PAPERS.

BY

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CONTENTS.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN

WHOSE EDUCATION HAS BEEN NEGLECTED.

LETTER I.

My dear Sir:

When I had the pleasure of meeting you at Ch——, for the second time in my life, I was much concerned to remark the general dejection of your manner. I may now add, that I was also much surprised; your cousin's visit to me having made it no longer a point of delicacy to suppress that feeling. General report had represented you as in possession of all which enters into the worldly estimate of happiness,—great opulence, unclouded reputation, and freedom from unhappy connections. That you had the priceless blessing of unfluctuating health, I know upon your own authority. And the concurring opinions of your friends, together with my own opportunities for observation, left me no room to doubt that you wanted not the last and mightiest among the sources of happiness,—a fortunate constitution of mind, both for moral and intellectual ends. So many blessings as

these, meeting in the person of one man, and yet all in some mysterious way defeated and poisoned, presented a problem too interesting, both to the selfish and the generous curiosity of men, to make it at all wonderful that at that time and place you should have been the subject of much discussion. Now and then some solutions of the mystery were hazarded; in particular I remember one from a young lady of seventeen, who said, with a positive air, "That Mr. M——'s dejection was well known to arise from an unfortunate attachment in early life," which assurance appeared to have great weight with some other young ladies of sixteen. But, upon the whole, I think that no account of the matter was proposed at that time which satisfied myself, or was likely to satisfy any reflecting person.

At length the visit of your cousin L—— in his road to Th—— has cleared up the mystery in a way more agreeable to myself than I could have ventured to anticipate from any communication short of that which should acquaint me with the entire dispersion of the dejection under which you labored. I allow myself to call such a disclosure agreeable, partly upon the ground that where the grief or dejection of our friends admits of no important alleviation, it is yet satisfactory to know that it may be traced to causes of adequate dignity; and, in this particular case, I have not only that assurance, but the prospect of contributing some assistance to your emancipation from these depressing recollections, by coöperating with your own efforts in the way you have pointed out for supplying the defects of your early education.

L—— explained to me all that your own letter had left imperfect; in particular how it was that you came to be defrauded of the education to which even your earliest and humblest prospects had entitled you; by what heroic efforts, but how vainly, you labored to repair that greatest of losses; what remarkable events concurred to raise you to your present state of prosperity; and all other circumstances which appeared necessary to put me fully in possession of your present wishes and intentions.

The two questions which you addressed to me through him I have answered below: these were questions which I could answer easily and without meditation; but for the main subject of our future correspondence, it is so weighty, and demands such close attention (as even *I* find, who have revolved the principal points almost daily for many years), that I would willingly keep it wholly distinct from the hasty letter which I am now obliged to write; on which account it is that I shall forbear to enter at present upon the series of letters which I have promised, even if I should find that my time were not exhausted by the answers to your *two questions below*.

To your first question,— whether to you, with your purposes and at your age of thirty-two, a residence at either of our English universities, or at any foreign university, can be of much service? — my answer is, firmly and unhesitatingly, no. The majority of the undergraduates of your own standing, in an academic sense, will be your juniors by twelve or fourteen years; a disparity of age which could not but make your society mutually burthensome. What, then, is

it that you would seek in a university? Lectures? These, whether public or private, are surely the very worst modes of acquiring any sort of accurate knowledge; and are just as much inferior to a good book on the same subject, as that book hastily read aloud, and then immediately withdrawn, would be inferior to the same book left in your possession, and open at any hour, to be consulted, retraced, collated, and in the fullest sense studied. But, besides this, university lectures are naturally adapted, not so much to the general purpose of communicating knowledge, as to the specific purpose of meeting a particular form of examination for degrees, and a particular profession to which the whole course of the education is known to be directed. The two single advantages which lectures can ever acquire, to balance those which they forego, are either, *first*, the obvious one of a better apparatus for displaying illustrative experiments than most students can command; and the cases where this becomes of importance it cannot be necessary to mention; *second*, the advantage of a rhetorical delivery, when *that* is of any use (as in lectures on poetry, &c.). These, however, are advantages more easily commanded in a great capital than in the most splendid university. What, then, remains to a university, except its libraries? And with regard to those the answer is short: to the greatest of them undergraduates have not free access; to the inferior ones (of their own college, &c.) the libraries of the great capitals are often equal or superior; and, for mere purposes of study, your own private library is far preferable to the Bodleian or the Vatican. To you, therefore, a uni-

versity can offer no attraction except on the assumption that you see cause to adopt a profession; and, as a degree from some university would in that case be useful (and indispensable except for the bar), your determination on this first question must still be dependent on that which you form upon the second.

In this second question you call for my opinion upon the 11th chapter of Mr. Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, as applied to the circumstances in which you yourself are placed. This chapter, to express its substance in the most general terms, is a dissuasion from what Herder, in a passage there quoted, calls "Die Authorschaft;" or, as Mr. Coleridge expresses it, "the trade of authorship;" and the amount of the advice is, — that, for the sake of his own happiness and respectability, every man should adopt some trade or profession, and should make literature a subordinate pursuit. On this advice, I understand you to ask, *first*, whether it is naturally to be interpreted, as extending to cases such as yours; and, *second*, if so, what is my judgment on such advice so extended? As to my judgment upon this advice, supposing it addressed to men of your age and situation, you will easily collect, from all which I shall say, that I think it as bad as can well be given.

Waiving this, however, and to consider your other question, — in what sense, and with what restrictions, the whole chapter is to be interpreted, — that is a point which I find it no easy matter to settle. Mr. Coleridge, who does not usually offend by laxity and indecision of purpose, has, in this instance, allowed

the very objects of his advice to shift and fluctuate before him; and, from the beginning to the end, nothing is firmly constructed for the apprehension to grasp, nor are the grounds of judgment steadily maintained. From the title of the chapter (an affectionate exhortation to those who in early life feel themselves disposed to become authors), and, from the express words of Herder, in the passage cited from him as the final words of the chapter, which words discountenance "authorship" only as "zu früh oder unmässig gebraucht" (practised too early, or with too little temperance), it would have been a natural presumption that Mr. Coleridge's counsels regarded chiefly or altogether the case of very youthful authors, and the unfortunate thirst for premature distinction. And if this had been the purpose of the chapter, excepting that the evil involved in such a case is not very great, and is generally intercepted by the difficulties which prevent, and overpunished by the mortifications which attend any such juvenile acts of presumption, there could have been no room for differing with Mr. Coleridge, except upon the propriety of occupying his great powers with topics of such trivial interest. But this, though from the title it naturally should have been, is *not* the evil, or any part of it, which Mr. Coleridge is contemplating. What Mr. Coleridge really has in his view are two most different objections to literature, as the principal pursuit of life; which, as I have said, continually alternate with each other as the objects of his arguments, and sometimes become perplexed together, though incapable of blending into any real coalition. The objections urged are: *First.* To literature con-

sidered as a means of livelihood; — as any part of the resources which a man should allow himself to rely on for his current income, or worldly credit, and respectability; here the evils anticipated by Mr. Coleridge are of a high and positive character, and such as tend directly to degrade the character, and indirectly to aggravate some heavy domestic evils. *Second.* To literature considered as the means of sufficiently occupying the intellect. Here the evil apprehended is an evil of defect; it is alleged that literature is not adequate to the main end of giving due and regular excitement to the mind and the spirits, unless combined with some other summons to mental exercise of periodical recurrence,— determined by an overruling cause, acting from without,— and not dependent therefore on the accidents of individual will, or the caprices of momentary feeling springing out of temper or bodily health. Upon the last objection, as by far the most important in any case, and the only one at all applicable to yours, I would wish to say a word; because my thoughts on that matter are from the abundance of my heart, and drawn up from the very depths of my own experience. If there has ever lived a man who might claim the privilege of speaking with emphasis and authority on this great question,— By what means shall a man best support the activity of his own mind in solitude? — I probably am that man; and upon this ground, that I have passed more of my life in absolute and unmitigated solitude, voluntarily, and for intellectual purposes, than any person of my age whom I have ever either met with, heard of, or read of. With such pretensions, what is it that I offer as the result

of my experience — and how far does it coincide with the doctrine of Mr. Coleridge? Briefly this: I wholly agree with him that literature, in the proper acceptation of the term, as denoting what is otherwise called *Belles Lettres*, &c.,— that is, the most eminent of the fine arts, and so understood, therefore, as to exclude *all science* whatsoever, — is not, to use a Greek word, *ἀυταρκης*,— not self-sufficing; no, not even when the mind is so far advanced that it can bring what have hitherto passed for merely literary or *æsthetic* questions under the light of philosophic principles; when problems of "taste" have expanded to problems of human nature. And why? Simply for this reason,— that our power to exercise the faculties on such subjects is not, as it is on others, in defiance of our own spirits; the difficulties and resistances to our progress in these investigations are not susceptible of minute and equable partition (as in mathematics); and, therefore, the movements of the mind cannot be continuous, but are either of necessity tumultuary and *per saltum*, or none at all. When, on the contrary, the difficulty is pretty equally dispersed and broken up into a series of steps, no one of which demands any exertion sensibly more intense than the rest, nothing is required of the student beyond that sort of application and coherent attention which, in a sincere student of any standing, may be presumed as a habit already and inveterately established. The dilemma, therefore, to which a student of pure literature is continually reduced — such a student, suppose, as the Schlegels, or any other man who has cultivated no acquaintance with the severer sciences — is this: either he studies lit-

erature as a mere man of taste, and perhaps also as a philologer, — and in that case his understanding must find a daily want of some masculine exercise to call it out and give it play, — or (which is the rarest thing in the world), having begun to study literature as a philosopher, he seeks to renew that elevated walk of study at all opportunities ; but this is often as hopeless an effort as to a great poet it would be to sit down upon any predetermination to compose in his character of poet. Hence, therefore, — if (as too often it happens) he has not cultivated those studies (mathematics, *e. g.*) which present such difficulties as will bend to a resolute effort of the mind, and which have the additional recommendation that they are apt to stimulate and irritate the mind to make that effort, — he is often thrown by the very cravings of an unsatisfied intellect, and not by passion or inclination, upon some vulgar excitement of business or pleasure, which becomes constantly more necessary to him.

I should do injustice to myself if I were to say that I owed this view of the case solely to my own experience ; the truth is, I easily foresaw, upon the suggestion almost of an instant, that literature would not suffice for my mind with my purposes. I foresaw this, and I provided for it from the very first ; but how ? *Not* in the way recommended by Mr. Coleridge, but according to a plan which you will collect from the letters I am to write, and which, therefore, I need not here anticipate. What, however, you you will say (for *that* is the main inquiry), what has been the success ? Has it warranted me to look back upon my past life, and to pronounce it upon

the whole a happy one? I answer in calmness, and with sincerity of heart, Yes. To you, with your knowledge of life, I need not say that it is a vain thing for any man to hope that he can arrive at my age without many troubles; every man has his own, and more especially he who has not insulated himself in this world, but has formed attachments and connections, and has thus multiplied the avennes through which his peace is assailable. But, setting aside these inevitable deductions, I assure you that the great account of my days, if summed up, would present a great overbalance of happiness; and of happiness during those years which I lived in solitude, of necessity derived exclusively from intellectual sources. Such an evil, indeed, as time hanging heavy on my hands, I never experienced for a moment. On the other hand, to illustrate the benefits of my plan by a picture of the very opposite plan, though pursued under the most splendid advantages, I would direct your eyes to the case of an eminent living Englishman, with talents of the first order, and yet, upon the evidence of all his works, ill-satisfied at any time either with himself or those of his own age. This Englishman set out in life, as I conjecture, with a plan of study modelled upon that of Leibnitz; that is to say, he designed to make himself (as Leibnitz most truly was) a *Polyhistor*, or Catholic student. For this reason, and because at a very early age I had become familiar with the writings of Leibnitz, I have been often tempted to draw a parallel between that eminent German and the no less eminent Englishman of whom I speak. In many things they agreed; these I shall notice at some

other opportunity; only in general I will say, that, as both had minds not merely powerful, but distinguished for variety and compass of power, so in both were these fine endowments completed and accomplished for works of Herculean endurance and continuity, by the alliance of a bodily constitution resembling that of horses. They were centaurs,—heroic intellects with brutal capacities of body. What partiality in nature! In general, a man has reason to think himself well off in the great lottery of this life if he draws the prize of a healthy stomach without a mind, or the prize of a fine intellect with a crazy stomach; but that any man should draw both is truly astonishing, and, I suppose, happens only once in a century. Thus far (as indeed much further) they agreed. The points of difference were many, and not less remarkable. Two I shall allege as pertinent to the matter before me. First, I remarked that Leibnitz, however anxious to throw out his mind upon the whole encyclopædia of human research, yet did not forget to pay the price at which only any *right* to be thus discursive can be earned. He sacrificed to the austerer muses. Knowing that God geometrizes eternally, he rightly supposed that in the universal temple Mathesis must furnish the master-key which would open most shrines. The Englishman, on the contrary, I remarked to have been too self-indulgent, and almost a voluptuary in his studies; sparing himself all toil, and thinking, apparently, to evade the necessity of artificial power by an extraordinary exertion of his own native power. Neither as a boy nor as a man had he submitted to any regular study or discipline of thought. His

choice of subjects had lain too much amongst those dependent upon politics, or other fleeting interests; and, when this had not happened, yet never amongst those which admitted of *continuous* thinking and study, and which support the spirits by perpetual influxes of pleasure, from the constant sense of success and difficulty overcome. As to the use of books, the German had been a discursive reader,—the Englishman, a desultory reader.

Secondly, I remarked that Leibnitz was always cheerful and obliging, most courteous and communicative to his fellow-laborers in literature or science; with a single exception (which rests, I think, as the sole stain upon his memory), just, and even generously just, to the claims of others; uncensorious, and yet patient of censure; willing to teach, and most willing to be taught. Our English contemporary was not, I think, naturally less amiable than Leibnitz; and therefore I ascribe it to his unfortunate plan of study—leaving him, of necessity, too often with no subjects for intellectual exertion but such as cannot be pursued successfully, unless in a state of genial spirits—that we find him continually in ill-humor, distempered and untuned with uncharitable feelings; directing too harsh and acrimonious a spirit of criticism always against the age in which he lives, sometimes even against individuals; querulous[1] under criticism, almost to the extent of believing himself the object of conspiracies and organized persecution; finally (which to me is far the gloomiest part of the picture), he neither will consent to believe that any man of his own age (at least of his own country) can teach *him* anything,—professing all

his obligations to those *who are dead*, or else to some rusty old German; nor, finally, will he consent to teach others, with the simple-minded magnanimity of a scholar, who should not seek to mystify and perplex his pupil, or to illuminate only with half-lights, nor put himself on his guard against his reader, as against a person seeking to grow as knowing as himself. On the contrary, who should rejoice to believe — if he could believe it — that all the world knew as much as himself; and should adopt as his motto (which I make it my pride to have done from my earliest days) the simple grandeur of that line in Chaucer's description of *his* scholar:

"That gladly would he learn and gladly teach."

Such were the two features of difference which I had occasion perpetually to remark between two great scholars, in many other features so closely resembling each other. In general these two features would be thought to exist independently; but, with my previous theory of the necessity, in all cases, that, with studies of so uncertain and even morbid an effect upon the spirits as literature, should be combined some analytic exercise of *inevitable* healthy action, in this respect it was natural that *I* should connect them in my mind as cause and effect; and, in that view, they gave a double attestation to Mr. Coleridge's advice where it agrees with mine, and to mine where it differs from his.

Thus far I have considered Mr. Coleridge's advice simply as it respects the student. But the object of his studies is also entitled to some consideration. If

it were better for the literary body that all should pursue a profession as their ἔργον (or business), and literature as a παρεργον (an accessary, or mere by-business), how far is literature itself likely to benefit by such an arrangement? Mr. Coleridge insists upon it that it will; and at page 225 he alleges seven names, to which at page 233 he adds an eighth, of celebrated men, who have shown "the possibility of combining weighty performances in literature with full and independent employment." On various grounds it would be easy, I think, to cut down the list, as a list any way favorable for Mr. Coleridge's purpose, to one name, namely, that of Lord Bacon. But, waiving his examples, let us consider his arguments. The main business, the ἔργον, after exhausting a man's powers during the day, is supposed to leave three hours at night for the παρεργον. Now, we are to consider that our bright ideal of a literatus may chance to be married, — in fact, Mr. Coleridge agrees to allow him a wife. Let us suppose a wife, therefore; and the more so, because else he will perhaps take one without our permission. I ask, then, what portion of these three hours is our student to give up to the pleasure of his wife's society? For, if a man finds pleasure in his wife's company at any time, I take it for granted that he would wish to spend the evening with her. Well, if you think so (says Mr. Coleridge, in effect, who had at first supposed the learned man to "retire into his study"), in fact, he need *not* retire. How then? Why, he is to study, not in his study, but in his drawing-room, whilst "the social silence, or undisturbing voices of a wife or sister, will be like a restorative atmos-

phere." Silence, by the way, is a strange mode of social pleasure. I know not what Mr. Coleridge does when he sits with a young woman; for my part, I do "mon possible" to entertain her, both with my wit and my wisdom; and am happy to hear *her* talk, even though she should chance to be my own wife; and never think of tolerating silence for one instant. But, not to quarrel about tastes, what is this "sister" that so pleasantly intrudes herself into the party? The wife, I understand; but, in the north of England, or any place where I have lived, wives do not commonly present men with sisters, but with children. Suppose, then, our student's wife should give him a son; or, what is noisier, a daughter; or, what is noisier than either, both? What's to be done then? Here's a worshipful audience for a philosopher! — here's a promising company for "undisturbing voices," and "social silence!" I admire Mr. Coleridge's way of blinking this question, of masking this youthful battery with "a sister." Children, however, are incidents that do and will occur in this life, and must not be blinked. I have seen the case again and again; and I say it, and say it with pain, that there is no more respect for philosophy amongst that lively part of society than Mr. Coleridge and I have for French philosophy. They may, however, be banished to their nursery. True; but, if they are ever admitted to the drawing-room, in houses where not so much company is kept, I observe that this visit is most interesting to all parties in the evening; and, if they would otherwise be admitted, no good-natured student would wish to have their expulsion charged upon his books. After

all, however, it is clear that Mr. Coleridge's voice is for the "retiring" system; and he gives us pretty plainly to understand (p. 230) that it is far better for men to be separated from their wives throughout the day. But, in saying this, he forgets that, in the case under consideration, the question is not so properly whether they are ever to be separated, as whether they are ever to meet. Indeed, taking what Mr. Coleridge says on the subject as addressed to literary men especially, I know not why they should be supposed likely to make unhappy marriages more than other men. They are not called upon to pass more of their time with their wives than country gentlemen, or men generally without a profession. On the other hand, if we are to understand the words of Mr. Coleridge as of universal application, I hope that he gives us a very unfair view of the average tenor of life in this important particular. Yet, if it be settled that men will quarrel, and must quarrel with their wives, or their wives with them, unless separated, would not a large screen meet the emergency? Or, might not the learned man, as soon as breakfast is ended, bow to his wife and withdraw to his library, where he might study or be sulky according to his taste, leaving her for the rest of the day to amuse or to employ herself in the way most agreeable to her sex, rank, and previous education? But, in whatever way this difficulty may be disposed of, one point is clear to my judgment: that literature must decay unless we have a class *wholly* dedicated to that service, — not pursuing it as an amusement only, with wearied and preöccupied minds. The reproach of being a "*nation boutiquiére,*" now so

eminently inapplicable to the English, would become indeed just, and in the most unfortunate sense just, if, from all our overstocked trades and professions, we could not spare men enough to compose a garrison on permanent duty for the service of the highest purposes which grace and dignify our nature.

You will not infer from all this any abatement in my old respect for Mr. Coleridge's great and various powers; no man admires them more. But there is no treason, I hope, in starting a little game now and then from the thickets of *The Friend*, the *Biographia Literaria*, or even from Mr. Coleridge's *Sermons*, considering that they are *Lay* ones. Young men must have some exercise this frosty weather. Hereafter I shall have occasion to break a lance with Mr. Coleridge on more difficult questions; and very happy I shall be if the amusement which I shall make it my business to strike out, by my hammering, from the flinty rock of his metaphysics, should either tempt any one to look into his valuable writings, or should tempt Mr. Coleridge to sally out of his hiding-place into a philosophic passion, and to attack me with the same freedom. Such an exhibition must be amusing to the public. I conceive that two trancendentalists, who are also two ——s, can hardly ever before have stripped in any ring. But, by the way, I wish he would leave transcendentalism to me and other young men; for, to say the truth, it does not prosper in his hands. *I* will take charge of the public principles in that point, and he will thus be more at leisure to give us another *Ancient Mariner*, which, I will answer for it, the whole literary body would receive with gratitude and a fervent "plaudite."

LETTER II.

OUTLINE OF THE WORK. — NOTICE OF FORMER WRITERS ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

My dear M——:

In this, my second and last letter of preface, I shall settle the idea and the arrangement of my papers. There will be in all about seven, of which four will exhibit the material on which the student is to work; the other three, the tools with which the workmanship is to be conducted. First, *what* is to be done, and, secondly, *how* is the natural and obvious distribution of the work; that is to say, the business is to assign, first, the end, and, secondly, the means. And, because the end should reasonably determine the means, it would seem natural that, in the arrangement of the work, all which relates to *that* should have precedency. Nevertheless, I mean to invert this order, and for the following reason: All that part of the means, which are so entirely determined by the end as to presuppose its full and circumstantial development, may be concluded specially restricted to that individual end. In proportion to this restriction they will, therefore, be of narrow application, and are best treated in direct connection, and concurrently with the object to

which they are thus appropriated. On the other hand, those means or instruments of thought, which are sufficiently complex and important to claim a separate attention to themselves, are usually of such large and extensive use that they belong indifferently to all schemes of study, and may safely be premised in any plan, however novel in its principles or peculiar in its tendencies. What are these general instruments of study? According to my view they are three, — first, Logic; secondly, Languages; thirdly, Arts of Memory. With respect to these, it is not necessary that any special end should be previously given. Be his end what it may, every student must have thoughts to arrange, knowledge to transplant, and facts to record. Means which are thus universally requisite may safely have precedency of the end; and it will not be a preposterous order if I dedicate my first three letters to the several subjects of Logic, Languages, and Arts of Memory, which will compose one half of my scheme, leaving to the other half the task of unfolding the course of study for which these instruments will be available. Having thus settled the arrangement, and implicitly, therefore, settled in part the idea or *ratio* of my scheme, I shall go on to add what may be necessary to confine your expectations to the right track, and prevent them from going above or below the true character of the mark I aim at. I profess, then, to attempt something much higher than merely directions for a course of reading. Not that such a work might not be of eminent service; and in particular at this time, and with a constant adaptation to the case of rich men, not literary, I am

of opinion that no more useful book could be executed than a series of letters (addressed, for example, to country gentlemen, merchants, &c.) on the formation of a library. The uses of such a treatise, however, are not those which I contemplate; for, either it would presume and refer to a plan of study already settled, — and in that light it is a mere complement of the plan I propose to execute, — or else it would attempt to *involve* a plan of study in the course of reading suggested; and *that* would be neither more nor less than to do *in concreto*, what it is far more convenient, as well as more philosophical, to do (as I am now going to do) directly and *in abstracto*. A mere course of reading, therefore, is much below what I propose; on the other hand, an organon of the human understanding is as much above it. Such a work is a labor for a life; that is to say, though it may take up but a small part of every day, yet could it in no other way accumulate its materials than by keeping the mind everlastingly on the watch to seize upon such notices as may arise daily throughout a life under the favor of accident or occasion. Forty years are not too large a period for such a work; and my present work, however maturely meditated, must be executed with rapidity. Here, in fact, I do but sketch or trace in outline (ὡς ἐν τυπῳ περιλαβειν) what there it would become my duty to develop, to fill up in detail, to apply, and to illustrate on the most extensive scale.

After having attempted in my first part to put you in possession of the best method for acquiring the *instruments* of study; and, with respect to logic in particular, having directed a philosophic light upon

its true meaning and purpose, with the hope of extinguishing that anarchy of errors which have possessed this ground from the time of Lord Bacon to the moment at which I write; I then, in the second division, address myself to the question of *ends*. Upon which word let me distinguish: upon ends, in an absolute sense, as ultimate ends, it is presumption in any man to offer counsel to another of mature age. Advice of that sort, given under whatever hollow pretences of kindness, is to be looked upon as arrogance in the most repulsive shape; and to be rejected with that sort of summary disdain, which any man not of servile nature would testify towards him who should attempt to influence his choice of a wife. A student of mature age must be presumed to be best acquainted with his own talents and his own intellectual infirmities, with his "forte" and his "foible," with his own former experience of failure or success, and with the direction in which his inclinations point. Far be it from me to violate by the spirit of my counsels a pride so reasonable, which, in truth, I hold sacred. My scheme takes an humbler ground. *Ends*, indeed, in a secondary sense, the latter half professes to deal with; but such ends as, though bearing that character in relation to what is purely and merely instrumental, yet again become *means* in relation to ends absolutely so called. The *final* application of your powers and knowledge it is for yourself only to determine; my pretensions in regard to that election are limited to this,—that I profess to place you on a vantage ground from which you may determine more wisely, by determining from a higher point of survey. My purpose is not to map

the whole course of your journey, but to serve as your guide to that station at which you may be able to lay down your future route for yourself. The former half of my work I have already described to you; the latter half endeavors to construct such a system of study as shall combine these two advantages: 1. Systematic unity; that is, such a principle of *internal* connection, as that the several parts of the plan shall furnish assistance interchangeably. 2. The largest possible compass of *external* relations. Some empires, you know, are built for growth; others are essentially improgressive, but are built for duration, on some principle of strong internal cohesion. Systems of knowledge, however, and schemes of study, should propose both ends: they should take their foundations broad and deep,

"And lay great bases for eternity,"

which is the surest key to internal and systematic connection; and, secondly, they should provide for future growth and accretion, regarding all knowledge as a nucleus and centre of accumulation for other knowledge. It is on this latter principle, by the way, that the system of education in our public schools, however otherwise defective, is justly held superior to the specious novelties of our suburban academies; for it is more radical, and adapted to a larger superstructure. Such, I say, is the character of my scheme; and, by the very act of claiming for it, as one of its benefits, that it leaves you in the *centre* of large and comprehensive relations to other parts of knowledge, it is pretty apparent that I do

not presume to suggest in what direction of these manifold relations you should afterwards advance; *that*, as I have now sufficiently explained, will be left to your own self-knowledge; but to your self-knowledge illumined at the point where I leave you by that other knowledge which my scheme of study professes to communicate.

From this general outline of my own plan, I am led by an easy transition to a question of yours, respecting the merits of the most celebrated amongst those who have trod the same ground in past times. Excepting only a little treatise of Erasmus, *de Ratione Studii*, all the essays on this subject by eminent continental writers appeared in the seventeenth century; and, of these, a large majority before the year 1640. They were universally written in Latin; and, the Latin of that age being good, they are so far agreeable to read; beyond this, and the praise of elegance in their composition and arrangement, I have not much to say in their behalf. About the year 1645, Lewis Elzevir published a *corpus* of these essays, amounting in all to four-and-twenty. In point of elegance and good sense, their merits are various; thus far they differ; but, in regard to the main point, they hold a lamentable equality of pretension—being all thoroughly hollow and barren of any practical use.[2] I cannot give you a better notion of their true place and relation to the class of works of which you are in search of, than by an analogy drawn from the idea of didactic poetry, as it exists in the Roman literature and our own. So thoroughly is this sometimes misunderstood, that I have seen it insisted on as a merit in a didactic poem, that the art which it

professed to deliver might be learned and practised in all its technicalities, without other assistance than that which the poem supplied. But, had this been true, so far from being a praise, it would instantly have degraded the poem from its rank as a work among the products of Fine Arts; *ipso facto*, such a poem would have settled down from that high intellectual rank into the ignoble pretensions of mechanic art, in which the metre, and the style which metre introduces, would immediately have lost their justification. The true idea of didactic poetry is this: either the poet selects an art which furnishes the *occasion* for a series of picturesque exhibitions (as Virgil, Dyer, &c.); and, in that case, it is true that he derives part of his power from the art which he delivers; not, however, from what is essential to the art, but from its accidents and adjuncts. Either he does this, or else (as is the case with Lord Roscommon, Pope, &c.), so far from seeking in his subject for any part of the *power*, he seeks in *that* only for the *resistance* with which he contends by means of the power derived from the verse and the artifices of style. To one case or other of this alternative all didactic poems are reducible; and, allowing for the differences of rhetoric and poetry, the same ideal must have presided in the composition of the various essays of the seventeenth century, addressed to students; the subject was felt to be austere and unattractive, and almost purely scholastic; it was the ambition of the writers, therefore, to show that they could present it in a graceful shape; and that under their treatment the subject might become interesting to the reader, as an arena, upon which skill was ex-

hibited, baffling or evading difficulties, even at the price of all benefit to the anxious and earnest disciple. *Spartam nactus es*, was their motto, *hanc exorna*; and, like Cicero, in his Idea of an Orator, with relation to the practical duties; or, Lord Shaftesbury, with relation to the accurate knowledge of the academic philosophy; they must be supposed deliberately to have made a *selection* from the arts or doctrines before them, for the sake of a beautiful composition which should preserve all its parts in harmony, and only secondarily (if at all) to have regarded the interests of the student. By all of them the invitation held out was not so much *Indocti discant*, as *Ament meminisse periti*.

In our own country there have been numerous "letters," &c., on this interesting subject; but not one that has laid any hold on the public mind, except the two works of Dr. Watts, especially that upon the "Improvement of the Mind." Being the most imbecile of books, it must have owed its success, 1. To the sectarian zeal of his party in religion —his fellows and his followers; 2. To the fact of its having gained for its author, from two Scotch universities, the highest degree they could bestow; 3. To the distinguished honor of having been adopted as a lecture-book (q. as an examination-book?) by both English universities; 4. To the extravagant praise of Dr. Johnson, amongst whose infirmities it was to praise warmly when he was flattered by the sense of his own great superiority in powers and knowledge. Dr. Johnson supposes it to have been modelled on Locke's Conduct of the Understanding; but surely this is as ludicrous as to charge upon Silence any

elaborate imitation of Mr. Justice Shallow. That Silence may have borrowed from another man half of a joke, or echoed the roar of his laughter, is possible; but of any more grave or laborious attempts to rob he stands ludicrously acquitted by the exemplary imbecility of his nature. No; Dr. Watts did *not* steal from Mr. Locke; in matters of dulness a man is easily original; and I suppose that even Feeble or Shallow might have had credit for the effort necessary to the following counsels, taken at random from Dr. Watts, at the page where the book has happened to fall open.

1. Get a distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the subject which you treat of; survey it on all sides, and make yourself perfect master of it; then (then! what then? — Think of Feeble making an inference. Well, "then") you will have all the sentiments that relate to it in your view; 2. Be well skilled in the language which you speak; 3. Acquire a variety of words, a *copia verborum*. Let your memory be rich in synonymous terms, p. 228, edit. 1817.

Well done, most magnanimous Feeble! Such counsels I suppose that any man might have produced, and you will not wish to see criticized. Let me rather inquire, what common defect it is which has made the works of much more ingenious men, and in particular that of Locke, utterly useless for the end proposed. The error in these books is the same which occurs in books of ethics, and which has made them more or less useless for any practical purpose. As it is important to put an end to all delusion in matters of such grave and general concern as the improvement of our understandings, or

the moral valuation of actions, and as I repeat that the delusion here alluded to has affected both equally (so far as they can be affected by the books written professedly to assist them), it may be worth while to spend a few lines in exposing it. I believe that you are so far acquainted with the structure of a syllogism as to know how to distinguish between the major and minor proposition; there is, indeed, a technical rule which makes it impossible to err; but you will have no need of *that*, if you once apprehend the *rationale* of a syllogism in the light under which I will here place it. In every syllogism one of the two premises (the major) lays down a rule, under which rule the other (the minor) brings the subject of your argument as a particular case. The minor is, therefore, distinguished from the major by an act of the *judgment, namely*, a subsumption of a special case under a rule. Now consider how this applies to morals: here the conscience supplies the general rule, or major proposition, and about this there is no question; but, to bring the special case of conduct, which is the subject of your inquiry, under this general rule; here first commences the difficulty, and just upon this point are ethical treatises for the most part silent. Accordingly no man thinks of consulting them for his direction under any moral perplexities; if he reads them at all, it is for the gratification of his understanding in surveying the order and relation amongst the several members of a system; never for the information of his moral judgment.

For any practical use in that way, a *casuistry*, that is, a subsumption of the *cases* most frequently recurring in ordinary life, should be combined[3] with the

system of moral principles,— the latter supplying the major (or normal) proposition; the former supplying the minor proposition, which brings the special case under the rule. With the help of this explanation, you will easily understand on what principle I venture to denounce, as unprofitable, the whole class of books written on the model of Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding*. According to Locke, the student is not to hurry, but again not to loiter; not to be too precipitate, nor yet too hesitating; not to be too confiding, but far less too suspicious; not too obstinate in his own opinions, yet again (for the love of God!) not too resigned to those of others; not too general in his divisions, but (as he regards his own soul) not too minute, &c. &c. &c.

But surely no man, bent on the improvement of his faculties, was ever guilty of these errors under these names, that is, knowingly and deliberately. If he is so at all, it is either that he has not reflected on his own method, or that, having done so, he has allowed himself in the act or habit offending these rules on a false view of its tendency and character; because, in fact, having adopted as his rule (or major) that very golden mean which Mr. Locke recommends, and which, without Mr. Locke's suggestion, he would have adopted for himself, it has yet been possible for him, by an erroneous judgment, to take up an act or habit under the rule,— which with better advice he would have excluded; which advice is exactly what Mr. Locke has — *not* given. Over and above all this, the method of the book is aphoristic; and, as might be expected from that method, without a plan; and which is partly the

cause and partly the consequence of having a plan without foundation.

This word *foundation* leads me to one remark suggested by your letter; and with that I shall conclude my own. When I spoke above of the student's taking his foundations broad and deep, I had my eye chiefly on the corner-stones of strong-built knowledge, namely, on logic; on a proper choice of languages; on a particular part of what is called metaphysics; and on mathematics. Now you allege (I suppose upon occasion of my references to mathematics in my last letter) that you have no "genius" for mathematics; and you speak with the usual awe (*pavor attonitorum*) of the supposed "profundity" of intellect necessary to a great progress in this direction. Be assured that you are in utter error; though it be an error all but universal. In mathematics, upon two irresistible arguments which I shall set in a clear light, when I come to explain the procedure of the mind with regard to that sort of evidence, and that sort of investigation, there can be no subtlety; all minds are levelled except as to the rapidity of the course, and, from the entire absence of all those acts of mind which do really imply profundity of intellect, it is a question whether an idiot might not be made an excellent mathematician. Listen not to the romantic notions of the world on this subject; above all listen not to mathematicians. Mathematicians, *as mathematicians*, have no business with the question. It is one thing to understand mathematics; another, and far different, to understand the philosophy of mathematics. With respect to this, it is memorable, that in no one of the great

philosophical questions which the ascent of mathematics has from time to time brought up above the horizon of our speculative view, has any mathematician who was merely such (however eminent) had depth of intellect adequate to its solution, without insisting on the absurdities published by mathematicians, on the philosophy of the *infinite*, since that notion was introduced into mathematics, or on the fruitless attempts of all but a metaphysician to settle the strife between the conflicting modes of valuing *living forces*;—I need only ask what English or French mathematician has been able to exhibit the notion of *negative quantities*, in a theory endurable even to a popular philosophy, or which has commanded any assent? Or again, what Algebra is there existing which does not contain a false and ludicrous account of the procedure in that science, as contrasted with the procedure in geometry? But, not to trouble you with more of these cases so opprobrious to mathematicians, lay this to heart, that mathematics are very easy and very important; they are, in fact, the organ of one large division of human knowledge. And, as it is of consequence that you should lose no time by waiting for my letter on that subject, let me forestall so much of it, as to advise that you would immediately commence with Euclid; reading those eight books of the Elements which are usually read, and the Data. If you should go no further, so much geometry will be useful and delightful; and so much, by reading for two hours a-day, you will easily accomplish in about thirteen weeks, that is, one quarter of a year.

LETTER III.

My dear Sir:

In my three following letters I am to consider, 1st, Languages; 2d, Logic; Arts of Memory; not as parts of knowledge sought or valued on their own account, but simply as the most general amongst the means and instruments of the student, estimated therefore with a reference to the number and importance of the *ends* which they further, and fairly to be presumed in all schemes of self-improvement liberally planned. In this letter I will speak of languages; my thoughts, and a twenty years' experience as a student, having furnished me with some hints that may be useful in determining your choice, where choice is at first sight so difficult, and the evils of an erroneous choice so great. On this Babel of an earth which you and I inhabit, there are said to be about three thousand languages and jargons. Of nearly five hundred you will find a specimen in the Mithridates of Adelung, and in some other German works of more moderate bulk.[4] The final purposes of this vast engine for separating nations it is not difficult in part to perceive; and it is presumable that those purposes have been nearly fulfilled; since there can be little doubt that within the next two

centuries all the barbarous languages of the earth (that is, those without a literature) will be one after one strangled and exterminated by four European languages, namely, the English, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the Russian. Central Africa, and *that* only, can resist the momentum of civilization for a longer period. Now, languages are sometimes studied, not as a key to so many bodies of literature, but as an object *per se;* for example, by Sir William Jones, Dr. Leyden, &c.; and where the researches are conducted with the enthusiasm and the sagacity of the late extraordinary Professor of Oriental Languages in Edinburgh, Dr. Alexander Murray, it is impossible to withhold one's admiration; *he* had a theory, and distinct purposes, which shed light upon his paths that are else "as dark as Erebus." Such labors conducted in such a spirit must be important, if the eldest records of the human race be important; for the affinities of language furnish the main clue for ascending, through the labyrinths of nations, to their earliest origins and connections. To a professed linguist, therefore, the natural advice would be — examine the structure of as many languages as possible; gather as many thousand specimens as possible into your *hortus siccus,* beginning with the eldest forms of the Teutonic, namely, the Visigothic and the Icelandic, for which the aids rendered by modern learning are immense. To a professed philologist, I say, the natural advice would be this. But to you, who have no such purposes, and whom I suppose to wish for languages simply as avenues to literature, not otherwise accessible, I will frankly say — start from this principle — that the act of

learning a language is in itself an evil; and so frame your selection of languages, that the largest possible body of literature *available for your purposes* shall be laid open to you at the least possible price of time and mental energy squandered in this direction. I say this with some earnestness. For I will not conceal from you, that one of the habits most unfavorable to the growth and sincere culture of the intellect in our day, is the facility with which men surrender themselves to the barren and ungenial labor of language-learning. Unless balanced by studies that give more exercise, more excitement, and more aliment to the faculties, I am convinced, by all I have observed, that this practice is the dry rot of the human mind. How should it be otherwise? The act of learning a science is good, not only for the knowledge which results, but for the exercise which attends it; the energies which the learner is obliged to put forth are true intellectual energies, and his very errors are full of instruction. He fails to construct some leading idea, or he even misconstructs it; he places himself in a false position with respect to certain propositions; views them from a false centre; makes a false or an imperfect antithesis; apprehends a definition with insufficient rigor; or fails in his use of it to keep it self-consistent. These and a thousand other errors are met by a thousand appropriate resources — all of a true intellectual character; comparing, combining, distinguishing, generalizing, subdividing, acts of abstraction and evolution, of synthesis and analysis, until the most torpid minds are ventilated, and healthily excited by this introversion of the faculties upon themselves.

But, in the study of language (with an exception, however, to a certain extent, in favor of Latin and Greek, which I shall notice hereafter), nothing of all this can take place, and for one simple reason, — that all is arbitrary. Wherever there is a law and system, wherever there is relation and correspondence of parts, the intellect will make its way, — will interfuse amongst the dry bones the blood and pulses of life, and create "a soul under the ribs of death." But whatsoever is arbitrary and conventional, — which yields no reason why it should be this way rather than that, obeying no theory or law, — must, by its lifeless forms, kill and mortify the action of the intellect. If this be true, it becomes every student to keep watch upon himself, that he does not, upon any light temptation, allow himself an overbalance of study in this direction; for the temptations to such an excess, which in our days are more powerful than formerly, are at all times too powerful. Of all the weapons in the armory of the scholar, none is so showy or so captivating to commonplace minds as skill in languages. *Vanity* is, therefore, one cause of the undue application to languages. A second is the national *fashion*. What nation but ourselves ever made the language of its eternal enemy an essential part of even a decent[5] education? What should we think of Roman policy, if, during the second Punic war, the Carthaginian language had been taught as a matter of course to the children of every Roman citizen? But a third cause, which I believe has more efficacy than either of the former, is mere *levity*, — the simple fact of being unballasted by any sufficient weight of plan or settled purpose to pre-

sent a counterpoise to the slightest momentum this way or that, arising from any impulse of accident or personal caprice. When there is no resistance, a breath of air will be sufficient to determine the motion. I remember once that, happening to spend an autumn in Ilfracombe, on the west coast of Devonshire, I found all the young ladies whom I knew busily employed on the study of marine botany. On the opposite shore of the channel, in all the South Welsh ports of Tenby, &c., they were no less busy upon conchology. In neither case from any previous love of the science, but simply availing themselves of their local advantages. Now, here a man must have been truly ill-natured to laugh; for the studies were in both instances beautiful. A love for it was created, if it had not preëxisted; and, to women and young women, the very absence of all austere unity of purpose and self-determination was becoming and graceful. Yet, when this same levity and liability to casual impulses come forward in the acts and purposes of a man, I must own that I have often been unable to check myself in something like a contemptuous feeling; nor should I wish to check myself, but for remembering how many men of energetic minds constantly give way to slight and inadequate motives, simply for want of being summoned to any anxious reviews of their own conduct. How many cases have I known where a particular study — as, suppose, of the Hartleian philosophy — was pursued throughout a whole college simply because a man of talents had talked of it in the junior common-room? How many where a book became popular because it had been mentioned in the House of Commons?

How many where a man resolved to learn Welsh because he was spending a month or two at Barmouth? — or Italian because he had found a Milan series of the poets in his aunt's library? — or the violin because he had bought a fine one at an auction?

In 1808–9 you must well remember what a strong impulse the opening of the Peninsular War communicated to our current literature. The presses of London and the provinces teemed with editions of Spanish books, dictionaries, and grammars; and the motions of the British armies were accompanied by a corresponding activity among British compositors. From the just interest which is now renewed in Spanish affairs, I suppose something of the same scene will recur. Now, for my own part, — though undoubtedly I would, for the sake of Calderon alone (judging of him through a German translation), most willingly study the Spanish literature (if I had leisure), — yet I should be ashamed to do so upon the irrelevant and *occasional* summons of an interesting situation in Spanish affairs. I should feel that by such an act I confessed a want of preöccupation in my mind, — a want of self-origination in my plans, — an inertness of will, which, above all things, I do and ought to detest. If it were right for me (right, I mean, in relation to my previous scheme of study) to have dedicated a portion of my life to the Spanish literature, it must have been right before the Spanish politics took an interesting aspect. If it were not right, it could not become so upon a suggestion so purely verbal as the recurrence of the word Spanish in the London journals.

This, I am sure, you will interpret candidly. I am not supposing you less furnished with powers of self-determination than myself. I have no personal allusion or exception; but I suppose every man liable to be acted on unduly, or by inadequate impulses, so long as he is not possessed by some plan that may steady that levity of nature which is implied in the mere state of indifference to all settled plans. This levity, in our days, meets with an accidental ally in the extraordinary facilities for studying languages in the shape of elementary books; which facilities of themselves form a fourth cause of the disproportionate study given to languages. But a fifth cause occurs to me, of a less selfish and indolent character than any of the preceding; and, as it seems to me hardly possible that it should not influence you more or less to make your choice of languages too large and comprehensive, I shall tell you, from my own case, what may be sufficient to set you on your guard against too much indulgence to a feeling in itself just and natural. In my youthful days, I never entered a great library, suppose of one hundred thousand volumes, but my predominant feeling was one of pain and disturbance of mind, — not much unlike that which drew tears from Xerxes, on viewing his immense army, and reflecting that in one hundred years not one soul would remain alive. To me, with respect to the books, the same effect would be brought about by my own death. Here, said I, are one hundred thousand books, the worst of them capable of giving me some pleasure and instruction; and before I can have had time to extract the honey from one twentieth of this hive, in all likelihood I

shall be summoned away. This thought, I am sure, must often have occurred to yourself; and you may judge how much it was aggravated when I found that, subtracting all merely professional books — books of reference, as dictionaries, &c. &c. &c. — from the universal library of Europe, there would still remain a total of not less than twelve hundred thousand books over and above what the presses of Europe are still disemboguing into the ocean of literature, many of them immense folios or quartos. Now, I had been told by an eminent English author, that, with respect to one single work, namely, the History of Thuanus, a calculation had been made by a Portuguese monk, which showed that barely to read over the words (and allowing no time for reflection) would require three years' labor, at the rate of (I think) three hours a day. Further, I had myself ascertained that to read a duodecimo volume, in prose, of four hundred pages, — all skipping being barred, and the rapid reading which belongs to the vulgar interest of a novel, — was a very sufficient work for one day. Consequently, three hundred and sixty-five per annum — that is (with a very small allowance for the claims of life on one's own account and that of one's friends), one thousand for every triennium; that is, ten thousand for thirty years — will be as much as a man who lives for that only can hope to accomplish. From the age of twenty to eighty, therefore, — if a man were so unhappy as to live to eighty, — the utmost he could hope to travel through would be twenty thousand volumes, — a number not, perhaps, above *five per cent.* of what the mere *current* literature of Europe would accumulate

in that period of years. Now, from this amount of twenty thousand make a deduction on account of books of larger size, books to be studied and books to be read slowly and many times over (as all works in which the composition is a principal part of their pretensions), — allow a fair discount for such deductions, and the twenty thousand will perhaps shrink to eight or five thousand. All this arithmetical statement you must not conceive to relate to any fanciful case of misery. No; I protest to you that I speak of as real a case of suffering as ever can have existed. And it soon increased; for the same panic seized upon me with respect to the works of art. I found that I had no chance of hearing the twenty-five thousandth part of the music that had been produced. And so of other arts. Nor was this all; for, happening to say to myself, one night as I entered a long street, "I shall never see the one thousandth part of the people who are living in this single street," it occurred to me that every man and woman was a most interesting book, if one knew how to read them. Here opened upon me a new world of misery; for, if books and works of art existed by millions, men existed by hundreds of millions. Nay, even if it had been possible for me to know all of my own generation, yet, like Dr. Faustus, who desired to see "Helen of Greece," I should still have been dissatisfied; for what was one generation to all that were past? Nay, my madness took yet a higher flight; for I considered that I stood on a little isthmus of time, which connected the two great worlds, the past and the future. I stood in equal relation to both; I asked for admittance to one as much as to

the other. Even if a necromancer could have brought up the great men of the seventeenth century, I should have said, What good does all this do me? Where are those of the twentieth century? — and so onward! In short, I never turned my thoughts this way but I fell into a downright midsummer madness. I could not enjoy what I had, — craving for that which I had not, and could not have; was thirsty, like Tantalus, in the midst of waters; even when using my present wealth, thought only of its perishableness; and "wept to have what I so feared to lose."

But all this, you will say, was, by my own admission, "madness." Madness, I grant; but such a madness! — not as lunatics suffer; no hallucination of the brain; but a madness like that of misers, — the usurpation and despotism of one feeling, natural in itself, but travelling into an excess, which at last upset all which should have balanced it. And I must assert that, with allowance for difference of degrees, no madness is more common. Many of those who give themselves up to the study of languages do so under the same disease which I have described; and, if they do not carry it on to the same extremity of wretchedness, it is because they are not so logical, and so consistent in their madness, as I was. Under our present enormous accumulation of books, I do affirm that a miserable distraction of choice (which is the germ of such a madness) must be very generally incident to the times; that the symptoms of it are, in fact, very prevalent; and that one of the chief symptoms is an enormous "gluttonism" for books, and for adding language to lan-

guage; and in this way it is that literature becomes much more a source of torment than of pleasure. Nay, I will go further, and will say that, of many who escape this disease, some owe their privilege simply to the narrowness of their minds, and contracted range of their sympathies with literature, which, enlarged, they would soon lose it. Others, again, owe it to their situation; as, for instance, in a country town, where books being few, a man can use up all his materials; his appetite is unpalled, and he is grateful for the loan of a MS., &c. But bring him up to London; show him the wagon-loads of unused stores which he is at liberty to work up; tell him that these even are but a trifle, perhaps, to what he may find in the libraries of Paris, Dresden, Milan, &c., of religious houses, of English noblemen, &c., —and this same man who came up to London blithe and happy will leave it pale and sad. You have ruined his peace of mind. A subject which he fancied himself capable of exhausting he finds to be a labor for centuries. He has no longer the healthy pleasure of feeling himself master of his materials; he is degraded into their slave. Perhaps I dwell too much on this subject; but allow me, before I leave it, to illustrate what I have said by the case of two eminent literati, who are at this moment exhibiting themselves as a couple of figurantes (if I may so say) on the stage of Europe, and who have sacrificed their own happiness and dignity of mind to the very madness I have been describing; or, if not, to the far more selfish passion for notoriety and ostentatious display. The men I mean are F. Bouterwek

and Frederick Schlegel, better known to the English public as the friend of Madame de Staël.

The history of the first is somewhat ludicrous. Coming upon the stage at a time when Kant possessed the national mind of Germany, he thought it would be a good speculation not to fall into the train of the philosopher, but to open a sort of chapel of dissent. He saw no reason why men should not swear by Bouterwek, as well as by Kant; and, connecting this fact with the subsequent confession of Bouterwek, that he was in reality playing off a conscious hoax, it is laughable to mention, that for a time he absolutely found some followers — who worshipped him, but suspiciously and provisionally. Unfortunately, however, as he had no leisure or ability to understand Kant, he was obliged to adopt Dr. Priestley's plan of revoking and cancelling in every successive work all his former works, as false, pestilent, and heretical. This upset him. The philosopher was unfrocked; and in that line of business he found himself bankrupt. At this crisis things looked ill. However, being young, he pleaded his tender years. George Barnwell and others had been led astray as well as himself, by keeping bad company: he had now quitted all connection with metaphysics; and begged to inform the public that he had opened an entirely new concern for criticism in all its branches. He kept his word; he left off hoaxing, and applied himself to a respectable line of business.

The fruits of his labors were a history, in twelve volumes, of modern literature from the end of the thirteenth century. Of this work I have examined all that I pretend to judge of, namely, the two sections

relating to the German and the English literature; and, not to do him injustice, if it professed to be no more than a bibliographical record of books, it is executed with a very laudable care and fidelity. But imagine to yourself the vast compass of his plan. He professes to give the history of, — 1. Spanish; 2. Portuguese; 3. English; 4. German; 5. French; 6. Italian literature; no sketch, observe, or abstract of them, but a full and formal history. Conceive, if you can, the monstrous and insane pretensions involved in such a scheme. At starting he had five languages to learn, besides the dialects of his own; not only so, but five languages, each through all its varieties for the space of half a millennium: English, for instance, not merely of this day, but the English of Chaucer, of the Metrical Romances; nay, even of Robert of Gloucester, in 1280. Next, the mere printed books (to say nothing of the MSS.) in any one of these languages, to be read and meditated, as they ought to be by an *historian* of the literature, would have found full employment for twelve able-bodied men through an entire life. And after all, when the materials were ready, the work of composition would be still to begin. Such were Bouterwek's pretensions. As to Schlegel's, who, without any more genius or originality, has much more talent, — his were still more extravagant, and were pushed to an extremity that must, I should think, at times disquiet his admirers with a feeling that all is not sound. For, though he did not profess to go so much into detail as Bouterwek, still his abstracts are represented as built on as much reading, though not directly quoted; and to

all that Bouterwek held forth in his promises Schlegel added, as a little *bonus* to his subscribers, 1. Oriental literature; 2. The Scandinavian literature; 3. The Provençal literature; and, for aught I know, a billion of things besides; to say nothing of an active share in the current literature, as reviewer, magazinist, and author of all work. Now, the very history of these pretensions exposes their hollowness: to record them is to refute them. Knowing, as we all know, how many years it demands, and by what a leisurely and genial communication with their works it is that we can gain any deep intimacy with even a few great artists, such as Shakspeare, Milton, or Euripides, how monstrous a fiction would that man force on our credulity, who tells us that he has read and weighed in the balances the total products of human intellect dispersed through thirty languages for a period of three thousand years; and how gross a delusion does *he* practise upon his own mind who can persuade himself that it is *reading* to cram himself with words, the bare sense of which can hardly have time to glance, like the lamps of a mail-coach, upon his hurried and bewildered understanding! There is a picture at Oxford, which I saw when a boy, of an old man, with misery in his eye, in the act of copying a book; and the story attached (I forget whether with any historic foundation) is that he was under a vow to copy out some great portion of the Bible before he allowed himself (or was allowed) to eat. I dare say you know the picture; and perhaps I tell the story wrong. However, just such a man, and just so wo-begone, must this man of words appear when he is alone in his study;

with a frozen heart and a famished intellect; and every now and then, perhaps, exclaiming with Alcibiades, "O, ye Athenians! what a world of hardship I endure to obtain your applause!" So slightly is his knowledge worked into the texture of his mind, that I am persuaded a brain fever would sweep it all away. With this sketch of Messrs. Bouterwek and Schlegel, it is superfluous to add that their criticisms are utterly *worthless;* being all words — words — words: however, with this difference, that Bouterwek's are simply = 0, being the mere rubbishy sweepings from the works of literatuli long since defunct: but Schlegel's, agreeably to his natural haughtiness and superior talents, are bad in a positive sense — being filled with such conceits, fancies, and fictions, as you would naturally expect from a clever man talking about what he had never, in any true sense of the word, read.[6] O, genius of English good sense, keep any child of mine from ever sacrificing his peace and intellectual health to such a life of showy emptiness, of pretence, of noise, and of words; and even with a view to the opinion of others, if it were worth while sacrificing very much to *that*, teach him how far more enviable is the reputation of having produced even one work, though but in a lower department of art, and which has given pleasure to myriads — (such, suppose, as "The Vicar of Wakefield") — than to have lived in the wonderment of a gazing crowd, like a rope-dancer, or a posture-master, with the fame of incredible attainments that tend to no man's pleasure, and which perish to the remembrance of all men as soon as their possessor is in his grave.

Thus, at some risk of fatiguing you, I have endeavored to sharpen your attention to the extreme danger which threatens a self-instructor in the besetting temptations to an over cultivation of languages; temptations which, whether appealing to his vanity and love of ostentation, or to his craving for a multifarious mastery over books, terminate in the same evil of substituting a barren study of words, which is, besides, the most lingering of all studies, for the healthy exercises of the intellect. All the great European poets, orators, and wits, are mentioned in a man's hearing so often, and so much discussion is constantly going on about their comparative merits, that a body of irritation and curiosity collects about these names, and unites with more legitimate feelings to persuade a man that it is necessary he should read them all — each in his own language. In a celebrated satire (*The Pursuits of Literature*), much read in my youth, and which I myself read about twenty-five years ago, I remember one counsel — there addressed to young men, but, in fact, of universal application. "I call upon them," said the author, "to *dare* to be ignorant of many things:" a wise counsel, and justly expressed; for it requires much courage to forsake popular paths of knowledge, merely upon a conviction that they are not favorable to the ultimate ends of knowledge. In you, however, *that* sort of courage may be presumed; but how will you "dare to be ignorant" of many things in opposition to the cravings of your own mind? Simply thus: destroy these false cravings by introducing a healthier state of the organ. A good scheme of study will soon show itself to be such by

this one test — that it will exclude as powerfully as it will appropriate; it will be a system of repulsion no less than of attraction; once thoroughly possessed and occupied by the deep and genial pleasures of one truly intellectual pursuit, you will be easy and indifferent to all others that had previously teased you with transient excitement; just as you will sometimes see a man superficially irritated as it were with wandering fits of liking for three or four women at once, which he is absurd enough to call "being in love;" but, once profoundly in love (supposing him capable of being so), he never makes such a mistake again, all his feelings after *that* being absorbed into a sublime unity. Now, without anticipating this scheme of study out of its place, yet in general you know whether your intentions lean most to science or to literature. For upon this decision revolve the whole motives which can determine your choice of languages; as, for instance, if you are in quest of science or philosophy, no language in Europe at this day (unless the Turkish) is so slenderly furnished as the Spanish; on the other hand, for literature, I am disposed to think that after the English none is so wealthy (I mean in quality, not in quantity).

Here, however, to prevent all mistakes, let me establish one necessary distinction. The word *literature* is a perpetual source of confusion, because it is used in two senses, and those senses liable to be confounded with each other. In a philosophical use of the word, literature is the direct and adequate antithesis of books of knowledge. But, in a popular use, it is a mere term of convenience for expressing

inclusively the total books in a language. In this latter sense, a dictionary, a grammar, a spelling-book, an almanac, a pharmacopœia, a parliamentary report, a system of farriery, a treatise on billiards, the court calendar, &c., belong to the literature. But, in the philosophical sense, not only would it be ludicrous to reckon these as parts of the literature, but even books of much higher pretensions must be excluded — as, for instance, books of voyages and travels, and generally all books in which the matter to be communicated is paramount to the manner or form of its communication ("ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri"). It is difficult to construct the idea of "literature" with severe accuracy; for it is a fine art — the supreme fine art, and liable to the difficulties which attend such a subtle notion; in fact, a severe construction of the idea must be the *result* of a philosophical investigation into this subject, and cannot precede it. But, for the sake of obtaining some expression for literature that may answer our present purpose, let us throw the question into another form. I have said that the antithesis of literature is books of knowledge. Now, what is that antithesis to *knowledge*, which is here implicitly latent in the word literature? The vulgar antithesis is *pleasure* ("aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetæ"). Books, we are told, propose to *instruct* or to *amuse*. Indeed! However, not to spend any words upon it, I suppose you will admit that this wretched antithesis will be of no service to us. And, by the way, let me remark to you, in this, as in other cases, how men by their own errors of understanding, by feeble thinking, and inadequate

distinctions, forge chains of meanness and servility for themselves. For, this miserable alternative being once admitted, observe what follows. In which class of books does the Paradise Lost stand? Among those which instruct, or those which *amuse?* Now, if a man answers among those which instruct, he lies; for there is no instruction in it, nor could be in any great poem, according to the meaning which the word must bear in this distinction, unless it is meant that it should involve its own antithesis. But if he says, "No — amongst those which amuse," then what a beast must he be to degrade, and in this way, what has done the most of any human work to raise and dignify human nature. But the truth is, you see that the idiot does not wish to degrade it; on the contrary, he would willingly tell a lie in its favor, if that would be admitted; but such is the miserable state of slavery to which he has reduced himself by his own puny distinction; for, as soon as he hops out of one of his little cells, he is under a necessity of hopping into the other. The true antithesis[7] to knowledge, in this case, is not *pleasure*, but power. All, that is literature, seeks to communicate power; all, that is not literature, to communicate knowledge. Now, if it be asked what is meant by communicating power, I, in my turn, would ask by what name a man would designate the case in which I should be made to feel vividly, and with a vital consciousness, emotions which ordinary life rarely or never supplies occasions for exciting, and which had previously lain unwakened, and hardly within the dawn of consciousness — as myriads of modes of feeling are at this moment in every human

mind for want of a poet to organize them? I say, when these inert and sleeping forms *are* organized, when these possibilities *are* actualized, is this conscious and living possession of mine *power*, or what is it?

When, in King Lear, the height and depth and breadth of human passion is revealed to us,—and, for the purposes of a sublime antagonism, is revealed in the weakness of an old man's nature, and in one night two worlds of storm are brought face to face — the human world, and the world of physical nature — mirrors of each other, semichoral antiphonies, strophe and antistrophe heaving with rival convulsions, and with the double darkness of night and madness, when I am thus suddenly startled into a feeling of the infinity of the world within me, is this power,—or what may I call it? Space, again — what is it in most men's minds? The lifeless form of the world without us,—a postulate of the geometrician, with no more vitality or real existence to their feelings, than the square root of two. But, if Milton has been able to *inform* this empty theatre, peopling it with Titanic shadows, forms that sat at the eldest counsels of the infant world, chaos and original night,—

> —— Ghostly shapes,
> To meet at noontide, Fear and trembling Hope,
> —— Death the Skeleton,
> And Time the Shadow ——

so that, from being a thing to inscribe with diagrams, it has become under his hands a vital agent on the human mind; I presume that I may justly express

the tendency of the Paradise Lost, by saying that it communicates power; a pretension far above all communication of knowledge. Henceforth, therefore, I shall use the antithesis power and knowledge as the most philosophical expression for literature (that is, Literæ Humaniores) and anti-literature (that is, Literæ didacticæ — Παιδεια).

Now, then, prepared with this distinction, let us inquire whether — weighing the difficulties against the benefits — there is an overbalance of motive for you with your purposes to study what are inaccurately termed[8] the "classical" languages. And, first, with respect to Greek, we have often had the question debated, and, in our own days, solemn challenges thrown out and solemn adjudications given on the question, whether any benefit corresponding to the time and the labor can be derived from the study of the ancient classics. Hitherto, however, the question could not be rightly shaped; for, as no man chose to plead "amusement" as a sufficient motive for so great an undertaking, it was always debated with a single reference to the *knowledge* involved in those literatures. But this is a ground wholly untenable. For, let the knowledge be what it might, all knowledge is translatable; and translatable without one atom of loss. If this were all, therefore, common sense would prescribe that faithful translations should be executed of all the classics, and all men in future depend upon these vicarious labors. With respect to the Greek, this would soon be accomplished; for what is the knowledge which lurks in that language? All knowledge may be commodiously distributed into science and

erudition; of the latter (antiquities, geography, philology, theology, &c.), there is a very considerable body; of the former, but little, namely, the mathematical and musical works,— and the medical works —what else? Nothing that can deserve the name of science, except the single *organon* of Aristotle. With Greek medicine I suppose that you have no concern. As to mathematics, a man must be an idiot if he were to study Greek for the sake of Archimedes, Apollonius, or Diophantus. In Latin or in French you may find them all regularly translated, and parts of them embodied in the works of English mathematicians. Besides, if it were otherwise, where the notions and all the relations are so few, elementary, and determinate, and the vocabulary therefore so scanty, as in mathematics, it could not be necessary to learn Greek, even if you were disposed to read the mathematicians in that language. I see no marvel in Halley's having translated an Arabic manuscript on mathematics, with no previous knowledge of Arabic; on the contrary, it is a case (and not a very difficult case) of the art of deciphering, so much practised by Wallis, and other great mathematicians contemporary with Halley. But all this is an idle disputation; for the knowledge of whatsoever sort which lies in Grecian mines, wretchedly as we are furnished with vernacular translations, the Latin version will always supply. This, therefore, is not the ground to be taken by the advocate of Greek letters. It is not for knowledge that Greek is worth learning, but for power. Here arises the question — Of what value is this power? that is, how is the Grecian literature to be rated in relation

to other literatures? Now, is it not only because "De Carthagine satius est silere quam parciùs dicere," but also because in my judgment there is no more offensive form of levity than the readiness to speak on great problems, incidentally and occasionally,— that I shall wholly decline this question. We have hitherto seen no rational criticism on Greek literature; nor, indeed, to say the truth, much criticism which teaches anything, or solves anything, upon any literature. I shall simply suggest one consideration to you. The question is limited wholly, as you see, to the value of the literature in the proper sense of that word. Now, it is my private theory, to which you will allow what degree of weight you please, that the antique or pagan literature is a polar antagonist to the modern or Christian literature; that each is an evolution from a distinct principle, having nothing in common but what is necessarily common to all modes of thought, namely, good sense and logic; and that they are to be criticized from different stations and points of view. This same thought has occurred to others; but no great advance is made simply by propounding the general thesis; and as yet nobody has done more.[9] It is only by the development of this thesis that any real service can be performed. This I have myself attempted, in a series of "reveries" on that subject; and, if you continue to hesitate on the question of learning Greek now that you know exactly how that question is shaped, and to what it points, my manuscript contains all the assistance that it is in *my* power to offer you in such a dilemma. The difference of the antique from the Christian literature,

you must bear in mind, is not like that between English and Spanish literature — species and species — but as between genus and genus. The advantages therefore are — 1, the *power* which it offers generally as a literature; 2, the new phasis under which it presents the human mind; the antique being the other hemisphere, as it were, which, with our own, or Christian hemisphere, composes the entire sphere of human intellectual energy.

So much for the Greek. Now, as to the Latin, the case is wholly reversed. Here the literature is of far less value; and, on the whole, with your views, it might be doubted whether it would recompense your pains. But the anti-literature (as for want of a strict antithesis I must call it) is inestimable; Latin having been the universal language of Christendom for so long a period. The Latin works since the restoration of letters are alone of immense value for knowledge of every kind; much science, inexhaustible erudition; and to this day in Germany, and elsewhere on the continent, the best part of the latter is communicated in Latin. Now, though all knowledge *is* (which power is not) adequately communicable by translation, yet as there is no hope that the immense bibliotheca of Latin accumulated in the last three centuries ever will be translated, you cannot possibly dispense with this language; and, that being so, it is fortunate that you have already a superficial acquaintance with it. The best means of cultivating it further, and the grounds of selection amongst the *modern* languages of Christendom, I will discuss fully in my next letter.

LETTER IV.

My dear Sir:

It is my misfortune to have been under the necessity too often of writing rapidly, and without opportunities for after-revision. In cases where much *composition*[10] is demanded, this is a serious misfortune, and sometimes irreparable, except at the price of recasting the whole work. But, to a subject like the present, little of what is properly called composition is applicable; and somewhat the less from the indeterminate form of *letters* into which I have purposely thrown my communications. Errors in composition apart, there can be no others of importance, except such as relate to the matter; and those are not at all the more incident to a man because he is in a hurry. Not to be too much at leisure is, indeed, often an advantage. On no occasion of their lives do men generally speak better than on the scaffold, and with the executioner at their side; partly, indeed, because they are then most in earnest, and unsolicitous about effect; but partly, also, because the pressure of the time sharpens and condenses the faculty of abstracting the capital points at issue. On this account I do not plead haste as an absolute and unmitigated disadvantage. Haste palliates what haste occasions. Now, there is no haste which can

occasion oversights, as to the matter, to him who has meditated sufficiently upon his subject; all that haste can do in such a case is to affect the language with respect to accuracy and precision; and thus far I plead it. I shall never plead it as shrinking from the severest responsibility for the thoughts and substance of anything I say; but often in palliation of expressions careless or ill chosen. And at no time can I stand more in need of such indulgence than at present, when I write both hastily and under circumstances of— But no matter what. Believe, in general, that I write under circumstances as unfavorable for careful selection of words as can well be imagined.

In my last letter I declined to speak of the antique literature, as a subject too unwieldy and unmanageable for my limits. I now recur to it for the sake of guarding and restraining that particular sentence in which I have spoken of the Roman literature as inferior to the Greek. In common with all the world, I must, of necessity, think it so in the drama, and generally in poetry κατ' ἐξοχήν. Indeed, for some forms of poetry, even of the lower order, it was the misfortune of the Roman literature that they were not cultivated until the era of fastidious taste, which in every nation takes place at a certain stage of society. They were harshly transplanted as exotics, and never passed through the just degrees of a natural growth on Roman soil. Notwithstanding this, the most exquisite specimens of the lighter lyric which the world has yet seen must be sought for in Horace; and very few writers of any country have approached to Virgil in the art of *composition*, how-

ever low we may be disposed at this day to rank him as a poet, when tried in the unequal contest with the sublimities of the Christian literature. The truth is (and this is worth being attended to), that the peculiar sublimity of the Roman mind does not express itself, nor is it at all to be sought, in their poetry. Poetry, according to the Roman ideal of it, was not an adequate organ for the grander movements of the national mind. Roman sublimity must be looked for in Roman acts and in Roman sayings.

For the acts, see their history for a thousand years, the early and fabulous part not excepted, — which, for the very reason that it *is*[11] fabulous, must be taken as so much the purer product of the Roman mind. Even the infancy of Rome was like the cradle of Hercules, glorified by splendid marvels, — "Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre." For their sayings, for their anecdotes, their serious bon-mots, there are none equal to the Roman in grandeur. "Englishman!" said a Frenchman once to me, "you that contest our claim to the sublime, and contend that 'la maniére noble' of our artists wears a falsetto character, what do you think of that saying of a king of ours, That it became not the King of France to avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans (that is, of himself, under that title)?"— "Think!" said I, "why, I think it a magnificent and regal speech. And such is my English generosity, that I heartily wish the Emperor Hadrian had not said the same thing fifteen hundred years before.[12] I would willingly give five shillings myself to purchase the copyright of the saying for the French nation; for *they* want it, and the Romans could spare it. Peream

qui ante nos nostra dixerunt! Cursed be the name of Hadrian that stands between France and the sublimest of bon-mots! Where, again, will you find a more adequate expression of the Roman majesty than in the saying of Trajan, — Imperatorem oportere stantem mori, — that Cæsar ought to die standing, — a speech of imperatorial grandeur; implying that he, who was "the foremost man of all this world," and, in regard to all other nations, the representative of his own, should express its characteristic virtue in his farewell act, — should die *in procinctu*, — and should meet the last[13] enemy, as the first, with a Roman countenance, and in a soldier's attitude. If this had an imperatorial, what follows had a consular majesty, and is almost the grandest story upon record. Marius, the man who rose *à caligâ* to be seven times consul, was in a dungeon, and a slave was sent in with commission to put him to death. These were the persons, — the two extremities of exalted and forlorn humanity, its vanward and its rearward man, a Roman consul and an abject slave. But their natural relations to each other were, by the caprice of fortune, monstrously inverted. The consul was in chains: the slave was for a moment the arbiter of his fate. By what spells, what magic, did Marius reïnstate himself in his natural prerogatives? By what marvels, drawn from heaven or from earth, did he, in the twinkling of an eye, again invest himself with the purple, and place between himself and his assassin a host of shadowy lictors? By the mere blank supremacy of great minds over weak ones. He *fascinated* the slave, as a rattlesnake does a bird. Standing "like Teneriffe," he smote him with his

eye, and said, "Tunc, homo, audes occidere C. Marium?"— Dost thou, fellow, presume to kill Caius Marius? Whereat the reptile, quaking under the voice, nor daring to affront the consular eye, sank gently to the ground, turned round upon his hands and feet, and, crawling out of the prison like any other vermin, left Marius standing in solitude, as steadfast and immovable as the capitol.

In such anecdotes as these it is — in the actions of trying emergencies and their appropriate circumstances — that I find the revelation of the Roman mind under its highest aspect. The Roman mind was great in the presence of man, mean in the presence of nature; impotent to comprehend or to delineate the internal strife of *passion*,[14] but powerful beyond any other national mind to display the energy of the *will* victorious over all passion. Hence it is that the true Roman sublime exists nowhere in such purity as in those works which were *not* composed with a reference to Grecian models. On this account I wholly dissent from the shallow classification which expresses the relations of merit between the writers of the Augustan period and that which followed, under the type of a golden and silver age. As artists, and with reference to composition, no doubt many of the writers of the latter age were rightly so classed; but an inferiority *quoad hoc* argues no uniform and absolute inferiority; and the fact is, that, in weight and grandeur of thought, the silver writers were much superior to the golden. Indeed, this might have been looked for on *à priori* grounds; for the silver writers were more truly Roman writers from two causes: first, because they trusted more

to their own native style of thinking, and, looking less anxiously to Grecian archetypes, they wrote more naturally, feelingly, and originally; secondly, because the political circumstances of their times were advantageous, and liberated them from the suspicious caution which cramped the natural movements of a Roman mind on the first establishment of the monarchy. Whatever outrages of despotism occurred in the times of the silver writers were sudden, transient, capricious, and personal, in their origin and in their direction; but, in the Augustan age, it was not the temper of Augustus, personally, and certainly not the temper of the writers leading them to any excesses of licentious speculation, which created the danger of bold thinking. The danger was in the times, which were unquiet and revolutionary. The struggle with the republican party was yet too recent; the wounds and cicatrices of the state too green; the existing order of things too immature and critical: the triumphant party still viewed *as a* party, and for that cause still feeling itself a party militant. Augustus had that chronic complaint of a "crick in the neck," of which later princes are said to have an acute attack every 30th of January. Hence a servile and timid tone in the literature. The fiercer republicans could not be safely mentioned. Even Cicero it was not decorous to praise; and Virgil, as perhaps you know, has, by insinuation, contrived to insult[15] his memory in the Æneid. But, as the irresponsible power of the emperors grew better secured, their jealousy of republican sentiment abated much of its keenness. And, considering that republican freedom of thought was the very matrix

of Roman sublimity, it ought not to surprise us, that as fast as the national mind was lightened from the pressure which weighed upon the natural style of its sentiment, the literature should recoil into a freer movement, with an elasticity proportioned to the intensity and brevity of its depression. Accordingly, in Seneca the philosopher, in Lucan, in Tacitus, even in Pliny the Younger, &c., but especially in the two first, I affirm that there is a loftiness of thought more eminently and characteristically Roman than in any preceding writers: and in *that* view to rank them as writers of a silver age, is worthy only of those who are servile to the commonplaces of unthinking criticism.

The style of thought in the silver writers, as a raw material, was generally more valuable than that of their predecessors, however much they fell below them in the art of working up that material. And I shall add further that, when I admit the vast defects of Lucan, for instance, as an artist, I would not be understood as involving in that concession the least toleration of the vulgar doctrine, that the diction of the silver writers is in any respect below the standard of pure latinity as existing in the writers of the Ciceronian age. A better structure of latinity, I will affirm boldly, does not exist than that of Petronius Arbiter: and, taken as a body, the writers of what is denominated the silver age are for diction no less Roman, and for thought much more intensely Roman, than any other equal number of writers from the preceding ages; and, with a very few exceptions, are the best fitted to take a permanent station in the regard of men at your age or mine, when the medi-

tative faculties, if they exist at all, are apt to expand, and to excite a craving for a greater weight of thought than is usually to be met with in the elder writers of the Roman literature. This explanation made, and having made that "amende honorable" to the Roman literature which my own gratitude demanded, I come to the remaining part of my business in this letter, namely, the grounds of choice amongst the languages of modern Europe. Reserving to my conclusion anything I have to say upon these *languages*, as depositories of *literature* properly so called, I shall first speak of them as depositories of *knowledge*. Among the four great races of men in Europe, namely, 1. The Celtic, occupying a few of the western extremities[15] of Europe; 2. The Teutonic, occupying the northern and midland parts; 3. The Latin (blended with Teutonic tribes), occupying the south[16] and, 4. The Sclavonic, occupying the east,[16] it is evident that of the first and the last it is unnecessary to say anything in this place, because their pretensions to literature do not extend to our present sense of the word. No Celt even, however extravagant, pretends to the possession of a body of Celtic philosophy and Celtic science of independent growth. The Celtic and Sclavonic languages therefore dismissed, our business at present is with those of the Latin and the Teutonic families. Now, three of the Latin family, namely, the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, are at once excluded for the purpose before us: because it is notorious that, from political and religious causes, these three nations have but feebly participated in the general scientific and philosophic labors

of the age. Italy, indeed, has cultivated natural philosophy with an exclusive zeal; a direction probably impressed upon the national mind by patriotic reverence for her great names in that department. But, merely for the sake of such knowledge (supposing no other motive), it would be idle to pay the price of learning a language, — all the current contributions to science being regularly gathered into the general garner of Europe by the scientific journals both at home and abroad. Of the Latin languages, therefore, which are wholly the languages of Catholic nations, but one — that is, the French — can present any sufficient attractions to a student in search of general knowledge. Of the Teutonic literatures, on the other hand, which are the adequate representatives of the Protestant intellectual interest in Europe (no Catholic nations speaking a Teutonic language except the southern states of Germany and part of the Netherlands), all give way at once to the paramount pretensions of the English and the German. I do not say this with the levity of ignorance, as if presuming, as a matter of course, that in a small territory, such as Denmark, *e. g.* the literature must, of necessity, bear a value proportioned to its political rank. On the contrary, I have some acquaintance with the Danish[19] literature; and though, in the proper sense of the word literature as a body of creative art, I cannot esteem it highly, yet, as a depository of knowledge in one particular direction, — namely, the direction of historical and antiquarian research, — it has, undoubtedly, high claims upon the student's attention. But this is a direction in which a long series of writers descending from a

remote antiquity is of more importance than a great contemporary body; whereas, for the cultivation of knowledge in a more comprehensive sense, and arrived at its present stage, large simultaneous efforts are of more importance than the longest successive efforts. Now, for such a purpose, it is self-evident that the means at the disposal of every state must be in due proportion to its statistical rank; for not only must the scientific institutions, the purchasers of books, &c., keep pace with the general progress of the country, but commerce alone, and the arts of life, which are so much benefited by science, naturally reäct upon science in a degree proportioned to the wealth of every state, in their demand for the aids of chemistry, mechanics, engineering, &c. &c.; a fact, with its inevitable results, to which I need scarcely call your attention. Moreover, waiving all mere presumptive arguments, the bare amount of books annually published in the several countries of Europe puts the matter out of all doubt that the great commerce of thought and knowledge in the civilized world is at this day conducted in three languages — the English, the German, and the French. You, therefore, having the good-fortune to be an Englishman, are to make your choice between the two ~~last~~ last; and, this being so, I conceive that there is no room for hesitation, — the "detur pulchriori" being, in this case (that is, remember, with an exclusive reference to *knowledge*), a direction easily followed.

Dr. Johnson was accustomed to say of the French literature, as the kindest thing he had to say about it, that he valued it chiefly for this reason: that it

had a book upon every subject. How far this might be a reasonable opinion fifty years ago, and understood, as Dr. Johnson must have meant it, of the French literature as compared with the English of the same period, I will not pretend to say. It has certainly ceased to be true even under these restrictions, and is in flagrant opposition to the truth if extended to the French in its relation to the German. Undoubtedly the French literature holds out to the student some peculiar advantages, as what literature does not? — some, even, which we should not have anticipated; for, though we justly value ourselves as a nation upon our classical education, yet no literature is poorer than the English in the learning of classical antiquities, — our Bentleys, even, and our Porsons, having thrown all their learning into the channel of philology; whilst a single volume of the Memoirs of the French Academy of Inscriptions contains more useful antiquarian research than a whole English library. In digests of history, again, the French language is richer than ours, and in their dictionaries of miscellaneous knowledge (*not* in their encyclopedias). But all these are advantages of the French only in relation to the English and not to the German literature, which, for vast compass, variety, and extent, far exceeds all others as a depository for the current accumulations of knowledge. The mere number of books published annually in Germany, compared with the annual product of France and England, is alone a satisfactory evidence of this assertion. With relation to France, it is a second argument in its favor that the intellectual activity of Germany is not intensely accumulated in one great

capital, as it is in Paris; but, whilst it is here and there converged intensely enough for all useful purposes (as at Berlin, Königsberg, Leipsic, Dresden, Vienna, Munich, &c.), it is also healthily diffused over the whole territory. There is not a sixth-rate town in Protestant Germany which does not annually contribute its quota of books: intellectual culture has manured the whole soil: not a district but it has penetrated,

——"like Spring,
Which leaves no corner of the land untouched."

A third advantage on the side of Germany (an advantage for this purpose) is its division into a great number of independent states. From this circumstance it derives the benefit of an internal rivalship amongst its several members, over and above that general external rivalship which it maintains with other nations. An advantage of the same kind we enjoy in England. The British nation is fortunately split into three great divisions, and thus a national feeling of emulation and contest is excited, —slight, indeed, or none at all, on the part of the English (not from any merit, but from mere decay of patriotic feeling), stronger on the part of the Irish, and sometimes illiberally and odiously strong on the part of the Scotch (especially as you descend, below the rank of gentlemen). But, disgusting as it sometimes is in its expression, this nationality is of great service to our efforts in all directions. A triple power is gained for internal excitement of the national energies; whilst, in regard to any external enemy, or any external rival, the three nations act with the unity of a single force. But the most con-

spicuous advantage of the German literature is its great originality and boldness of speculation, and the character of masculine austerity and precision impressed upon their scientific labors by the philosophy of Leibnitz and Wolff heretofore, and by the severer philosophy of modern days. Speaking of the German literature at all, it would be mere affectation to say nothing on a subject so far-famed and so much misrepresented as this. Yet, to summon myself to an effort of this kind at a moment of weariness and exhausted attention, would be the certain means of inflicting great weariness upon you. For the present, therefore, I take my leave.

LETTER V.

My dear Sir:

In my last letter, having noticed the English, the German, and the French, as the three languages in which the great commerce of thought and knowledge in the civilized world is at this day conducted, and having attributed three very considerable advantages to the German as compared with the French, I brought forward, in conclusion, as an advantage more conspicuous even than any I had before insisted on, the great originality and boldness of speculation which have distinguished the philosophic researches of Germany for the last one hundred and fifty years.[20] On this point, as it stood opposed to some prejudices and gross misstatements among ourselves, I naturally declined to speak at the close of a letter which had, perhaps, already exhausted your attention. But, as it would be mere affectation wholly to evade a question about which so much interest[21] has gathered, and an interest which, from its objects and grounds, must be so durable, I gave you reason to expect that I would say a few words on that which is at this time understood by the term *German Philosophy*, that is, the philosophy of Kant. This I shall now do. But, let me remind you for what purpose, that you may not lay to my charge, as

a fault, *that* limited notice of my subject which the nature and proportions of my plan prescribe. In a short letter it cannot be supposed possible, if it were otherwise right on this occasion, that I should undertake an analysis of a philosophy so comprehensive as to leave no track of legitimate interests untouched, and so profound as to presuppose many preparatory exercises of the understanding. What the course of my subject demands is, that I should liberate the name and reputation of the Kantean philosophy from any delusion which may collect about its purposes and pretensions, through the representations of those who have spoken of it amongst ourselves. The case is this: I have advised you to pay a special attention to the German literature, as a literature of knowledge, not of power; and, amongst other reasons for this advice, I have alleged the high character and pretensions of its philosophy. But these pretensions have been met by attacks, or by gross misrepresentations, from all writers, within my knowledge, who have at all noticed the philosophy in this country. So far as these have fallen in your way, they must naturally have indisposed you to my advice; and it becomes, therefore, my business to point out any facts which may tend to disarm the authority of these writers, just so far as to replace you in the situation of a neutral and unprejudiced student.

The persons who originally introduced the Kantean philosophy to the notice of the English public, or rather attempted to do so, were two Germans — Dr. Willich and (not long after) Dr. Nitsch. Dr. Willich, I think, has been gone to Hades for these last dozen years; certainly his works have: and Dr. Nitsch,

though not gone to Hades, is gone (I understand) to Germany, which answers my purpose as well; for it is not likely that a few words uttered in London will contrive to find out a man buried in the throng of thirty million Germans. *Quoad hoc*, therefore, Dr. Nitsch may be considered no less defunct than Dr. Willich; and I can run no risk of wounding anybody's feelings if I should pronounce both doctors very eminent blockheads. It is difficult to say which wrote the more absurd book. Willich's is a mere piece of book-making, and deserves no sort of attention. But Nitsch, who seems to have been a painstaking man, has produced a work which is thus far worthy of mention, that it reflects as in a mirror one feature common to most of the German commentaries upon Kant's works, and which it is right to expose. With very few exceptions, these works are constructed upon one simple principle: Finding it impossible to obtain any glimpse of Kant's meaning or drift, the writers naturally asked themselves what was to be done. Because a man does not understand one iota of his author, is he therefore not to comment upon him? That were hard indeed; and a sort of abstinence which it is more easy to recommend than to practise. Commentaries must be written; and, if not by those who understand the system (which would be the best plan), then (which is clearly the second best plan) by those who do *not* understand it. Dr. Nitsch belonged to this latter very respectable body, for whose great numerical superiority to their rivals I can take upon myself to vouch. Being of their body, the worthy doctor adopted their expedient, which is simply this: never

to deliver any doctrine except in the master's words; on all occasions to parrot the *ipsissima verba* of Kant; and not even to venture upon the experiment of a new illustration drawn from their own funds. Pretty nearly upon this principle was it that the wretched Brucker and others have constructed large histories of philosophy. Having no comprehension of the inner meaning and relations of any philosophic opinion, nor suspecting to what it tended, or in what necessities of the intellect it had arisen, how could the man do more than superstitiously adhere to that formula of words in which it had pleased the philosopher to clothe it? It was unreasonable to expect he should. To require of him that he should present it in any new aspect of his own devising would have been tempting him into dangerous and perplexing situations: it would have been, in fact, a downright aggression upon his personal safety, and calling upon him to become *felo de se*. Every turn of a sentence might risk his breaking down; and no man is bound to risk his neck, credit, or understanding, for the benefit of another man's neck, credit, or understanding. "It 's all very well," Dr. Nitsch and his brethren will say — "it 's all very well for you, gentlemen, that have no commenting to do, to understand your author; but, to expect us to understand him also, that have to write commentaries on him for two, four, and all the way up to twelve volumes, 8vo., just serves to show how far the unreasonableness of human nature can go." The doctor was determined on moral principles to make no compromise with such unreasonableness; and, in common with all his brethren, set his face against understanding each and

every chapter, paragraph, or sentence, of Kant, so long as they were expected to do duty as commentators. I treat the matter ludicrously; but, in substance, I assure you that I do no wrong to the learned[22] commentators; and, under such auspices, you will not suppose that Kant came before the English public with any advantage of patronage. Between two such supporters as a Nitsch on the right hand, and a Willich on the left, I know not *that* philosopher that would escape foundering. But, fortunately for Kant, the supporters themselves foundered; and no man that ever I met with had seen or heard of their books, or seen any man that *had* seen them. It did not appear that they were, or, logically speaking, could be forgotten; for no man had ever remembered them.

The two doctors having thus broken down, and set off severally to Hades and Germany, I recollect no authors of respectability who have since endeavored to attract the attention of the English public to the Kantean philosophy, except, 1. An anonymous writer in an early number of the *Edinburgh Review;* 2. Mr. Coleridge; 3. Mr. Dugald Stewart; 4. Madame de Staël, in a work published, I believe, originally in this country, and during her residence amongst us. I do not add Sir William Drummond to this list, because my recollection of anything he has written on the subject of Kant (in his Academical Questions) is very imperfect; nor Mr. W——, the reputed author of an article on Kant (the most elaborate, I am told, which at present exists in the English language) in the Encyclopedia Londinensis; for this essay, together with a few other notices of Kant in other encyclopedias,

or elsewhere, have not happened to fall in my way. The four writers above mentioned were certainly the only ones on this subject who commanded sufficient influence, either directly in their own persons, or (as in the first case) vicariously in the channel through which the author communicated with the public, considerably to affect the reputation of Kant in this country for better or worse. None of the four, except Mr. Coleridge, having, or professing to have, any direct acquaintance with the original works of Kant, but drawing their information from imbecile French books, &c., it would not be treating the other three with any injustice to dismiss their opinions without notice; for, even upon any one philosophical question, much more upon the fate of a great philosophical system supposed to be *sub judice*, it is as unworthy of a grave and thoughtful critic to rely upon the second-hand report of a flashy rhetorician, as it would be unbecoming and extra-judicial in a solemn trial to occupy the ear of the court with the gossip of a country town.

However, to omit no point of courtesy to any of these writers, I shall say a word or two upon each of them separately. The first and the third wrote in a spirit of hostility to Kant; the second and fourth, as friends. In that order I shall take them. The writer of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, I suppose, upon the internal evidence, to have been the late Dr. Thomas Brown, a pupil of Mr. Dugald Stewart's, and his successor in the Moral Philosophy chair at Edinburgh. This is a matter of no importance in itself; nor am I in the habit of troubling myself or others with literary gossip of that sort; but I men-

tion it as a conjecture of my own; because, if I happen to be right, it would be a very singular fact that the only two writers within my knowledge who have so far forgot the philosophic character as to attempt an examination of a vast and elaborate system of philosophy, not in the original, not in any authorized or accredited Latin version (of which there were two even at that time), not in any version at all, but in the tawdry rhetoric of a Parisian *philosophie à la mode*, a sort of *philosophie pour les dames*, — that these two writers, thus remarkably agreeing in their readiness to forget the philosophic character, should also happen to have stood nearly connected in literary life. In such coincidences we suspect something more than a blind accident; we suspect the natural tendency of their philosophy, and believe ourselves furnished with a measure of its power to liberate the mind from rashness, from caprice, and injustice, in such deliberate acts, which it either suggests or tolerates. If their own philosophic curiosity was satisfied with information so slender, mere justice required that they should not, on so slight and suspicious a warrant, have grounded anything in disparagement of the philosophy or its founder. The book reviewed by the Edinburgh reviewer, and relied on for his account of the Kantean philosophy, is the essay of Villars; a book so entirely childish, that perhaps no mortification more profound could have fallen upon the reviewer than the discovery of the extent to which he had been duped by his author. Of this book no more needs to be said than that the very terms do not occur in it which express the hinges of the system. Mr. Stewart has confided

chiefly in Dégérando; a much more sober-minded author, of more good sense, and a greater zeal for truth, but, unfortunately, with no more ability to penetrate below the surface of the Kantean system. M. Dégérando is represented as an unexceptionable evidence by Mr. Stewart, on the ground that he is admitted to be so by Kant's "countrymen." The "countrymen" of Kant, merely *as*[23] countrymen, can have no more title to an opinion upon this point than a Grantham man could have a right to dogmatize on Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy, on the ground that he was a fellow-townsman of Sir Isaac's. The air of Königsberg makes no man a philosopher. But, if Mr. Stewart means that the competency of M. Dégérando has been admitted by those countrymen of Kant's whose educations have fitted them to understand him, and whose writings make it evident that they *have* understood him (such, for instance, as Reinhold, Schulze, Tieftrunk, Beck, Fichte, and Schelling), then he has been misinformed. The mere existence of such works as the *Histoire Comparée* of M. Dégérando, which cannot be regarded in a higher light than that of verbal indices to the corpus philosophiæ, is probably unknown to them; certainly, no books of that popular class are ever noticed by any of them, nor could rank higher in their eyes than an elementary school algebra in the eyes of a mathematician. If any man acknowledges Dégérando's attempt at a popular abstract of Kant as a sound one, *ipso facto*, he degrades himself from the right to any opinion upon the matter. The elementary notions of Kant, even the main problem of his great work, are not once so much as alluded to by Dégé-

rando. And, by the way, if any man ever talks in your presence about Kant, and you suspect that he is talking without knowledge, and wish to put a stop to him, I will tell you how you shall effect that end. Say to him as follows: Sir, I am instructed by my counsel, learned in this matter, that the main problem of the philosophy you are talking of lies involved in the term *transcendental*, and that it may be thus expressed: *"An detur aliquid transcendentale in mente humanâ,"*—"Is there in the human mind anything which realizes the notion of *transcendental* (as that notion is regulated and used by Kant)?" Now, as this makes it necessary above all things to master that notion in the fullest sense, I will thank you to explain it to me. And, as I am further instructed that the answer to this question is affirmative, and is involved in the term *synthetic unity*, I will trouble you to make it clear to me wherein the difference lies between this and what is termed *analytic unity*. Thus speaking, you will in all probability gag him; which is, at any rate, one desirable thing gained when a man insists on disturbing a company by disputing and talking philosophy.

But, to return: as there must always exist a strong presumption against philosophy of Parisian manufacture (which is in that department the Birmingham ware of Europe); secondly, as M. Dégérando had expressly admitted (in fact, boasted) that he had a little trimmed and embellished the Kantean system, in order to fit it for the society of *"les gens comme il faut;"* and, finally, as there were Latin versions, &c., of Kant, it must reasonably occur to any reader to ask why Mr. Stewart should not have consulted

these. To this question Mr. Stewart answers, that he could not tolerate their "barbarous" style and nomenclature. I must confess that in such an answer I see nothing worthy of a philosopher; and should rather have looked for it from a literary *petit-maître* than from an emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy. Will a philosopher decline a useful experiment in physics because it will soil his kid gloves? Who thinks or cares about style in such studies that is sincerely and anxiously in quest of truth?[24] In fact, *style*, in any proper sense, is no more a possible thing in such investigations as the understanding is summoned to by Kant, than it is in Euclid's Elements. As to the nomenclature again, supposing that it *had* been barbarous, who objects to the nomenclature of modern chemistry, which is, *quoad materiam*, not only a barbarous, but a hybrid nomenclature? Wherever law and intellectual order prevail, they *debarbarize* (if I may be allowed such a coinage) what in its elements might be barbarous: the form ennobles the matter. But, how is the Kantean terminology barbarous, which is chiefly composed of Grecian or Latin terms? In constructing it, Kant proceeded in this way: where it was possible, he recalled obsolete and forgotten terms from the Platonic philosophy, and from the schoolmen, or restored words abused by popular use to their original philosophic meaning. In other cases, when there happen to exist double expressions for the same notion, he called in and reminted them, as it were. In doing this he was sometimes forestalled in part, and guided by the tendency of language itself. All languages, as it has been remarked, tend

to clear themselves of synonymes as intellectual culture advances, — the superfluous words being taken up and appropriated by new shades and combinations of thought evolved in the progress of society. And, long before this appropriation is fixed and petrified, as it were, into the acknowledged vocabulary of the language, an insensible *clinamen* (to borrow a Lucretian word) prepares the way for it. Thus, for instance, long before Mr. Wordsworth had unveiled the great philosophic distinction between the powers of *fancy* and *imagination*, the two words had begun to diverge from each other; the first being used to express a faculty somewhat capricious[25] and exempted from law, the latter to express a faculty more self-determined. When, therefore, it was at length perceived that under an apparent unity of meaning there lurked a real dualism, and for philosophic purposes it was necessary that this distinction should have its appropriate expression, this necessity was met half way by the *clinamen* which had already affected the popular usage of the words. So, again, in the words *Deist* and *Theist;* naturally, they should express the same notion: the one to a Latin, the other to a Grecian ear. But, of what use are such duplicates? It is well that the necessities of the understanding gradually reach all such cases by that insensible *clinamen* which fits them for a better purpose than that of extending the mere waste fertility of language, namely, by taking them up into the service of thought. In this instance *Deist* was used pretty generally throughout Europe to express the case of him who admits a God, but under the fewest predicates that will satisfy the conditions of

the understanding. A *Theist*, on the other hand, even in popular use, denoted him who admits a God with some further (transcendental) predicates; as, for example, under the relation of a moral governor to the world. In such cases as this, therefore, where Kant found himself already anticipated by the progress of language, he did no more than regulate and ordinate the evident *nisus* and tendency of the popular usage into a severe definition. Where, however, the notions were of too subtle a nature to be laid hold of by the popular understanding, and too little within the daily use of life to be ever affected by the ordinary causes which mould the course of a language, there he commenced and finished the process of separation himself.

And what were the uses of all this? Why, the uses were these: *first*, in relation to the whole system of the transcendental philosophy: the new notions which were thus fixed and recorded were necessary to the system; they were useful in proportion as *that* was useful, that is, in proportion as it was true. *Secondly*, they extended the domain of human thought, apart from the system and independently of it. A perpetual challenge or summons is held out to the mind in the Kantean terminology to clear up and regulate its own conceptions, which, without discipline, are apt from their own subtle affinities to blend and run into each other. The new distinctions are so many intellectual problems to be mastered. And, even without any view to a formal study of the transcendental philosophy, great enlargement would be given to the understanding by going through[26] a Kantean dictionary, well explained and well illus-

trated. This terminology, therefore, was useful, 1. As a means to an end (being part of the system); 2. As an end in itself. So much for the uses. As to the power of mind put forth in constructing it (between which and the uses lies the valuation of Kant's service; for, if no uses, then we do not thank him for any difficulty he may have overcome; if no difficulty overcome, then we do not ascribe as a merit to him any uses which may flow from it),— as to the power of mind put forth in constructing it, I do not think it likely that you will make the same mistake which I have heard from some unreflecting persons, and which, in fact, lurks at the bottom of much that has been written against Kant's obscurity, as though Kant had done no more than impose new names. Certainly, if that were all, the merit would not be very conspicuous. It would cost little effort of mind to say, Let this be A, and that be D: let this notion be called *transcendent*, and that be called *transcendental*. Such a statement, however, supposes the ideas to be already known and familiar, and simply to want names. In this lies the blunder. When Kant assigned the names, he created the ideas; that is, he drew them within the consciousness. In assigning to the complex notion X the name *transcendental*, Kant was not simply transferring a word which had previously been used by the schoolmen to a more useful office; he was bringing into the service of the intellect a new birth; that is, drawing into a synthesis, which had not existed before *as* a synthesis, parts or elements which exist and come forward hourly in every man's mind. I urge this upon your attention, because you will often

hear such challenges thrown out as this (or others involving the same error), "Now, if there be any sense in this Mr. Kant's writings, let us have it in good old mother English." That is, in other words, transfer into the unscientific language of life scientific notions and relations which it is not fitted to express. The challenger proceeds upon the common error of supposing all ideas fully developed to exist *in esse* in all understandings, ergo, in his own; and all that are in his own he thinks that we can express in English. Thus the challenger, on his notions, has you in a dilemma, at any rate; for, if you do not translate it, then it confirms his belief that the whole is jargon; if you *do* (as, doubtless, with the help of much periphrasis, you may translate it into English that will be intelligible to a man who already understands the philosophy), then where was the use of the new terminology? But the way to deal with this fellow is as follows: My good sir, I shall do what you ask; but, before I do it, I beg that you will oblige me by, 1. Translating this mathematics into the language of chemistry; 2. By translating this chemistry into the language of mathematics; 3. Both into the language of cookery; and, finally, solve me the Cambridge problem, "Given the captain's name, and the year of our Lord, to determine the longitude of the ship." This is the way to deal with such fellows.

The terminology of Kant, then, is not a rebaptism of ideas already existing in the universal consciousness; it is in part an enlargement of the understanding by new territory (of which I have spoken), and in part a better regulation of its old territory. This regulation is either negative, and consists in

limiting more accurately the boundary-line of conceptions that had hitherto been imperfectly defined, or it is positive, and consists in the substitutions of names which express the relations and dependencies of the object[27] (*termini organici*) for the conventional names which have arisen from accident, and do *not* express those relations (*termini bruti*). It is on this principle that the nomenclature of chemistry is constructed: substances that were before known by arbitrary and non-significant names are now known by systematic names; that is, such as express their relations to other parts of the system. In this way a terminology becomes, in a manner, organic; and, being itself a product of an advanced state of the science, is an important reägent for facilitating further advances.

These are the benefits of a sound terminology; to which let me add, that no improved terminology can ever be invented — nay, hardly any plausible one — which does not presuppose an improved theory. Now, surely benefits such as these ought to outweigh any offence to the ears or the taste, if there were any. But the elegance of coherency is the sole elegance which a terminology needs to possess, or indeed can possess. The understanding is, in this case, the arbiter; and where *that* approves, it must be a misplaced fastidiousness of feeling which does not submit itself to the presiding faculty. As an instance of a repulsive terminology, I would cite that of Aristotle, which has something harsh and technical in it that prevents it from ever blending with the current of ordinary language; even to this, however, so far as it answers its purposes, the mind soon

learns to reconcile itself. But here, as in other more important points, the terminology of Kant is advantageously distinguished from the Aristotelian, by adapting itself with great ductility to any variety of structure and arrangement incident to a philosophic diction.

I have spoken so much at length on the subject of Kant's terminology, because this is likely to be the first stumbling-block to the student of his philosophy; and because it has been in fact the main subject of attack amongst those who have noticed it in this country; if *that* can be called attack which proceeds in acknowledged ignorance of the original works.

A much more serious attack upon Kant has been the friendly notice of Madame de Staël. The sources from which she drew her opinions were understood to be the two Schlegels, and, probably, M. Dégérando. Like some countrymen of Kant's (*e. g.* Kiesewetter), she has contrived to translate his philosophy into a sense which leaves it tolerably easy to apprehend; but unfortunately at the expense of all definite purpose, applicability, or philosophic meaning. On the other hand, Mr. Coleridge, whose great philosophic powers and undoubted acquaintance with the works of Kant would have fitted him beyond any man to have explained them to the English student, has unfortunately too little talent for teaching or communicating any sort of knowledge, and apparently too little simplicity of mind or zealous desire to do so. Hence it has happened that, so far from assisting Kant's progress in this country, Mr. Coleridge must have retarded it by expounding the oracle in words of more Delphic obscurity than the German

could have presented to the immaturest . It is, moreover, characteristic of Mr. Coleridge's mind that it never gives back anything as it receives it. All things are modified and altered in passing through his thoughts; and from this cause, I believe, combined with his aversion to continuous labor, arises his indisposition to mathematics; for *that* he must be content to take as he finds it. Now, this indocility of mind greatly unfits a man to be the faithful expounder of a philosophic system; and it has, in fact, led Mr. Coleridge to make various misrepresentations of Kant; one only, as it might indispose you to pay any attention to Kant, I shall notice. In one of his works he has ascribed to Kant the foppery of an exoteric and an esoteric doctrine; and that upon grounds wholly untenable. The direct and simple-minded Kant, I am persuaded, would have been more shocked at this suspicion than any other with which he could have been loaded.

I throw the following remarks together as tending to correct some of the deepest errors with which men come to the examination of philosophic systems, whether as students or as critics.

1. A good terminology will be one of the first results from a good theory; and hence, though a coherent terminology is not a sufficient evidence in favor of a system, the absence of such a terminology is a sufficient evidence against it.

2. It is asked which is the true philosophy. But this is not the just way of putting the question. The purpose of philosophy is not so much to accumulate positive truths in the first place, as to rectify

the position of the human mind, and to correct its mode of seeing. The progress of the human species in this path is not direct, but oblique. One philosophy does not differ from another solely by the amount of truth and error which it brings forward; there is none which has ever had much interest for the human mind but will be found to contain some truth of importance, or some approximation to it. One philosophy has differed from another rather by the station it has taken, and the aspect under which it has contemplated its object.

3. It has been objected to Kant, by some critics in this country, that his doctrines are in some instances reproductions only of doctrines brought forward by other philosophers. The instances alleged have been very unfortunate; but, doubtless, whatsoever truth is contained (according to the last remark) in the erroneous systems, and sometimes in the very errors themselves of the human mind, will be gathered up in its progress by the true system. Where the erroneous path has wandered in all directions, has returned upon itself perpetually, and crossed the field of inquiry with its mazes in every direction, doubtless the path of truth will often intersect it, and perhaps for a short distance coincide with it; but that in this coincidence it receives no impulse or determination from that with which it coincides, will appear from the self-determining force which will soon carry it out of the same direction as inevitably as it entered it.

4. The test of a great philosophical system is often falsely conceived. Men fancy a certain number of great outstanding problems of the highest interest to

human nature, upon which every system is required to try its strength; and *that* will be the true one, they think, which solves them all; and *that* the best approximation to the true one which solves most. But this is a most erroneous way of judging. True philosophy will often have occasion to show that these supposed problems are no problems at all, but mere impositions of the mind upon itself, arising out of its unrectified position — errors grounded upon errors. A much better test of a sound philosophy than the number of the preëxisting problems which it solves will be the quality of those which it proposes. By raising the station of the spectator, it will bring a region of new inquiry within his view; and the very faculty of comprehending these questions will often depend on the station from which they are viewed. For, as the earlier and ruder problems that stimulate human curiosity often turn out baseless and unreal, so again the higher order of problems will be incomprehensible to the undisciplined understanding. This is a fact which should never be lost sight of by those who presume upon their natural and uncultivated powers of mind to judge of Kant, Plato, or any other great philosopher.

5. But the most general error which I have ever met with, as a ground for unreasonable expectations in reference not to Kant only, but to all origianl philosophers, is the persuasion which men have that their understandings contain already in full development all the notions which any philosophy can demand; and this not from any vanity, but from pure misconception. Hence they naturally think that all which the philosopher has to do is to point to the

elements of the knowledge as they exist ready prepared, and forthwith the total knowledge of the one is transferred to any other mind. Watch the efforts of any man to master a new doctrine in philosophy, and you will find that involuntarily he addresses himself to the mere dialectic labor of transposing, dissolving, and recombining, the notions which he already has. But it is not thus that any very important truth can be developed in the mind. New matter is wanted as well as new form. And the most important remark which I can suggest as a caution to those who approach a great system of philosophy as if it were a series of riddles and their answers, is this: No complex or very important truth was ever yet transferred in full development from one mind to another. Truth of that character is not a piece of furniture to be shifted; it is a seed which must be sown, and pass through the several stages of growth. No doctrine of importance can be transferred in a matured shape into any man's understanding from without: it must arise by an act of genesis within the understanding itself.

With this remark I conclude; and am,

Most truly, yours,

X. Y. Z.

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 12.

That this appears on the very face of his writings, may be inferred from a German work, published about two years ago, by a Hamburg barrister (I think) — Mr. Jacobs. The subject of the book is, the Modern Literature of England, with the lives, etc., of the most popular authors. It is made up in a great measure from English literary journals, but not always; and in the particular case of the author now alluded to, Mr. Jacobs imputes to him not merely too lively a sensitiveness to censure, but absolutely a "*wasserscheue*" (hydrophobia) with regard to reviewers and critics. How Mr. Jacobs came to use so strong an expression, or this particular expression, I cannot guess; unless it were that he had happened to see (which, however, does not appear) in a work of this eloquent Englishman the following picturesque sentence: "By an unconscionable extension of the old adage, '*Noscitur a socio*,' my friends are never under the waterfall of criticism, but I must be wet through with the spray."—*Spray*, indeed! I wish some of us knew no more of these angry cataracts than their spray.

Note 2. Page 23.

Not for the sake of any exception in its favor from the general censure here pronounced on this body of essays, but for its extraordinary tone of passion and frantic energy, and at times of noble sentiment eloquently expressed, I must notice, as by far the most memorable of these essays of the 17th century, that of Joachim

Forz Ringelberg, *On the Method of Study* (De Ratione Studii). It is one of those books which have been written most evidently not merely by a madman (as many thousands have), but by a madman under a high paroxysm of his malady; and, omitting a few instances of affectation and puerility, it is highly affecting. It appears that the author, though not thirty years of age at the date of his book, was afflicted with the gravel — according to his belief, incurably; and much of the book was actually written in darkness (on waxen tablets, or on wooden tablets, with a *stylus* formed of charred bones), during the sleepless nights of pain consequent upon his disease. "Ætas abiit," says he, "reditura nunquam — Ah! nunquam reditura! Tametsi annum nunc solùm trigesimum ago, spem tamen ademit calculi morbus." And again: "Sic interim meditantem calculi premunt, ut gravi ipsa dolore mœreat mens, et plerumque noctes abducat insomnes angor." Towards the end it is that he states the remarkable circumstances under which the book was composed. "Bonam partem libri hujus in tenebris scripsi, quando somnus me ob calculi dolorem reliquerat; idque quum sol adversa nobis figeret vestigia, nocte vagante in medio cœlo. Deerat lumen; verum tabulas habeo, quibus etiam in tenebris utor." It is singular that so interesting a book should nowhere have been noticed to my knowledge in English literature, except, indeed, in a slight and inaccurate way, by Dr. Vicesimus Knox, in his Winter Evening Lucubrations.

Note 3. Page 27.

Accordingly, our fashionable moral practitioner for this generation, Dr. Paley, who prescribes for the consciences of both universities, and, indeed, of most respectable householders, has introduced a good deal of casuistry into his work, though not under that name. In England there is an aversion to the mere name, founded partly on this, that casuistry has been most cultivated by Roman Catholic divines, and too much with a view to an indulgent and dispensing morality; and partly on the excessive subdivision and hair-splitting of cases; which tends to the infinite injury of morals, by perplexing and tampering with the conscience, and by presuming morality to be above the powers of any but the subtlest minds. All this, however, is but the abuse of casuistry; and

without casuistry of some sort or other, no practical decision could be made in the accidents of daily life. Of this, on a fitter occasion, I could give a cumulative proof. Meantime, let it suffice to observe that law, which is the most practical of all things, is a perpetual casuistry; in which an immemorial usage, a former decision of the court, or positive statute, furnishes the major proposition; and the judgment of the jury, enlightened by the knowledge of the bench, furnishes the minor or casuistical proposition.

Note 4. Page 31.

Especially one, whose title I forget, by Vater, the editor and completer of the *Mithridates*, after Adelung's death. By the way, for the sake of the merely English reader, it may be well to mention that the *Mithridates* is so called with an allusion to the great king of that name contemporary with Sylla, Lucullus, etc., of whom the tradition was that, in an immense and polyglot army, composed from a great variety of nations, he could talk to every soldier in his own language.

Note 5. Page 34.

See the advertisements of the humblest schools; in which, however low the price of tuition, etc., is fixed, French never fails to enter as a principal branch of the course of study. To which fact I may add, that even twelve or fifteen years ago I have seen French circulating libraries in London chiefly supported by people in a humble rank.

Note 6. Page 45.

The most disengenuous instances in Schlegel of familiar acquaintance claimed with subjects of which he is necessarily ignorant, are the numerous passages in which he speaks of philosophers, especially of Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Kant. In such cases his sentences are always most artificially and jesuitically constructed, to give him the air of being quite at his ease on the one hand, and yet, on the other, to avoid committing himself by too much descent into particulars. So dangerous, however, is it for the ablest man to attempt speaking of what he does not understand, that, as a

sailor will detect a landsman, however expert in the use of nautical diction, before he has uttered two sentences, so, with all his art and finesse, and speaking besides to questions of his own choosing, yet cannot Schlegel escape detection in any one instance when he has attempted to act the philosopher. Even where the thing said is not otherwise objectionable, it generally detects itself as the remark of a novice, by addressing itself to something extra-essential in the philosophy, and which a true judge would have passed over as impertinent to the real business of the system. Of the ludicrous blunders which inevitably arise in both Bouterwek and Schlegel, from hasty reading, or no reading at all, I noted some curious instances in my pocket-book; but, not having it with me, I shall mention two from memory. Bouterwek and Schlegel would both be highly offended, I suppose, if I were to doubt whether they had ever read the Paradise Lost. "O, calumny — vile calumny! We that have given such fine criticisms upon it, not to have read it!" Yes; but there is such a case *in rerum naturâ* as that of criticizing a work which the critic had not even seen. Now, that Boutereek had not read the Paradise Lost, I think probable from this: Bodmer, during part of the first half of the last century, as is known to the students of German literature, was at the head of a party who supported the English literature against the French party of the old dolt Gottsched. From some work of Bodmer's Bouterwek quotes with praise a passage which, from being in plain German prose, he supposes to be Bodmer's, but which, unfortunately, happens to be a passage in the Paradise Lost, and so memorable a passage that no one having once read it could have failed to recognize it. So much for Bouterwek: as to Schlegel, the presumption against him rests upon this: he is lecturing Milton in a high professor's style for his choice of a subject: "Milton," says he, "did not consider that the fall of man was but an inchoate action, but a part of a system, of which the restoration of man is another and equally essential part. The action of the Paradise Lost is, therefore, essentially imperfect." (Quoting from memory, and from a memory some years old, I do not pretend to give the words, but this is the sense.) Now, *pace tanti viri*, Milton *did* consider this, and has provided for it by a magnificent expedient, which a man who had read the Paradise Lost would have been likely to remember, namely, by the Vision combined

with the Narrative of the Archangel, in which his final restoration is made known to Adam; without which, indeed, to say nothing of Mr. Schlegel's objection, the poem could not have closed with that *repose* necessary as the final impression of any great work of art.

Note 7. Page 49.

For which distinction, as for most of the sound criticism on poetry, or any subject connected with it that I have ever met with, I must acknowledge my obligations to many years' conversation with Mr. Wordsworth. Upon this occasion it may be useful to notice that there is a rhetorical use of the word "power," very different from the analytic one here introduced, which, also, is due originally to Mr. Wordsworth, and will be found in no book before 1798; this is now become a regular slang term in London conversation. In reference to which, it is worth notice that a critic, speaking of the late Mr. Shelley, a year or two ago, in the most popular literary journal of the day, said, "It is alleged that there is power in Mr. Shelley's poetry; now, there can be no power shown in poetry, except by writing good poems" (or words to that effect). Waiving, however, the question of Mr. Shelley's merits, so far is this remark from being true, that the word was originally introduced expressly to provide for the case where, though the poem was *not* good from defect in the *composition*, or from other causes, the stamina and *matériel* of good poetry, as fine thinking and passionate conceptions, could not be denied to exist.

Note 8. Page 51.

A late writer has announced it as a matter of discovery, that the term "classics" is applicable also to the modern languages. But, surely, this was never doubted by any man who considered the meaning and origin of the term. It is drawn, as the reader must be reminded, from the political economy of Rome. Such a man was rated as to his income in the third class, such another in the fourth, and so on; but he who was in the highest was said emphatically to be of *the* class, "classicus," a class-man, without adding the number, as in that case superfluous. Hence, by an

obvious analogy, the best authors were rated as classici, or men of the highest class; just as in English we say, "men of rank," absolutely, for men who are in the highest ranks of the state. The particular error by which this mere formal term of relation was *materiated* (if I may so say) in one of its accidents (namely, the application to Greek and Roman writers), is one of the commonest and most natural.

Note 9. Page 53.

Nor do I much expect, *will* do more; which opinion I build on the particular formula chosen for expressing the opposition of the antique and the Christian literature, namely, the classical and the romantic. This seeming to me to imply a total misconception of the true principle on which the distinction rests, I naturally look for no further developments of the thesis from that quarter.

Note 10. Page 55.

"*Composition.*"—This word I use in a sense, not indeed peculiar to myself, but yet not very common, nor anywhere, that I know of, sufficiently developed. It is of the highest importance in criticism; and, therefore, I shall add a note upon the true construction of the idea, either at the end of this letter or the next, according to the space left.

Note 11. Page 57.

In addition to the arguments lately urged in the *Quarterly Review*, for bastardizing and degrading the early history of Rome, I may here mention two others, alleged many years ago in conversation by a friend of mine. 1. *The immoderate length of time assigned to the reigns of the kings.* For though it is possible that one king's reign may cover two entire generations (as that of George III.), or even two and a half (as that of Louis XIV.), yet it is in the highest degree improbable that a series of seven kings, immediately consecutive, should average, in the most favorable cases, more than twenty-four years for each: for the proof of which, see the Collective Chronology of Ancient and Modern Europe. 2. *The dramatic and artificial casting of the parts*

for these kings. Each steps forward as a scenical person, to play a distinct part or character. One makes Rome ; another makes laws ; another makes an army ; another, religious rites, etc. And last of all comes a gentleman who "enacts the brute part" of destroying, in effect, what his predecessors had constructed ; and thus furnishes a decorous catastrophe for the whole play, and a magnificent birth for the republican form of government.

Note 12. Page 57.

Submonente quodam ut in pristinos inimicos animadverteret, negavit se ita facturum ; adjectâ civili voce,— Minime licere Principi Romano, ut quæ privatus agitasset odia — ista Imperator exequi. *Spartian in Had.* —Vid. Histor. August.

Note 13. Page 58.

Neither let it be objected that it is irrational to oppose what there is no chance of opposing with success. When the Roman Senate kept their seats immovably upon the entrance of the Gauls reeking from the storm of Rome, they did it not as supposing that this spectacle of senatorial dignity could disarm the wrath of their savage enemy ; if they had, their act would have lost all its splendor. The language of their conduct was this : So far as the grandeur of the will is concerned, we have carried our resistance to the last extremity, and have expressed it in the way suitable to our rank. For all beyond we were not answerable ; and, having recorded our "protest" in such an emphatic language, death becomes no dishonor. The *stantem mori* express es the same principle, but in a symbolic act.

Note 14. Page 59.

So palpable is this truth, that the most unreflecting critics have hence been led to suspect the pretensions of the Atys to a Roman origin.

Note 15. Page 60.

Orabunt alii causas melius. Æn. VI. — An opinion upon the

Grecian superiority in this point, which is so doubtful even to us in our perfect impartiality at this day, as a general opinion without discrimination of persons, that we may be sure it could not spontaneously have occurred to a Roman in a burst of patriotic feeling, and must have been deliberately manufactured to meet the malignant wishes of Augustus. More especially because, in whatever relation of opposition or of indifference to the principles of a military government, to the Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos, Virgil might view the fine arts of painting, statuary, etc., he could not but have viewed the arts of forensic eloquence as standing in the closest alliance with that principle.

NOTE 16. Page 62.

Namely: 1, in the Cornish, Welsh, Manks, Highland Scotch, and Irish provinces of the British empire (in the first and last it is true that the barbarous Celtic blood has been too much improved by Teutonic admixture, to allow of our considering the existing races as purely Celtic; this, however, does not affect the classification of their genuine literary relics). 2, in Biscay; and 3, in Basse Bretagne (Armorica): to say nothing of a Celtic district said to exist in the Alps, etc.

NOTE 17. Page 62.

Namely: Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, England, and Scotch Lowlands.

NOTE 18. Page 62.

Namely: Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal.

NOTE 19. Page 63.

I take this opportunity of mentioning a curious fact which I ascertained about twelve years ago, when studying the Danish. The English and Scotch philologists have generally asserted that the Danish invasions in the ninth and tenth centuries, and their

settlements in various parts of the island (as Lincolnshire, Cumberland, etc.), had left little or no traces of themselves in the language. This opinion has been lately reässerted in Dr. Murray's work on the European languages. It is, however, inaccurate. For the remarkable dialect spoken amongst the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, together with the names of the mountains, tarns, etc., most of which resist all attempts to unlock their meaning from the Anglo-Saxon, or any other form of the Teutonic, are pure Danish — generally intelligible from the modern Danish of this day, but in all cases from the elder form of the Danish. Whenever my *Opera Omnia* are collected, I shall reprint a little memoir on this subject, which I inserted about four years ago in a provincial newspaper: or possibly before that event, for the amusement of the lake tourists, Mr. Wordsworth may do me the favor to accept it as an appendix to his work on the English lakes.

Note 20. Page 68.

Dating from the earliest works of Leibnitz, rather more.

Note 21. Page 68.

I have heard it alleged as a reason why no great interest in the German philosophy can exist or can be created amongst the English, that "there is no demand for books on that subject:" in which remark there is a singular confusion of thought. Was there any "demand" for the Newtonian philosophy, until the Newtonian philosophy appeared? How should there be any "demand" for books which do not exist? But, considering the lofty pretensions of the Kantean philosophy, it would argue a gross ignorance of human nature to suppose that no interest had already attended the statement of these pretensions whenever they have been made known; and, in fact, amongst thoughtful and intellectual men a very deep interest has long existed on the subject, as my own experience has been sufficient to convince me. Indeed, what evidence could be alleged more strong of apathy and decay in all intellectual activity, and in all honorable direction of intellectual interests, than the possibility that a systematic philosophy should

arise in a great nation near to our own, and should claim to have settled forever many of the weightiest questions which concern the dignity and future progress of the human species, and should yet attract no attention or interest? We may be assured that no nation not thoroughly emasculated in power of mind — that is, so long as any severe studies survive amongst her — can ever be so far degraded. But these judgments come of attending too much to the movements of what is called "the literary world:" literature very imperfectly represents the intellectual interests of any people: and literary people are, in a large proportion, as little intellectual people as any one meets with.

Note 22. Page 72.

Under this denomination I comprehend all the rabble of abbreviators, abstractors, dictionary-makers, etc. etc., attached to the establishment of the Kantean philosophy. One of the last, by the way, Schmidt, the author of a Kantean dictionary, may be cited as the *beau ideal* of Kantean commentators. He was altogether agreed with Dr. Nitsch upon the duty of not understanding one's author; and acted up to his principle through life — being, in fact, what the Cambridge men call a *Bergen-op-zoom*, that is, one that sturdily defies his author, stands a siege of twelve or twenty years upon his understanding, and holds out to the last, impregnable to all the assaults of reason or argument, and the heaviest batteries of common sense.

Note 23. Page 75.

The reader may suppose that this could not possibly have been the meaning of Mr. Stewart. But a very general mistake exists as to the terminology of Kant — as though a foreigner must find some difficulties in it which are removed to a native. "His own countrymen," says a respectable literary journal, when speaking of Kant (*Edinburgh Monthly Review* for August, 1820, p. 168) — "His own countrymen find it difficult to comprehend his meaning; and they dispute about it to this day." Why not? The terminology of Kant is partly Grecian, partly scholastic; and how should

either become intelligible to a German, *qua* German, merely because they are fitted with German terminations and inflexions?

Note 24. Page 77.

The diction of the particular book which had been recommended to Mr. Stewart's attention, namely, the *Expositio Systematica* of Phiseldek, a Danish professor, has all the merits which a philosophic diction can have, being remarkably perspicuous, precise, simple, and unaffected. It is too much of a mere metaphrase of Kant, and has too little variety of illustration; otherwise I do not know a better digest of the philosophy.

Note 25. Page 78.

Which distinction comes out still more strongly in the secondary derivative *fanciful*, and the primary derivative *fantastic:* I say primary derivative, in reference to the history of the word: — 1, φαντασία, whence *phantasy:* — 2, for metrical purposes, *phant'sy* (as it is usually spelt in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, and other scholar-like poems of that day): — 3, by dropping the *t* in pronunciation; phansy or fancy. Now, from No. 1 comes *fantastic;* from No. 3 comes *fanciful*.

Note 26. Page 79.

In some cases it is true that the construction of the ideas is posterior to the system, and presupposes a knowledge of it, rather than precedes it; but this is not generally true.

Note 27. Page 82.

In a conversation which I once had with the late Bishop of Llandaff, on the subject of Kant, he objected chiefly to the terminology, and assigned as one instance of what seemed to him needless innovations, the word *apperception*. "If this word means self-consciousness," said he, "I do not see why Mr. Kant might not have contented himself with what contented his father." But the truth is, that this word exactly illustrates the explanation made above; it expresses one fact in a system *sub ratione*, and with a retrospect

to another. This would have been the apology for the word: however, in this particular instance, I chose rather to apologize for Kant, by alleging that Wolff and Leibnitz had used the word; so that it was an established word before the birth of the transcendental philosophy, and it might, therefore, be doubted whether Mr. Kant, senior, *had* contented himself in this case with less than Mr. Kant, junior.

THEORY OF GREEK TRAGEDY.

THE Greek tragedy is a great problem. We cannot say that the Greek drama is such in any more comprehensive sense; for the comedy of Greece depends essentially upon the same principles as our own. Comedy, as the reflex of the current of social life, will shift in correspondence to the shifting movements of civilization. Inevitably as human intercourse in cities grows more refined, comedy will grow more subtle; it will build itself on distinctions of character less grossly defined, and on features of manners more delicate and impalpable. But the *fundus*, the ultimate resource, the well-head of the comic, must forever be sought in the same field, namely, the ludicrous of incident, or the ludicrous of situation, or the ludicrous which arises in a mixed way between the character and the situation. The age of Aristophanes, for example, answered, in some respects, to our own earliest dramatic era, namely, from 1588 to 1635,—an age not (as Dr. Johnson assumes it to have been, in his elaborate preface to Shakspeare) rude or gross; on the contrary, far more intense with intellectual instincts and agencies

than his own, which was an age of collapse. But in the England of Shakspeare, as in the Athens of Aristophanes, the surface of society in cities still rocked, or at least undulated, with the ground-swell surviving from periods of intestine tumult and insecurity. The times were still martial and restless; men still wore swords in pacific assemblies; the intellect of the age was a fermenting intellect; it was a revolutionary intellect. And comedy itself, colored by the moving pageantries of life, was more sinewy, more audacious in its movements; spoke with something more of an impassioned tone; and was hung with draperies more rich, more voluminous, more picturesque. On the other hand, the age of the Athenian Menander, or the English Congreve, though still an unsettled age, was far less insecure in its condition of police, and far less showy in its exterior aspect. In England it is true that a picturesque costume still prevailed; the whole people were still draped[1] professionally; each man's dress proclaimed his calling; and so far it might be said, "natio comœdia est." But the characteristic and dividing spirit had fled, whilst the forms survived; and those middle men had universally arisen whose equivocal relations to different employments broke down the strength of contrast between them. Comedy, therefore, was thrown more exclusively upon the interior man; upon the *nuances* of his nature, or upon the finer spirit of his manners. It was now the acknowledged duty of comedy to fathom the coynesses of human nature, and to arrest the fleeting phenomena of human demeanor.

But tragedy stood upon another footing. Whilst

the comic muse in every age acknowledges a relationship which is more than sisterly,— in fact, little short of absolute identity,— the tragic muse of Greece and England stand so far aloof as hardly to recognize each other under any common designation. Few people have ever studied the Grecian drama; and hence may be explained the possibility that so little should have been said by critics upon its characteristic differences, and nothing at all upon the philosophic ground of these differences. Hence may be explained the fact that, whilst Greek tragedy has always been a problem in criticism, it is still a problem of which no man has attempted the solution. This problem it is our intention briefly to investigate.

I. There are cases occasionally occurring in the English drama and the Spanish, where a play is exhibited within a play. To go no further, every person remembers the remarkable instance of this in Hamlet. Sometimes the same thing takes place in painting. We see a chamber, suppose, exhibited by the artist, on the walls of which (as a customary piece of furniture) hangs a picture. And as this picture again might represent a room furnished with pictures, in the mere logical possibility of the case we might imagine this descent into a life below a life going on *ad infinitum*. Practically, however, the process is soon stopped. A retrocession of this nature is difficult to manage. The original picture is a mimic,— an unreal life. But this unreal life is itself a real life with respect to the secondary picture; which again must be supposed realized with relation to the tertiary picture, if such a thing were attempted. Consequently, at every step of the *in-*

trovolution (to neologize a little in a case justifying a neologism), something must be done to differentiate the gradations, and to express the subordinations of life; because each term in the descending series, being first of all a mode of non-reality to the spectator, is next to assume the functions of a real life in its relations to the next lower or interior term of the series.

What the painter does in order to produce this peculiar modification of appearances, so that an object shall affect us first of all as an idealized or unreal thing, and next as itself a sort of relation to some secondary object still more intensely unreal, we shall not attempt to describe; for in some technical points we should, perhaps, fail to satisfy the reader; and without technical explanations we could not satisfy the question. But, as to the poet, all the depths of philosophy (at least, of any known and recognized philosophy) would less avail to explain, speculatively, the principles which, in such a case, should guide him, than Shakspeare has explained by his practice. The problem before him was one of his own suggesting; the difficulty was of his own making. It was, so to differentiate a drama that it might stand within a drama, precisely as a painter places a picture within a picture; and therefore that the secondary or inner drama should be non-realized upon a scale that would throw, by comparison, a reflex coloring of reality upon the principal drama. This was the problem,— this was the thing to be accomplished; and the secret, the law, of the process by which he accomplishes this is, to swell, tumefy, stiffen, not the diction only, but the tenor of

the thought,—in fact, to stilt it, and to give it a prominence and an ambition beyond the scale which he adopted for his ordinary life. It is, of course, therefore in rhyme,—an artifice which Shakspeare employs with great effect on other similar occasions (that is, occasions when he wished to solemnize or in any way differentiate the life); it is condensed and massed as respects the flowing of the thoughts; it is rough and horrent with figures in strong relief, like the embossed gold of an ancient vase; and the movement of the scene is contracted into short gyrations, so unlike the free sweep and expansion of his general developments.

Now, the Grecian tragedy stands in the very same circumstances, and rises from the same original basis. If, therefore, the reader can obtain a glimpse of the life within a life, which the painter sometimes exhibits to the eye, and which the Hamlet of Shakspeare exhibits to the mind, then he may apprehend the original phasis under which we contemplate the Greek tragedy.

II. But to press further into the centre of things, perhaps the very first element in the situation of the Grecian tragedy, which operated by degrees to evoke all the rest, was the original elevation of the scale by which all was to be measured, in consequence of two accidents: 1st, the sanctity of the ceremonies in which tragedy arose; 2d, the vast size of the ancient theatres.

The first point we need not dwell on; everybody is aware that tragedy in Greece grew by gradual expansions out of an idolatrous rite,—out of sacrificial pomp; though we do not find anybody who has

noticed the consequent overruling effect which this had upon the quality of that tragedy; how, in fact, from this early cradle of tragedy, arose a sanctity which compelled all things to modulate into the same religious key. But next, the theatres — why were they so vast in ancient cities, in Athens, in Syracuse, in Capua, in Rome? Purely from democratic influences. Every citizen was entitled to a place at the public scenical representations. In Athens, for example, the state paid for him. He was present, by possibility and by legal fiction, at every performance; therefore, room must be prepared for him. And, allowing for the privileged foreigners (the domiciled aliens called μετοικοι), we are not surprised to hear that the Athenian theatre was adapted to an audience of thirty thousand persons. It is not enough to say *naturally* — inevitably out of this prodigious compass, exactly ten times over the compass of the *large* Drury-Lane, burned down a generation ago, arose certain immediate results that moulded the Greek tragedy in all its functions, purposes, and phenomena. The person must be aggrandized, the countenance must be idealized. For upon any stage corresponding in its scale to the colossal dimensions of such a house, the unassisted human figure would have been lost; the unexaggerated human features would have been seen as in a remote perspective, and, besides, have had their expression lost; the unreverberated human voice would have been undistinguishable from the surrounding murmurs of the audience. Hence the cothurnus to raise the actor; hence the voluminous robes to hide the disproportion thus resulting to the figure; hence the mask larger

than life, painted to represent the noble Grecian contour of countenance; hence the mechanism by which it was made to swell the intonations of the voice like the brazen tubes of an organ.

Here, then, you have a tragedy, by its very origin, in mere virtue of the accidents out of which it arose, standing upon the inspiration of religious feeling; pointing, like the spires of our English parish churches, up to heaven by mere necessity of its earliest purpose, from which it could not alter or swerve *per saltum*; so that an influence once there was always there. Even from that cause, therefore, you have a tragedy ultra-human and Titanic. But next, from political causes falling in with that early religious cause, you have a tragedy forced into a more absolute and unalterable departure from a human standard. That figure so noble, that voice so profound, and, by the very construction of the theatres as well as of the masks, receiving such solemn reverberations, proclaim a being elevated above the ordinary human scale. And then comes the countenance always adjusted to the same unvarying tone of sentiment, namely, the presiding sentiment of the situation, which of itself would go far to recover the key-note of Greek tragedy. These things being given, we begin to perceive a life removed by a great gulf from the ordinary human life even of kings and heroes; we descry a life within a life.

III. Here, therefore, is the first great landing-place, the first station, from which we can contemplate the Greek tragedy with advantage. It is, by comparison with the life of Shakspeare, what the inner life of the mimetic play in Hamlet is to the outer

life of the Hamlet itself. It is a life below a life. That is, it is a life treated upon a scale so sensibly different from the proper life of the spectator, as to impress him profoundly with the feeling of its idealization. Shakspeare's tragic life is our own life exalted and selected; the Greek tragic life presupposed another life,— the spectator's,— thrown into relief before it. The tragedy was projected upon the eye from a vast profundity in the rear; and between this life and the spectator, however near its phantasmagoria might advance to him, was still an immeasurable gulf of shadows.

Hence, coming nearer still to the determinate nature and circumscription of the Greek tragedy, it was *not* in any sense a development — 1st, of human character; or, 2d, of human passion. Either of these objects attributed to tragedy at once inoculates it with a life essentially on the common human standard. But that neither was so much as dreamed of in the Grecian tragedy is evident from the mere mechanism and ordinary conduct of those dramas which survive; those especially which seem entitled to be viewed as fair models of the common standard. About a thousand lines, of which one fifth must be deducted for the business of the chorus, may be taken as the average extent of a Greek tragic drama. Five acts, of one hundred and sixty lines each, allow no sweep at all for the systole and diastole, the contraction and expansion, the knot and the *dénouement*, of a tragic interest, according to our modern meaning. The ebb and flow, the inspiration and expiration, cannot find room to play in such a narrow scene. Were the interest made to turn at all upon

the evolution of character, or of passion modified by character, and both growing upon the reader through various aspects of dialogue, of soliloquy, and of multiplied action, it would seem a storm in a wash-hand basin. A passion which advanced and precipitated itself through such rapid harlequin changes would at best impress us with the feeling proper to a hasty melodrame, or perhaps serious pantomime. It would read like the imperfect outline of a play; or, still worse, would seem framed to move through such changes as might raise an excuse for the dancing and the lyric music. But the very external phenomena, the apparatus and scenic decorations, of the Greek tragedy, all point to other functions. Shakspeare — that is, English tragedy — postulates the intense life of flesh and blood, of animal sensibility, of man and woman, breathing, waking, stirring, palpitating with the pulses of hope and fear. In Greek tragedy, the very masks show the utter impossibility of these tempests or conflicts. Struggle there is none, internal or external; not like Hamlet's with his own constitutional inertia, and his gloomy irresolution of conscience; not like Macbeth's with his better feeling as a man, with his generosity as a host. Medea, the most tragic figure in the Greek scene, passes through no flux and reflux of passion, through no convulsions of jealousy on the one hand, or maternal love on the other. She is tossed to and fro by no hurricanes of wrath, wrenched by no pangs of anticipation. All that is supposed to have passed out of the spectator's presence. The dire conflict no more exhibits itself scenically, and "*coram populo*," than the murder of her two innocent children. Were

it possible that it should, how could the *mask* be justified? The apparatus of the stage would lose all decorum; and Grecian taste, or sense of the appropriate, which much outran the strength of Grecian creative power, would have been exposed to perpetual shocks.

IV. The truth is now becoming palpable: certain great *situations* — not passion in states of growth, of movement, of self-conflict — but fixed, unmoving *situations* were selected; these held on through the entire course of one or more acts. A lyric movement of the chorus, which closed the act, and gave notice that it was closed, sometimes changed this situation; but throughout the act it continued unchanged, like a statuesque attitude. The story of the tragedy was pretty nearly involved and told by implication in the *tableaux vivans* which presided through the several acts. The very slight dialogue which goes on seems meant rather as an additional exposition of the interest — a commentary on the attitude originally assumed — than as any exhibition of passions growing and kindling under the eye of the spectator. The mask, with its monotonous expression, is not out of harmony with the scene; for the passion is essentially fixed throughout, not mantling and undulating with the breath of change, but frozen into marble life.

And all this is both explicable in itself, and peremptorily determined, by the sort of idealized life — life in a state of remotion, unrealized, and translated into a neutral world of high cloudy antiquity — which the tragedy of Athens demanded for its atmosphere.

Had the Greeks, in fact, framed to themselves the

idea of a tumultuous passion, passion expressing itself by the agitations of fluctuating will, as any fit or even possible subject for scenic treatment, in that case they must have resorted to real life; the more real the better. Or, again, had real life offered to their conceptions a just field for scenic exhibition, in that case they must have been thrown upon conflicts of tempestuous passion; the more tempestuous the better. But being, by the early religious character of tragedy, and by the colossal proportions of their theatres, imperiously driven to a life more awful and still,—upon life as it existed in elder days, amongst men so far removed that they had become invested with a patriarchal, or even antediluvian mistiness of antiquity, and often into the rank of demi-gods,—they felt it possible to present this mode of being in states of *suffering*, for suffering is enduring and indefinite; but never in states of *conflict*, for conflict is by its nature fugitive and evanescent. The tragedy of Greece is always held up as a thing long past; the tragedy of England is a thing now passing. We are invited by Sophocles or Euripides, as by some great necromancer, to see long-buried forms standing in solid groups upon the stage — phantoms from Thebes or from Cyclopian cities. But Shakspeare is a Cornelius Agrippa, who shows us, in his magic glass, creatures yet breathing, and actually mixing in the great game of life upon some distant field, inaccessible to us without a magician's aid.

The Greek drama, therefore, by its very necessities proposing to itself only a few grand attitudes or situations, and brief dialogues as the means of illuminating those situations, with scarcely anything of

action "actually occurring on the stage," from these purposes derives its other peculiarities: in the elementary necessities lay the *fundus* of the rest.

V. The notion, for example, that murder, or violent death, was banished from the Greek stage, on the Parisian conceit of the shock which such bloody incidents would give to the taste, is perfectly erroneous. Not because it was sanguinary, but because it was action, had the Greeks an objection to such violences. No action of *any kind* proceeds legitimately on that stage. The persons of the drama are always in a reposing state "so long as they are before the audience." And the very meaning of an *act* is, that in the intervals, the suspension of the acts, any possible time may elapse, and any possible action may go on.

VI. Hence, also, a most erroneous theory has arisen about Fate as brooding over the Greek tragic scene. This was a favorite notion of the two Schlegels. But it is evident that many Greek tragedies, both amongst those which survive and amongst those the title and subjects of which are recorded, did not and could not present any opening at all for this dark agency. Consequently it was not essential. And, even where it did intervene, the Schlegels seem to have misunderstood its purpose. A prophetic coloring, a coloring of ancient destiny, connected with a character or an event, has the effect of exalting and ennobling. But whatever tends towards this result inevitably translates the persons and their situation from that condition of ordinary breathing life which it was the constant effort of the Greek tragedy to escape; and therefore it was that the

Greek poet preferred the gloomy idea of Fate: not because it was essential, but because it was elevating. It is for this reason, and apparently for this reason only, that Cassandra is connected by Æschylus with Agamemnon. The Sphinx, indeed, was connected with the horrid tale of Œdipus in *every* version of the tale; but Cassandra was brought upon the stage out of no *certain* historic tradition, or proper relation to Agamemnon, but to confer the solemn and mysterious hoar of a dark prophetic woe upon the dreadful catastrophe. Fate was therefore used, not for its own direct moral value as a force upon the will, but for its derivative power of ennobling and darkening.

VII. Hence, too, that habit amongst the tragic poets of travelling back to regions of forgotten fable, and dark legendary mythus. Antiquity availed powerfully for their purposes, because of necessity it abstracted all petty details of individuality and local notoriety — all that would have composed a *character*. It acted as twilight acts (which removes day's "mutable distinctions"), and reduced the historic person to that sublime state of monotonous gloom which suited the views of a poet who wanted only the *situation*, but would have repelled a poet who sought also for the complex features of a character. It is true that such remote and fabulous periods are visited at times, though not haunted, by the modern dramatist. Events are sought, even upon the French stage, from Gothic or from Moorish times. But in that case the poet endeavors to improve and strengthen any traits of character that tradition may have preserved, or by a direct effort of power to

create them altogether where history presents a blank neutrality; whereas the Greek poet used simply that faint outline of character, in its gross distinctions of good and bad, which the situation itself implied. For example, the Creon of Thebes is pretty uniformly exhibited as tyrannical and cruel. But that was the mere result of his position as a rival originally for the throne, and still more as the executive minister of the popular vengeance against Polynices for having brought a tide of war against his mother land; in that representative character, Creon is compelled to acts of cruelty against Antigone in her sublime exercise of natural piety — both sisterly and filial; and this cruelty to her, and to the miserable wreck, her father, making the very wrath of Heaven an argument for further persecution, terminates in leaving him an object of hatred to the spectator. But, after all, his conduct seems to have been purely official and ministerial. Nor, if the reader think otherwise, will he find any further emanation from Creon's individual will or heart than the mere blank expression of tyranny in a public cause; nothing, in short, of that complexity and interweaving of qualities, that interaction of moral and intellectual powers, which we moderns understand by a character. In short, all the rude outlines of character on the Greek stage were, in the first place, mere inheritances from tradition, and generally mere determinations from the situation; and in no instance did the qualities of a man's will, heart, or constitutional temperament, manifest themselves by and through a collision or strife amongst each other; which is our test of a dramatic character. And therefore it was,

that elder or even fabulous ages were used as the true natural field of the tragic poet; partly because antiquity ennobled; partly also because, by abstracting the individualities of a character, it left the historic figure in that neutral state which was most entirely passive to the moulding and determining power of the situation.

Two objections we foresee — 1. That even Æschylus, the sublimest of the Greek tragedians, did *not* always go back to a high antiquity. He himself had fought in the Persian war; and yet he brings both Xerxes and his father Darius (by means of his apparition) upon the stage; though the very Marathon of the father was but ten years earlier than the Thermopylæ and Salamis of the son. But in this instance the scene is not properly Grecian; it is referred by the mind to Susa, the capital of Persia, far eastward even of Babylon, and four months' march from Hellas. Remoteness of space in that case countervailed the proximity in point of time; though it may be doubted whether, without the benefit of the supernatural, it would, even in that case, have satisfied the Grecian taste. And it certainly would not, had the whole reference of the piece not been so intensely Athenian. For, when we talk of Grecian tragedy, we must remember that, after all, the Pagan tragedy was in any proper sense exclusively Athenian; and the tendency of the Grecian taste, in its general Grecian character, was in various instances modified or absolutely controlled by that special feature of its existence.

2. It will be urged, as indicating this craving after antiquity to be no peculiar or distinguishing feature

of the Greek stage, that we moderns also turn away sometimes with dislike from a modern subject. Thus, if it had no other fault, the Charles I. of Banks is coldly received by English readers, doubtless; but not because it is too modern. The objection to it is, that a parliamentary war is too intensely political; and political, moreover, in a way which doubly defeated its otherwise tragic power; first, because questions too *notorious* and too domineering of law and civil polity were then at issue; the very same which came to a final hearing and settlement at 1688–9. Our very form of government, at this day, is the result of the struggle then going on,—a fact which eclipses and dwarfs any separate or private interest of an individual prince, though otherwise, and by his personal character, in the highest degree, an object of tragic pity and reverence. Secondly, because the political interest afloat at that era (1649) was too complex and intricate; it wanted the simplicity of a poetic interest. That is the objection to Charles I. as a tragedy; not because modern, but because too domineeringly political; and because the political features of the case were too many and too intricate.

VIII. Thus far, therefore, we now comprehend the purposes and true *locus* to the human imagination of the Grecian tragedy — that it was a most imposing scenic exhibition of a few grand situations; grand from their very simplicity, and from the consequences which awaited their *dénouement;* and seeking support to this grandeur from constantly fixing its eye upon elder ages lost in shades of antiquity; or, if departing with that ideal now and then, doing so with

a view to patriotic objects, and seeking an occasional dispensation from the rigor of art in the popular indulgence to whatever touched the glory of Athens. Let the reader take, along with them, two other circumstances, and he will then complete the idea of this stately drama, — first, the character of the *Dialogue*; secondly, the functions of the *Chorus*.

IX. From one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty lines of hexameter iambic verse compose the dialogue of each act.[2] This space is sufficient for the purpose of unfolding the situation to the spectator; but, as a means of unfolding a character, would have been by much too limited. For such a purpose, again, as this last, numerous scenes, dialogues, or soliloquies, must have been requisite; whereas, generally, upon the Greek stage, a single scene, one dialogue between two interlocutors, occupies the entire act. The object of this dialogue was, of course, to bring forward the prominent points of the situation, and to improve the interest arising out of,— 1, its grandeur; 2, its statuesque arrangement to the eye; or, 3, the burden of tragic consequences which it announced. With such purposes, so distinct from any which are pursued upon the modern stage, arose a corresponding distinction of the dialogue. Had the dialogue ministered to any purpose so *progressive* and so active as that of developing a character, with new incidents and changes of the speakers coming forward at every moment, as occasions for evoking the peculiarities of that character,— in such a case the more it had resembled the movement, the fluctuations, the hurry of actual life and of real colloquial intercourse, the more it would have aided the views

of the poet. But the purpose of the Greek dialogue was not progressive; essentially it was retrospective. For example, the *Heracleidæ* opens with as fine and impressive a group as ever sculptor chiselled,— a group of young children, princely daughters of a great hero, whose acts resound through all mythology, namely, of Hercules, of a Grecian cleanser and deliverer from monsters, once irresistible to quell the oppressor, but now dead, and himself the subject of outrage in the persons of his children. These youthful ladies, helpless from their sex, with their grandmother Alcmene, now aged and infirm, have arranged themselves as a marble group on the steps ascending to the altars of a local deity. They have but one guide, one champion,— a brother in arms of the deceased Hercules, and his reverential friend; but this brave man also suffering, through years and martial toils, under the penalties of decaying strength. Such is the situation, such the inauguration, of this solemn tragedy. The dialogue which follows between Iolaus, the faithful guardian of the ladies, and the local ruler of the land, takes up this inaugural picture,— so pompous from blazing altars and cloudy incense,— so ceremonial from the known religious meaning of the attitudes,— so beautiful from the loveliness of the youthful suppliants rising tier above tier according to their ages, and the graduation of the altar steps,— so moving in its picture of human calamity by the contrasting figure of the two gray-haired supporters,— so complete and orbicular in its delineation of human frailty by the surmounting circumstances of its crest, the altar, the priestess, the temple, the serene Grecian sky; this impressive picture, having

of itself appealed to every one of thirty thousand hearts, having already challenged universal attention, is now explained and unfolded through the entire first act. Iolaus, the noble old warrior, who had clung the closer to the fluttering dovecot of his buried friend from the unmerited persecution which had assaulted them, comments to the stranger prince upon the spectacle before him,—a spectacle significant to Grecian eyes, intelligible at once to everybody, but still rare, and witnessed in practice by nobody. The prince, Demophoon, is a ruler of Athens; the scene is placed in the Attic territory, but not in Athens; about fifteen miles, in fact, from that city, and not far from the dread field of Marathon. To the prince Iolaus explains the lost condition of his young flock. The ruler of Argos had driven them out of every asylum in the Peloponnesus. From city to city he had followed them at the heels, with his cruel heralds of persecution. They were a party of unhappy fugitives (most of them proclaiming their innocence by their very age and helplessness), that had run the circle of Greek hospitality; everywhere had been hunted out like wild beasts, or those common nuisances from which their illustrious father had liberated the earth; that the long circuit of their unhappy wanderings had brought them at the last to Athens, in which they had a final confidence, as knowing well, not only the justice of that state, but that she only would not be moved from her purposes by fear of the aggressor. No finer opening can be imagined. The statuesque beauty of the group, and the unparalleled persecution which the first act exposes (a sort of misery and an absolute hostility of

the human race to which our experience suggests no corresponding case, except that of a leper in the middle ages, or the case of a man under a papal interdict), fix the attention of the spectators beyond any other situation in Grecian tragedy. And the compliment to Athens, not verbal, but involved in the very situation, gave a depth of interest to this drama, for the very tutelary region of the drama, which ought to stamp it with a sort of prerogative as in some respects the ideal tragedy or model of the Greek theatre.

Now, this one dialogue, as filling one act of a particular drama, is quite sufficient to explain the view we take of the Greek tragic dialogue. *It is altogether retrospective.* It takes for its theme the visible group arranged on the stage before the spectators from the first. Looking back to this, the two interlocutors (supposed to come forward upon the stage) contrive between them, one by pertinent questions, the other by judicious management of his replies, to bring out those circumstances in the past fortunes and immediate circumstances of this interesting family, which may put the audience in possession of all which it is important for them to know. The reader sees the dark legendary character which invests the whole tale; and in the following acts this darkness is made more emphatic from the fact that incidents are used of which contradictory versions existed, some poets adopting one version, some another, so cloudy and uncertain were the facts. All this apocryphal gloom aids that sanctity and awe which belong to another and a higher mode of life; to that slumbering life of sculpture, as opposed to painting, which we have

called a life within a life. Grecian taste would inevitably require that the dialogue should be adjusted to this starting-point and standard. Accordingly, in the first place, the dialogue is always (and in a degree quite unperceived by the translators up to this time) severe, massy, simple, yet solemnized intentionally by the use of a select vocabulary, corresponding (in point of archaism and remoteness from ordinary use) to our scriptural vocabulary. Secondly, the metre is of a kind never yet examined with suitable care. There were two objects aimed at in the Greek iambic of the tragic drama; and in some measure these objects were in collision with each other, unless most artfully managed. One was, to exhibit a purified imitation of real human conversation. The other was, to impress upon this colloquial form, thus far by its very nature recalling ordinary human life, a character of solemnity and religious conversation. Partly this was effected by acts of omission and commission; by banishing certain words or forms of words; by recalling others of high antiquity: particular tenses, for instance, were never used by the tragic poets; not even by Euripides (the most Wordsworthian of the Athenian poets in the circumstance of having a peculiar theory of poetic diction, which lowered its tone of separation, and took it down from the cothurnus); other verbal forms, again, were used nowhere but upon the stage. Partly, therefore, this consecration of the tragic style was effected by the antique cast, and the exclusive cast of its phraseology. But, partly also, it was effected by the metre. From whatever cause it may arise,—chiefly, perhaps, from differences in the genius of the

two languages,— certain it is, that the Latin iambics of Seneca, &c. (in the tragedies ascribed to him), cannot be so read by an English mouth as to produce anything like the sonorous rhythmus and the grand intonation of the Greek iambics. This is a curious fact, and as yet, we believe, unnoticed. But over and above this original adaptation of the Greek language to the iambic metre, we have no doubt whatever that the recitation of verse on the stage was of an artificial and semi-musical character. It was undoubtedly much more *sustained*, and intonated with a slow and measured stateliness,[3] which, whilst harmonizing it with the other circumstances of solemnity in Greek tragedy, would bring it nearer to music. Beyond a doubt, it had the effect (and might have the effect even now, managed by a good reader) of the *recitative* in the Italian opera; as, indeed, in other points, the Italian opera is a much nearer representative of the Greek tragedy, than the direct modern tragedy, professing that title.

X. As to the Chorus, nothing needs to be said upon this element of the Athenian tragedy. Everybody knows how solemn, and therefore how solemnizing, must have been the richest and most lyrical music, the most passionate of the ancient poetry, the most dithyrambic of tragic and religious raptures, supported to the eye by the most hieroglyphic and therefore mysterious of dances. For the dances of the chorus, the strophe and the antistrophe, were symbolic, and therefore full of mysterious meanings; and not the less impressive, because these meanings and these symbols had lost their significancy to the mob; since the very cause of that loss lay in the

antiquity of their origin. One great error which remains to be removed is the notion that the chorus either did support, or was meant to support, the office of a moral teacher. The chorus simply stood on the level of a sympathizing spectator, detached from the business and interests of the action; and its office was to guide or to interpret the sympathies of the audience. Here was a great error of Milton's; but it is not an error of this place or subject. At present it is sufficient to say, that the mysterious solemnity conferred by the chorus presupposes and is in perfect harmony with our theory of a life within a life,— a life sequestrated into some far-off slumbering state, having the severe tranquillity of Hades,— a life symbolized by the marble life of sculpture; but utterly out of all symmetry and proportion to the realities of that human life which we moderns take up as the basis of our tragic drama.

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 102.

"*The whole people were still draped professionally.*"— For example, physicians never appeared without the insignia of their calling; clergymen would have incurred the worst suspicions had they gone into the streets without a gown and bands. Ladies, again, universally wore masks, as the sole substitute known to our ancestors for the modern parasol; a fact, perhaps, now first noticed.

Note 2. Page 117.

The five acts which old tradition prescribed as binding upon the Greek tragic drama cannot always be marked off by the interruptions of the chorus. In the *Heracleidæ* of Euripides they can. But it is evident that these acts existed for the sake of the chorus, by way of allowing sufficient openings (both as to number and length) for the choral dances; and the necessity must have grown out of the time allowed for a dramatic representation, and originally, therefore, out of the mere accidental convenience prescribed by the social usages of Athens. The rule, therefore, was at any rate an arbitrary rule. Purely conventional it would have been, and local, had it even grown out of any Attic superstition (as we have sometimes thought it might) as to the number of the choral dances. But most probably it rested upon a sort of convention, which of all is the least entitled to respect or translation to foreign

soils, namely, the mere local arrangement of meals and sleeping hours in Athens; which, having prescribed a limited space to the whole performance, afterwards left this space to be distributed between the recitation and the more popular parts, addressed to eye and ear as the mob of Athens should insist. Horace, in saying roundly, as a sort of *brutum fulmen*, "*Non quinto brevior, non sit productior, actu fabulæ*," delivers this capricious rule in the capricious manner which becomes it. The *stet pro ratione voluntas* comes forward equally in the substance of the precept and the style of its delivery.

Note 8. Page 122.

Any man, who has at all studied the Greek iambics, must well remember those forms of the metre which are used in a cadence at the close of a resounding passage, meant to express a full pause, and the prodigious difference from such as were meant for weaker lines, or less impressive metrical effects. These cadences, with their full body of rhythmus, are never reproduced in the Latin imitations of the iambic hexameter: nor does it seem within the compass of Latin metre to reach such effects: though otherwise, and especially by the dactylic hexameter, the Latin language is more powerful than the Greek.

CONVERSATION.

'Amongst the arts connected with the *elegances* of social life, in a degree which nobody denies, is the art of Conversation; but in a degree which almost everybody denies, if one may judge by their neglect of its simplest rules, this same art is not less connected with the *uses* of social life. Neither the luxury of conversation, nor the possible benefit of conversation, is to be under that rude administration of it which generally prevails. Without an art, without some simple system of rules, gathered from experience of such contingencies as are most likely to mislead the practice, when left to its own guidance, no act of man nor effort accomplishes its purposes in perfection. The sagacious Greek would not so much as drink a glass of wine amongst a few friends without a systematic art to guide him, and a regular form of polity to control him, which art and which polity (begging Plato's pardon) were better than any of more ambitious aim in his Republic. Every *symposium* had its set of rules, and vigorous they were; had its own *symposiarch* to govern it, and a tyrant he was. Elected democratically, he became, when once installed, an autocrat not less despotic than the King

of Persia. Purposes still more slight and fugitive have been organized into arts. Taking soup gracefully, under the difficulties opposed to it by a dinner dress at that time fashionable, was reared into an art about forty-five years ago by a Frenchman, who lectured upon it to ladies in London; and the most brilliant duchess of that day was amongst his best pupils. Spitting — if the reader will pardon the mention of so gross a fact — was shown to be a very difficult art, and publicly prelected upon about the same time, in the same great capital. The professors in this faculty were the hackney-coachmen; the pupils were gentlemen who paid a guinea each for three lessons; the chief problem in this system of hydraulics being to throw the salivating column in a parabolic curve from the centre of Parliament-street, when driving four-in-hand, to the foot pavements, right and left, so as to alarm the consciences of guilty peripatetics on either side. The ultimate problem, which closed the *curriculum* of study, was held to lie in spitting round a corner; when *that* was mastered, the pupil was entitled to his doctor's degree. Endless are the purposes of man, merely festal or merely comic, and aiming but at the momentary life of a cloud, which have earned for themselves the distinction and apparatus of a separate art. Yet for conversation, the great paramount purpose of social meetings, no art exists or has been attempted.

That seems strange, but is not really so. A limited process submits readily to the limits of a technical system; but a process so unlimited as the interchange of thought, seems to reject them. And even, if an art of conversation were less unlimited, the

means of carrying such an art into practical effect, amongst so vast a variety of minds, seem wanting Yet again, perhaps, after all, this may rest on a mistake. What we begin by misjudging is the particular phasis of conversation which brings it under the control of art and discipline. It is not in its relation to the intellect that conversation ever has been improved or *will* be improved primarily, but in its relation to manners. Has a man ever mixed with what in technical phrase is called "good company," meaning company in the highest degree polished, company which (being or *not* being aristocratic as respects its composition) is aristocratic as respects the standard of its manners and usages? If he really *has*, and does not deceive himself from vanity or from pure inacquaintance with the world, in that case he must have remarked the large effect impressed upon the grace and upon the freedom of conversation by a few simple instincts of real good breeding. Good breeding — what is it? There is no need in this place to answer that question comprehensively; it is sufficient to say, that it is made up chiefly of *negative* elements; that it shows itself far less in what it prescribes, than in what it forbids. Now, even under this limitation of the idea, the truth is, that more will be done for the benefit of conversation by the simple magic of good manners (that is, chiefly by a system of forbearances), applied to the besetting vices of social intercourse, than ever *was* or *can* be done by all varieties of intellectual power assembled upon the same arena. Intellectual graces of the highest order may perish and confound each other when exercised in a spirit of ill temper, or under the license of bad

manners; whereas, very humble powers, when allowed to expand themselves colloquially in that genial freedom which is possible only under the most absolute confidence in the self-restraint of your collocutors, accomplish their purpose to a certainty, if it be the ordinary purpose of liberal amusement, and have a chance of accomplishing it even when this purpose is the more ambitious one of communicating knowledge or exchanging new views upon truth.

In my own early years, having been formed by nature too exclusively and morbidly for solitary thinking, I observed nothing. Seeming to have eyes, in reality I saw nothing. But it is a matter of no very uncommon experience, that, whilst the mere observers never become meditators, the mere meditators, on the other hand, may finally ripen into close observers. Strength of thinking, through long years, upon innumerable themes, will have the effect of disclosing a vast variety of questions, to which it soon becomes apparent that answers are lurking up and down the whole field of daily experience; and thus an external experience which was slighted in youth, because it was a dark cipher that could be read into no meaning, a key that answered to no lock, gradually becomes interesting as it is found to yield one solution after another to problems that have independently matured in the mind. Thus, for instance, upon the special functions of conversation, upon its powers, its laws, its ordinary diseases, and their appropriate remedies, in youth I never bestowed a thought or a care. I viewed it, not as one amongst the gay ornamental arts of the intellect, but as one amongst the dull necessities of business. Loving

solitude too much, I understood too little the capacities of colloquial intercourse. And thus it is, though not for *my* reason, that most people estimate the intellectual relations of conversation. Let these, however, be what they may, one thing seemed undeniable — that this world talked a great deal too much. It would be better for all parties, if nine in every ten of the *winged words* flying about in this world (Homer's *epea pteroenta*) had their feathers clipped amongst men, or even amongst women, who have a right to a larger allowance of words. Yet, as it was quite out of my power to persuade the world into any such self-denying reformation, it seemed equally out of the line of my duties to nourish any moral anxiety in that direction. *To talk* seemed then in the same category as *to sleep*; not an accomplishment, but a base physical infirmity. As a moralist, I really was culpably careless upon the whole subject. I cared as little what absurdities men practised in their vast tennis-courts of conversation, where the ball is flying backwards and forwards to no purpose forever, as what tricks Englishmen might play with their monstrous national debt. Yet at length what I disregarded on any principle of moral usefulness, I came to make an object of the profoundest interest on principles of art. *Betting*, in like manner, and *wagering*, which apparently had no moral value, and for that reason had been always slighted as inconsiderable arts (though, by the way, they always had one valuable use, namely, that of evading quarrels, since a bet summarily intercepts an altercation), rose suddenly into a philosophic rank, when successively Huyghens, the Bernoullis, and De Moivre, were led,

by the suggestion of these trivial practices amongst men, to throw the light of a high mathematical analysis upon the whole doctrine of Chances. Lord Bacon had been led to remark the capacities of conversation as an organ for sharpening one particular mode of intellectual power. Circumstances, on the other hand, led me into remarking the special capacities of conversation, as an organ for absolutely creating another mode of power. Let a man have read, thought, studied, as much as he may, rarely will he reach his possible advantages as a *ready* man, unless he has exercised his powers much in conversation — that was Lord Bacon's idea. Now, this wise and useful remark points in a direction not objective, but subjective — that is, it does not promise any absolute extension to truth itself, but only some greater facilities to the man who expounds or diffuses the truth. Nothing will be done for truth objectively that would not at any rate be done, but subjectively it will be done with more fluency, and at less cost of exertion to the doer. On the contrary, my own growing reveries on the latent powers of conversation (which, though a thing that then I hated, yet challenged at times unavoidably my attention) pointed to an absolute birth of new insight into the truth itself, as inseparable from the finer and more scientific exercise of the talking art. It would not be the brilliancy, the ease, or the adroitness of the expounder, that would benefit, but the absolute interests of the thing expounded. A feeling dawned on me of a secret magic lurking in the peculiar life, velocities, and contagious ardor of conversation, quite separate from any which belonged to books; arming a man with

new forces, and not merely with a new dexterity in wielding the old ones. I felt, and in this I could not be mistaken, as too certainly it was a fact of my own experience, that in the electric kindling of life between two minds, and far less from the kindling natural to conflict (though *that* also is something) than from the kindling through sympathy with the object discussed, in its momentary coruscation of shifting phases, there sometimes arise glimpses and shy revelations of affinity, suggestion, relation, analogy, that could not have been approached through any avenues of methodical study. Great organists find the same effect of inspiration, the same result of power creative and revealing, in the mere movement and velocity of their own voluntaries, like the heavenly wheels of Milton, throwing off fiery flakes and bickering flames; these *impromptu* torrents of music create rapturous *fioriture*, beyond all capacity in the artist to register, or afterwards to imitate. The reader must be well aware that many philosophic instances exist where a change in the degree makes a change in the kind. Usually this is otherwise; the prevailing rule is, that the principle subsists unaffected by any possible variation in the amount or degree of the force. But a large class of exceptions must have met the reader, though from want of a pencil he has improperly omitted to write them down in his pocket-book — cases, namely, where upon passing beyond a certain point in the graduation, an alteration takes place suddenly in the *kind* of effect, a new direction is given to the power. Some illustration of this truth occurs in conversation, where a velocity in the movement of thought is made possible

(and often natural), greater than ever can arise in methodical books; and where, secondly, approximations are more obvious and easily effected between things too remote for a steadier contemplation. One remarkable evidence of a *specific* power lying hid in conversation may be seen in such writings as have moved by impulses most nearly resembling those of conversation; for instance, in those of Edmund Burke. For one moment, reader, pause upon the spectacle of two contrasted intellects, Burke's and Johnson's: one an intellect essentially going forward, governed by the very necessity of growth — by the law of motion in advance; the latter, essentially an intellect retrogressive, retrospective, and throwing itself back on its own steps. This original difference was aided accidentally in Burke by the tendencies of political partisanship, which, both from moving amongst moving things and uncertainties, as compared with the more stationary aspects of moral philosophy, and also from its more fluctuating and fiery passions, must unavoidably reflect in greater life the tumultuary character of conversation. The result from these original differences of intellectual constitution, aided by these secondary differences of pursuit, is, that Dr. Johnson never, in any instance, GROWS a truth before your eyes, whilst in the act of delivering it, or moving towards it. All that he offers up to the end of the chapter he had when he began. But to Burke, such was the prodigious elasticity of his thinking, equally in his conversation and in his writings, the mere act of movement became the principle or cause of movement. Motion propagated motion, and life threw off life. The very violence of a projectile, as

thrown by *him*, caused it to rebound in fresh forms, fresh angles, splintering, coruscating, which gave out thoughts as new (and that would at the beginning have been as startling) to himself as they are to his reader. In this power, which might be illustrated largely from the writings of Burke, is seen something allied to the powers of a prophetic seer, who is compelled oftentimes into seeing things, as unexpected by himself as by others. Now, in conversation, considered as to its *tendencies* and capacities, there sleeps an intermitting spring of such sudden revelation, showing much of the same general character; a power putting on a character *essentially* differing from the character worn by the power of books.

If, then, in the *colloquial* commerce of thought, there lurked a power not shared by other modes of that great commerce, a power separate and *sui generis*, next it was apparent that a great art must exist somewhere, applicable to this power; not in the Pyramids, nor in the tombs of Thebes, but in the unwrought quarries of men's minds, so many and so dark. There was an art missing. If an art, then an artist missing. If the art (as we say of foreign mails) were "due," then the artist was "due." How happened it that this great man never made his appearance? But perhaps he *had*. Many people think Dr. Johnson the *exemplar* of conversational power. I think otherwise, for reasons which I shall soon explain, and far sooner I should look for such an *exemplar* in Burke. But neither Johnson nor Burke, however they might rank as *powers*, was the *artist* that I demanded. Burke valued not at all the reputation of a great performer in conversation; he

scarcely contemplated the skill as having a real existence; and a man will never be an artist who does not value his art, or even recognize it as an object distinctly defined. Johnson, again, relied sturdily upon his natural powers for carrying him aggressively through all conversational occasions or difficulties that English society, from its known character and composition, could be supposed likely to bring forward, without caring for any art or system of rules that might give further effect to that power. If a man is strong enough to knock down ninety-nine in a hundred of all antagonists, in spite of any advantages as to pugilistic science which they may possess over himself, he is not likely to care for the improbable case of a hundredth man appearing with strength equal to his own, superadded to the utmost excess of that artificial skill which is wanting in himself. Against such a contingency it is not worth while going to the cost of a regular pugilistic training. Half a century might not bring up a case of actual call for its application. Or, if it did, for a single *extra* case of that nature, there would always be a resource in the *extra* (and, strictly speaking, foul) arts of kicking, scratching, pinching, and tearing hair.

The conversational powers of Johnson were narrow in compass, however strong within their own essential limits. As a *conditio sine quâ non*, he did not absolutely demand a *personal* contradictor by way of "stoker" to supply fuel and keep up his steam, but he demanded at least a *subject* teeming with elements of known contradictory opinion, whether linked to partisanship or not. His views of all things tended to

negation, never to the positive and the creative. Hence may be explained a fact, which cannot have escaped any keen observer of those huge Johnsonian *memorabilia* which we possess, namely, that the gyration of his flight upon any one question that ever came before him was so exceedingly brief. There was no process, no evolution, no movements of self-conflict or preparation; — a word, a distinction, a pointed antithesis, and, above all, a new abstraction of the logic involved in some popular fallacy, or doubt, or prejudice, or problem, formed the utmost of his efforts. He dissipated some casual perplexity that had gathered in the eddies of conversation, but he contributed nothing to any weightier interest; he unchoked a strangulated sewer in some blind alley, but what river is there that felt his cleansing power? There is no man that can cite any single error which Dr. Johnson unmasked, or any important truth which he expanded. Nor is this extraordinary. Dr. Johnson had not within himself the fountain of such power, having not a brooding or naturally philosophic intellect. Philosophy in any acquired sense he had none. How else could it have happened that, upon David Hartley, upon David Hume, upon Voltaire, upon Rousseau, the true or the false philosophy of his own day, beyond a personal sneer, founded on some popular slander, he had nothing to say and said nothing? A new world was moulding itself in Dr. Johnson's meridian hours, new generations were ascending, and "other palms were won." Yet of all this the Doctor suspected nothing. Countrymen and contemporaries of the Doctor's, brilliant men, but (as many think) trifling men, such as Horace

Walpole and Lord Chesterfield, already in the middle of that eighteenth century, could read the signs of the great changes advancing, already started in horror from the portents which rose before them in Paris, like the procession of regal phantoms before Macbeth, and have left in their letters records undeniable (such as now read like Cassandra prophecies) that already they had noticed tremors in the ground below their feet, and sounds in the air, running before the great convulsions under which Europe was destined to rock, full thirty years later. Many instances, during the last war, showed us that in the frivolous dandy might often lurk the most fiery and accomplished of *aides-de-camp*; and these cases show that men, in whom the world sees only elegant *roués*, sometimes from carelessness, sometimes from want of opening for display, conceal qualities of penetrating sagacity, and a learned spirit of observation, such as may be looked for vainly in persons of more solemn and academic pretension. But there was a greater defect in Dr. Johnson, for purposes of conversation, than merely want of eye for the social phenomena rising around him. He had no eye for such phenomena, because he had a somnolent want of interest in them; and why? because he had little interest in man. Having no sympathy with human nature in its struggles, or faith in the progress of man, he could not be supposed to regard with much interest any forerunning symptoms of changes that to him were themselves indifferent. And the reason that he felt thus careless was the desponding taint in his blood. It is good to be of a melancholic temperament, as all the ancient physiologists held, but only if the melan-

choly is balanced by fiery aspiring qualities, not when it gravitates essentially to the earth. Hence the drooping, desponding character, and the monotony of the estimate which Dr. Johnson applied to life. We were all, in *his* view, miserable, scrofulous wretches; the "strumous diathesis" was developed in our flesh, or soon would be; and, but for his piety, which was the best indication of some greatness latent within him, he would have suggested to all mankind a nobler use for garters than any which regarded knees. In fact, I believe, that but for his piety, he would not only have counselled hanging in general, but hanged himself in particular. Now, this gloomy temperament, not as an occasional but as a permanent state, is fatal to the power of brilliant conversation, in so far as that power rests upon raising a continual succession of topics, and not merely of using with lifeless talent the topics offered by others. Man is the central interest about which revolve all the fleeting phenomena of life; these secondary interests demand the first; and with the little knowledge about them which must follow from little care about them, there can be no salient fountain of conversational themes. *Pectus—id est quod disertum facit.* From the heart, from an interest of love or hatred, of hope or care, springs all permanent eloquence; and the elastic spring of conversation is gone, if the talker is a mere showy man of talent, pulling at an oar which he detests.

What an index might be drawn up of subjects interesting to human nature, and suggested by the events of the Johnsonian period, upon which the Doctor ought to have talked, and must have talked,

if his interest in man had been catholic, but on which the Doctor is not recorded to have uttered one word! Visiting Paris once in his life, he applied himself diligently to the measuring — of what? Of gilt mouldings and diapered panels! Yet books, it will be said, suggest topics as well as life, and the moving sceneries of life. And surely Dr. Johnson had *this* fund to draw upon? No; for, though he had read much in a desultory way, he had studied nothing;* and, without that sort of systematic reading, it is but a rare chance that books can be brought to bear effectually, and yet indirectly, upon conversation; whilst to make them directly and formally the subjects of discussion, presupposes either a learned audience, or, if the audience is not so, much pedantry and much arrogance in the talker.

* "*Had studied nothing.*"—It may be doubted whether Dr. Johnson understood any one thing thoroughly, except Latin; not that he understood even *that* with the elaborate and circumstantial accuracy required for the editing critically of a Latin classic. But if he had less than *that*, he also had more; he *possessed* that language in a way that no extent of mere critical knowledge could confer. He wrote it genially, not as one translating into it painfully from English, but as one using it for his original organ of thinking. And in Latin verse he expressed himself at times with the energy and freedom of a Roman. With Greek his acquaintance was far more slender.

SECOND PAPER.

THE flight of our human hours, not really more rapid at any one moment than another, yet oftentimes to our feelings *seems* more rapid, and this flight startles us like guilty things with a more affecting *sense* of its rapidity, when a distant church-clock strikes in the night-time, or, when, upon some solemn summer evening, the sun's disk, after settling for a minute with farewell horizontal rays, suddenly drops out of sight. The record of our loss in such a case seems to us the first intimation of its possibility; as if we could not be made sensible that the hours were perishable until it is announced to us that already they have perished. We feel a perplexity of distress when that which seems to us the cruelest of injuries, a robbery committed upon our dearest possession by the conspiracy of the world outside, seems also as in part a robbery sanctioned by our own collusion. The world, and the customs of the world, never cease to levy taxes upon our time; that is true, and so far the blame is not ours; but the particular *degree* in which we suffer by this robbery depends much upon the weakness with which we ourselves become parties to the wrong, or the energy with which we resist it. Resisting or not, however, we are doomed to suffer a bitter pang as often as the irrecoverable flight of our time is brought home with keenness to our hearts. The spectacle of a lady floating over the sea in a boat, and waking suddenly from sleep to find her

magnificent rope of pearl-necklace by some accident detached at one end from its fastenings, the loose string hanging down into the water, and pearl after pearl slipping off forever into the abyss, brings before us the sadness of the case. That particular pearl, which at the very moment is rolling off into the unsearchable deeps, carries its own separate reproach to the lady's heart. But it is more deeply reproachful as the representative of so many others, uncounted pearls, that have already been swallowed up irrecoverably whilst she was yet sleeping, and of many beside that must follow before any remedy can be applied to what we may call this jewelly hemorrhage. A constant hemorrhage of the same kind is wasting our jewelly hours. A day has perished from our brief calendar of days, and *that* we could endure; but this day is no more than the reiteration of many other days, days counted by thousands, that have perished to the same extent and by the same unhappy means, namely, the evil usages of the world made effectual and ratified by our own *lacheté*. Bitter is the upbraiding which we seem to hear from a secret monitor,—"My friend, you make very free with your days; pray, how many do you expect to have? What is your rental, as regards the total harvest of days which this life is likely to yield?" Let us consider. Three-score years and ten produce a total sum of twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty days; to say nothing of some seventeen or eighteen more that will be payable to you as a *bonus* on account of leap-years. Now, out of this total, one third must be deducted at a blow for a single item, namely, sleep. Next, on account of illness, of recreation,

and the serious occupations spread over the surface of life, it will be little enough to deduct another third. Recollect also that twenty years will have gone from the earlier end of your life (namely, above seven thousand days) before you can have attained any skill or system, or any definite purpose, in the distribution of your time. Lastly, for that single item which, amongst the Roman armies, was indicated by the technical phrase "*corpus curare*," tendance on the animal necessities, namely, eating, drinking, washing, bathing, and exercise, deduct the smallest allowance consistent with propriety, and, upon summing up all these appropriations, you will not find so much as four thousand days left disposable for direct intellectual culture. Four thousand, or forty hundreds, will be a hundred forties; that is, according to the lax Hebrew method of indicating six weeks by the phrase of "forty days," you will have a hundred bills or drafts on Father Time, value six weeks each, as the whole period available for intellectual labor. A solid block of about eleven and a half continuous years is all that a long life will furnish for the development of what is most august in man's nature. After *that*, the night comes when no man can work; brain and arm will be alike unserviceable; or, if the life should be unusually extended, the vital powers will be drooping as regards all motions in advance.

Limited thus severely in his *direct* approaches to knowledge, and in his approaches to that which is a thousand times more important than knowledge, namely, the conduct and discipline of the knowing faculty, the more clamorous is the necessity that a wise man should turn to account any INDIRECT and

supplementary means towards the same ends; and amongst these means a chief one by right and potentially is CONVERSATION. Even the primary means, books, study, and meditation, through errors from without and errors from within, are not *that* which they might be made. Too constantly, when reviewing his own efforts for improvement, a man has reason to say (indignantly, as one injured by others; penitentially, as contributing to this injury himself), "Much of my studies have been thrown away; many books which were useless, or worse than useless, I have read; many books which ought to have been read, I have left unread; such is the sad necessity under the absence of all preconceived plan; and the proper road is first ascertained when the journey is drawing to its close." In a wilderness so vast as that of books, to go astray often and widely is pardonable, because it is inevitable; and in proportion as the errors on this primary field of study have been great, it is important to have reaped some compensatory benefits on the secondary field of conversation. Books teach by one machinery, conversation by another; and, if these resources were trained into correspondence to their own separate ideals, they might become reciprocally the complements of each other. The false selection of books, for instance, might often be rectified at once by the frank collation of experiences which takes place in miscellaneous colloquial intercourse. But other and greater advantages belong to conversation for the effectual promotion of intellectual culture. Social discussion supplies the natural integration for the deficiencies of private and sequestered study. Simply to rehearse,

simply to express in words amongst familiar friends, one's own intellectual perplexities, is oftentimes to clear them up. It is well known that the best means of learning is by teaching; the effort that is made for others is made eventually for ourselves; and the readiest method of illuminating obscure conceptions, or maturing such as are crude, lies in an earnest effort to make them apprehensible by others. Even this is but one amongst the functions fulfilled by conversation. Each separate individual in a company is likely to see any problem or idea under some difference of angle. Each may have some difference of views to contribute, derived either from a different course of reading, or a different tenor of reflection, or perhaps a different train of experience. The advantages of colloquial discussion are not only often commensurate in *degree* to those of study, but they recommend themselves also as being different in *kind*; they are special and *sui generis*. It must, therefore, be important that so great an organ of intellectual development should not be neutralized by mismanagement, as generally it is, or neglected through insensibility to its latent capacities. The importance of the subject should be measured by its relation to the interests of the intellect; and on this principle we do not scruple to think that, in reviewing our own experience of the causes most commonly at war with the free movement of conversation as it ought to be, we are in effect contributing hints for a new chapter in any future "Essay on the Improvement of the Mind." Watts' book under that title is really of little practical use, nor would it ever have been thought so had it not been patronized, in a

spirit of partisanship, by a particular section of religious dissenters. Wherever *that* happens, the fortune of a book is made; for the sectarian impulse creates a sensible current in favor of the book; and the general or neutral reader yields passively to the motion of the current, without knowing or caring to know whence it is derived.

Our remarks must of necessity be cursory here, so that they will not need or permit much preparation; but one distinction, which is likely to strike on some minds, as to the two different purposes of conversation, ought to be noticed, since otherwise it will seem doubtful whether we have not confounded them; or, secondly, if we have *not* confounded them, which of the two it is that our remarks contemplate. In speaking above of conversation, we have fixed our view on those uses of conversation which are ministerial to intellectual culture; but, in relation to the majority of men, conversation is far less valuable as an organ of intellectual culture than of social enjoyment. For one man interested in conversation as a means of advancing his studies, there are fifty men whose interest in conversation points exclusively to convivial pleasure. This, as being a more extensive function of conversation, is so far the more dignified function; whilst, on the other hand, such a purpose as direct mental improvement seems by its superior gravity to challenge the higher rank. Yet, in fact, even here the more general purpose of conversation takes precedency; for, when dedicated to the objects of festal delight, conversation rises by its tendency to the rank of a fine art. It is true that not one man in a million rises to any distinction in this art; nor,

whatever France may conceit of herself, has any one nation, amongst other nations, a real precedency in this art. The artists are rare indeed; but still the art, as distinguished from the artist, may, by its difficulties, by the quality of its graces, and by the range of its possible brilliances, take rank as a *fine* art; or, at all events, according to its powers of execution, it tends to that rank; whereas the best order of conversation that is simply ministerial to a purpose of use, cannot pretend to a higher name than that of a *mechanic* art. But these distinctions, though they would form the grounds of a separate treatment in a regular treatise on conversation, may be practically neglected on this occasion, because the hints offered, by the generality of the terms in which they express themselves, may be applied indifferently to either class of conversation. The main diseases, indeed, which obstruct the healthy movement of conversation, recur everywhere; and alike whether the object be pleasure or profit in the free interchange of thought, almost universally that free interchange is obstructed in the very same way, by the very same defect of any controlling principle for sustaining the general rights and interests of the company, and by the same vices of self-indulgent indolence, or of callous selfishness, or of insolent vanity, in the individual talkers.

Let us fall back on the recollections of our own experience. In the course of our life we have heard much of what was reputed to be the select conversation of the day, and we have heard many of those who figured at the moment as effective talkers; yet in mere sincerity, and without a vestige of misan-

thropic retrospect, we must say, that never once has it happened to us to come away from any display of that nature without intense disappointment; and it always appeared to us that this failure (which soon ceased to be a *disappointment*) was inevitable by a necessity of the case. For here lay the stress of the difficulty; almost all depends, in most trials of skill, upon the parity of those who are matched against each other. An ignorant person supposes that, to an able disputant, it must be an advantage to have a feeble opponent; whereas, on the contrary, it is ruin to him; for he cannot display his own powers but through something of a corresponding power in the resistance of his antagonist. A brilliant fencer is lost and confounded in playing with a novice; and the same thing takes place in playing at ball, or battledore, or in dancing, where a powerless partner does not enable you to shine the more, but reduces you to mere helplessness, and takes the wind altogether out of your sails. Now, if by some rare good luck the great talker — the protagonist — of the evening has been provided with a commensurate second, it is just possible that something like a brilliant "passage of arms" may be the result, though much, even in that case, will depend on the chances of the moment for furnishing a fortunate theme; and even then, amongst the superior part of the company, a feeling of deep vulgarity and of mountebank display is inseparable from such an ostentatious duel of wit. On the other hand, supposing your great talker to be received like any other visitor, and turned loose upon the company, then he must do one of two things; either he will talk upon *outré* subjects specially

tabooed to his own private use, in which case the great man has the air of a quack-doctor addressing a mob from a street stage; or else he will talk like ordinary people upon popular topics; in which case the company, out of natural politeness, that they may not seem to be staring at him as a lion, will hasten to meet him in the same style; the conversation will become general; the great man will seem reasonable and well-bred; but, at the same time, we grieve to say it, the great man will have been extinguished by being drawn off from his exclusive ground. The dilemma, in short, is this: if the great talker attempts the plan of showing off by firing cannon-shot when everybody else is contented with musketry, then undoubtedly he produces an impression, but at the expense of insulating himself from the sympathies of the company, and standing aloof as a sort of monster hired to play tricks of funambulism for the night. Yet again, if he contents himself with a musket like other people, then for *us*, from whom he modestly hides his talent under a bushel, in what respect is he different from the man who *has* no such talent?

> "If she be not fair to me,
> What care I how fair she be?"

The reader, therefore, may take it upon the *à priori* logic of this dilemma, or upon the evidence of our own experience, that all reputation for brilliant talking is a visionary thing, and rests upon a sheer impossibility, namely, upon such a histrionic performance in a state of insulation from the rest of the company as could not be effected, even for a single

time, without a rare and difficult collusion, and could not, even for that single time, be endurable to a man of delicate and honorable sensibilities.

Yet surely Coleridge *had* such a reputation, and without needing any collusion at all; for Coleridge, unless he could have all the talk, would have none. But then this was not conversation; it was not *colloquium*, or talking *with* the company, but *alloquium*, or talking *to* the company. As Madame de Staël observed, Coleridge talked, and *could* talk, only by monologue. Such a mode of systematic trespass upon the conversational rights of a whole party, gathered together under pretence of amusement, is fatal to every purpose of social intercourse, whether that purpose be connected with direct use and the service of the intellect, or with the general graces and amenities of life. The result is the same, under whatever impulse such an outrage is practised; but the impulse is not always the same; it varies; and so far the criminal intention varies. In some people this gross excess takes its rise in pure arrogance. They are fully aware of their own intrusion upon the general privileges of the company; they are aware of the temper in which it is likely to be received; but they persist wilfully in the wrong, as a sort of homage levied compulsorily upon those who may wish to resist it, but hardly *can* do so without a violent interruption, wearing the same shape of indecorum as that which they resent. In most people, however, it is not arrogance which prompts this capital offence against social rights, but a blind selfishness, yielding passively to its own instincts, without being distinctly aware of the degree in which this self-indulgence

trespasses on the rights of others. We see the same temper illustrated at times in travelling; a brutal person, as we are disposed at first to pronounce him, but more frequently one who yields unconsciously to a lethargy of selfishness, plants himself at the public fireplace, so as to exclude his fellow-travellers from all but a fraction of the warmth. Yet he does not do this in a spirit of wilful aggression upon others; he has but a glimmering suspicion of the odious shape which his own act assumes to others, for the luxurious torpor of self-indulgence has extended its mists to the energy and clearness of his perceptions. Meantime, Coleridge's habit of soliloquizing through a whole evening of four or five hours had its origin neither in arrogance nor in absolute selfishness. The fact was that he *could* not talk unless he were uninterrupted, and unless he were able to count upon this concession from the company. It was a silent contract between him and his hearers, that nobody should speak but himself. If any man objected to this arrangement, why did he come? For the custom of the place, the *lex loci*, being notorious, by coming at all he was understood to profess his allegiance to the autocrat who presided. It was not, therefore, by an insolent usurpation that Coleridge persisted in monology through his whole life, but in virtue of a concession from the kindness and respect of his friends. You could not be angry with him for using his privilege, for it was a privilege conferred by others, and a privilege which he was ready to resign as soon as any man demurred to it. But though reconciled to it by these considerations, and by the ability with which he used it, you could not but feel

that it worked ill for all parties. Himself it tempted oftentimes into pure garrulity of egotism, and the listeners it reduced to a state of debilitated sympathy or of absolute torpor. Prevented by the custom from putting questions, from proposing doubts, from asking for explanations, reäcting by no mode of mental activity, and condemned also to the mental distress of hearing opinions or doctrines stream past them by flights which they must not arrest for a moment, so as even to take a note of them, and which yet they could not often understand, or, seeming to understand, could not always approve, the audience sank at times into a listless condition of inanimate vacuity. To be acted upon forever, but never to reäct, is fatal to the very powers by which sympathy must grow, or by which intelligent admiration can be evoked. For his own sake, it was Coleridge's interest to have forced his hearers into the active commerce of question and answer, of objection and demur. Not otherwise was it possible that even the attention could be kept from drooping, or the coherency and dependency of the arguments be forced into light.

The French rarely make a mistake of this nature. The graceful levity of the nation could not easily err in this direction, nor tolerate such deliration in the greatest of men. Not the gay temperament only of the French people, but the particular qualities of the French language, which (however poor for the higher purposes of passion) is rich beyond all others for purposes of social intercourse, prompt them to rapid and vivacious exchange of thought. Tediousness, therefore, above all other vices, finds no countenance or indulgence amongst the French, excepting always in

two memorable cases, namely, first, the case of tragic dialogue on the stage, which is privileged to be tedious by usage and tradition; and, secondly, the case (authorized by the best usages in living society) of narrators or *raconteurs*. This is a shocking anomaly in the code of French good taste as applied to conversation. Of all the bores whom man in his folly hesitates to hang, and heaven in its mysterious wisdom suffers to propagate their species, the most insufferable is the teller of "good stories," — a nuisance that should be put down by cudgelling, by submersion in horse-ponds, or any mode of abatement, as summarily as men would combine to suffocate a vampyre or a mad dog. This case excepted, however, the French have the keenest possible sense of all that is odious and all that is ludicrous in prosing, and universally have a horror of *des longueurs*. It is not strange, therefore, that Madame de Staël noticed little as extraordinary in Coleridge beyond this one capital monstrosity of unlimited soliloquy, that being a peculiarity which she never could have witnessed in France; and, considering the burnish of her French tastes in all that concerned colloquial characteristics, it is creditable to her forbearance that she noticed even this rather as a memorable fact than as the inhuman fault which it was. On the other hand, Coleridge was not so forbearing as regarded the brilliant French lady. He spoke of her to ourselves as a very frivolous person, and in short summary terms that disdained to linger upon a subject so inconsiderable. It is remarkable that Goethe and Schiller both conversed with Madame de Staël, like Coleridge, and both spoke of her afterwards in the

same disparaging terms as Coleridge. But it is equally remarkable that Baron *William* Humboldt, who was personally acquainted with all the four parties,—Madame de Staël, Goethe, Schiller, and Coleridge,—gave it as his opinion (in letters subsequently published) that the lady had been calumniated through a very ignoble cause, namely, mere ignorance of the French language, or, at least, non-familiarity with the fluencies of *oral* French. Neither Goethe nor Schiller, though well acquainted with written French, had any command of it for purposes of *rapid* conversation; and Humboldt supposes that mere spite at the trouble which they found in limping after the lady so as to catch one thought that she uttered, had been the true cause of their unfavorable sentence upon her. Not malice aforethought, so much as vindictive fury for the sufferings they had endured, accounted for their severity in the opinion of the diplomatic baron. He did not extend the same explanation to Coleridge's case, because, though even then in habits of intercourse with Coleridge, he had not heard of *his* interview with the lady, nor of the results from that interview; else what was true of the two German wits was true *à fortiori* of Coleridge; the Germans at least *read* French and talked it slowly, and occasionally understood it when talked by others. But Coleridge did none of these things We are all of us well aware that Madame de Staël was *not* a trifler; nay, that she gave utterance at times to truths as worthy to be held oracular as any that were uttered by the three inspired wits—all philosophers, and bound to truth—but all poets, and privileged to be wayward. This we may collect

from these anecdotes, that people accustomed to colloquial despotism, and who wield a sceptre within a circle of their own, are no longer capable of impartial judgments, and do not accommodate themselves with patience, or even with justice, to the pretensions of rivals; and were it only for this result of conversational tyranny, it calls clamorously for extinction by some combined action upon the part of society.

Is such a combination on the part of society possible as a sustained effort? We imagine that it *is* in these times, and will be more so in the times which are coming. Formerly the social meetings of men and women, except only in capital cities, were few; and even in such cities the infusion of female influence was not broad and powerful enough for the correction of those great aberrations from just ideals which disfigured social intercourse. But great changes are proceeding; were it only by the vast revolution in our *means* of intercourse, laying open every village to the contagion of social temptations, the world of western Europe is tending more and more to a mode of living in public. Under such a law of life, conversation becomes a vital interest of every hour, that can no more suffer interruption from individual caprice or arrogance than the animal process of respiration from transient disturbances of health. Once, when travelling was rare, there was no fixed law for the usages of public rooms in inns or coffee-houses; the courtesy of individuals was the tenure by which men held their rights. If a morose person detained the newspaper for hours, there was no remedy. At present, according to the circumstances of the case,

there are strict regulations, which secure to each individual his own share of the common rights.

A corresponding change will gradually take place in the usages which regulate conversation. It will come to be considered an infringement of the general rights for any man to detain the conversation, or arrest its movement, for more than a short space of time, which gradually will be more and more defined. This one curtailment of arrogant pretensions will lead to others. Egotism will no longer freeze the openings to intellectual discussions; and conversation will then become, what it never *has* been before, a powerful ally of education, and generally of self-culture. The main diseases that besiege conversation at present are — 1st. The want of *timing*. Those who are not recalled, by a sense of courtesy and equity, to the continual remembrance that, in appropriating too large a share of the conversation, they are committing a fraud upon their companions, are beyond all control of monitory hints or of reproof, which does not take a direct and open shape of personal remonstrance; but this, where the purpose of the assembly is festive and convivial, bears too harsh an expression for most people's feelings. That objection, however, would not apply to any mode of admonition that was universally established. A public memento carries with it no personality. For instance, in the Roman law-courts, no advocate complained of the *clepsydra*, or water timepiece, which regulated the duration of his pleadings. Now, such a contrivance would not be impracticable at an after-dinner talk. To invert the clepsydra, when all the water had run out, would be an act open to any one

of the guests, and liable to no misconstruction, when this check was generally applied, and understood to be a simple expression of public defence, not of private rudeness or personality. The clepsydra ought to be filled with some brilliantly-colored fluid, to be placed in the centre of the table, and with the capacity, at the very most, of the little minute-glasses used for regulating the boiling of eggs. It would obviously be insupportably tedious to turn the glass every two or three minutes; but to do so occasionally would avail as a sufficient memento to the company. 2d. Conversation suffers from the want of some discretional power lodged in an individual for controlling its movements. Very often it sinks into flats of insipidity through mere accident. Some trifle has turned its current upon ground where few of the company have anything to say — the commerce of thought languishes; and the consciousness that it *is* languishing about a narrow circle, "unde pedem proferre pudor vetat," operates for the general refrigeration of the company. Now, the ancient Greeks had an officer appointed over every convivial meeting, whose functions applied to all cases of doubt or interruption that could threaten the genial harmony of the company. We also have such officers — presidents, vice-presidents, &c.; and we need only to extend their powers, so that they may exercise over the movement of the conversation the beneficial influence of the Athenian *symposiarch*. At present the evil is, that conversation has no authorized originator; it is servile to the accidents of the moment; and generally these accidents are merely verbal. Some word or some name is dropped

casually in the course of an illustration; and *that* is allowed to suggest a topic, though neither interesting to the majority of the persons present, nor leading naturally into other collateral topics that are more so. Now, in such cases it will be the business of the symposiarch to restore the interest of the conversation, and to rekindle its animation, by recalling it from any tracks of dulness or sterility into which it may have rambled. The natural *excursiveness* of colloquial intercourse, its tendency to advance by subtle links of association, is one of its advantages; but mere *vagrancy* from passive acquiescence in the direction given to it by chance or by any verbal accident, is amongst its worst diseases. The business of the symposiarch will be, to watch these morbid tendencies, which are not the deviations of graceful freedom, but the distortions of imbecility and collapse. His business it will also be to derive occasions of discussion bearing a general and permanent interest from the fleeting events of the casual disputes of the day. His business again it will be to bring back a subject that has been imperfectly discussed, and has yielded but half of the interest which it promises, under the interruption of any accident which may have carried the thoughts of the party into less attractive channels. Lastly, it should be an express office of education to form a particular style, cleansed from *verbiage*, from elaborate parenthesis, and from circumlocution, as the only style fitted for a purpose which is one of pure enjoyment, and where every moment used by the speaker is deducted from a public stock.

Many other suggestions for the improvement of

conversation might be brought forward within ampler limits; and especially for that class of conversation which moves by discussion a whole code of regulations might be proposed, that would equally promote the interests of the individual speakers and the public interests of the truth involved in the question discussed. Meantime nobody is more aware than we are that no style of conversation is more essentially vulgar than that which moves by disputation. This is the vice of the young and the inexperienced, but especially of those amongst them who are fresh from academic life. But discussion is not necessarily disputation; and the two orders of conversation — *that*, on the one hand, which contemplates an interest of knowledge, and of the self-developing intellect; *that*, on the other hand, which forms one and the widest amongst the gay embellishments of life — will always advance together. Whatever there may remain of illiberal in the first (for, according to the remark of Burke, there is always something illiberal in the severer aspects of study until balanced by the influence of social amenities), will correct itself, or will tend to correct itself, by the model held up in the second; and thus the great organ of social intercourse, by means of speech, which hitherto has done little for man, except through the channel of its ministrations to the direct *business* of daily necessities, will at length rise into a rivalship with books, and become fixed amongst the alliances of intellectual progress, not less than amongst the ornamental accomplishments of convivial life.

LANGUAGE.

No language is stationary, except in rude and early periods of society. The languages of nations like the English and French, walking in the van of civilization, having popular institutions, and taking part in the business of the earth with morbid energy, are placed under the action of causes that will not allow them any respite from change. Neologism, in revolutionary times, is not an infirmity of caprice, seeking (to use the proverb of Cervantes) "for better bread than is made of wheat," but is a mere necessity of the unresting intellect. New ideas, new aspects of old ideas, new relations of objects to each other, or to man — the subject who contemplates those objects — absolutely insists on new words. And it would not be a more idle misconception to find a disease in the pains of growth, than to fancy a decay of vernacular purity in the multitude of verbal coinages which modern necessities of thought and action are annually calling forth on the banks of the Thames and the Seine.

Such coinages, however, do not all stand upon the same basis of justification. Some are regularly formed from known roots upon known analogies;

others are formed licentiously. Some again meet a real and clamorous necessity of the intellect; others are fitted to gratify the mere appetite for innovation. They take their rise in various sources, and are moulded with various degrees of skill. Let us throw a hasty glance on the leading classes of these coinages, and of the laws which appear to govern them, or of the anomalies with which they are sometimes associated. There are also large cases of innovation, in which no process of coinage whatever is manifested, but perhaps a simple restoration of old words, long since obsolete in literature and good society, yet surviving to this hour in provincial usage; or, again, an extension and emancipation of terms heretofore narrowly restricted to a technical or a professional use; as we see exemplified in the word *ignore*, which, until very lately, was so sacred to the sole use of grand juries, that a man would have been obscurely suspected by a policeman, and would indeed have suspected himself, of something like petty larceny, in forcing it into any general and philosophic meaning; which, however, it has now assumed, with little offence to good taste, and with *yeoman* service to the intellect. Other cases again there are, and at present far too abundant, in which the necessities of social intercourse, and not unfrequently the necessities of philosophic speculation, are provisionally supplied by *slang*, and the phraseology that is born and bred in the streets. The market-place and the highway, the *forum* and the *trivium*, are rich seed-plots for the sowing and the reaping of many indispensable ideas. That a phrase belongs to the slang dictionary is certainly no absolute recommendation; sometimes such

a phrase may be simply disgusting from its vulgarity, without adding anything to the meaning or to the rhetorical force. How shocking to hear an official dignitary saying (as but yesterday *was* heard), "What *on earth* could the clause mean?" Yet neither is it any safe ground of absolute excommunication even from the sanctities of literature that a phrase is entirely a growth of the street. The word *humbug*, for instance (as perhaps I may have occasion to show further on), rests upon a rich and comprehensive basis; it cannot be rendered adequately either by German or by Greek, the two richest of human languages; and without this expressive word we should all be disarmed for one great case, continually recurrent, of social enormity. A vast mass of villany, that cannot otherwise be reached by legal penalties or brought within the rhetoric of scorn, would go at large with absolute impunity, were it not through the stern Rhadamanthian aid of this virtuous and inexorable word.

Meantime, as it would not suit the purposes of a sketch to be too systematic in the treatment of a subject so inexhaustible as language and style, neither would it be within the limits of just proportion that I should be too elaborate in rehearsing beforehand the several avenues and classes of cases through which an opening is made for new words amongst ourselves or the French. I will select such cases for separate notice as seem most interesting or most seasonable. But previously, as a proper mode of awakening the reader into giving relief and just prominence to the subject, I will point attention to the varying scale of appreciation applied to the diction and the national

language, as a ground of national distinction and honor, by the five great intellectual nations of ancient and modern history, namely, the Greeks, the Romans, the French, the English, and the Germans. In no country, except one, is such a preface more requisite than in England, where it is strange enough that, whilst the finest models of style exist, and sub-consciously operate effectively as sources of delight, the *conscious* valuation of style is least perfectly developed.

Every nation has reason to feel interested in the pretensions of its own native language; in the original quality of that language or characteristic *kind* of its powers, and in the particular *degree* of its expansions at the period in question. Even semi-barbarous tribes sometimes talk grandiloquently on this head, and ascribe to uncultivated jargons a fertility or a range of expressiveness quite incompatible with the particular stage of social development which the national capacities have reached. Not only in spite of its barbarism, but oftentimes in mere virtue of its barbarism, we find a language claiming by its eulogists to possess more than ordinary powers of picturesque expression. Such a claim is continually put forward on behalf of the Celtic languages, as, for instance, the Armoric, the Welsh, the Irish, the Manx, the Gaelic. Such a claim is put forward also for many oriental languages. Yet, in most of these cases, there is a profound mistake committed; and generally the same mistake. Without being strictly barbarous, all these languages are uncultured and rude in a degree corresponding to the narrow social development of the races who speak them. These

races are precisely in that state of imperfect expansion, both civilly and intellectually, under which the separation has not fully taken place between poetry and prose. Their social condition is too simple and elementary to require much cultivation of intellectual topics. Little motive exists for writing, unless on occasions of poetic excitement. The subdued coloring, therefore, of prose has not yet been (to speak physiologically) secreted. And the national diction has the appearance of being more energetic and sparkling, simply because it is more inflated; the chastities of good taste not having yet been called forth by social necessities to disentangle the separate forms of impassioned and non-impassioned composition. The Kalmuck Tartars, according to a German traveller, namely, Bergmann, long resident amongst them, speak in rapturous terms of their own language; but it is probable that the particular modes of phraseology which fascinate their admiration are precisely those which a more advanced civilization, and a corresponding development of taste, would reject as spurious. Certainly, in the case of a language and a literature likely to be much in advance of the Kalmuck, namely, the Arabic, at the era of Mahomet, we find this conjecture realized. The Koran is held by the devout Mahometan to be the most admirable model of composition; but exactly those ornaments of diction or of imagery, which he regards as the jewels of the whole, are most entirely in the childish taste of imperfect civilization. That which attracts the Arab critic or the Persian is most of all repulsive to the masculine judgment of the European.

Barbarism, in short, through all degrees, generates its own barbaresque standards of taste; and nowhere so much as in the great field of diction and ornamental composition. A high civilization is an indispensable condition for developing the full powers of a language; and it is equally a condition for developing the taste which must preside over the appreciation of diction and style. The elder civilizations of Egypt and of Asiatic empires are too imperfectly known at this day to furnish any suggestions upon the subject. The earliest civilization that offers a practical field of study to our own age is the superb one of Greece.

It cannot be necessary to say that from that memorable centre of intellectual activity have emanated the great models in art and literature, which, to Christendom, when recasting her mediæval forms, became chiefly operative in controlling her luxuriance, and in other negative services, though not so powerful for positive impulse and inspiration. Greece was in fact *too* ebullient with intellectual activity,— an activity too palestric, and purely human,— so that the opposite pole of the mind, which points to the mysterious and the spiritual, was, in the agile Greek, too intensely a child of the earth, starved and palsied; whilst in the Hebrew, dull and inert intellectually, but in his spiritual organs awake and sublime, the case was precisely reversed. Yet, after all, the result was immeasurably in favor of the Hebrew. Speaking in the deep sincerities of the solitary and musing heart, which refuses to be duped by the whistling of names, we must say of the Greek that —*laudatur et alget*— he has won the admiration of

the human race, he is numbered amongst the chief brilliances of earth, but on the deeper and more abiding nature of man he has no hold. He will perish when any deluge of calamity overtakes the libraries of our planet, or if any great revolution of thought remoulds them, and will be remembered only as a generation of flowers is remembered; with the same tenderness of feeling, and with the same pathetic sense of a natural predestination to evanescence. Whereas the Hebrew, by introducing himself to the secret places of the human heart, and sitting there as incubator over the awful germs of the spiritualities that connect man with the unseen worlds, has perpetuated himself as a power in the human system; he is coënduring with man's race, and careless of all revolutions in literature or in the composition of society. The very languages of these two races repeat the same expression of their intellectual differences, and of the differences in their missions. The Hebrew, meagre and sterile as regards the numerical wealth of its ideas, is infinite as regards their power; the Greek, on the other hand, rich as tropic forests in the polymorphous life, the life of the dividing and distinguishing intellect, is weak only in the supreme region of thought. The Hebrew has scarcely any individuated words. Ask a Hebrew scholar if he has a word for a *ball* (as a tennis-ball, *pila lusoria*); he says, "O, yes." What is it, then? Why, he gives you the word for *globe*. Ask for *orb*, for *sphere*, &c., still you have the same answer; the individual circumstantiations are swallowed up in the generic outline. But the Greek has a felicitous parity of wealth in the abstract and the concrete. Even as *vocal* lan-

guages, the Hebrew and the Greek obey the same prevailing law of difference. The Hebrew is a sublime monochord, uttering vague vowel sounds as indistinct and shy as the breathings of an Æolian harp when exposed to a fitful breeze. The Greek is more firmly articulated by consonants, and the succession of its syllables runs through a more extensive compass of sonorous variety than can be matched in any other known language. The Spanish and the Italian, with all the stateliness of their modulation, make no approach to the canorous *variety* of the sounds of the Greek.[1] Read a passage from almost any Greek poet, and each syllable seems to have been placed in its present position as a relief, and by way of contrast to the syllable which follows and precedes.

Of a language thus and otherwise so divinely endowed, the Greeks had a natural right to be proud. Yet *were* they so? There is no appearance of it; and the reason no doubt lay in their insulated position. Having no *intellectual* intercourse with foreign nations, they had virtually no intercourse at all — none which could affect the feelings of the literary class, or generally of those who would be likely to contemplate language as a subject of æsthetic admiration. Each Hellenic author might be compared with others of his compatriot authors, in respect to his management of their common language; but not the language itself compared as to structure or capacities with other languages; since these other languages (one and all) were in any practical sense hardly assumed to exist. In this there was no arrogance. Aliens, as to country and civil polity, being objects

of jealousy in the circumstances of Greece, there could be no reason for abstaining from any designation, however hostile, which might seem appropriate to the relation between the parties. But, in reality, the term *barbarians*[2] seems, for many ages, to have implied nothing either hostile or disrespectful. By a natural *onamatopœia*, the Greeks used the iterated syllables *barbar* to denote that a man was unintelligible in his talk; and by the word *barbarian* originally it is probable that no sort of reproach was intended, but simply the fact that the people so called spoke a language not intelligible to Greeks. Latterly the term seems to have been often used as one of mere convenience for classification, indicating the *non-Hellenes* in opposition to the *Hellenes;* and it was not meant to express any qualities whatever of the aliens — simply they were described as *being* aliens. But in the earliest times it was meant, by the word *barbarians*, to describe them under the idea of men who were στερογλωττοι, men who, speaking in a tongue different from the Grecian, spoke unintelligibly; and at this day it is very probable that the Chinese mean nothing more by the seemingly offensive term *outside barbarians*. The mis-translations must be many between ourselves and the Chinese; and the probability is, that this reputedly arrogant expression means only "the aliens, or external people, who speak in tongues foreign to China." Arrogant or not arrogant, however, in the mouth of the Greeks, the word *barbarians* included the whole human race not living in Hellas, or in colonies thrown off from Hellas.[3] Having no temptation or facilities for holding any intellectual intercourse with those who could not

communicate through the channel of the Greek language, it followed that the Greeks had no means or opportunity for comparing their own language with the languages of other nations; and, together with this power of mutual comparison, fell away the call and excitement to vanity upon that particular subject. Greece was in the absolute insulation of the phœnix, the unique of birds, that dies without having felt a throb of exultation or a pang of jealousy, because it has exposed its gorgeous plumage and the mysterious solemnities of its beauty only to the dusky recesses of Thebaic deserts.

Not thus were the Romans situated. The Greeks, so profound and immovable was their self-conceit, never in any generation came to regard the Romans with the slightest tremor of jealousy, as though they were or ever could be rivals in literature. The Roman nobles, as all Greece knew, resorted in youth to Athens as to the eternal well-head of learning and eloquence; and the literary or the forensic efforts of such persons were never viewed as by possibility efforts of competition with their masters, but simply as graceful expressions of homage to the inimitable by men whose rank gave a value to this homage. Cicero and other Romans of his day were egregiously duped by their own vanity, when they received as sincere the sycophantic praises of mercenary Greek rhetoricians. No Greek ever in good faith admired a Roman upon intellectual grounds, except indeed as Polybius did, whose admiration was fixed upon the Roman institutions, not upon their literature; though even in his day the Roman literature had already put forth a masculine promise, and in Plau-

tus, at least, a promise of *unborrowed* excellence. The Greeks were wrong; the Romans had some things in their literature which a Greek could neither have rivalled nor even understood. They had a peculiar rhetoric, for example, such as Ovid's in the contest for the arms of Achilles,—such as Seneca's, which, to this hour, has never been properly examined, and which not only has no parallel in Grecian literature, but which, strangely enough, loses its whole effect and sense when translated into Greek; so entirely is it Roman by incommunicable privilege of genius.

But, if the Greeks did no justice to their Roman pupils, on the other hand, the Roman pupils never ceased to regard the Greeks with veneration, or to acknowledge them for their masters in literature: *they* had a foreign literature before their eyes challenging continual comparison; and this foreign literature was in a language which also challenged comparison with their own. Every Roman of distinction understood Greek; often talked it fluently, declaimed in it, and wrote books in it. But there is no language without its own peculiar genius, and therefore none without its separate powers and advantages. The Latin language has in excess such an original character, and consequently such separate powers. These Romans were not slow to discover. Studying the Greek so closely, they found by continual collation in what quarter lay the peculiar strength of the Latin. And, amongst others, Cicero did himself the greatest honor, and almost redeems the baseness of his political conduct, by the patriotic fervor which he now and then exhibits in defending the claims of his native

language and native literature. He maintains also, more than once, and perhaps with good reason, the native superiority of the Roman mind to the Grecian in certain qualities of racy humor, &c.[4]

Here, namely, in the case of Cicero, we have the first eminent example (though he himself records some elder examples amongst his own countrymen) of a man standing up manfully to support the pretensions of his mother tongue. And this might be done in a mere spirit of pugnacious defiance to the arrogance of another nation — a spirit which finds matter of quarrel in a straw. But here also we find the first example of a statesman's seriously regarding a language in the light of a foremost jewel amongst the trophies of nationality.

Coming forward to our own times, we find sovereign rulers, on behalf of great nations, occasionally raising disputes which presume some sense of the value and dignity attached to a language. Cromwell, for instance, insisted upon Cardinal Mazarine's surrendering his pretension to have the French language used in a particular negotiation; and accordingly Latin was substituted. But this did not argue in Cromwell any *real* estimation of the English language. He had been weak enough to wish that his own life and annals should be written in Latin rather than in English. The motive, it is true, might be to facilitate the circulation of the work amongst the literati of the continent. But vernacular translations would more certainly have been executed all over the continent in the absence of a Latin original; for this, by meeting the demand of foreigners in part (namely, of *learned* foreigners), would *pro tanto* have

lessened the motives to such translations. And apart from this preference of a Latin to a domestic portraiture addressing itself originally to his own countrymen, or, if Latin were otherwise the preferable language, apart from Cromwell's preference of a Latin Casaubon to a Latin Milton, in no instance did Cromwell testify any sense of the commanding rank due to English literature amongst the contemporary[5] literatures of Christendom, nor any concern for its extension.

In the case of resisting the French arrogance, Cromwell had seemed to express homage to the language of his country, but in reality he had only regarded the political dignity of his country. A pretension may be lighter than a feather; and yet in behalf of our country we do right to suffer no insolent aggression upon it by an enemy. But this argues no sincere regard for that pretension on its own account. We have known a sailor to knock an Italian down for speaking disrespectfully of English tenor voices. The true and appropriate expression of reverence to a language is not by fighting for it, as a subject of national rivalry, but by taking earnest pains to write it with accuracy, practically to display its beauty, and to make its powers available for commensurate ends. Tried by this test, which of the three peoples that walk at the head of civilization — French, Germans, or English — have best fulfilled the duties of their position?

To answer that the French only have been fully awake to these duties is painful, but too manifestly it is true. The French language possesses the very highest degree of merit, though not in the very high-

est mode of merit; it is the unique language of the planet as an instrument for giving effect to the powers, and for meeting the necessities of social gayety and colloquial intercourse. This is partly the effect, and partly the cause, of the social temperament which distinguishes the French; partly follows the national disposition, and partly leads to it. The adaptation of the language to the people, not perhaps more really prominent in this case than in others, is more conspicuously so; and it may be in a spirit of gratitude for this genial coöperation in their language that the French are in a memorable degree anxious to write it with elegance and correctness. They take a pride in doing so; and it is remarkable that grammatical inaccuracies, so common amongst ourselves, and common even amongst our literary people, are almost unknown amongst the educated French.[6]

But mere fidelity to grammar would leave but a *negative* impression; the respect which the French show to their language expresses itself chiefly in their way of managing it, that is, in their attention to style and diction. It is the rarest thing possible to find a French writer erring by sentences too long, too intricate and loaded with clauses, or too clumsy in their structure. The very highest qualities of style are not much within the ideal of French composition; but in the executive results French prose composition usually reveals an air of finish, of self-restraint under any possible temptation to *des longueurs*, and of graceful adroitness in the transitions.

Precisely the reverse of all this is found in the

compositions of the German, who is the greatest nuisance, in what concerns the treatment of language, that the mind of man is capable of conceiving. Of his language the German is proud, and with reason, for it is redundantly rich. Even in its Teutonic section it is *so* rich as to be self-sufficing, and capable, though awkwardly, of dispensing with the Greek and Latin counter-section. This independence of alien resources has sometimes been even practically adopted as the basis of a dictionary, and officially patronized. Some thirty years ago, the Prussian government was said to have introduced into the public service a dictionary[7] which rejected all words not purely vernacular. Such a word, for instance, as *philosophie* was not admissible; the indigenous word *weltweisheit* was held to be not only sufficient, which it really *is*, but exclusively legitimate. Yet, with all this scrupulosity and purism of veneration for his native language, to which he ascribes *every* quality of power and beauty, and amongst others — *credite posteri!* — sometimes even *vocal* beauty[8] and euphony, the true German has no sense of grace or deformity in the management of his language. Style, diction, the construction of sentences, are ideas perfectly without meaning to the German writer. If a whole book were made up of a single sentence, all collateral or subordinate ideas being packed into it as parenthetical intercalations,—if this single sentence should even cover an acre of ground, the true German would see in all *that* no want of art, would recognize no opportunities thrown away for the display of beauty. The temple would in *his* eyes exist, because the materials of the temple — the stone, the

lime, the iron, the timber—had been carted to the ground. A sentence, even when insulated and viewed apart for itself, is a subject for complex art: even *so* far it is capable of multiform beauty, and liable to a whole *nosology* of malconformations. But it is in the *relation* of sentences, in what Horace terms their "*junctura*," that the true life of composition resides. The mode of their *nexus*,—the way in which one sentence is made to arise out of another, and to prepare the opening for a third,—this is the great loom in which the textile process of the moving intellect reveals itself and prospers. Here the separate clauses of a period become architectural parts, aiding, relieving, supporting each other. But how can any approach to that effect, or any suggestion of it, exist for him who hides and buries all openings for parts and graceful correspondences in one monotonous continuity of period, stretching over three octavo pages? Kant was a great man, but he was obtuse and deaf as an antediluvian boulder with regard to language and its capacities. He has sentences which have been measured by a carpenter, and some of them run two feet eight by six inches. Now, a sentence with that enormous span is fit only for the use of a megatherium or a pre-Adamite. Parts so remote as the beginning and the end of such a sentence can have no sensible relation to each other; not much as regards their logic, but none at all as regards their more *sensuous* qualities,—rhythmus, for instance, or the continuity of metaphor. And it is clear that, if the internal relations of a sentence fade under the extravagant misproportion of its scale, *a fortiori* must the outer relations. If two figures,

or other objects, are meant to modify each other visually by means of color, of outline, or of expression, they must be brought into juxtaposition, or at least into neighborhood. A chasm between them, so vast as to prevent the synthesis of the two objects in one coëxisting field of vision, interrupts the play of all genial comparison. Periods, and clauses of periods, modify each other, and build up a whole, then, only when the parts are shown *as* parts, cohering and conspiring to a common result. But, if each part is separately so vast as to eclipse the disc of the adjacent parts, then substantially they are separate wholes, and do not coalesce to any joint or complex impression.

We English in this matter occupy a middle position between the French and the Germans. Agreeably to the general cast of the national character, our tendency is to degrade the value of the ornamental, whenever it is brought before us under any suggestion of comparison or rivalry with the substantial or grossly useful. Viewing the thoughts as the substantial objects in a book, we are apt to regard the manner of presenting these thoughts as a secondary or even trivial concern. The one we typify as the metallic substance, the silver or gold, which constitutes the true value, that cannot perish in a service of plate; whereas the style too generally, in *our* estimate, represents the mere casual fashion given to the plate by the artist — an adjunct that any change of public taste may degrade into a positive disadvantage. But in this we English err greatly; and by these three capital oversights:

1. It is certain that style, or (to speak by the most

general expression) the management of language, ranks amongst the fine arts, and is able therefore to yield a separate intellectual pleasure quite apart from the interest of the subject treated. So far it is already one error to rate the value of style as if it were necessarily a dependent or subordinate thing. On the contrary, style has an *absolute* value, like the product of any other exquisite art, quite distinct from the value of the subject about which it is employed, and irrelatively to the subject; precisely as the fine workmanship of Scopas the Greek, or of Cellini the Florentine, is equally valued by the connoisseur, whether embodied in bronze or marble, in an ivory or golden vase. But

2. If we *do* submit to this narrow valuation of style, founded on the interest of the subject to which it is ministerial, still, even on that basis, we English commit a capital blunder, which the French earnestly and sincerely escape; for, assuming that the thoughts involve the primary interest, still it must make all the difference in the world to the success of those thoughts, whether they are treated in the way best fitted to expel the doubts or darkness that may have settled upon them; and, secondly, in cases where the business is, not to establish new convictions, but to carry old convictions into operative life and power, whether they are treated in the way best fitted to rekindle in the mind a practical sense of their value. Style has two separate functions—first, to brighten the *intelligibility* of a subject which is obscure to the understanding; secondly, to regenerate the normal *power* and impressiveness of a subject which has become dormant to the sensibilities. Darkness gath-

ers upon many a theme, sometimes from previous mistreatment, but oftener from original perplexities investing its very nature. Upon the style it is, if we take that word in its largest sense — upon the skill and art of the developer, that these perplexities greatly depend for their illumination. Look, again, at the other class of cases, when the difficulties are not for the understanding, but for the practical sensibilities as applicable to the services of life. The subject, suppose, is already understood sufficiently; but it is lifeless as a motive. It is not new light that is to be communicated, but old torpor that is to be dispersed. The writer is not summoned to convince, but to persuade. Decaying lineaments are to be retraced, and faded coloring to be refreshed. Now, these offices of style are really not essentially below the level of those other offices attached to the original *discovery* of truth. He that to an old conviction, long since inoperative and dead, gives the regeneration that carries it back into the heart as a vital power of action,— he, again, that by new light, or by light trained to flow through a new channel, reconciles to the understanding a truth which hitherto had seemed dark or doubtful,— both these men are really, *quoad* us that benefit by their services, the *discoverers* of the truth. Yet these results are amongst the possible gifts of style. Light to *see* the road, power to *advance along* it — such being amongst the promises and proper functions of style, it is a capital error, under the idea of its ministeriality, to undervalue this great organ of the advancing intellect — an organ which is equally important considered as a tool for the culture and *popularization*

of truth, and also (if it had no use at all in that way) as a mode *per se* of the beautiful, and a fountain of intellectual pleasure. The vice of that appreciation, which we English apply to style, lies in representing it as a mere ornamental accident of written composition — a trivial embellishment, like the mouldings of furniture, the cornices of ceilings, or the arabesques of tea-urns. On the contrary, it is a product of art the rarest, subtlest, and most intellectual; and, like other products of the fine arts, it is then finest when it is most eminently disinterested, that is, most conspicuously detached from gross palpable uses. Yet, in very many cases, it really *has* the obvious uses of that gross palpable order; as in the cases just noticed, when it gives light to the understanding, or power to the will, removing obscurities from one set of truths, and into another circulating the life-blood of sensibility. In these cases, meantime, the style is contemplated as a thing separable from the thoughts; in fact, as the *dress* of the thoughts — a robe that may be laid aside at pleasure. But

3. There arises a case entirely different, where style cannot be regarded as a *dress* or alien covering, but where style becomes the *incarnation* of the thoughts. The human body is not the dress or apparel of the human spirit; far more mysterious is the mode of their union. Call the two elements A and B: then it is impossible to point out A as existing aloof from B, or *vice versa*. A exists in and through B, B exists in and through A. No profound observer can have failed to observe this illustrated in the capacities of style. Imagery is sometimes not the mere alien apparelling of a thought, and of a nature

to be detached from the thought, but is the coëfficient that, being superadded to something else, absolutely *makes* the thought.

In this third case, our English tendency to undervalue style goes more deeply into error than in the other two. In those two we simply underrate the enormous services that are or might be rendered by style to the interests of truth and human thinking; but, in the third case, we go near to abolish a mode of existence. This is not so impossible an offence as might be supposed. There are many ideas in Leibnitz, in Kant, in the schoolmen, in Plato at times, and certainly in Aristotle (as the ideas of antiperistasis, entelecheia, &c.), which are only to be arrested and realized by a signal *effort* — by a struggle and a *nisus* both of reflection and of large combination. Now, where so much depends upon an effort — on a spasmodic strain — to fail by a hair's breadth is to collapse. For instance, the idea involved in the word transcendental,[9] as used in the critical philosophy of Kant, illustrates the metaphysical relations of style.

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 168.

The Romans discover something apparently of the same tendency to a vague economy of abstraction. But in *them* it is merely casual, and dependent on accidental ignorance. Thus, for instance, it is ridiculous to render the Catullian *Passer meæ puellæ* by *sparrow*. As well suppose Lesbia to have fondled a pet hedgehog. *Passer*, or *passerculus*, means *any* little bird whatever. The sternness of the Roman mind disdained to linger upon petty distinctions ; or at least until the ages of luxurious refinement had paved the way for intellectual refinements. So again, *malum*, or even *pomum*, does not mean an apple, but any whatever of the larger spherical or spheroidical fruits. A peach, indeed, was described differentially as *malum Persicum;* an apricot, had the Romans known it, would have been rendered by *malum apricum*, or *malum apricatum;* but an apple also, had it been mentioned with any stress of opposition or pointed distinction attached to it, would have been described differentially as *malum vulgare* or *malum domesticum*.

Note 2. Page 169.

There is a short note by Gibbon upon this word ; but it adds nothing to the suggestions which every thoughtful person will furnish to himself.

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guage, and a more fastidious apprehension had been directed to its slighter shades of difference, the term "*barbarous*" was applied apparently to uncouth dialects of the Greek language itself. Thus in the Ajax of Sophocles, Teucer (though certainly talking Greek) is described as speaking barbarously. Perhaps, however, the expression might bear a different construction. But in elder periods it seems hardly possible that the term *barbarous* could ever have been so used. Sir Edward B. Lytton, in his "Athens," supposes Homer, when describing the Carians by this term, to have meant no more than that they spoke some provincial variety of the Ionic Greek: but, applied to an age of so little refinement as the Homeric, I should scarcely think this interpretation admissible.

Note 4. Page 172.

Where, by the way, the vocabulary of æsthetic terms, after all the labors of Ernesti and other German editors, is still far from being understood. In particular, the word *facetus* is so far from answering to its usual interpretation, that *nostro periculo* let the reader understand it as precisely what the French mean by *naïve*.

Note 5. Page 173.

At this era, when Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and the contemporary dramatists, when Lord Bacon, Seldon, Milton, and many of the leading English theologians (Jewel, Hooker, Chillingworth, and Jeremy Taylor), had appeared — in fact, all the *optimates* of the English literature — it must be remembered that the French literature was barely beginning. Montaigne was the only *deceased* author of eminence; Corneille was the only living author in general credit. The reader may urge that already, in the times of Catherine de Medici, there were eminent poets. In the reign of her son Charles IX. were several; and in the reign of her husband there was even a celebrated *Pleiad* of poets. But these were merely *court* poets — they had no national name; and were already forgotten in the days of Louis XIII. As to German literature, *that* was a blank. Germany had then but one tolerable poet, namely, Opitz, whom some people (chiefly his countrymen) honor with the title of the German Dryden!

NOTE 6. Page 174.

This the reader might be apt to doubt, if he were to judge of French grammar by French orthography. Until recently — that is, through the last thirty years — very few people in France, even of the educated classes, could spell. They spelt by procuration. The compositors of the press held a general power-of-attorney to spell for universal France. A *fac simile* of the spelling which prevailed amongst the royal family of France at the time of the elder Revolution is given in Cléry's journal: it is terrific. Such forms occur, for instance, as *J'avoient* (J'avois) for *I had: J'été* (etois) for *I was*. But, in publishing such facts, the reader is not to imagine that Cléry meant to expose anything needing concealment. All people of distinction spelled in that lawless way; and the loyal valet doubtless no more thought it decorous for a man of rank to spell his own spelling, than to clean his own shoes or to wash his own linen. "Base is the man who pays," says Ancient Pistol; "base is the man who spells," said the French of that century. It would have been vulgar to spell decently; and it was not illiterate to spell abominably; for literary men spelled not at all better: they also spelled by proxy, and by grace of compositors.

NOTE 7. Page 175.

By Heinze, if I recollect; and founded partly on that of Wolff.

NOTE 8. Page 175.

Foreigners do not often go so far as this; and yet an American, in his "Sketches of Turkey" (New York, 1833), characterizes the German (p. 478) not only as a soft and melodious language, but absolutely as "the *softest* of all European languages." Schiller and Goethe had a notion that it was capable of being hammered into euphony, that it was by possibility malleable in that respect, but then only by great labor of selection, and as a trick of rope-dancing ingenuity.

NOTE 9. Page 181.

"*Transcendental.*"— Kant, who was the most sincere, honorable, and truthful of human beings, always understood himself. He

hated tricks, disguises, or mystifications, simulation equally with dissimulation; and his love of the English was built avowedly on their *veracity*. So far he is a delightful person to deal with. On the other hand, of all men he had the least talent for explaining himself, or communicating his views to others. Whenever Kant undertakes to render into popular language the secrets of metaphysics, one inevitably thinks of Bardolph's attempt to analyze and justify the word *accommodation*: — "*Accommodation* — that is, when a man is (as they say) accommodated; or when a man is being whereby he may be thought to be accommodated, which is an excellent thing." There are sometimes Eleusinian mysteries, sealed by nature herself, the mighty mother, as *aporreta*, things essentially ineffable and unutterable in vulgar ears. Long, for instance, he labored, but vainly he labored, to render intelligible the scholastic idea of the transcendental. This should have been easy to deal with; for on the one side lay the *transcendent*, on the other the *immanent*, two buoys to map out the channel; and yet did Kant, throughout his long life, fail to satisfy any one man who was not previously and independently in possession of the idea. Difficulties of this nature should seem as little related to artifice of style and diction as geometrical difficulties; and yet it is certain that, by throwing the stress and emphasis of the perplexity upon the exact verbal *nodus* of the problem, a better structure of his sentences would have guided Kant to a readier apprehension of the real shape which the difficulty assumed to the ordinary student.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH MANNERS.

An impression prevails pretty generally that the manners of our French neighbors are more polished than our own, and by most people this is *assumed* as a thing admitted even amongst ourselves, who are the persons most interested in denying it. A concession, however, made in ignorance, avails nothing. Such a concession argues the candor of the conceding party, but not therefore the truth of the charge. We English are ready enough to tax our countrymen with such vices of deportment or habits as are flagrantly obtrusive ; and sometimes even with such as are altogether imaginary.* A fault is not necessarily

* Witness the malicious charge against all of us English, so current in the mouths of both Frenchmen and the English themselves, that from aristocratic jealousies as to the rank and pretensions of parties not personally known and guaranteed to us, we avoid on the continent beyond all other society that of our own countrymen. If this were even true, there might be alleged some reasons for it not altogether illiberal. Meantime it happens that the very contradictory charge to this exists as a standing reproach to the English in our own literature. From Lord Chesterfield's days downwards to this present era, it has been made an argument of our national absurdity, that we English herd only with our own countrymen ; that we do not *virtually* quit England ; and that

a real one, because it happens to be denounced by English people as an English fault; nor, if it were so, ought we to lay any great stress upon it, so long as it is demonstrable that these same English accusers have overlooked the counterbalancing fault in the particular nation with which they are comparing us. We, for our part, cannot afford to be so candid as all *that*. Candor is a very costly virtue — it costs us a most distressing effort of mind to confess anything, however true, against ourselves or against our country, unless when we have a "consideration" for doing so. In the present case, we shall find this consideration in the power of retaliation upon the French by means of corresponding exceptions to *their* manners. Luckily, if *we* offend in one way, *they* offend not less conspicuously in another. Having this set-off against our ancient enemy, we are not indisposed to admit the truth against ourselves, which else it would have been quite out of the question to expect of us.

The idea involved in what we call *manners* is a very complex one; and in some of its elements, as we may have occasion to show further on, it represents qualities of character (as also of temperament) that are perfectly neutral as regards the *social* expression of manners. This social expression, which is the chief thing that men think of when describing manners as good or bad, lies in two capital features:

in this way we only, of all European nations, fail to improve by travel, refusing, in fact, to benefit by that extended experience which originally had been the ostensible object of our travels. Malignant calumniator, whether foreign or (as too often happens) native English, reconcile these charges, if you can!

first of all, in respect to others; secondly, in self-respect. Now, the English fail too often in the first, the French in the second. *There* is the balance. The French reason to have *us* as regards the first; we *them* as regards the second.

The term "*respect* for others" may seem too strong for the case. *Respect*, in its graver expressions, may have no opening for itself in casual intercourse with strangers. But simple decency of appearance, and decorum of manner, warrant that limited mode of respect which expresses itself by courtesy and affability. You listen to the stranger with complaisance; you answer him with cheerfulness. So much of attention might be justified in the most aristocratic country by a decent exterior, by a demeanor not brutal, and by a style of conversation not absolutely repulsive. Here it is, and in all cases where the relation between strangers rests upon the simple footing of their common humanity, that the Frenchman has so great an advantage over the Englishman. Every Frenchman has been trained from his infancy to recognize in all human beings an indefeasible claim upon his civility. To listen without visible impatience upon being asked by a stranger for information, to answer without abruptness or marked expression of hurry, he considers a mere debt to the universal rights of human nature; and to refuse the payment of a debt so easily settled he would regard as a dishonor to himself. The Englishman, on the other hand, in the same circumstances, is too often morose and churlish; he answers fretfully, hurriedly, and briefly, as to one who is interrupting him unseasonably, or even robbing him of his time; and at any rate it is rare that

he answers as if he had a pleasure in giving the information asked. This tone of harshness and incivility it is that constantly deters people of quick sensibility from addressing themselves at random, in any case of difficulty, to the street-passengers in London. Often have we observed timid or nervous people drawing up into a corner, and anxiously reviewing the stream of passing faces, in order to select one that might promise patience enough and kindness for enduring the interruption. This repulsive aspect of British manners wears even an exaggerated shape in Scotland. London is not half so uncivilized in this respect as some of our Lowland Scottish cities. Ask a question of ten successive passengers, and nine of the answers will give you reason to wish that you had held your tongue. Even sexual gallantry avails not always to prompt courtesy. A handsome young lady from the northern Highlands of Scotland, used to the courtesy of her Celtic countrymen (for the Scotch Highlanders have no resemblance in this point to the Lowland Scotch), told us, that on her first visit southwards, happening to inquire her way of a working-man, instead of any direction whatever, she received a lecture for her presumption in supposing that "folk" had nothing else to do but to answer idle people's questions. This was her first application. Her second was less mortifying, but equally unprofitable. The man in that second case uttered no word at all, civil or uncivil; but, with a semicircular wave backwards of his right arm, jerked his right thumb over his right shoulder, after which he repeated the same manœuvre with his left arm, left thumb, and left shoulder,—leaving the young Inver-

ness-shire lady utterly mystified by his hieroglyphics, which to this hour she has not solved, still thankful that he had forborne to lecture her.

At first sight, then, it may be easily imagined how fascinating * is the aspect of a society moulded by French courtesy, coming in direct succession to that harsher form which society wears in the streets of this island. And yet even this French courtesy has been the object of suspicion in reference to its real origin. Mr. Scott, of Aberdeen, a celebrated man in his day, was assured during one of his French tours, and not by any envious foreigner, but by a discerning Frenchman, that the true ground of French affability was, not any superior kindness of heart disposable for petty occasions, but the national love of talking. A French woman comes out of her road, or leaves her shop, in order to finish her instructions as to your proper route, so that mistake shall be impossible. She does this with an *empressement* that seems truly amiable, because apparently altogether disinterested. "By no means," said her cynical countryman to Mr.

* A Scotchman, who published an account of his tour to Paris some ten or twelve years ago, furnishes a memorable illustration of the profound impression made on him by a sudden transition from his native country to France. He professes himself a rigid Presbyterian, and everywhere shows a bigoted hatred of Popery, which at times expresses itself most indecorously; yet such was his astonishment at the general courtesy amongst the French, and such his sense of the public peace produced by this courtesy, combined with general sobriety, that he seriously propounds the question, — whether even the sacrifice of Protestant purity, and the adoption of Popery, would not be a cheap price to pay, if by such changes it were possible to purchase these French advantages of quiet and refinement.

Scott, "not at all disinterested. What she seeks to gratify is far less any temper of general kindliness than the furious passion for hearing herself talk. Garrulity is what you gentlemen from England have mistaken for diffusive courtesy." There *is* so far a foundation for this caustic remark, that undoubtedly the French are the most garrulous people upon earth. Look into the novels of Eugene Sue and of Dumas, which reflect pretty accurately the external features of Parisian society, and you will perceive how indispensable to the daily comfort of the general population is copious talking, and unlimited indulgence of petty personal curiosity. These habits naturally support and strengthen the auxiliary habit of cheerful politeness. To tempt others into the spirit of communicativeness, it is indispensable to open their hearts by courteous and genial treatment. But, allowing for this undoubted national infirmity,—namely, the intense predisposition to gossiping and *commerage*,—it still remains undeniable that the French, with less of a profound or impassioned benignity than some of their neighbors, have more by a great deal of that light-hearted, surface good-nature, which applies itself to trivial and uncostly services.

The garrulity of the French temperament, therefore, if it mingles a little as a selfish element in the French affability, is yet so far valuable as it offers a collateral pledge for its continuance. This demur, therefore, will not seriously disturb the pretensions of the French to the most *amiable* form of national politeness that has ever descended deeply amongst the body of the people. But another demur there is,

not suggested by any countryman of their own, but irresistibly forced upon the notice of us islanders by the clamorous contrast with our own manners, which *does* undoubtedly probe the value of their refinement in a way painfully humiliating. Ask any candid and *observing* tourist in France for the result of his experience, and he will agree that generally at the *table d'hote*, and especially when the company is composed chiefly of flying travellers, the French manifest a selfishness and an exclusiveness of attention to their own comfort, which is shocking to a native of this country. In thorough contradiction to the prevailing notions of this country, which on such subjects are almost uniformly unsound, the French nationally are great eaters. They and the Germans are the two most gormandizing races in Europe. This gratification is not for a moment laid under any restraint by the verbal sacrifices to civility. The dishes are rifled of their best luxuries in the same unblushing spirit of selfishness which would govern most of us in escaping from a burning theatre. Of course no individual experience is sufficient for sustaining this as a *national* charge; but we have heard concurrent testimonies from many travellers to the same effect, all tending to show a general selfishness amongst the French in any similar case of competition, which the cloak of external and verbal politeness does but the more powerfully expose. Such an exposure, if true and unexaggerated, stands out in violent contrast to all that we have ourselves observed of British life. Through a course of many years' familiarity with our own mails, and other superior public carriages, we never once witnessed a dinner at which

the spirit of mutual attention and self-sacrifice did not preside.

Even in respect for others, therefore, where generally the French so much excel ourselves, yet when a selfish interest thwarts the natural tendency of their manners, this tendency appears to give way. But it is in *self*-respect that the French most of all betray their inferiority, and here it is the countervailing excellence of British manners asserts itself. The stern and too often surly Briton, whether Englishman or Scotchman, is saved by this very form of unamiableness from the pettiness of garrulity. If sometimes he is disagreeable, at least he is not undignified; if he presents an unattractive phasis to society, at any rate he is not unmanly. Now, of all unmanliness, intellectually though not morally speaking, the habits of gossip and loquaciousness are about the most degrading.

Yet gossiping and garrulity are not the most prominent infirmities by which the French betray their deficient self-respect. Gesticulation, as an inseparable organ of French conversation, is even more immediately disfiguring to the ideal of personal dignity. A gesticulating nation cannot be a dignified nation. A running accompaniment of pantomime may be picturesque, and in harmony with the general vivacity amongst harlequins and columbines, but cannot for a moment reconcile itself with any authentic standard of human dignity. The French have been notorious through generations for their puerile affectation of Roman forms, models, and historic precedents; and yet, beyond all other races known to history, the Roman is that which it would be most diffi-

cult to represent as expressing the grandeur of its purposes by gesticulation or histrionic pantomime.

This feature of French manners, and the essential degradation which cleaves to it, ought to be kept before the public eye at this moment, when not only the increasing intercourse with France, but also the insensible contagion from our own popular novels, too often written by those who are semi-denizens of Paris, violently tend to the transfiguration of our own ideals, so greatly superior in this particular to those of France. In many of these novels we have it said, as a matter of course, that A or B "shrugged his shoulders." But what Englishman, unless ridiculously metamorphosed by Paris, so as absolutely to have forgotten his own native usages, ever uses this odious gesture, or *could* use it with any hope of not disgusting his audience? not to mention other forms of pantomime still more degrading, though countenanced by good society in Paris (such, for example, as the application of the finger to the side of the nostrils, together with an accompanying advancement of the face, by way of expressing a signal of knowingness or insinuation of secret understanding). Even the words and phrases imported by our novels, and which are already settling into vernacular use, are sometimes fitted to import also the vulgar sentiment which they embody. Twenty-five years ago the vile ejaculation "*Bah!*" was utterly unknown to the English public. Now, and entirely through the currency given to it by our own novels, it has become the most popular expression for dismissing with contempt any opinion or suggestion of the person with whom you are conversing. Anything more

brutal or more insolent, in the way of summary contempt, cannot be imagined. To reject your companion's thoughts may sometimes be requisite in mere sincerity; but to do so with this plebeian want of consideration, leaving behind it the same sense of a stinging insult as would follow the act of puffing the smoke from a tobacco-pipe into your face, is a striking instance of the real coarseness which often crept amongst the refinements of the French.

This instance, by the way, illustrates also the fact that the French swerve at times from the law of respect to others not less grossly (though less frequently) than from the law of self-respect; and it is worthy of remark that they swerve *uniformly* from the proper tone of respect for others, when it happens that this respect is precluded from expressing itself (as between equals it does) by means of kindness and courtesy. Thus, in the intercourse between master and servant the French always hold a false tone, whether in real life, or in the imitations of the drama. The French master is never dignified, though he may chance to be tyrannical; and the French servant, without meaning to be so, is always disrespectfully familiar. The late Lady Blessington well illustrated the difference between a French and an English footman. "If," said she, "I ask my English servant any question about the residence and occupation of a petitioner who may have called to solicit charity, he answers rigorously to the particular questions I put; not by one hair's-breadth does he allow himself to wander into circumstances about which I have not questioned him. But the Frenchman fancies himself called upon to give his opinion upon every

point, however remotely connected with my inquiries. He loses himself in volumes of garrulity; and, without designing any disrespect, practically by his voluble manner forgets that he is speaking to his mistress."

To the manners of a nation belong also its usages, and some of these amongst the French are essentially vulgar. That field would lead us too far. But, in the mean time, when peace and the increasing facilities of locomotion are annually bringing us more and more within French influence, it may have a seasonable use to direct the thoughts upon the current prejudice that French manners furnish any absolute model — to separate that which is really good and beautiful from that which rests upon false foundations — and, by suggesting a spirit of jealous discrimination in relation to foreign manners, eventually to warn us against exotic forms of coxcombry, and sometimes against exotic forms of sheer slang and brutality.

CALIFORNIA.

When a new comet is descried, we set ourselves to trace the path on which it is moving; so that, if it seems likely to trespass on our own orbit, prudent men may have warning to make all snug aloft, and ready for action; authors, in particular, seeking to correct the proofs of any book they may be publishing, before the comet has had time with its tail to sweep all the types into "pye." It is now becoming a duty to treat California as a comet; for she is going ahead at a rate that beats Sinbad and Gulliver, threatening (if we believe the star-gazers of our day) to throw universal commerce into "pye;" and other Californias are looming in her wake, such as Australia and the South Sea island now called Hawaii;[1] they are crowding all sail towards the same object of private gain and public confusion; anxieties are arising in various quarters; and it is daily becoming more a matter of public interest to assign the course upon which they are really advancing, and to measure the dangers (if any at all) with which they are practically charged.

In the case of California, the most painful feature at the outset of the *termashaw* was the torpor mani-

fested by all the governments of Christendom as to a phenomenon that was leading their countrymen by wholesale into ruin. Helpless and ignorant as that army of children, which in an early stage of the Crusades set forward by land for Palestine; knowing as little as those children of the horrors that besieged the road, or of the disappointments that would seal its terminus, supposing it ever to be reached; from every quarter of Europe rushed the excited ploughman and artisan, as vultures on a day of battle to the supper of carrion; and not a word of warning or advice from their government. On the continent this neglect had its palliation. Most governments were then too occupied by anxieties and agitations derived from the approaching future, or even by desperate convulsions derived from the present. But whither shall we look for the excuse of our own government? Some years ago, it was, by inconsiderate radicals, made the duty of government to find work for the people. *That* was no part of their duty; nor *could* be; for it can be no duty to attempt impossibilities. But it *was* a part of their duty, officially, to publish remonstrances and cautions against general misapprehension of apparent openings, that too often were no real openings, for labor, and against a national delusion that for ninety-nine out of a hundred was sure to end in ruin. Two things government were bound to have done, namely, first, to have circulated a circumstantial account of the different routes to San Francisco, each with its separate distances assigned, and its separate varieties of inconceivable hardship; second, to have sent out a party of surveyors and mineralogists, with instruc-

tions to report from time to time, at short intervals, upon the real condition of the prospects before the gold-diggers, upon the comparative advantages of the several districts in California as yet explored, with these mineral views, and upon the kind of labors, and the kind of tools or other apparatus, that had any reasonable chance of success. Had this been done, some myriads of energetic and enterprising men, that have long since perished miserably, would have been still available for the public service. California, be its real wealth what it may, was a "job;" a colossal job; and was worked as a job by a regular conspiracy of jobbers. The root of this conspiracy lay and lies (in all senses *lies*) up and down the United States. It is no affront, nor intended as such, to the American Union or to Mr. Barnum, if I say that this gigantic republic (which, by the seventh census, just now in the course of publication, has actually extended its territorial compass, in a space of ten years, from about two millions of square miles, which it had in 1840, to three and a quarter millions of square miles, which it had reached last midsummer) produces a race of Barnums on a pre-Adamite scale, corresponding in activity to its own enormous proportions. The idea of a Barnum does not at all presuppose an element of fraud. There are many honorable Barnums; but also there is a minority of fraudulent Barnums. All alike, good Barnums and bad Barnums, are characterized by Titanic energy, such as would tear into ribbons a little island like ours, but is able to pull fearlessly against a great hulk of a continent, that the very moon finds it fatiguing to cross. Now, it happened

that the bad Barnums took charge of the California swindle. They stationed a first-rate liar in San Francisco, under whom, and accountable to whom, were several accomplished liars distributed all the way down to Panama, and thence to Chagres. All along the Atlantic seaboard this gathering volley of lies and Californian "notions" raced with the speed of gunpowder trains up to New York, in which vast metropolis (confounded amongst its seven hundred thousand citizens) burrowed the central bureau of the swindle. Thence in ten days these poetic hoaxes crossed over to a line of repeating liars posted in Liverpool and London, from which cities, of course, the lies ran by telegraph in a few hours over the European continent, and thence by Tartar expresses overland to Indus and the Ganges. When the swindle got into regular working order, it was as good as a comedy to watch its mode of playing. The policy of the liars was to quarrel with each other, and cavil about straws, for the purpose of masking the subterraneous wires of their fraudulent concert. Liar No. 5, for instance, would observe carelessly, in a Panama journal, that things were looking up at Sacramento, for (by the latest returns that could be depended on) the daily product of gold had now reached a million of dollars. Upon which No. 8, at Chagres, would quote the paragraph into a local paper, and comment upon it thus, with virtuous indignation: "Who or what this writer may be, with his daily million of dollars, we know not, and do not desire to know. But we warn the editor of that paper that it is infamous to sport with the credulity of European emigrants. A million,

indeed, daily! We, on the contrary, assert that the produce for the last three months, though steadily increasing, has never exceeded an average of half a million — and even *that* not to be depended on for more than nine days out of ten." To him succeeds No. 10, who, after quoting No. 8, goes on thus: "Some people are never content. To *our* thinking, half a million of dollars daily, divided amongst about fourteen hundred laborers, working only seven hours a day, is a fair enough remuneration, considering that no education is required, no training, and no capital. Two ounces of tobacco and a spade, with rather a large sack for bagging the gold, having a chain and padlock — such is the stock required for a beginner. In a week he will require more sacks and more padlocks; and in two months, a roomy warehouse, with suitable cellars, for storing the gold until the fall, when the stoutest steamers sail. But, as we observed, some people are never content. A friend of ours, not twelve miles from San Francisco, in digging for potatoes, stumbled upon a hamper of gold that netted forty thousand dollars. And, behold, the next comer to that locality went off in dudgeon because, after two days' digging, he got nothing but excellent potatoes; whereas he ought to have reflected that our friend's golden discovery was a lucky chance, such as does not happen to the most hard-working man above once in three weeks."

Then came furious controversies about blocks of gold embedded in quartz, and left at "our office" for twenty-four hours, with liberty for the whole town to weigh and measure them. One editor affirms that the blocks weighed six quintals, and the quartz, if

pulverized, would hardly fill three snuff-boxes. "But," says a second editor, "the bore of our friend's nostrils is preternaturally large; his pinch, being proportionable, averages three ounces; and three of his snuff-boxes make one horse-bucket. Six tons, does he say? I don't believe, at the outside, it reaches seven hundred weight." Thereupon rejoins editor No. 1: "The blockhead has mistaken a quintal for a ton; and thus makes us talk nonsense. Of course we shall always talk nonsense, when we talk in *his* words and not in our own. His wish was —to undermine us; but so far from doing *that*, the knowing reader will perceive that he confirms our report, and a little enlarges it."

Even in Scotland, as far north as Perth and Aberdeen, the incorporation of liars thought it might answer to suborn a youth, to all appearance an ingenuous youth, as repeating signalist in the guise of one writing home to his Scottish relations, with flourishing accounts of his success at the "diggins." Apparently he might have saved his postage, since the body of his letter represented him as having returned to Scotland, so that he might have reported his adventures by word of mouth. This letter was doctored so as to leave intentionally a very slight impression that even in California the course of life was checkered with good and evil. It had been found, perhaps, that other letters, in more romantic keys, had overleaped their own swindling purpose. The vivacious youth admitted frankly that on some days he got nothing — except, perhaps, a touch of catarrh. Such things were actually possible, namely, the getting nothing except a *soupçon* of catarrh, even

in California. Finally, however, with all his candor, the repeating signalist left one great mystery unsolved. He had been getting nothing on some days; but still, after all these cloudy seasons had been allowed for, his gains had *averaged* from three to four guineas a day during the period of his stay. That being the case, one could not well understand what demon had led him ever to quit this garden of the Hesperides for Perth or Aberdeen, where no such golden apples grow either on the high-roads, or even in gentlemen's "policies," beset with mastiff-dogs and policemen.

But why, or for what ultimate purpose, do I direct these satiric glances at the infant records of California, and the frauds by which she prospered? No doubt the period of her childhood, and of the battle which she had to fight at starting with an insufficient population, was shortened exceedingly and alleviated by unlimited lying. An altar she ought to raise, dedicated to the goddess of insolent mendacity, as the tutelary power under which she herself emerged into importance; this altar should be emblazoned upon the shield of her heraldic honors; this altar should stand amongst the quarterings on her coins. And it cannot be denied that a preliminary or heralding generation has perished in the process of clearing the way for that which is now in possession. What by perils of the sea, and the greater perils of the land route; what by "plague, pestilence, and famine; by battle, and murder, and sudden death" (to quote our English Litany), within the precincts of the gold districts, probably not far from a quarter of a million are now sleeping in ob-

scure graves that might have been saved by the interference of surveyors, guides, monitors — such as a benign and Christian government in Europe would assuredly have authorized officially. But these things are not disputed; or, only as a question of extent. The evil is confessed. But, small or great, it is now over. War, it is true, and war of that ferocious character which usually takes place with the vindictive Indians, apparently is now imminent; but this will be transitory, possibly favorable to peace and settlement, by absorbing the ruffianism of the state. And, in the mean time, the iniquity[3] of the Lynch law is giving way, and thawing, as a higher civilization is mounting above the horizon. After a preliminary night of bloodshed and darkness, California will begin to take her place amongst the prosperous States of the American Union. And the early stage of outrage and violence will, upon retrospect, rapidly sink into a mere accident of surprise, due to the embarrassments of vast distance, combined with the suddenness and special temptations of so strange a discovery.

But, all these extraordinary accidents allowed for, it cannot surely be my intention (the reader will say) to raise doubts upon the main inference from all that we have heard, namely, the prospect of a new influx into our supplies of gold, setting in with a force and a promise of permanence that, five years ago, would have read to the exchanges of Europe like a page from the "Arabian Nights."

The first principle of change in our prospects — first in importance, and likely to be the first chronologically in tempering our delusions, and taking the

shine out of our various El Dorados — is one which never seems to have occurred in the way of a remote scruple to the blockheads who report the different local discoveries as they explode in California, one after another, like the raps from a school-boy's cracker. One and all, they are anxious only about one solitary element of success, namely, the *abundance* of the gold. They seem never to have heard that diamonds and emeralds are not scarce as they are for want of known diamond and emerald mines, nor pearls for want of vast unworked pearl fisheries. Some of these have scarcely been opened for want of even a delusive encouragement; others, having been worked for ages, are now closed without hope of returning to them. Emeralds and sapphires are lying at this moment in a place which I could indicate, and no policeman is on duty in the whole neighborhood to hinder me or the reader from pocketing as many as we please. We are also at perfect liberty to pocket the anchors of her majesty's ship the Victoria (120 guns), and to sell them for old iron. Pocket them by all means, and I engage that the magistrate sitting at the Thames police-office will have too much respect for your powers to think of detaining you. If he does, your course is to pocket the police-office, and all which it inherits. The man that pockets an anchor may be a dangerous customer, but not a customer to be sneezed at. What need of laws to intercept acts which are physically unapproachable? Many a mine and quarry have been abandoned under ordinances of nature *defying* you to work them; many other under changes, making it (though possible) useless to work them. Both

these little sets of objection *have* occurred (yes, have already occurred) in California, and *will* occur more and more.

I never heard of any ancient prince, wilful as he might be, insisting upon hanging his chief baker, unless he baked him an apple-pie furnished from the garden of the Hesperides; not but the apples might have been "good bakers," but then the dragon was to be taken into consideration. And over many a mine in this world there is, in effect, a dragon of one kind or other watching to preserve them from human violation. And suppose the prohibition not to be absolute, but that, with proper machinery for pumping out water, etc., and with improved arts of working, you could raise the precious metal, still, if every pound weight of gold (which, at modern prices, may be valued roundly at fifty pounds sterling) cost you in raising it seventy pounds sterling, it is presumable that you would not long pursue that sort of game. Both in England and Ireland we have fallen upon silver and gold many scores of times. We have had boxes, and trinkets, and very large vases, wrought out of this native metal; but invariably we have been obliged to say adieu to these tantalizing game preserves. To work them was too costly. "One or two more such victories," said Pyrrhus the Epirot, "and I am a gone 'coon." And five discoveries of gold mines in Ireland are supposed to be as ruinous as two potato famines. In California there have been evidences not to be misunderstood that, let the gold be as plentiful as the periodical romances state it to be, nevertheless the exhaustibility of that gold which could be *worked profitably* was indicated not only as

certain, but as very near. This term, when approached too nearly, has again been thrown to a distance in several cases by fortunate and critical discoveries of other gold more accessible (as recently at Mariposa). But, whenever I read of men digging down to depths of sixty or seventy feet, I know by that one fact that the general reports, describing gold as a thing to be picked up for stooping, must be fraudulent fables, circulated on behalf of men and on the instigation of men who have houses to let, building-ground to sell, and "water privileges" to mortgage. No man would patiently be digging to vast depths who knew that others generally won their gold as easily as a man digs up potatoes, unless he also knew that such enviable prizes were sown as thinly as twenty-thousand-pound prizes in our English lotteries of the last generation.

Here, then, is the first thing to pause upon, namely, that, however "handy" this gold may lie in California or in Australia, however "sweetly" it may work off for those meritorious vagabonds who first break ground in the virgin fields, one thing is undeniable: that the course of further advance will not be upwards from good to better, but downwards from good, or very good, or charming, to decent, to rather bad, and lastly to disgusting. This is a very ugly fact; and the cunning amongst the workers, or rather amongst those who have something to sell amongst workers, attempt to break the force of this fact by urging that as yet the aids of science and machinery have not been applied to the case; so that any advantage which is now possessed by the vagabonds must soon be greater. That is true; past

denying it is that concert, and combination, and the resources of capital, will tell upon the gold-fields, and reduce the labor, which already is reduced by comparison with other gold-fields. Certainly, in the first stage of all, the progress will, by means of machinery, lie from good to better. But that momentary period of success will not avail to alter or to hide the ugly truth, that in all future stages — that is, in every stage *subsequent* to that in which the gold is found upon the surface — the inverse course must take place; that is, not from good to better, but from good to something continually worse. What is it that ultimately and irresistibly determines the value of gold? Why is it, for instance, that in modern times gold has generally ranged at about fifteen times the value, weight for weight, of silver? Is it, as ignorant people fancy, because there is fifteen times as much silver in the market of the world as there is of gold? Not at all, my poor benighted friend. It is because any given quantity of gold, say a hundred weight, requires fifteen times as much labor (or, more comprehensively, fifteen times as much capital) to bring it to market than an equal quantity of silver; and nothing will permanently alter that ratio but what alters the quantity of labor involved in one or the other; and nothing can permanently reduce the value of gold but what reduces the cost of bringing it to market. Now, I defy any vagabond whatever, whether old vagabond of California, or young vagabond of Australia, or younger vagabond of Owhyee, or most young vagabond of South America, to deny that his labor is at the best (that is, is most productive) when it is starting. His first crop

of gold is taken off the surface, as with us poor old women and children are hired at sixpence a day to pick stones off the land. Next comes the ploughman. It begins to be hard work, my friend, that ploughing for gold. And finally comes the sinking of shafts, and going down for hours into mephitic regions of carbonic acid gas, and after damp, etc. Neither is there any dispensation from this necessity of going downwards from bad to worse, except in the single case of crushing quartz. Machinery must prodigiously facilitate that labor; and so long as the quartz holds out, that advantage will apparently last. But this quartz must, I suspect, be one of the rare prizes in the lottery; and amongst quartz itself, as amongst vagabonds, there will be a better and a worse. And the signs of these differences will soon become familiar, and the best will be taken first; and thus here again the motion forward will be from bad to worse.

But now, as I can afford to be liberal, and leave myself ample means, in Yankee phrase, to "whip" the vagabonds, after all, let me practise the graceful figure of concession. I will concede, therefore, what most vehemently I doubt, that, for a few years, these new gold-fields should work so kindly as seriously to diminish the cost of producing marketable gold. In that case, mark what will follow. You know the modern doctrine of rent, reader? Of course you do, and it would be presumption in me to doubt your knowing it. But still, for the sake of a foolish caprice that haunts me, suffer me to talk to you as if you did *not* know the doctrine of rent.[4] I will state it in as brief a compass as perhaps is possible

In a new colony, having a slender population, the natural order in which the arable land is taken up must be this: in the first stage of the process none but the best land will be cultured; which land let us class as No. 1. In the second stage, when population will have expanded, more wheat, and therefore more land, being wanted, the *second* best will be brought into culture; and this we will call No. 2. In the third stage, No. 3 will be used. And so onwards; nor can there reasonably be any deviation from this order, unless through casual error, or else because occasionally an inferior soil may compensate its intrinsic inferiority by the extrinsic advantage of lying nearer to a town, or nearer to a good road, or to a navigable river, etc. By way of expressing the graduations of quality upon this scale, suppose we interpret them by corresponding graduations of price: No. 1, for the production of a given quantity (no matter what), requires an outlay of twenty shillings; No. 2, for the same quantity, requires twenty-five shillings; and No. 3, which is very perverse land indeed, requires thirty shillings. Now, because twenty shillings paid the full cost of No. 1, then, as soon as the twenty-five shillings land is called for by the growing population, since in the same market all wheat of equal quality must bear the same price, which price is here twenty-five shillings, it follows that a surplus five shillings arises on No. 1 beyond what the cost of culture required. For the same reason, when No. 3 is called for, the price (regulated of necessity by the *most* costly among the several wheats) rises to thirty shillings. This is now the price for the whole, and therefore for No. 1. Con-

sequently, upon this wheat there is now a surplus of ten shillings beyond what the culture required; and upon No. 2, for the same reason, there is a surplus of five shillings. What becomes of this surplus? It constitutes RENT. And, amongst other corollaries, these two follow: first, that the lowest quality of land under culture, the last in the descending scale, pays no rent; and, secondly, that this lowest quality determines the price for the whole; and the successive development of advantages for the upper qualities, as the series continues to expand, always expresses itself in successive increments of rent. As here, if No. 4 were taken up at thirty-five shillings, then rent would immediately commence on No. 3, which would pay as rent the difference between thirty and thirty-five shillings, namely, five shillings. No. 2 would now pay ten shillings, and No. 1 (I am happy, on its owner's account, to announce) would pay fifteen shillings.

Well, this is that famous doctrine of RENT, which drew after it other changes, so as, in fact, to unsettle nearly all the old foundations in political economy. And that science had in a manner to pass through the Insolvent Court, and begin the world again upon a very small remainder of its old capital. What I wish to observe upon it in this place is, that this doctrine takes effect, not merely upon arable land, but also upon all mines, quarries, fisheries, etc. All these several organs of wealth involve within themselves a graduation of advantages, some yielding more, some less, some still less, on the same basis of cost. Now, before California entered the gold-market, to what quarter did Europe look for her

chief supply of gold? Ancient gold, melted down, — some of it, no doubt, gold that had furnished toilet equipages to Semiramis, and chains of decoration to Nimrod or the Pharaohs, — entered largely into the market. But for new gold, innocent gold, that had never degraded itself by ministering to acts of bribery and corruption, we looked chiefly to Russia. I remember an excellent paper, some four years back, on these Russian gold-mines in the chains of the Ural Mountains. It was in a French journal of great merit, namely, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; and, to the best of my remembrance, it reported the product of these mines as being annually somewhere about four millions sterling. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the whole of this product rested on the same basis of cost.

There can be no doubt that the case which I have just imagined as to wheat had its exemplification in these gold-mines. No doubt there are many numbers in the scale which are not worked at all, nor could be profitably worked, unless science should discover less costly modes of working them. But, even as things now are, with many parts of the scale as yet undeveloped, it is certain that a considerable range of numbers, in respect of costliness, is already under culture. Suppose these (as in the wheat case) to be Nos. 1, 2, 3. Then, if California or Australia should succeed in seriously diminishing the cost of producing gold, the first evidence of such a revolution would show itself in knocking off No. 3 in the Ural mines. Should the change continue, and in the same direction, it would next knock off No. 2. And, of the whole Ural machinery, only

No. 1 would at length survive; or, in other words, only that particular mine, or particular chamber of a mine, which worked under the highest natural advantages, producing a given weight of gold at a cost lower than any other section of the works; producing, suppose, an ounce of gold at the cost of thirteen ounces of silver, when elsewhere the same quantity cost fourteen ounces, fourteen and a half, etc. Always, therefore, any *bonâ fide* action of California upon the cost of gold would show itself, first of all, in a diminishing supply from Russia.[5] But, then, for a considerable time, this increased supply from California, having Russia to pull against, would so far neutralize and counteract any sensible impression that otherwise it might produce in Christendom. This would happen even if the product of California had really been ten millions sterling for the first three years, and fifteen millions for 1850; that is, forty-five millions in all. According to my own view, as already explained, it is not likely that California could reduce the cost of gold, except for the first year or two; after which the cost would travel the other way, not by decrements, but by increments, sure, if slow. No greatly-increased quantity of gold could continue to flood the gold market, unless the cost were seriously reduced. The market of Europe would repel it; and this discouragement would reäct upon the motives of the productive body in California. But, were it otherwise, and supposing the cost reduced by eight per cent., or, in round terms, from its present mint price in London, to seventy shillings an ounce, a stimulus would be thus applied to the consumption of gold for various

purposes, which, in defiance of the lowered natural price, would quicken and inflame its market price. It is clear, from what has already happened in the United States and in France, that gold would enter more largely into the currencies of nations. It is probable, also, that a very large quantity, in the troubled condition of the political atmosphere throughout Europe for many years to come, will be absorbed by the hoarders of Christendom. Certainly I do not deny that unexpected discoveries of gold-fields, apparently inexhaustible, have been made, and almost simultaneously made, in regions as remote from each other as some of them are from ourselves. In several quarters of the American continent, both north and south, in the Sandwich Islands, in Africa, in New Zealand, and, more notoriously (as regards impressions on Europe), in Australia (namely, in the island of Van Diemen, but on a still larger scale in the continental regions of Victoria and Port Philip), gold is now presenting itself to the unarmed and uninstructed eye upon a scale that confounds the computations of avarice. "There is some trick in all this," is the natural thought of every man when first hearing the news. He wonders how it was that many people did not read such broadcast indications twenty years ago. That thought raises a shade of suspicion upon the very *facts in limine*. And next as to the *construction* of the facts, a misgiving comes over him that possibly there may be too much of a good thing. Many people remember the anecdote connected with the first importation of Brazilian emeralds into Europe. This happened at an Italian port, namely,

Leghorn; and the jeweller, in whose trade none but Oriental emeralds were as yet known, struck with admiration at the superior size of one offered to him by a stranger, bought it for a very high price, upon which the stranger, exulting in his good fortune, displayed a large trunk full of the same jewels. But, on this evidence of their abundance in certain regions of Brazil, the jeweller's price sank in the ratio of seven shillings to twenty-five guineas. At present, however, the public mania travels in an opposite direction. The multiplication of gold is to go on at a rate accelerated beyond the dreams of romance; and yet, concurrently with this enormous diffusion of the article, its exchangeable value is in some incomprehensible way to be steadily maintained. This delusion is doubtless but partially diffused. But another, equally irreflective, seems to prevail generally, namely, that, under any circumstances whatever, and travelling towards whatever result, the discovery must prove a glorious one in respect to the interests of the human race. And the rumor of other and other similar discoveries, in far distant regions, equally sudden, and equally promising to be inexhaustible, is hailed as if it laid open to us some return of a Saturnian age. *Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.* I, on the contrary, view this discovery as in any event almost neutral with respect to human prosperity, but in some possible events as likely to be detrimental. Fighting, with Mr. Cobden's permission, will go on for millions of years yet to come; and, in pure sympathy with the grander interests of human nature, every person who reads what lies written a little below the

surface will say (as *I* say), God forbid that it should not. In that day when war should be prohibited, or made nearly impossible, man will commence his degeneration. But if we change not (as change we never shall) in respect to our fighting instincts, we shall change, if the gold fable prospers, a good deal as to the fashion of our arms. Like Ashantees, not a corporal nor a private sentinel but will have a golden hilt to his sword, and a golden scabbard. Still, as people to be plundered by marauders in the nights succeeding to a great battle, we shall not rate much higher. A pound of gold, more or less, will make little difference. "I consider it no object," will be said by the plunderer. And, even if buried in a golden coffin, we shall not be more worth looking after by the resurrection-man; but on a morning parade, under a bright sun, we shall be far prettier to look at. Such would be the upshot if the gold fable were realized.

Seriously, let us calculate the probable and the possible in the series of changes. What I infer from the whole review, taken in combination, is, that in one half the anticipations in respect to the revolutions at hand are vague and indeterminate, and in the other half contradictory. One may gather, from the arguments and the exultations taken together, that some dim idea is entertained of the California supplies uniting with the previous supplies (from Russia and Borneo especially), and jointly terminating in the result of making gold in the first plentiful, and then (as an imaginary consequence) cheap in relation to all other commodities. In this one reads the usual gross superstition as to the interaction of

supply and demand. The dilemma which arises is this: California does, or does not, produce her gold at a diminished cost. If she does *not*, no abundance or redundance could be more than transitory in its effect of cheapness; since the more she sold on the terms of selling cheaper, and producing no cheaper at all, which is the supposition, the more she would be working for her own ruin. But, on the other hand, if she *does* produce at a diminished cost, which is the only ground of cheapness that can last, then she drives Russia effectually out of the market — No. 3, 2, 1, in the inverse order illustrated above; and the effect of her extra supplies is simply to fill up a *vacuum* which she herself has created. At least that will be the final effect to the extent of five millions sterling per annum. But if she and Australia jointly should *really* supply more than this sum, it does not follow that, because produced at a lower cost, this *extra supply* will command an *extra* market. The demand for gold is limited by the fixed and traditional uses to which it is applied. Mr. Joe Smith, the prophet of the Mormons, delivered it to his flock, as his own private and prophetic crotchet, that the true use of gold, its ultimate and providential function on this planet, would turn out to be the paving of streets and high-roads. But we poor non-Mormonites are not so far advanced in philosophy as all that; and, unless we could simultaneously pave our roads with good intentions, which (it is well known) are all ordered for another place, we have reason to fear that the trustees of every road, the contractors and the paviers upon it, would abscond nightly with as much high-road as they laid down in

the day. There are at this moment three openings, and perhaps no more, for an enlarged use of gold, in the event of its becoming materially cheaper. Many nations would extend the use of gold in their currencies. Secondly, the practice of hoarding — once so common, and in Oriental lands almost universal, but in Europe greatly narrowed by the use of paper currencies, and by the growing security of property — will for many years revive extensively under the action of two causes: first, under the general political agitation of Europe; and, secondly, under the special doctrines of communism, so avowedly friendly to spoliation and public robbery. *La propriété — c'est le vol*, is a signal held aloft for all Christendom to take care of their pockets. The fine old miser, therefore, of ancient days, brooding night and day over his buried gold, will again revolve upon us, should gold really become cheap. Finally, the embellishment of human persons by gold trinkets, ornaments, and the more lavish use of gilding in the decoration of houses, furniture, etc., would further enlarge the new demand. But all this only in the case of a real cheapness. And, even if *that* were realized (whereas hitherto there are no signs of it), this unfortunate check to the extended use of gold would inevitably arise intermittingly: the diminished cost of production, by the supposition, reduces the price of gold; that is, reduces the *natural* price. But, in the mean time, every *extra* call for gold, on the large scales supposed, would instantly inflame the *market* price of gold, and virtually cancel much of the new advantage. This counteraction would again narrow the use of gold. That narrowing

would again lower the market price of gold. Under that lowering, again, the extra use of gold would go ahead. Again the extra cheapness would disappear, and consequently the motive to an enlarged use. And we should live in the endless alternations, hot fits and cold fits, of an intermitting fever.

But, on *my* view, there will arise that preliminary bar to such a state which I have already explained. In the earliest stage of these new gold workings, one and all, the result will be this: a tendency to *lower* the producing cost of gold; and this tendency will, in the second stage, be stimulated by the aids of science; and thus, finally, if the tendency could act long enough, the price *would* be lowered in the gold markets of the world. But this is an impossibility, because, before such an effect could be accomplished, the third stage of the new diggings would reverse the steps, tending continually to *increase* the cost of gold, as the easy surface-gathering was exhausted. The fourth stage would recede still further from the early cheapness, as the mining descended, and had to fight with the ordinary difficulties of mines; and the fifth stage would find the reader and myself giving up all thoughts of sporting gold tables and chairs, and contentedly leaving such visions to those people who (according to the old saying) are "born with a gold spoon in their mouths."

ON THE FINAL CATASTROPHE OF THE GOLD-DIGGING MANIA.

So long as California, and California exclusively, was concerned in this portentous craze, there were

two drawbacks, upon any eventual ruin to be anticipated (come when it would), in so far as it could affect ourselves. First, there was this drawback—that the bubble was not by two thirds[6] upon so large a scale as it has been since Australia became a party to the mania; consequently, in that proportion the ruin from the final explosion of the bubble promised to be less. Secondly, the people concerned in the Californian affair were not chiefly from Great Britain. By a large majority, they were people from the United States; some being Yankees, that is to say, Northern Americans, from the New England States (namely, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, etc.); but more being from the central states of Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Ohio, etc. Generally speaking, however, the Californian population represents adequately the activities of the earth. It is a *cosmical* population, drafted from every climate and region, that, having within itself the stirring impulses of progress and adventurous industry, happens also to have the advantage of easy access to maritime districts, and the means of nautical emigration. The final crash will, therefore, to us English, be far ampler *now* than it could have been under the original restriction to the stage of California; not merely through the far larger development of the evil, but also through the more immediate connection of the chief sufferers with ourselves. What shape, then, will the crash assume? Or, how am I entitled to talk of *any* crash, or so fluently to characterize this popular rush to the gold diggings as a "craze," a "bubble," and a "mania"?

The reasons are not far to seek. They are plain

and obvious. I will state them; and if any reader can reply to them without practising evasions, and without forging facts, let him do so. I confess that, if mere authority of position and audacity of assertion in the public journals ought to have any weight against blank force of logic and inexorable facts of experience, I myself should have consented to be silenced oftentimes when I had not been convinced. But in every one of these journals I read such monstrous oversights as to the permanent conditions of the question, that I am not summoned to any deferential treatment of the adverse views. If, in arguing the merits of a particular course through a difficult navigation, my antagonist begins by ignoring a visible rock lying right ahead, it is for *him* to explain such an oversight; and, until he does explain it, my right it is to spend very little ceremony upon the circumstantialities of his arguments.

The public journals of this island, whether literary or political, have almost monotonously welcomed the large discoveries of gold, as if necessarily, *primâ facie*, and without further discussion, subjects of universal congratulation to the human race. And it is evident, from the language used in many instances, that excess or superfluity is, in the judgment of these journals, not an affection incident in the case, not an element that can ever enter into the logic of the estimate. Whereas, on the contrary, I assert that no product whatsoever of this earth, be it animal, mineral, or vegetable, but is liable to most pernicious excess, — excess embarrassing, or by possibility ruinous, to the prosperity of human industry; excess confounding to human foresight.

Everything, without exception, is liable to this ruinous reäction from excess; and beyond almost anything else gold is in that predicament.

There are many things which, though otherwise susceptible of such an excess, are able for a long time to evade its inconveniences, by virtue of their own variable flexibility in applying themselves to human purposes. The scale of their application is often so elastic, narrowing or expanding according to circumstances, that the danger of excess is for *them* permanently thrown to a distance. Iron, for example, is interchangeable at this day for so many purposes with wood, that, long after the margin for a large *extra* use had been exhausted within the field of its own regular applications, it would find another *extra* margin by trespassing within the field ordinarily occupied by wood, or by brick, or by marble. A wooden house was sent out to St. Helena for Napoleon; but, at this day, the ready-made houses sent out from New York and London to California are chiefly of iron. So again of ships, of light bridges, of gates, of fences, of balconies, etc. Wood and iron will probably for generations relieve their own superfluities by alternate encroachments on each other, according to the alternate advantages which each material, under shifting circumstances, may happen to obtain in the market. Wheat, again, in seasons of extra cheapness, when oats have happened to be unusually dear, has usurped to a considerable extent upon the ordinary oatmeal diet of a whole peasantry. It is not common, but it does sometimes happen, that wheaten flour is substituted for oatmeal; similar substitutions are without end;

so that excess of production is a point not very easily reached in the case of many articles. A very large majority benefit, in the event of over-production, not merely by their own independent capacities of expansion, but also by the corresponding capacities of contraction in some other article which ordinarily has been employed as a substitute.[7]

But now, without further delay, let us come to the possible expansions in the use of gold; for, substantially, that is the sole question at issue. Gold is so enormously more costly, bulk for bulk, than all other articles of luxury and ornament, excepting only jewels and pearls, that it cannot possibly benefit by the second mode of expansion here noticed, namely, by some other article contracting or retiring in order to make room for it, but solely by the alternate mode, namely, by the extension of its own separate use, according to the ordinary mode of using it. The plain, flagrant, and undeniable fact meets us upon every road that connects human calculations with the subject, that the whole frenzy of gold-digging will be suddenly pulled up — in one month will be frozen into abrupt extinction — by mere failure — blank failure — of demand. So far as its own proper use can be enlarged, so far there is an opening for an extension of the demand; but as to any substitutional use, *that* is inconceivable.

This mortal wound to the whole bestial scene of sensuality and robbery (robbery, for such it is, consequent upon the helplessness of the government) has hidden itself, naturally enough, from the poor, illiterate vagabonds that compose the plundering army of diggers. And it is possible to excuse some

blindness upon such a prospect, even in educated people, under the misleading influence of such a case as this. A river, suppose at a mile distance, has been swelling for many days, and at length is overflowing its banks. The flood, continually increasing, travels hourly in the direction of your own house. But, before it can touch that house in the slightest degree, it must fill up to the very brim a deep valley which is interposed between that river and the house. So long, now, as this intervening valley wants one hair's breadth of being full, there is not a vestige of any warning given to you that an awful calamity is at hand. At noon, suppose, exactly as the clock strikes twelve, the overwhelming deluge is pouring in at every window and door within its level. Sixty seconds before the clock struck, you could have sworn that every window-sill was dry as dust. Not otherwise (what by accident and what by uncalculating ignorance) the whole phenomena of the gold case have darkened themselves to the unreflecting observers. There were *many* valleys to be filled up before the overflowing river could reach our own unalarmed house. There were, first of all, the *hoarders*, a class most numerous under Oriental despotisms, but, even in Christian Europe, not at all an insignificant class; since, when the sovereign does *not* plunder, the lord paramount over vassals often *does*. The year 1848 armed, as against the menaces of communism, many millions of hoarders — say thirty millions at ten pounds sterling a man. That would account for the burial of three hundred millions sterling. Then make a corresponding allowance for Asiatic hoarders But as all Asiatic populations

(reserving only Japan, China, and Hindostan) are miserably slender, and also, man for man, are poorer, allow, perhaps, one hundred millions sterling for this class. Thirdly, allow for the sovereign hoarders, namely, the several governments in Europe, who, under some strange misconception of the case, have taken occasion to build up a gold currency at the very moment when ordinary foresight should have proclaimed to every nation the necessity of converting any gold articles in their possession into glass, stone, marble, copper,— anything, in short, that was not under absolute judicial sentence of depreciation. All these allowances may amount to five hundred and fifty or six hundred millions. These millions constitute the valley that had to be filled to the brim before the surplus could enter ruinously into your own house. How far off may be that consummation, I do not pretend to say. Certainly not very far. The Russian, the Californian, and the Australian, added to some other more trivial contributions from parts of Africa, from the island of Borneo, &c., cannot now yield much under seventy-five millions sterling per annum. About one hundred and fifty millions, therefore, are added biennially; and four such biennial contributions would produce the entire sum wanted, as the vacuum to be filled up. But already, some years ago, this filling up had commenced; and previously to *that*, the stock of gold locked up in ornamental articles was already very large. Upon *any* calculation, near indeed we must stand, fatally near, to the epoch at which, pretty suddenly, all further demand for gold must cease.

Upon you it is— you the opposers of this view—

that the *onus* rests of showing into what shape the demand for gold will transmigrate, when once it shall have been thoroughly satisfied and gorged in all shapes which hitherto it has assumed. How romantically impossible any new shape must be, will appear from this one consideration. At the time when the Californian mines were discovered, how was it that the world got on as respected its gold wants? Tell me, you that dispose so lightly of the whole threatening catastrophe, was or was not the produce of the Russian Ural Mountains, added to other more trivial sources, sufficient (when combined with the vast *accumulated* stock long ago in the universal gold markets) for the total purposes of this terraqueous globe? Was it, or was it not? No evasions, if you please. If it was — hearken to the dilemma which besieges you — then how are you simple enough to suppose that the same planet which found six or seven millions as much as its annual necessities could absorb, should suddenly become able to digest seventy-five millions? If, on the other hand, it was *not* sufficient,— if you endeavor to explain some small fraction of the marvel by alleging that, in fact, the Ural product of gold was not measured by the capacity of the earth to absorb, but by the limited power of Russia to produce,— then I demand why it was that the Ural price of gold did not steadily increase. Had more gold been wanted by the earth, more could readily have been furnished by Russia, upon a very small advance in the price. Precisely because this advance of price was not forthcoming,— that is to say, precisely because the supply was fully up to the demand,— we obtain the clearest

evidence that all the Californian and Australian gold has spent itself upon no necessity of ordinary annual recurrence, upon no demand that can last, but upon filling up extraordinary chasms that cannot repeat themselves,—such, for instance, as replacing silver or paper currencies with gold; and, therefore, that, when that service is fulfilled,—which is the only service of a large national nature that can still be in any degree unsatisfied,—thenceforward, of mere necessity, we descend again into that condition of limited demand which for years had been met sufficiently by the Russian supply of five or six millions sterling per annum.

For, now, if you question this, and fancy that the Australian supply of gold is, by some unspeakable process, to create a demand for itself, tell us how, and illustrate the shape which this new demand will take. Do not fence with the clouds, but come down to earth. You cannot deny that, two years ago, when we had no Australian gold, the goldsmiths of this earth did very well without it. Say not a word, therefore, of the Californian gold; every ounce of Australian gold, were there no other addition, should logically be so much more than is wanted. How, then, do you suppose that it is eventually to be disposed of? Because, until we know this, we cannot pretend to know whether it is a laughing matter or a crying matter. As to fancying that Australian gold will continue to force a market for itself, you cannot seriously suppose that a man, who never thought of buying a gold watch or other trinket when such articles were made of Uralian gold, will suddenly conceive a fancy for such an article, simply

because the gold is raised in an English colony, and, though no cheaper, has, by its redundant production, ceased to impress the imagination. If it were really true that gold, because it was dug up in extra quantities, could therefore command an extra market, why not apply the same theory to iron, to coals, or to calico? A comfortable doctrine it would be for the English manufacturer, that, in proportion as he increased his production, he could extend his market; that is, could extend his market precisely as he overstocked it. And yet, of all things, gold could least benefit by such a forced increase. Calico might be substituted for linen cloth, iron in many applications for wood, coals for turf; but gold can be substituted for nothing. If a man resolves to substitute a gold watch for a silver one, surely his motive for doing so is not because gold is produced in one latitude or one longitude, having previously been produced in another. It is very clear that, long before California or Australia had been heard of, no man who wished for a gold watch had any difficulty in obtaining it, if only he could *pay* for it; and that little part of the ceremony, I presume, he must submit to even now.

Why, yes — certainly he must pay for it; but here dawns upon us the real and sincere fancy of the advantage worked by the new gold diggings,— some confused notion arises that he will pay less. But, then, exactly in that proportion falls away the motive for undergoing the preternatural labor of the diggings. Even this, however, will not avail; for so costly is gold, under any conceivable advantages for cheapening it, that, even at one half or one quarter of the

price, gold trinkets would not come within the reach of any class so much more extended than the class now purchasing such articles, as to meet within a thousand degrees the increased produce of gold. In articles of absolute homely use, it is clear that gold never can be substituted for less costly metals. Ornamental gold articles, on the other hand, are in their total possible range (considering that they do not perish from year to year) ludicrously below the scale which could do anything for the relief of our Australian gold. It is not, therefore, only that the monstrous and hyperbolical excess of gold, as measured against any conceivable use or application of gold, would terminate in forcing down the price of gold to a point at which it would no longer furnish any encouragement whatever to the gold-digger; but, even at this abject price (or at any price whatever), gold would cease to command a market. It is natural enough that the poor simpletons who are at the diggings, or are hurrying thither like kites to carrion, should be the dupes of the old fantastic superstition which invests the precious metals with some essential and indefeasible divinity. But the conductors of great national journals should have known better; and, if they do really entertain the conceit that gold must always be gold (that is, must have some mysterious value apart and separate from any use which it can realize), in that case they ought to have traced the progress of a gold nugget, weighing, suppose, a pound, through the markets of the world, under the condition that all their markets are plethorically overstocked.

Some such case has been pressed, apparently, on

the attention of men lately, and the answer — the desperate answer which I understand to have been extorted — was this: it was contended that the mere market for female ornaments throughout Hindostan would suffice to provide a vent for the Australian surplus through many years to come. Now, this allegation might easily be disposed of in one sentence, namely, thus: If the Hindoo women are able and willing to pay the existing price for gold,— namely, from seventy to seventy-five shillings per ounce,— why did they *not* pay it long before Californian digging arose? Russia would *always* have furnished them gold at that price. How is it, then, that they are in want of gold ornaments? Russia would gladly have received an order for an annual excess of two million ounces. The dilemma is apparently not to be evaded; either these Hindoo women cannot afford the price of gold ornaments, or, on the other hand, they *have* afforded it, and are already possessed of such ornaments. However, that I may not be said to have evaded any possible argument, let us review the statistics of the case. First of all, it is *Hindoo* women of whom we are speaking; and properly, therefore, twenty millions of Mahometans — that is, ten millions of females — should be subtracted from the population of India. But waive this, and call the total population one hundred millions. I distrust these random computations altogether; but let that pass. The families, therefore, may count for fifty millions. Now, more than one half of the human race are under the age of fifteen. It is true that, in a country where many a woman marries at twelve, the age for ornaments must be dated from a much

earlier period. Yet, again, as decay commences at an age correspondingly even more premature, possibly it would not be unfair to deduct one half as the sum of those who fall below or rise above the age for personal ornaments. However, on this and other distinct grounds, deduct only ten millions; and suppose fifteen millions of the remaining forty to be already in possession of such ornaments. There remain, therefore, twenty-five millions as the supposed available market for gold. Now, according to what I remember of Dr. Buchanan's very elaborate statistics applied to the Mysore territory, and taking this as the standard, I should hold one ounce of gold to be a large allowance for each individual female; for, when alloyed into jeweller's gold, this would be equal to four ounces' weight. On that basis, the market of India would take off twenty-five million ounces of gold. But, if we are to believe the current reports, within the last twelve months the Australian diggings produced about fifteen million ounces of gold, reckoned locally at nearly seventy shillings an ounce. Next year, naturally, the product will be much larger; and in one year, therefore, on the most liberal allowance, all India would be adequately supplied with gold by Australia alone; and, as gold does not perish, this would not be a *recurrent* demand. Once satisfied, that call would be made no more; once filled, that chasm would not again be empty. And what is to become of the Australian gold in the year succeeding? Are we to have spades and ploughshares manufactured of gold, or how? But away with such trifling! One might draw amusement from human folly in cases that were less urgent;

but, under circumstances as they really stand, and hurrying, as we actually find ourselves, down a precipitous descent that allows no time for looking forward nor escape in looking back, which of us could be childish enough to dwell upon the comic aspects of the calamity? And these two results will very soon unfold themselves: first this, namely, that without reference to the depreciation of gold,—not stopping to ask upon what scale *that* would move, suppose it little, or suppose it much,—alike in any result the possibility of finding new extension of market for gold, under the exhaustion of all conceivable extensions applied to its uses in the arts, must, by such flying steps, approach its final limit, that in that way separately a headlong depreciation must overtake us without warning.[8]

Secondly, another depreciation, from another quarter, will arise to complicate and to intensify this primary depreciation. The sudden cessation of the *demand*, from mere defect of further uses and purposes, will of itself establish a sudden lock in the clockwork of the commercial movement. But of a nature altogether different, and more gigantic in its scale, will be the depreciation from inhuman and maniacal excesses.

I add a few paragraphs as my closing remarks; and, in order to mark their disconnection with each other, I number them with figures. They all grow out of the subject, but do not arise consecutively out of each other.

1. On this day (Thursday, Dec. 16, 1852), being the day when I put a close to these remarks, have just received the *Times* newspaper for Monday,

December 13, 1852, and in that paper I observe two things: 1st (on col. 1 of p. 5), that the *San Francisco Herald* reports the exportation of gold as amounting probably to five and a half millions of dollars for the month then current (November); and that this is given as likely to be the representative export, is plain from what precedes; for, says the *Herald*, "The production, instead of falling off (as croakers long ago predicted), seems to be steadily on the increase." Here we find a yearly export of more than fourteen millions sterling announced joyfully as something that may be depended upon. And, in the midst of such insane exultation, of course we need not be surprised that "a *croaker*" means — not the man that looks forward with horror to the ruin contingent upon such a prophecy being realized — but upon him who doubts it. Secondly, I observe (col. 2 of p. 3) that in a brief notice of the translation published by Mr. Hankey, jun., from M. Leon Faucher's "Remarks on the Production of the Precious Metals," there is extracted one paragraph, the first which has ever met my eye, taking the same view as myself of the dangers ahead, though in a tone far below the urgency of the case. "I can hardly agree," says Mr. Hankey, "that there is so little ground for alarm as to a depreciation in the value of gold, in consequence of the late discoveries." He then goes on to assign reasons for his own fears. But, as he actually allows a considerable weight amongst the grounds of his fears to the few hundred thousands of sovereigns sent out to Australia, with the view of meeting the momentary deficiency in coin, and which (as he rightly observes) will soon

be returning upon us and aggravating the domestic glut, anybody taking *my* view will naturally infer the exceeding inadequacy of his fears to the real danger. The sovereign will prove a mere drop in the ocean.[9] On this same day, I have read letters from Australia, announcing further vast discoveries of gold, namely, at a distance of about twenty miles from Adelaide. The same accounts confirm what I cited earlier in this paper as the probable annual amount from Australia — *previously to this last discovery* — as reaching fifty-one or fifty-two millions sterling *per annum*, by showing that in eleven months, namely, from October, 1851, to September, 1852, the export shipped from *Victoria alone* had been ten millions sterling. Between California and Australia, supposing the present rates of production to continue, within three years the earth would be deluged with gold. It is true that a sudden crash will intercept the consummation, but in a way that will work ruin to more nations than one.

2. Why is it that we speak with mixed astonishment and disgust, horror and laughter struggling for the mastery, of the mania which possessed the two leaders of civilization (so by all the world they are entitled), England and France, London and Paris, about one hundred and thirty years back? The South Sea Bubble, amongst the English in 1718–19 — the Mississippi Bubble amongst the French in 1720 — wherefore is it that we marvel at them? that we write books about them? that we expose them in colors of pity and scorn to our children of this generation? In simple truth, we are as gross fools as our ancestors; and indeed grosser. For, after

all, the loss was local and partial at that time. Not one family in ten thousand suffered materially; but, as things are now proceeding, none will escape, for the ruin will steal upon us in a form not at first perceived. *It is already stealing upon us.* But why, I ask, would any prudent man, any reflecting man, have seen through the bubbles of our ancestors? My answer is this: Such a man would have scented the fraud in the very names. The Mississippi!—the South Sea! Why, the lies of Falstaff were not more gross, or more overflowing with self-refutation. The Mississippi was at this time a desert, requiring a century, at least, and a vast impulse of colonization, to make it capable of any produce at all. The South Sea was a solitary wilderness, from which (unless in blubber and spermaceti) not a hundred pounds' worth of any valuable commodity could have been exported. Both were mines of pure emptiness—not mines exhausted; there never had been anything to exhaust. And, in fact, I remember nothing in all comedy, or universal farce, that can match these two hoaxes upon London and Paris, unless it were a scene which I remember in one of Took's afterpieces. He introduces a political *quidnunc*, possessed by the Athenian mania of hunting eternally after some new thing. His name, if I recollect, is Gregory Gazette. And, in one scene, where some pecuniary fraud is to be executed, Sir Gregory is persuaded into believing that the Pope has, by treaty, consented to turn Protestant, upon being put into possession of Nova Zembla, and selected sections of Greenland. Was there anything less monstrous than this in the French or the English craze of 1718–20? Or is there anything

less monstrous in our present reliance on the Hindoo women for keeping up the price of gold?

3. I need not say, to any man who reflects, that fifty such populations as that of Hindostan, or even of Europe (which means a very different thing), would not interrupt the depreciation of gold, or retard it for two years, under the assumption of an influx on its present scale. M. Cavalier, a great authority in France on all questions of this nature, has supposed it possible that the depreciation might go down as far as fifty per cent. on its present price; though, why it should stop *there*, no man can guess. Even, however, at that price, or, in round expressions, costing forty shillings an ounce, it will yet be eight times the price of silver; and one moment's consideration will suggest to us the hopelessness of any material retardation to this fall, by any extended use of gold for decorations in dress, houses, etc., through the simple recollection, that all the enormous advantages of a price eight times lower have not availed to secure any further extension to the ornamental use of silver. Silver is much more beautiful than gold in combination with the other accompaniments of a table, such as purple and golden and amber-colored wines, light of candles, glass, etc. Silver is susceptible of higher workmanship; silver is worked much more cheaply; and yet, with five shillings an ounce to start from, instead of forty, services of silver plate are, even yet, in the most luxurious of cities, the rarest of domestic ornaments. One cause of this may be that silver, as a service for the dinner-table, finds a severe rival in the exquisite beauty of porcelain; but that rival it will continue to find; and, in

such a rivalship, gold would be beaten hollow by any one of the competitors, even if it had the advantage of starting on the same original level as to price.

4. But, finally, there occurs to you as a last resource, when dinner-services and Hindoo women are all out of the field, the *currencies* of the earth. Yes; there it is, you think, that the diggings will find their asylum of steady support. Unhappily, my reader, instead of support, through that channel it is that we shall receive our ruin. Were it not for currencies, nobody would be ruined but the diggers, and their immediate agents. But, as most of these were ruined at starting, they would at worst end as they began. The misery is, that most nations, misconceiving the result altogether, have already furnished themselves with gold currencies. These, on the mistake being discovered, will hurry back into the market. Then the glut will be prodigiously aggravated; but in that way only can the evil be in part evaded. If gold continued with ourselves to be a compulsory and statutable payment, and our funded proprietors were still paid in gold, every family would be ruined. For, if nominally these proprietors are but about three hundred thousand, we must remember that many a single proprietor, appearing only as one name, virtually represents tens of thousands — bankers, for instance — charitable institutions — insurance offices, etc. So wide a desolation could not by any device of man reach so vast a body of helpless interests. The first step to be taken would be to repeal the statute which makes gold a legal tender for sums above forty shillings; and, at the same time, to

rescind the mint regulations. The depreciation will not express itself openly, so long as these laws are in force. At this moment, in Staffordshire and Warwickshire, within the last six weeks, iron and coal have risen cent per cent. Part of the cause lies beyond a doubt in the depreciation of gold; and this would declare itself, were gold no longer current under legal coercion.

P. S., *written on January* 27, 1853. — More than a calendar month has elapsed since the proof of this article was sent to me. Two facts have transpired in the interval, namely, the return of the steamer called the Australian, confirming the romantic estimates previously received: the single colony of Victoria yielding, according to the careful interpretation of the London "Standard," at the present rate, twenty-five millions sterling per annum. The other noticeable fact is the general survey, on New-year's-day, by the "Times" *city* reporter, of the prospects for the current year, 1853. He pronounces that there is "no cloud" to darken our anticipations; or, if any, only through political convulsions, contingent, by possibility, on the crazy moneyed speculations afloat in Paris. The superfluous gold he supposes to be got rid of by various *investments*; though he himself notices the nugatoriness of any investment that simply shifts the gold from one holder to another. No possible investment can answer any purpose of even *mitigating* the evils in arrear, unless in so far as it does really and substantially *absorb* the gold, that is, *withdraw it from circu-*

lation by locking it up in some article of actual service in that identical form of gold. To invest, for instance, in the funds, is simply to transfer the gold from the buyer of the stock to the seller; and so of all other pretended "*investments*," unless really and truly they withdraw the gold from circulation and from commercial exchange. Meantime, the solitary hope is that the gold quarries may soon be exhausted.

NOTES.

NOTE 1. Page 199.

That is, by missionaries in their dictionaries of the Sandwich language: but formerly better known to sailors as that *Owhyhee* where Captain Cook was massacred.

NOTE 2. Page 201.

I quote from an abstract of the census in the *New York Journal of Commerce* for December 5, 1851, transmitted by an American friend before it had been published even in the Washington journals. This estimate does not include a vast extent of *watery* domains.

NOTE 3. Page 206.

"*Iniquity.*"—Naturally one might suppose that Lynch law would not be liable to much of downright injustice, unless through disproportionate severity in its punishments, considering how gross and palpable are the offences which fall within its jurisdiction. But the fact is otherwise. If with us in Europe the law, that superintends *civil* rights, works continual injustice by its cruel delays, so often announcing a triumph over oppression to an ear that has long been asleep in the grave; on the other hand, the Lynch code is always trembling by the brink of bloody wrong through the very opposite cause of its rapturous precipitance. A remarkable

case of this nature is reported in the Washington and New York journals of Christmas last. A man had been arrested on a charge of robbery in some obscure place two hundred miles from San Francisco. Reasons for doubt had arisen amongst the intelligent, and amongst consciences peculiarly tender, but not such reasons as would have much weight amongst an infuriated mob. Two gentlemen, a physician and a young lawyer, whose names should be glorified by history, made a sublime though fruitless effort, at great personal risk, to rescue the prisoner from the bigots who had prejudged him. Finally, however, he *was* rescued ; but, as may be supposed, in a place so slenderly peopled, with no result beyond that of gaining a little additional time — that is, so long as the hiding-place of the prisoner should remain undiscovered. Fortunately this time proved sufficient for the discovery of the real offender. He was taken at San Francisco, two hundred miles off. Luckily he confessed : and that took away all pretence for raising demurs. But so satisfied were some of the witnesses against the innocent prisoner with their own identification of the criminal — through his features, build of person, size, apparent age, and dress — that they resisted even the circumstantialities of the regular judicial confession. Some of these incredulous gentlemen mounted their horses, and rode off to San Francisco ; where, upon visiting the prison, to their extreme astonishment, they found a man who presented a mere duplicate and *fac simile* of the prisoner whom they had left behind. It is true that precipitancy would not often be misled into injustice by this specific error : but neither is this specific error the only one, by many a hundred, that might give a fatal turn to the sentence of a jury deciding by momentary and random gleams of probability.

NOTE 4. Page 211.

Very grievously I suspect myself here of plagiarism from Molière. In one of his plays, Mons. Y. says to Mons. X., "You understand Greek, I believe?" To which Mons. X. replies, "O, yes, I understand Greek perfectly. But have the goodness, my dear friend, to talk to me as if by chance I did *not* understand Greek."

NOTE 5. Page 215.

The supply furnished by Borneo, upon what data I know not, is often rated at one million sterling. So that the two great annual influxes of gold do not apparently exceed five millions sterling. But all this must give way, or must be greatly lowered in cost, before any great impression could be produced by California.

NOTE 6. Page 222.

"*Not by two thirds upon so large a scale.*"—It is in the last degree difficult to obtain any reports that can be relied on. In the absence of official returns, there is naturally an invitation held out to the double spirit of romance, moving its wings in an atmosphere of unlimited credulity, and also of furious self-interest, having an equal motive (though not the same motive) to exaggeration. I speak, therefore, as everybody *must* speak, under correction from better authorities, if any such shall come forward; although it must be still borne in mind that even official returns, supposing them fully organized, could do little more than apply a conjectural correction to those irregular transmissions of gold which, under various motives (sometimes of politic concealment, sometimes of ignorant distrust), are going on largely amongst a population so mixed and disorderly as that of Australia. Taking, however, such authorities as could be found, and collating them together, I had reason to estimate the Californian produce *annually* at about twenty-seven millions sterling, when California stood alone; and to estimate the *present* Australian produce at three times that amount, or very nearly one million sterling per week.

NOTE 7. Page 225.

And this in cases where the use or office of the article must be strictly vicarious and substitutional. But in large classes of things, as, for instance, children's toys, gifts of affection, parting memorials, ornaments for mantelpieces, or brackets, etc., a large range of substitution is possible when the function of the article may be totally different. A watch, for instance, may be presented by substitution for a fan; or a porcelain vase for a brace of pistols; or a crucifix for a pearl necklace.

NOTE 8. Page 284.

"*Without warning.*"—The mistake is to imagine that the retrogression must travel through stages corresponding to the movement in advance; but it is forgotten that, even if so — even upon that very assumption — the movement would *not* be leisurely, but, on the contrary, fearfully and frantically fast. What a storm-flight has been the forward motion of the gold development! People forget *that*. But they also forget altogether the other consideration, which I have suggested under the image of an interposing valley needing to be filled up; which necessity of course retarded for two or three years, and so long, therefore, masked and concealed the true velocity of the impending evil. If an enemy is obliged to move under ground in order to approach one's assailable points, during all this hidden advance, it is inevitable to forget the steps that are at once out of sight and inaudible.

NOTE 9. Page 286.

Mr. Hankey, meantime, happens to be governor of the bank, and that being so, his opinion will have weight. That is all I ask. In the tendencies we coincide: the only difference is as to the degree. And for *that* the Australian exports of gold will soon speak loudly enough.

CEYLON.*

THERE is in the science and process of colonization, as in every complex act of man, a secret philosophy — which is first suspected through results, and first expounded by experience. Here, almost more than anywhere else, nature works in fellowship with man. Yet all nature is not alike suited to the purposes of the early colonist: and all men are not alike qualified for giving effect to the hidden capacities of nature. One system of natural advantages is designed to have a long precedency of others; and one race of men is selected and sealed for an eternal preference in this function of colonizing to the very noblest of their brethren. As colonization advances, that ground becomes eligible for culture — that nature becomes full of promise — which in earlier stages of the science was *not* so; because the dreadful solitude becomes continually narrower under the accelerated diffusion of men, which shortens the *space* of distance — under the strides of nautical science, which shortens the *time* of distance — and under the eternal discoveries of civilization, which combat with ele-

* *Ceylon and its Capabilities.* By J. W. Bennett.

mentary nature. Again, in the other element of colonization, races of men become known for what they are; the furnace has tried them all; the truth has justified itself; and if, as at some great memorial review of armies, some solemn *armilustrum*, the colonizing nations, since 1500, were now by name called up, France would answer not at all; Portugal and Holland would stand apart with dejected eyes — dimly revealing the legend of *Fuit Ilium;* Spain would be seen sitting in the distance, and, like Judæa on the Roman coins, weeping under her palm-tree in the vast regions of the Orellana; whilst the British race would be heard upon every wind, coming on with mighty hurras, full of power and tumult, as some "hail-stone chorus,"* and crying aloud to the five hundred millions of Burmah, China, Japan, and the infinite islands, to make ready their paths before them. Already a ground-plan, or ichnography, has been laid down of the future colonial empire. In three centuries, already some outline has been sketched, rudely adumbrating the future settlement destined for the planet, some infant castrametation has been marked out for the future encampment of nations. Enough has been already done to show the course by which the tide is to flow; to prefigure for languages their proportions, and for nations to trace their distribution.

In this movement, so far as it regards man, in this machinery for sifting and winnowing the merits of races, there is a system of marvellous means, which by its very simplicity masks and hides from us the

* "Hail-stone Chorus." — *Handel's Israel in Egypt.*

wise profundity of its purpose. Oftentimes, in wandering amongst the inanimate world, the philosopher is disposed to say — this plant, this mineral, this fruit, is met with so often, not because it is better than others of the same family,— perhaps it is worse, — but because its resources for spreading and naturalizing itself are, by accident, greater than theirs. That same analogy he finds repeated in the great drama of colonization. It is not, says he pensively to himself, the success which measures the merit. It is not that nature or that providence has any final cause at work in disseminating these British children over every zone and climate of the earth. O, no! far from it! But it is the unfair advantages of these islanders, which carry them thus potently ahead. Is it so indeed? Philosopher, you are wrong. Philosopher, you are envious. You speak Spanish, philosopher, or even French. Those advantages which you suppose to disturb the equities of the case — were they not products of British energy? Those twenty-five thousands of ships, whose graceful shadows darken the blue waters in every climate — did they build themselves? That myriad of acres, laid out in the watery cities of docks — were they sown by the rain, as the fungus or the daisy? Britain *has* advantages at this stage of the race, which make the competition no longer equal — henceforwards it has become gloriously "unfair," — but at starting we were all equal. Take this truth from us, philosopher: that in such contests the power constitutes the title; the man that has the ability to go ahead is the man entitled to go ahead; and the nation that

can win the place of leader is the nation that ought to do so.

This colonizing genius of the British people appears upon a grand scale in Australia, Canada, and, as we may remind the else forgetful world, in the United States of America; which States are our children, prosper by our blood, and have ascended to an overshadowing altitude from an infancy tended by ourselves. But on the fields of India it is that our aptitudes for colonization have displayed themselves most illustriously, because they were strengthened by violent resistance. We found many kingdoms established, and to these we have given unity; and in process of doing so, by the necessities of the general welfare, or the mere instincts of self-preservation, we have transformed them to an empire, rising like an exhalation, of our own — a mighty monument of our own superior civilization.

Ceylon, as a virtual dependency of India, ranks in the same category. There also we have prospered by resistance; there also we have succeeded memorably where other nations memorably failed. Of Ceylon, therefore, now rising annually into importance, let us now (on occasion of this splendid book, the work of one officially connected with the island, bound to it also by affectionate ties of services rendered, not less than of unmerited persecutions suffered) offer a brief, but rememberable, account of Ceylon in itself, and of Ceylon in its relations, historial or economic, to ourselves.

Mr. Bennett says of it, with more or less of doubt, three things — of which any one would be sufficient to detain a reader's attention, namely, 1. That it is

the Taprobane of the Romans; 2. That it was, or has been thought to be, the Paradise of Scripture; 3. That it is "the most magnificent of the British *insular* possessions," or, in yet wider language, that it is an "incomparable colony." This last count in the pretensions of Ceylon is quite indisputable; Ceylon is in fact already, Ceylon is at this moment, a gorgeous jewel in the imperial crown; and yet, compared with what it may be, with what it will be, with what it ought to be, Ceylon is but that grain of mustard-seed which hereafter is destined to become the stately tree,* where the fowls of heaven will lodge for generations. Great are the promises of Ceylon, great already her performances. Great are the possessions of Ceylon, far greater her reversions. Rich she is by her developments, richer by her endowments. She combines the luxury of the tropics with the sterner gifts of our own climate. She is hot, she is cold. She is civilized, she is barbarous. She has the resources of the rich, and she has the energies of the poor.

But for Taprobane, but for paradise, we have a word of dissent. Mr. Bennett is well aware that many men in many ages have protested against the possibility that Ceylon could realize *all* the conditions involved in the ancient Taprobane. Milton, it is true, with other excellent scholars, has *insinuated* his belief that probably Taprobane is Ceylon; when our Saviour in the wilderness sees the great vision of Roman power, expressed, *inter alia*, by high officers of the Republic flocking to or from the gates of

* St. Mark 4: 31, 32.

Rome, and "embassies from regions far remote," crowding the Appian or the Emilian roads, some

> "From the Asian kings, and Parthian amongst these;
> From India and the golden Chersonese,
> And utmost Indian isle Taprobane;
> * * * * *
> Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed;"

it is probable, from the mention of this island Taprobane following so closely after that of the Malabar peninsula, that Milton held it to be the island of Ceylon, and not of Sumatra. In this he does but follow the stream of geographical critics; and, upon the whole, if any one island exclusively is to be received for the Roman Taprobane, doubt there can be none that Ceylon has the superior title. But, as we know that, in regions less remote from Rome, *Mona* did not always mean the Isle of Man, nor *Ultima Thule* uniformly the Isle of Skye or of St. Kilda,—so it is pretty evident that features belonging to Sumatra, and probably to other Oriental islands, blended (through mutual misconceptions of the parties, questioned and questioning) into one semi-fabulous object not entirely realized in any locality whatever. The case is precisely as if Cosmas Indicopleustes, visiting Scotland in the sixth century, should have placed the scene of any adventure in a town distant six miles from Glasgow and eight miles from Edinburgh. These we know to be irreconcilable conditions, such as cannot meet in any town whatever, past or present. But in such a case many circumstances might, notwithstanding, combine to throw a current of very strong suspicion upon

Hamilton as the town concerned. On the same principle, it is easy to see that most of those Romans who spoke of Taprobane had Ceylon in their eye. But that all had not, and, of those who really *had*, that some indicated by their facts very different islands, whilst designing to indicate Ceylon, is undeniable; since, amongst other imaginary characteristics of Taprobane, they make it extend considerably to the south of the line. Now, with respect to Ceylon, this is notoriously false; that island lies entirely in the northern tropic, and does not come within five (hardly more than six) degrees of the equator. Plain it is, therefore, that Taprobane, if construed very strictly, is an *ens rationis* made up by fanciful composition from various sources, and much like our own mediæval conceit of Prester John's country, or the fancies (which have but recently vanished) of the African river Niger, and the golden city Tombuctoo. These were lies; and yet, also, in a limited sense, they were truths. They were expansions often fabulous and impossible, engrafted upon some basis of fact by the credulity of the traveller, or subsequently by misconception of the scholar. For instance, as to Tombuctoo, Leo Africanus had authorized men to believe in some vast African city, central to that great continent, and a focus to some mighty system of civilization. Others, improving on that chimera, asserted that this glorious city represented an inheritance derived from ancient Carthage; here, it was said, survived the arts and arms of that injured state; hither across Bilidulgerid had the children of Phœnicia fled from the wrath of Rome; and the mighty phantom of him whose uplifted truncheon had

pointed its path to the carnage of Cannæ was still the tutelary genius watching over a vast posterity worthy of himself. Here was a wilderness of lies; yet, after all, the lies were but so many voluminous *fasciæ*, enveloping the mummy of an original truth. Mungo Park came, and the city of Tombuctoo was shown to be a real existence. Seeing was believing. And yet, if, before the time of Park, you had avowed a belief in Tombuctoo, you would have made yourself an indorser of that huge forgery which had so long circulated through the forum of Europe, and, in fact, a party to the total fraud.

We have thought it right to direct the reader's eye upon this correction of the common problem as to this or that place — Ceylon for example — answering to this or that classical name,— because, in fact, the problem is more subtle than it appears to be. If you are asked whether you believe in the unicorn, undoubtedly you are within the *letter* of the truth in replying that you do, for there are several varieties of large animals which carry a single horn in the forehead.* But, *virtually*, by such an answer you would countenance a falsehood or a doubtful legend, since you are well aware that, in the idea of an unicorn, your questioner included the whole traditionary character of the unicorn, as an antagonist and emulator of the lion, &c.; under which fanciful description, this animal is properly ranked with the griffin,

* *Unicorn:* and strange it is that, in ancient dilapidated monuments of the Ceylonese, religious sculptures, &c., the unicorn of Scotland frequently appears according to its true heraldic (that is, fabulous) type.

the mermaid, the basilisk, the dragon, and sometimes discussed in a supplementary chapter by the current zoologies, under the idea of heraldic and apocryphal natural history. When asked, therefore, whether Ceylon is Taprobane, the true answer is, not by affirmation simply, nor by negation simply, but by both at once; it is, and it is not. Taprobane includes much of what belongs to Ceylon, but also more, and also less. And this case is a type of many others standing in the same logical circumstances.

But, secondly, as to Ceylon being the local representative of Paradise, we may say, as the courteous Frenchman did to Dr. Moore upon the Doctor's apologetically remarking of a word, which he had used, that he feared it was not good French — "Non, Monsieur, il n'est pas; mais il mérite bien l'être." Certainly, if Ceylon was not, at least it ought to have been, Paradise; for at this day there is no place on earth which better supports the paradisiacal character (always excepting Lapland, as an Upsal professor observes, and Wapping, as an old seaman reminds us) than this Pandora of islands, which the Hindoos call Lanka, and Europe calls Ceylon. We style it the "Pandora" of islands, because, as all the gods of the heathen clubbed their powers in creating that ideal woman,—clothing her with perfections, and each separate deity subscribing to her dowry some separate gift,—not less conspicuous, and not less comprehensive, has been the bounty of Providence, running through the whole diapason of possibilities, to this all-gorgeous island. Whatsoever it is that God has given by separate allotment and par-

tition to other sections of the planet, all this he has given cumulatively and redundantly to Ceylon. Was she therefore happy, was Ceylon happier than other regions, through this hyper-tropical munificence of her Creator? No, she was not; and the reason was, because idolatrous darkness had planted curses where Heaven had planted blessings; because the insanity of man had defeated the graciousness of God. But another era is dawning for Ceylon; God will now countersign his other blessings, and ripen his possibilities into great harvests of realization, by superadding the one blessing of a dovelike religion; light is thickening apace, the horrid altars of Moloch are growing dim; woman will no more consent to forego her birthright as the daughter of God; man will cease to be the tiger-cat that, in the *noblest* chamber of Ceylon, he has ever been; and with the new hopes that will now blossom amidst the ancient beauties of this lovely island, Ceylon will but too deeply fulfil the functions of a paradise. Too subtly she will lay fascinations upon man; and it will need all the anguish of disease, and the stings of death, to unloose the ties which, in coming ages, must bind the hearts of her children to this Eden of the terraqueous globe.

Yet if, apart from all bravuras of rhetoric, Mr. Bennett seriously presses the question regarding Paradise as a question in geography, we are sorry that we must vote against Ceylon, for the reason that heretofore we have pledged ourselves in print to vote in favor of Cashmeer; which beautiful vale, by the way, is omitted in Mr. Bennett's list of the candidates for that distinction already entered upon the roll. Supposing the Paradise of Scripture to have

had a local settlement upon our earth, and not in some extra-terrene orb, even in that case we cannot imagine that anything could now survive, even so much as an angle or a curve of its original outline. All rivers have altered their channels; many are altering them forever.* Longitude and latitude might be assigned, at the most, if even those are not substantially defeated by the Miltonic "pushing askance" of the poles with regard to the equinoctial. But, finally, we remark that whereas human nature has ever been prone to the superstition of local consecrations and personal idolatries, by means of memorial relics, apparently it is the usage of God to hallow such remembrances by removing, abolishing, and confounding, all traces of their punctual identities. *That* raises them to shadowy powers. By that process such remembrances pass from the state of base sensual signs, ministering only to a sensual servitude, into the state of great ideas — mysterious as spirituality is mysterious, and permanent as truth is permanent. Thus it is, and therefore it is, that Paradise has vanished; Luz is gone; Jacob's ladder is found only as an apparition in the clouds; the true cross survives no more among the Roman Catholics than the true ark is mouldering upon Ararat; no scholar can lay his hand upon Gethsemane; and for the grave of Moses the son of Amram, mightiest of law-givers, though it is somewhere near Mount Nebo, and in a valley of Moab, yet eye has not been suffered to behold it, and "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."†

* See Dr. Robison on *Rivers*. † Deut. 34 : 6.

If, however, as to Paradise in connection with Ceylon we are forced to say "*No*," if as to Taprobane in connection with Ceylon we say both "*Yes*" and "*No*," — not the less we come back with a reiterated "*Yes, yes, yes*." upon Ceylon as the crest and eagle's plume of the Indies, as the priceless pearl, the ruby without a flaw, and (once again we say it) as the Pandora of Oriental islands.

Yet ends so glorious imply means of corresponding power: and advantages so comprehensive cannot be sustained unless by a machinery proportionately elaborate. Part of this machinery lies in the miraculous climate of Ceylon. Climate? She has all climates. Like some rare human favorite of nature, scattered at intervals along the line of a thousand years, who has been gifted so variously as to seem

"Not one, but all mankind's epitome,"

Ceylon, in order that she might become capable of products without end, has been made an abstract of the whole earth, and fitted up as a *panorganon* for modulating through the whole diatonic scale of climates. This is accomplished in part by her mountains. No island has mountains so high. It was the hideous oversight of a famous infidel in the last century, that, in supposing an Eastern prince *of necessity* to deny frost and ice as things impossible to *his* experience, he betrayed too palpably his own non-acquaintance with the grand economies of nature. To make acquaintance with cold, and the products of cold, obviously he fancied it requisite to travel northwards; to taste of polar power, he sup-

posed it indispensable to have advanced towards the pole. Narrow was the knowledge in those days, when a master in Israel might have leave to err thus grossly. Whereas, at present, few are the people amongst those not openly making profession of illiteracy, who do not know that a sultan of the tropics — ay, though his throne were screwed down by exquisite geometry to the very centre of the equator — might as surely become familiar with winter by ascending three miles in altitude, as by travelling three thousand horizontally. In that way of ascent it is that Ceylon has her regions of winter and her Arctic districts. She has her Alps, and she has her alpine tracts for supporting human life and useful vegetation. Adam's Peak, which of itself is more than seven thousand feet high (and by repute the highest range within her shores), has been found to rank only fifth in the mountain scale. The highest is a thousand feet higher. The maritime district, which runs round the island for a course of nine hundred miles, fanned by the sea-breezes, makes, with these varying elevations, a vast cycle of secondary combinations for altering the temperature and for *adapting* the weather. The central region has a separate climate of its own. And an inner belt of country, neither central nor maritime, which from the sea belt is regarded as inland, but from the centre is regarded as maritime, composes another chamber of climates; whilst these again, each individually within its class, are modified into minor varieties by local circumstances as to wind, by local accidents of position, and by shifting stages of altitude.

With all this compass of power, however (obtained

from its hills and its varying scale of hills), Ceylon has not much of waste ground, in the sense of being irreclaimable — for of waste ground, in the sense of being unoccupied, she has an infinity. What are the dimensions of Ceylon? Of all islands in this world which we know, in respect of size it most resembles Ireland, being about one sixth part less. But, for a particular reason, we choose to compare it with Scotland, which is very little different in dimensions from Ireland, having (by some hundred or two of square miles) a trifling advantage in extent. Now, say that Scotland contains a trifle more than thirty thousand square miles, the relation of Ceylon to Scotland will become apparent when we mention that this Indian island contains about twenty-four thousand five hundred of similar square miles. Twenty-four and a half to thirty — or forty-nine to sixty — there lies the ratio of Ceylon to Scotland. The ratio in population is not less easily remembered: Scotland has *now* (October, 1843) hard upon three millions of people; Ceylon, by a late census, has just three *half*-millions. But strange indeed, where everything seems strange, is the arrangement of the Ceylonese territory and people. Take a peach: what you call the flesh of the peach, the substance which you eat, is massed orbicularly around a central stone — often as large as a pretty large strawberry. Now, in Ceylon, the central district, answering to this peach-stone, constitutes a fierce little Liliputian kingdom, quite independent, through many centuries, of the lazy belt, the peach-flesh, which swathes and enfolds it, and perfectly distinct by the character and origin of its population. The peach-stone is called Kandy,

and the people Kandyans. These are a desperate variety of the tiger-man, agile and fierce as he is, though smooth, insinuating, and full of subtlety as a snake, even to the moment of crouching for their last fatal spring. On the other hand, the people of the engirdling zone are called the Cinghalese, spelled according to the fancy of us authors and compositors, who legislate for the spelling of the British empire, with an S or a C. As to moral virtue, in the sense of integrity or fixed principle, there is not much lost upon either race: in that point they are "much of a muchness." They are also both respectable for their attainments in cowardice; but with this difference, that the Cinghalese are soft, inert, passive cowards; but your Kandyan is a ferocious little bloody coward, full of mischief as a monkey, grinning with desperation, laughing like a hyena, or chattering if you vex him, and never to be trusted for a moment. The reader now understands why we described the Ceylonese man as a tiger-cat in his noblest division: for, after all, these dangerous gentlemen in the peach-stone are a more promising race than the silky and nerveless population surrounding them. You can strike no fire out of the Cinghalese: but the Kandyans show fight continually, and would even persist in fighting, if there were in this world no gunpowder (which exceedingly they dislike), and if their allowance of arrack were greater.

Surely this is the very strangest spectacle exhibited on earth: a kingdom within a kingdom, an *imperium in imperio*, settled and maintaining itself for centuries in defiance of all that Pagan, that Mahometan, that Jew, or that Christian, could do. The

reader will remember the case of the British envoy to Geneva, who being ordered in great wrath to "quit the territories of the republic in twenty-four hours," replied, "By all means: in ten minutes." And here was a little bantam kingdom, not much bigger than the irate republic, having its separate sultan, with full-mounted establishment of peacock's feathers, white elephants, Moorish eunuchs, armies, cymbals, dulcimers, and all kinds of music, tormentors, and executioners; whilst his majesty crowed defiance across the ocean to all other kings, rajahs, soldans, kesars, "flowery" emperors, and "golden-feet" east or west, be the same more or less; and really with some reason. For though it certainly is amusing to hear of a kingdom, no bigger than Sterlingshire with the half of Perthshire, standing erect and maintaining perpetual war with all the rest of Scotland,—a little nucleus of pugnacity, sixty miles by twenty-four, rather more than a match for the lazy lubber nine hundred miles long, that dandled it in its arms,—yet as the trick was done, we cease to find it ridiculous.

For the trick *was* done: and that reminds us to give the history of Ceylon in its two sections, which will not prove much longer than the history of Tom Thumb. Precisely three centuries before Waterloo, namely, *Anno Domini* 1515, a Portuguese admiral hoisted his sovereign's flag and formed a durable settlement at Columbo, which was, and is, considered the maritime capital of the island. Very nearly half way on the interval of time between this event and Waterloo, namely, in 1656 (anti-penultimate year of Cromwell), the Portuguese nation made over, by

treaty, this settlement to the Dutch; which, of itself, seems to mark that the sun of the former people was now declining to the west. In 1796, now forty-seven years ago, it arose out of the French revolutionary war — so disastrous for Holland — that the Dutch surrendered it perforce to the British, who are not very likely to surrender it in *their* turn on any terms, or at any gentleman's request. Up to this time, when Ceylon passed under our flag, it is to be observed that no progress whatever, not the least, had been made in mastering the peach-stone, that old central nuisance of the island. The little monster still crowed and flapped his wings on his dunghill, as had been his custom always in the afternoon for certain centuries. But nothing on earth is immortal; even mighty bantams must have their decline and fall; and omens began to show out that soon there would be a dust with the new master at Columbo. Seven years after our *début* on that stage, the dust began. By the way, it is perhaps an impertinence to remark it, but there certainly *is* a sympathy between the motions of the Kandyan potentate and our European enemy Napoleon. Both pitched into *us* in 1803, and we pitched into both in 1815. That we call a coincidence. How the row began was thus: some incomprehensible intrigues had been proceeding for a time between the British governor or commandant, or whatever he might be, and the Kandyan prime minister. This minister, who was a noticeable man with large gray eyes, was called *Pilamé Tilawé*. We write his name after Mr. Bennett: but it is quite useless to study the pronunciation of it, seeing that he was hanged in 1812 (the year of Moscow) — a fact

for which we are thankful as often as we think of it. *Pil.* (surely *Tilawé* cannot be pronounced Garlic?) managed to get the king's head into chancery, and then fibbed him. Why Major-general M'Dowall (then commanding our forces) should collude with Pil. Garlic, is past our understanding. But so it was. *Pil.* said that a certain prince, collaterally connected with the royal house, by name Mootto Sawmé, who had fled to our protection, was, or might be thought to be, the lawful king. Upon which the British general proclaimed him. What followed is too shocking to dwell upon. Scarcely had Mootto, apparently a good creature, been inaugurated, when *Pil.* proposed his deposition, — to which General M'Dowall consented, — and his own (*Pil.'s*) elevation to the throne. It is like a dream to say that this also was agreed to. King Pil. the First, and, God be thanked, the last, was raised to the — *musnud*, we suppose, or whatsoever they call it in Pil.'s jargon. So far there was little but farce; now comes the tragedy. A certain Major Davie was placed with a very inconsiderable garrison in the capital of the Kandyan empire, called by name Kandy. This officer, whom Mr. Bennett somewhere calls the "gallant," capitulated upon terms, and had the inconceivable folly to imagine that a base Kandyan chief would think himself bound by these terms. One of them was, that he (Major Davie) and his troops should be allowed to retreat unmolested upon Columbo. Accordingly, fully armed and accoutred, the British troops began their march. At Wattépolowa a proposal was made to Major Davie that Mootto Sawmé (our *protegé* and instrument) should be delivered up to the Kandyan

tiger. O, sorrow for the British name! he *was* delivered. Soon after, a second proposal came, that the British soldiers should deliver up their arms, and should march back to Kandy. It makes an Englishman shiver with indignation to hear that even this demand was complied with. Let us pause for one moment. Wherefore is it that in all similar cases, — in this Ceylonese case, in Major Baillie's Mysore case, in the Cabool case,— uniformly the privates are wiser than their officers? In a case of delicacy or doubtful policy, certainly the officers would have been the party best able to solve the difficulties; but in a case of elementary danger, where manners disappear, and great passions come upon the stage, strange it is that poor men, laboring men, men without education, always judge more truly of the crisis than men of high refinement. But this was seen by Wordsworth; thus spoke he, thirty-six years ago, of Germany, contrasted with the Tyrol:

> "Her haughty schools
> Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say —
> A few strong instincts, and a few plain rules,
> Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
> More for mankind, at this unhappy day,
> Than all the pride of intellect and thought!"

The regiment chiefly concerned was the 19th (for which regiment the word *Wattépolowa*, the scene of their martyrdom, became afterwards a memorial war-cry). Still, to this hour, it forces tears of wrath into our eyes when we read the recital of the case. A dozen years ago we first read it in a very interesting book, published by the late Mr. Blackwood,— the

Life of Alexander Alexander. This Alexander was not personally present at the bloody catastrophe; but he was in Ceylon at the time, and knew the one sole fugitive * from that fatal day. The soldiers of the 19th, not even in that hour of horror, forgot their discipline, or their duty, or their respectful attachment to their officers. When they were ordered to ground their arms (O, base idiot that could issue such an order!) they remonstrated most earnestly, but most respectfully. Major Davie, agitated and distracted by the scene, himself recalled the order. The men resumed their arms. Alas! again the fatal order was issued; again it was recalled; but finally it was issued peremptorily. The men sorrowfully obeyed. We hurry to the odious conclusion. In parties of twos and of threes, our brave countrymen were called out by the horrid Kandyan tiger-cats. Disarmed by the frenzy of their moon-struck commander, what resistance could they make? One after one the parties called out to suffer were decapitated by the executioner. The officers, who had refused to give up their pistols, finding what was going on, blew out their brains with their own hands, now too bitterly feeling how much wiser had been the poor privates than themselves. At length there was stillness on the field. Night had come on. All were gone,

"And darkness was the burier of the dead."

The reader may recollect a most picturesque mur-

* *Fugitive*, observe. There were some others, and amongst them Major Davie, who, for private reasons, were suffered to survive as prisoners.

der near Manchester, about thirteen or fourteen years ago, perpetrated by two brothers named M'Kean, where a servant-woman, whose throat had been effectually cut, rose up, after an interval, from the ground at a most critical moment (so critical that, by that act, and at that second of time, she drew off the murderer's hand from the throat of a second victim), staggered in her delirium to the door of a room where sometimes a club had been held, doubtless under some idea of obtaining aid, and at the door, after walking some fifty feet, dropped down dead. Not less astonishing was the resurrection, as it might be called, of an English corporal, cut, mangled, re-mangled, and left without sign of life. Suddenly he rose up, stiff and gory. Dying and delirious, as he felt himself, with misery from exhaustion and wounds, he swam rivers, threaded enemies, and, moving day and night, came suddenly upon an army of Kandyans; here he prepared himself with pleasure for the death that now seemed inevitable, when, by a fortunate accident, for want of a fitter man, he was selected as an ambassador to the English officer commanding a Kandyan garrison, and thus once more escaped miraculously.

Sometimes, when we are thinking over the great scenes of tragedy through which Europe passed from 1805 to 1815, suddenly, from the bosom of utter darkness, a blaze of light arises; a curtain is drawn up; a saloon is revealed. We see a man sitting there alone, in an attitude of alarm and expectation. What does he expect? What is it that he fears? He is listening for the chariot-wheels of a fugitive army. At intervals he raises his head, and we know

him now for the Abbé de Pradt; the place, Warsaw; the time, early in December, 1812. All at once the rushing of cavalry is heard; the door is thrown open; a stranger enters. We see, as in Cornelius Agrippa's mirror, his haggard features; it is a momentary king, having the sign of a felon's death written secretly on his brow; it is Murat; he raises his hands with a gesture of horror as he advances to M. l'Abbé. We hear his words, "*L'Abbé, all is lost!*"

Even so, when the English soldier, reeling from his anguish and weariness, was admitted into the beleaguered fortress, his first words, more homely in expression than Murat's, were to the same dreadful purpose: "Your honor," he said, "all is dished;" and, this being uttered by way of prologue, he then delivered himself of the message with which he had been charged, and *that* was a challenge from the Kandyan general to come out and fight without aid from his artillery. The dismal report was just in time; darkness was then coming on. The English officer spiked his guns, and, with his garrison, fled by night from a fort in which else he would have perished by starvation or by storm, had Kandyan forces been equal to such an effort. This corporal was, strictly speaking, the only man who *escaped*, one or two other survivors having been reserved as captives for some special reasons. Of this captive party was Major Davie, the commander, whom Mr. Bennett salutes by the title of "gallant," and regrets that "the strong arm of death" had intercepted his apology.

He could have made no apology. Plea or pallia-

tion he had none. To have polluted the British honor in treacherously yielding up to murder (and absolutely for nothing in return) a prince whom we ourselves had seduced into rebellion — to have forced his men and officers into laying down their arms, and suing for the mercy of wretches the most perfidious on earth — these were acts as to which atonement or explanation was hopeless for *him*, forgiveness impossible for England. So this man is to be called "the gallant" — is he? We will thank Mr. Bennett to tell us who was that officer subsequently seen walking about in Ceylon, no matter whether in Western Columbo or in Eastern Trincomalé, long enough for reaping his dishonor, though, by accident, not for a court-martial. Behold, what a curse rests in this British island upon those men, who, when the clock of honor has sounded the hour for their departure, cannot turn their dying eyes nobly to the land of their nativity, stretch out their hands to the glorious island in farewell homage, and say, with military pride,— as even the poor gladiators (who were but slaves) said to Cæsar, when they passed his chair to their death,— "*Morituri te salutamus!*" This man (and Mr. Bennett knows it), because he was incrusted with the leprosy of cowardice, and because upon him lay the blood of those to whom he should have been *in loco parentis*, made a solitude wherever he appeared; men ran from him as from an incarnation of pestilence; and between him and free intercourse with his countrymen, from the hour of his dishonor in the field to the hour of his death, there flowed a river of separation,— there were stretched lines of interdict heavier than ever Pope ordained,—

there brooded a schism like that of death, a silence like that of the grave, making known forever the deep damnation of the infamy which on this earth settles upon the troubled resting-place of him who, through cowardice, has shrunk away from his duty, and, on the day of trial, has broken the bond which bound him to his country.

Surely there needed no arrear of sorrow to consummate this disaster. Yet two aggravations there were, which afterwards transpired, irritating the British soldiers to madness. One was soon reported, namely, that one hundred and twenty sick or wounded men, lying in a hospital, had been massacred without a motive by the children of hell with whom we were contending. The other was not discovered until 1815. Then first it became known that, in the whole stores of the Kandyan government (*à fortiori* then in the particular section of the Kandyan forces which we faced), there had not been more gunpowder remaining at the hour of Major Davie's infamous capitulation than seven hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupois; other munitions of war having been in the same state of bankruptcy. Five minutes more of resistance, one inspiration of English pluck, would have placed the Kandyan army in our power,—would have saved the honor of the country,—would have redeemed our noble soldiers, —and to Major Davie would have made the total difference between lying in a traitor's grave and lying in Westminster Abbey.

Was there no vengeance, no retribution, for these things? Vengeance there was, but by accident. Retribution there was, but partial and remote. In-

famous it was for the English government at Columbo, as Mr. Bennett insinuates, that, having a large fund disposable annually for secret service, between 1796 and 1803, such a rupture *could* have happened and have found us unprepared. Equally infamous it was that summary chastisement was not inflicted upon the perfidious court of Kandy. What *real* power it had, when unaided by villany amongst themselves, was shown in 1804, in the course of which year one brave officer, Lieutenant Johnstone of the 19th, with no more than one hundred and fifty men, including officers, marched right through the country, in the teeth of all opposition from the king, and resolutely took * Kandy in his route. However, for the present, without a shadow of a reason (since all reasons ran in the other direction), we ate our leek in silence; once again, but now for the last time, the bloody little bantam crowed defiance from his dunghill, and tore the British flag with his spurs. What caused his ruin at last was literally the profundity of our own British humiliation; had *that* been less,—had it not been for the natural reäction of that spectacle, equally hateful and incredible, upon a barbarian chief, as ignorant as he was fiendish,—he would have returned a civil answer to our subsequent remonstrances. In that case, our government would have been conciliated, and the monster's son, who yet lives in Malabar, would now be reigning in his stead. But *Diis aliter visum est*—earth was weary of this

* "*Took* Kandy in his route." This phrase is equivocal; it bears two senses — the traveller's sense and the soldier's. But we rarely make such errors in the use of words; the error is original in the government documents themselves.

Kandyan nuisance, and the infatuation which precipitated its doom took the following shape. In 1814, certain traders, ten in number, not British but Cinghalese, and therefore British subjects, entitled to British protection, were wantonly molested in their peaceable occupations by this Kandyan king. Three of these traders one day returned to our frontier, wearing upon necklaces, inextricably attached to their throats, their own ears, noses, and other parts of their own persons, torn away by the pincers of the Kandyan executioners. The seven others had sunk under their sufferings. Observe that there had been no charge or imputation against these men, more or less: *stet pro ratione voluntas.* This was too much even for our all-suffering * English administration. They sent off a kind of expostulation, which amounted to this: "How now, my good sir? What are you up to?" Fortunately for his miserable subjects (and, as this case showed, by possibility, for many who were *not* such), the vain-glorious animal returned no answer; not because he found any diplomatic difficulty to surmount, but in mere self-glorification and in pure disdain of *us.* What a commentary was *that* upon our unspeakable folly, to that hour!

We are anxious that the reader should go along with the short remainder of this story, because it

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bears strongly upon the true moral of our Eastern policy, of which, hereafter, we shall attempt to unfold the casuistry in a way that will be little agreeable to the calumniators of Clive and Hastings. We do not intend that these men shall have it all their own way in times to come. Our Eastern rulers have erred always, and erred deeply, by doing too little rather than too much. They have been *too* long-suffering; and have tolerated many nuisances, and many miscreants, when their duty was — when their power was — to have destroyed them forever. And the capital fault of the East India Company — that greatest benefactor for the East that ever yet has arisen — has been in not publishing to the world the grounds and details of their policy. Let this one chapter in that policy, this Kandyan chapter, proclaim how great must have been the evils from which our "usurpations" (as they are called) have liberated the earth. For let no man dwell on the rarity, or on the limited sphere, of such atrocities, even in Eastern despotisms. If the act be rare, is not the anxiety eternal? If the personal suffering be transitory, is not the outrage upon human sensibilities, upon the majesty of human nature, upon the possibilities of light, order, commerce, civilization, of a duration and a compass to make the total difference between man viler than the brutes and man a little lower than the angels?

It happened that the first noble, or "Adikar," of the Kandyan king, being charged with treason at this time, had fled to our protection. That was enough. Vengeance on *him*, in his proper person, had become impossible; and the following was the

vicarious vengeance adopted by God's vicegerent upon earth, whose pastime it had long been to study the ingenuities of malice, and the possible refinements in the arts of tormenting. Here follows the published report on this one case: "The ferocious miscreant determined to be fully revenged, and immediately sentenced the Adikar's wife and children, together with his brother and the brother's wife, to death after the following fashion. The children were ordered to be decapitated before their mother's face, and their heads to be pounded in a rice-mortar by their mother's hands; which, to save herself from a diabolical torture and exposure" (concealments are here properly practised in the report, for the sake of mere human decency), "she submitted to attempt. The eldest boy shrunk (shrank) from the dread ordeal, and clung to his agonized parent for safety; but his younger brother stepped forward, and encouraged him to submit to his fate, placing himself before the executioner by way of setting an example. The last of the children to be beheaded was an infant at the breast, from which it was forcibly torn away, and its mother's milk was dripping from its innocent mouth as it was put into the hands of the grim executioner." Finally, the Adikar's brother was executed, having no connection (so much as alleged) with his brother's flight; and then the two sisters-in-law, having stones attached to their feet, were thrown into a tank. These be thy gods, O Egypt! such are the processes of Kandyan law, such is its horrid religion, and such the morality which it generates! And let it not be said, these were the excesses of a tyrant. Man does not brutalize, by possibility,

in pure insulation. He gives, and he receives. It is by sympathy, by the contagion of example, by reverberation of feelings, that every man's heart is moulded. A prince, to have been such as this monster, must have been bred amongst a cruel people; a cruel people, as by other experience we know them to be, naturally produce an inhuman prince; and such a prince reproduces his own corrupters.

Vengeance, however, was now at hand; a better and more martial governor, Sir Robert Brownrigg, was in the field since 1812. On finding that no answer was forthcoming, he marched with all his forces. But again these were inadequate to the service; and once again, as in 1803, we were on the brink of being sacrificed to the very lunacies of retrenchment. By a mere god-send, more troops happened to arrive from the Indian continent. We marched in triumphal ease to the capital city of Kandy. The wicked prince fled; Major Kelley pursued him — to pursue was to overtake — to overtake was to conquer. Thirty-seven ladies of his *zenana* and his mother were captured elsewhere; and finally the whole kingdom capitulated by a solemn act, in which we secured to it what we had no true liberty to secure, namely, the *inviolability* of their horrid idolatries. Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's — but this was *not* Cæsar's. Whether in some other concessions, whether in volunteering certain civil privileges of which the conquered had never dreamed, and which, for many a long year, they will not understand, our policy were right or wrong, may admit of much debate. Oftentimes, but not always, it is wise and long-sighted policy to

presume in nations higher qualities than they have, and developments beyond what really exist. But as to religion, there can be no doubt and no debate at all. To exterminate their filthy and bloody abominations of creed and of ritual practice, is the first step to any serious improvement of the Kandyan people; it is the *conditio sine quâ non* of all regeneration for this demoralized race. And what we ought to have promised, all that in mere civil equity we had the right to promise, was, that we would *tolerate* such follies, would make no war upon such superstitions as should not be openly immoral. One word more than this covenant was equally beyond the powers of one party to that covenant, and the highest interests of all parties.

Philosophically speaking, this great revolution may not close perhaps for centuries; historically, it closed about the opening of the Hundred Days in the *annus mirabilis* of Waterloo. On the 13th of February, 1815, Kandy, the town, was occupied by the British troops, never again to be resigned. In March followed the solemn treaty by which all parties assumed their constitutional stations. In April occurred the ceremonial part of the revolution; its public notification and celebration, by means of a grand processional entry into the capital, stretching for upwards of a mile; and in January, 1816, the late king, now formally deposed, "a stout, good-looking Malabar, with a peculiarly keen and roving eye, and a restlessness of manner, marking unbridled passions," was conveyed in the governor's carriage to the jetty at Trincomalee, from which port H. M. S. Mexico conveyed him to the Indian continent; he was there

confined in the fortress of Velore, famous for the bloody mutiny amongst the Company's sepoy troops, so bloodily suppressed. In Vellore, this cruel prince, whose name was Sree Wickremé Rajah Singha, died some years after; and one son whom he left behind him, born during his father's captivity, may still be living. But his ambitious instincts, if any such are working within him, are likely to be seriously baffled in the very outset by the precautions of our diplomacy; for one article of the treaty proscribes the descendants of this prince as enemies of Ceylon, if found within its precincts. In this exclusion, pointed against a single family, we are reminded of the Stuart dynasty in England, and the Bonaparte dynasty in France. We cannot, however, agree with Mr. Bennett's view of this parallelism — either in so far as it points our pity towards Napoleon, or in so far as it points the regrets of disappointed vengeance to the similar transportation of Sree.

Pity is misplaced upon Napoleon, and anger is wasted upon Sree. He ought to have been hanged, said Mr. Bennett; and so said many of Napoleon. But it was not our mission to punish either. The Malabar prince had broken no faith with *us;* he acted under the cursed usages of a cruel people and a bloody religion. These influences had trained a bad heart to corresponding atrocities. Courtesy we did right to pay him, for our own sakes as a high and noble nation. What we could not punish judicially, it did not become us to revile. And, finally, we much doubt whether hanging upon a tree, either in Napoleon's case or Sree's, would not practically have been found by both a happy liberation from

that bitter cup of mortification which both drank off in their latter years.

At length, then, the entire island of Ceylon, about a hundred days before Waterloo, had become ours forever. Hereafter Ceylon must inseparably attend the fortunes of India. Whosoever in the East commands the sea must command the southern empires of Asia; and he who commands those empires must forever command the Oriental islands. One thing only remains to be explained; and the explanation, we fear, will be harder to understand than the problem: it is — how the Portuguese and Dutch failed, through nearly three centuries, to master this little obstinate *nucleus* of the peach. It seems like a fairy tale to hear the answer; Sinbad has nothing wilder. "They were," says Mr. Bennett, "repeatedly masters of the capital." What was it, then, that stopped them from going on? "At one period, the former (that is, the Portuguese) had conquered all but the impregnable position called *Kandi Udda*." And what was it, then, that lived at Kandi Udda? The dragon of Wantley? or the dun cow of Warwick? or the classical Hydra? No; it was thus: *Kandi* was "in the centre of the mountainous region, surrounded by impervious jungles, with secret approaches for only one man at a time." Such tricks might have answered in the time of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves; but we suspect that, even then, an "*open sesame*" would have been found for this pestilent defile. Smoking a cigar through it, and dropping the sparks, might have done the business in the dry season. But, in very truth, we imagine that political arrangements were answerable for this

long failure in checkmating the king, and not at all the cunning passage which carried only one inside passenger. The Portuguese permitted the Kandyan natives to enter their army; and that one fact gives us a short solution of the case. For, as Mr. Bennett observes, the principal features of these Kandyans are merely "human imitations of their own indigenous leopards — treachery and ferocity," as the circumstances may allow them to profit by one or the other. Sugar candy, however, appears to have given very little trouble to *us*; and, at all events, it is ours now, together with all that is within its gates. It is proper, however, to add, that since the conquest of this country, in 1815, there have been three rebellions, namely: in 1817–18, in 1834, and finally in 1842. This last comes pretty well home to our own times and concerns; so that we naturally become curious as to the causes of such troubles. The two last are said to have been inconsiderable in their extent. But the earlier of the three, which broke out so soon after the conquest as 1817, must, we conceive, have owed something to intrigues promoted on behalf of the exiled king. His direct lineal descendants are excluded, as we have said, from the island forever; but his relatives, by whom we presume to be meant his *cognati* or kinspeople in the female line, not his *agnati*, are allowed to live in Kandy, suffering only the slight restriction of confinement to one street out of five, which compose this ancient metropolis. Meantime, it is most instructive to hear the secret account of those causes which set in motion this unprincipled rebellion. For it will thus be seen how hopeless it is, under the present idolatrous

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bears strongly upon the true moral of our Eastern policy, of which, hereafter, we shall attempt to unfold the casuistry in a way that will be little agreeable to the calumniators of Clive and Hastings. We do not intend that these men shall have it all their own way in times to come. Our Eastern rulers have erred always, and erred deeply, by doing too little rather than too much. They have been *too* long-suffering; and have tolerated many nuisances, and many miscreants, when their duty was — when their power was — to have destroyed them forever. And the capital fault of the East India Company — that greatest benefactor for the East that ever yet has arisen — has been in not publishing to the world the grounds and details of their policy. Let this one chapter in that policy, this Kandyan chapter, proclaim how great must have been the evils from which our "usurpations" (as they are called) have liberated the earth. For let no man dwell on the rarity, or on the limited sphere, of such atrocities, even in Eastern despotisms. If the act be rare, is not the anxiety eternal? If the personal suffering be transitory, is not the outrage upon human sensibilities, upon the majesty of human nature, upon the possibilities of light, order, commerce, civilization, of a duration and a compass to make the total difference between man viler than the brutes and man a little lower than the angels?

It happened that the first noble, or "Adikar," of the Kandyan king, being charged with treason at this time, had fled to our protection. That was enough. Vengeance on *him*, in his proper person, had become impossible; and the following was the

religion displacing the *avowed* worship of devils, and giving to the people a new nature, a new heart, and hopes as yet not dawning upon their dreams. How often has it been said, by the vile domestic calumniators of British policy, by our own anti-national deceivers, that if to-morrow we should leave India no memorial would attest that ever we had been there! Infamous falsehood! damnable slander! Speak, Ceylon, to *that*. True it is that the best of our gifts,—peace, freedom, security, and a new standard of public morality,—these blessings are like sleep, like health, like innocence, like the eternal revolutions of day and night, which sink inaudibly into human hearts, leaving behind (as sweet vernal rains) no flaunting records of ostentation and parade; we are not the nation of triumphal arches and memorial obelisks; but the sleep, the health, the innocence, the grateful vicissitudes of seasons, reproduce themselves in fruits and products, enduring for generations, and overlooked by the slanderer only because they are too diffusive to be noticed as extraordinary, and benefiting by no light of contrast simply because our own beneficence has swept away the ancient wretchedness that could have furnished that contrast. Ceylon, of itself, can reply victoriously to such falsehoods. Not yet fifty years have we held this island; not yet thirty have we had the *entire* possession of the island; and (what is more important to a point of this nature) not yet thirty have we had that secure possession which results from the consciousness that our government is not meditating to resign it. Previously to Waterloo, our tenure of Ceylon was a provisional tenure. With

the era of our Kandyan conquest coincides the era of our absolute appropriation, signed and countersigned forever. The arrangements of that day at Paris, and by a few subsequent congresses of revision, are like the arrangements of Westphalia in 1648 — valid until Christendom shall be again convulsed to her foundations. From that date is, therefore, justly to be inaugurated our English career of improvement. Of the roads laid open through the island we have spoken. The attempts at improvement of the agriculture and horticulture furnish matter already for a romance, if told of any other than this wonderful labyrinth of climates. The openings for commercial improvement are not less splendid. It is a fact infamous to the Ceylonese that an island, which might easily support twenty millions of people, has been liable to famine, not unfrequently, with a population of fifteen hundred thousand. This has already ceased to be a possibility; is *that* a blessing of British rule? Not only many new varieties of rice have been introduced, and are now being introduced, adapted to opposite extremes of weather and soil,— some to the low grounds, warm and abundantly irrigated; some to the dry grounds, demanding far less of moisture,— but also other and various substitutes have been presented to Ceylon. Manioc, maize, the potato, the turnip, have all been cultivated. Mr. Bennett himself would, in ancient Greece, have had many statues raised to his honor for his exemplary bounties of innovation. The food of the people is now secure. And, as regards their clothing or their exports, there is absolutely no end to the new prospects opened before them by the Eng-

lish. Is *cotton* a British gift? Is sugar? Is coffee? We are not the men lazily and avariciously to anchor our hopes on a pearl fishery; we rouse the natives to cultivate their salt fish and shark fisheries. Tea will soon be cultivated more hopefully than in Assam. Sugar, coffee, cinnamon, pepper, are all cultivated already. Silk-worms and mulberry-trees were tried with success, and opium with *virtual* success (though in that instance defeated by an accident), under the auspices of Mr. Bennett. Hemp (and surely it is wanted!) will be introduced abundantly; indigo is not only grown in plenty, but it appears that a beautiful variety of indigo, a violet-colored indigo, exists as a weed in Ceylon. Finally, in the running over hastily the *summa genera* of products by which Ceylon will soon make her name known to the ends of the earth, we may add that salt provisions of every kind, of which hitherto Ceylon did not furnish an ounce, will now be supplied redundantly; the great mart for this will be in the vast bosom of the Indian ocean; and at the same time we shall see the scandal wiped away, that Ceylon, the head-quarters of the British navy in the East, could not supply a cock-boat in distress with a week's salt provisions, from her own myriads of cattle, zebus, buffaloes, or cows.

Ceylon has this one disadvantage for purposes of theatrical effect: she is like a star rising heliacally, and hidden in the blaze of the sun. Any island, however magnificent, becomes lost in the blaze of India. But *that* does not affect the realities of the case. She has *that* within which passes show. Her one calamity is in the laziness of her native

population ; though in this respect the Kandyans are a more hopeful race than the Cinghalese. But the evil for both is that they want the *motives* to exertion. These will be created by a new and higher civilization. Foreign laborers will also be called for ; a mixed race will succeed in the following generations ; and a mixed breed in man is always an improved breed. Witness everywhere the people of color contrasted with the blacks. Then will come the great race between man indefinitely exalted, and a glorious tropical nature indefinitely developed. Ceylon will be born again ; in our hands she will first answer to the great summons of nature, and will become, in fact, what, by providential destiny, she is, the queen lotus of the Indian seas, and the Pandora of islands.

Vita. - Inv.
S. P. of m.

PRESENCE OF MIND: A FRAGMENT.

THE Roman *formula* for summoning an earnest concentration of the faculties upon any object whatever, that happened to be critically urgent, was *Hoc age*, "Mind *this!*" or, in other words, do not mind *that*—*non illud age*. The antithetic formula was "*aliud* agere," to mind something alien, or remote from the interest then clamoring for attention. Our modern military orders of "*Attention!*" and "*Eyes straight!*" were both included in the *Hoc age*. In the stern peremptoriness of this Roman formula we read a picturesque expression of the Roman character both as to its strength and its weakness — of the energy which brooked no faltering or delay (for beyond all other races the Roman was *natus rebus agendis*) — and also of the morbid craving for action, which was intolerant of anything but the intensely practical.

In modern times, it is we of the Anglo-Saxon blood, that is, the British and the Americans of the United States, who inherit the Roman temperament, with its vices and its fearful advantages of power. In the ancient Roman these vices appeared more barbarously conspicuous. We, the countrymen of Lord Bacon

and Sir Isaac Newton, and at one time the leaders of austere thinking, cannot be supposed to shrink from the speculative through any native incapacity for sounding its depths. But the Roman had a real inaptitude for the speculative; to *him* nothing was real that was not practical. He had no metaphysics; he wanted the metaphysical instinct. There was no school of *native* Roman philosophy: the Roman was merely an eclectic or *dilettante*, picking up the crumbs which fell from Grecian tables; and even mathematics was so repulsive in its sublimer aspects to the Roman mind, that the very word mathematics had in Rome collapsed into another name for the dotages of astrology. The mathematician was a mere variety of expression for the wizard or the conjurer.

From this unfavorable aspect of the Roman intellect, it is but justice that we should turn away to contemplate those situations in which that same intellect showed itself preternaturally strong. To face a sudden danger by a corresponding weight of sudden counsel or sudden evasion — *that* was a privilege essentially lodged in the Roman mind. But in every nation some minds much more than others are representative of the national type; they are normal minds, reflecting, as in a focus, the characteristics of the race. Thus Louis XIV. has been held to be the idealized expression of the French character; and amongst the Romans there cannot be a doubt that the first Cæsar offers in a rare perfection the revelation of that peculiar grandeur which belonged to the children of Romulus.

What *was* that grandeur? We do not need, in this place, to attempt its analysis. One feature will suffice

for our purpose. The late celebrated John Foster, in his essay on decision of character, amongst the accidents of life which might serve to strengthen the natural tendencies to such a character, or to promote its development, rightly insists on *desertion*. To find itself in solitude, and still more to find itself thrown upon that state of abandonment by sudden treachery, crushes the feeble mind, but rouses a terrific reäction of haughty self-assertion in that order of spirits which matches and measures itself against difficulty and danger. There is something corresponding to this case of human treachery in the sudden caprices of fortune. A danger, offering itself unexpectedly in some momentary change of blind external agencies, assumes to the feelings the character of a perfidy accomplished by mysterious powers, and calls forth something of the same resentment, and in a gladiatorial intellect something of the same spontaneous resistance. A sword that breaks in the very crisis of a duel, a horse killed by a flash of lightning in the moment of collision with the enemy, a bridge carried away by an avalanche at the instant of a commencing retreat, affect the feelings like dramatic incidents emanating from a human will. This man they confound and paralyze; that man they rouse into resistance as by a personal provocation and insult. And if it happens that these opposite effects show themselves in cases wearing a national importance, they raise what would else have been a mere casualty into the tragic or the epic grandeur of a fatality. The superb character, for instance, of Cæsar's intellect throws a colossal shadow as of predestination over the most trivial incidents of his career. On the morning of Pharsalia,

every man who reads a record of that mighty event feels* by a secret instinct that an earthquake is approaching which must determine the final distribution of the ground, and the relations amongst the whole family of man, through a thousand generations. Precisely the inverse cause is realized in some modern sections of history, where the feebleness or the inertia of the presiding intellect communicates a character of triviality to events that otherwise are of paramount historical importance. In Cæsar's case, simply through the perfection of his preparations arrayed against all conceivable contingencies, there is an impression left as of some incarnate Providence, veiled in a human form, ranging through the ranks of the legions; whilst, on the contrary, in the modern cases to which we allude, a mission, seemingly authorized by inspiration, is suddenly quenched, like a torch falling into water, by the careless character of the superintending intellect. Neither case is without its appropriate interest. The spectacle of a vast historical dependency, pre-organized by an intellect of unusual grandeur, wears the grace of congruity and reciprocal proportion. And, on the other hand, a series of mighty events contingent upon the motion this way or that of a frivolous hand, or suspended on the breath of caprice, suggests the wild and fantastic disproportions of ordinary life,

* "Feels by a secret instinct." — A sentiment of this nature is finely expressed by Lucan in the passage beginning, "Advenisse diem," etc. The circumstance by which Lucan chiefly defeats the grandeur and simplicities of the truth is the monstrous numerical exaggeration of the combatants and the killed at Pharsalia.

when the mighty masquerade moves on forever through successions of the gay and the solemn — of the petty and the majestic.

Cæsar's cast of character owed its impressiveness to the combination which it offered of moral grandeur and monumental immobility, such as we see in Marius, with the dazzling intellectual versatility found in the Gracchi, in Sylla, in Catiline, in Antony. The comprehension and the absolute perfection of his prescience did not escape the eye of Lucan, who describes him as — "Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum." A fine lambent gleam of his character escapes also in that magnificent fraction of a line, where he is described as one incapable of learning the style and sentiments suited to a private interest — "Indocilis privata loqui."

There has been a disposition manifested amongst modern writers to disturb the traditional characters of Cæsar and his chief antagonist. Audaciously to disparage Cæsar, and without a shadow of any new historic grounds to exalt his feeble competitor, has been adopted as the best chance for filling up the mighty gulf between them. Lord Brougham, for instance, on occasion of a dinner given by the Cinque Ports at Dover to the Duke of Wellington, vainly attempted to raise our countryman by unfounded and romantic depreciations of Cæsar. He alleged that Cæsar had contended only with barbarians. Now, *that* happens to be the literal truth as regards Pompey. The victories on which his early reputation was built were won from semi-barbarians — luxurious, it is true, but also effeminate in a degree never suspected at Rome until the next generation. The

slight but summary contest of Cæsar with Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, dissipated at once the cloud of ignorance in which Rome had been involved on this subject by the vast distance and the total want of familiarity with Oriental habits. But Cæsar's chief antagonists, those whom Lord Brougham specially indicated, namely, the Gauls, were *not* barbarians. As a military people they were in a stage of civilization next to that of the Romans. They were quite as much *aguerris*, hardened and seasoned to war, as the children of Rome. In certain military habits they were even superior. For purposes of war four races were then preëminent in Europe — namely, the Romans, the Macedonians, certain select tribes amongst the mixed population of the Spanish peninsula, and finally the Gauls. These were all open to the recruiting parties of Cæsar; and amongst them all he had deliberately assigned his preference to the Gauls. The famous legion, who carried the *Alauda* (the lark) upon their helmets, was raised in Gaul from Cæsar's private funds. They composed a select and favored division in his army, and, together with the famous tenth legion, constituted a third part of his forces — a third numerically on the day of battle, but virtually a half. Even the rest of Cæsar's army had been for so long a space recruited in the Gauls, Transalpine as well as Cisalpine, that at Pharsalia the bulk of his forces is known to have been Gaulish. There were more reasons than one for concealing that fact. The policy of Cæsar was to conceal it not less from Rome than from the army itself. But the truth became known at last to all wary observers. Lord Brougham's objection to the

quality of Cæsar's enemies falls away at once when it is collated with the deliberate composition of Cæsar's own army. Besides that, Cæsar's enemies were *not* in any exclusive sense Gauls. The German tribes, the Spanish, the Helvetian, the Illyrian, Africans of every race, and Moors; the islanders of the Mediterranean, and the mixed populations of Asia, had all been faced by Cæsar. And if it is alleged that the forces of Pompey, however superior in numbers, were at Pharsalia largely composed of an Asiatic rabble, the answer is — that precisely of such a rabble were the hostile armies composed from which he had won his laurels. False and windy reputations are sown thickly in history; but never was there a reputation more thoroughly histrionic than that of Pompey. The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, amongst a million of other crotchets, did (it is true) make a pet of Pompey; and he was encouraged in this caprice (which had for its origin the doctor's *political** ani-

* It is very evident that Dr. Arnold could not have understood the position of politics in Rome, when he allowed himself to make a favorite of Pompey. The doctor hated aristocrats as he hated the gates of Erebus. Now, Pompey was not only the leader of a most selfish aristocracy, but also their tool. Secondly, as if this were not bad enough, that section of the aristocracy to which he had dedicated his services was an odious oligarchy; and to this oligarchy, again, though nominally its head, he was in effect the most submissive of tools. Cæsar, on the other hand, if a democrat in the sense of working by democratic agencies, was bending all his efforts to the reconstruction of a new, purer, and enlarged aristocracy, no longer reduced to the necessity of buying and selling the people in mere self-defence. The everlasting war of bribery, operating upon universal poverty, the internal disease of Roman society, would have been redressed by Cæsar's measures,

mosity to Cæsar) by one military critic, namely, Sir William Napier. This distinguished soldier conveyed messages to Dr. Arnold warning him against the popular notion that Pompey was a poor strategist. Now, had there been any Roman state-paper office, which Sir William could be supposed to have searched and weighed against the statements of surviving history, we might, in deference to Sir William's great experience and talents, have consented to a rehearing of the case. Unfortunately, no new materials have been discovered; nor is it alleged that the old ones are capable of being thrown into new combinations, so as to reverse or to suspend the old adjudications. The judgment of history stands; and amongst the records which it involves none is more striking than this — that, whilst Cæsar and Pompey were equally assaulted by sudden surprises, the first invariably met the sudden danger (sudden, but never unlooked-for) by counter resources of evasion. He showed a new front as often as his situation exposed a new peril. At Pharsalia, where the cavalry of Pompey was far superior to his

and *was* redressed according to the degree in which those measures were really brought into action. New judicatures were wanted, new judicial laws, a new aristocracy, by slow degrees a new people, and the right of suffrage exercised within new restrictions — all these things were needed for the cleansing of Rome; and that Cæsar would have accomplished this labor of Hercules was the true cause of his death. The scoundrels of the oligarchy felt their doom to be approaching. It was the just remark of Napoleon, that Brutus (but still more, we may say, Cicero), though falsely accredited as a patriot, was, in fact, the most exclusive and the most selfish of aristocrats.

own, he anticipated and was in full readiness for the particular manœuvre by which it was attempted to make this superiority available against himself. By a new formation of his troops he foiled the attack, and caused it to recoil upon the enemy. Had Pompey then no rejoinder ready for meeting this reply? No. His one arrow being shot, his quiver was exhausted. Without an effort at parrying any longer, the mighty game was surrendered as desperate. "Check to the king!" was heard in silent submission; and no further stratagem was invoked, even in silent prayer, but the stratagem of flight. Yet Cæsar himself, objects a celebrated doctor (namely, Bishop Warburton), was reduced by his own rashness at Alexandria to a condition of peril and embarrassment not less alarming than the condition of Pompey at Pharsalia. How far this surprise might be reconcilable with Cæsar's military credit, is a question yet undecided; but this at least is certain, that he was equal to the occasion; and, if the surprise was all but fatal, the evasion was all but miraculous. Many were the sudden surprises which Cæsar had to face before and after this,—on the shores of Britain, at Marseilles, at Munda, at Thapsus,—from all of which he issued triumphantly, failing only as to that final one from which he had in pure nobility of heart announced his determination to shelter himself under no precautions.

Such cases of personal danger and escape are exciting to the imagination, from the disproportion between the interests of an individual and the interests of a whole nation, which for the moment happen to be concurrent. The death or the escape of Cæsar

at one moment rather than another, would make a difference in the destiny of many nations. And in kind, though not in degree, the same interest has frequently attached to the fortunes of a prince or military leader. Effectually the same dramatic character belongs to any struggle with sudden danger, though not (like Cæsar's) successful. That it was *not* successful, becomes a new reason for pursuing it with interest; since equally in that result as in one more triumphant we read the altered course by which history is henceforward destined to flow.

For instance, how much depended, what a weight of history hung in suspense, upon the evasions, or attempts at evasion, of Charles I. He was a prince of great ability; and yet it confounds us to observe with how little of foresight, or of circumstantial inquiry, either as regarded things or persons, he entered upon these difficult enterprises of escape from the vigilance of military guardians. His first escape, namely, that into the Scottish camp before Newark, was not surrounded with any circumstances of difficulty. His second escape from Hampton Court had become a matter of more urgent policy, and was proportionally more difficult of execution. He was attended on that occasion by two gentlemen (Berkely and Asburnham), upon whose qualities of courage and readiness, and upon whose acquaintance with the accidents, local or personal, that surrounded their path, all was staked. Yet one of these gentlemen was always suspected of treachery, and both were imbecile as regarded that sort of wisdom on which it was possible for a royal person to rely. Had the questions likely to arise been such as belong to a

masquerading adventure, these gentlemen might have been qualified for the situation. As it was, they sank in mere distraction under the responsibilities of the occasion. The king was as yet in safety. At Lord Southampton's country mansion, he enjoyed the protection of a loyal family ready to face any risk in his behalf; and his retreat was entirely concealed. Suddenly this scene changes. The military commander in the Isle of Wight is acquainted with the king's situation, and brought into his presence, together with a military guard, though no effort had been made to exact securities from his honor in behalf of the king. His single object was evidently to arrest the king. His military honor, his duty to the parliament, his private interest, all pointed to the same result, namely, the immediate apprehension of the fugitive prince. What was there in the opposite scale to set against these notorious motions? Simply the fact that he was nephew to the king's favorite chaplain, Dr. Hammond. What rational man, in a case of that nature, would have relied upon so poor a trifle? Yet even this inconsiderable bias was much more than balanced by another of the same kind, but in the opposite direction. Colonel Hammond was nephew to the king's chaplain, but in the mean time he was the husband of Cromwell's niece; and upon Cromwell privately, and the whole faction of the Independents politically, he relied for all his hopes of advancement. The result was that, from mere inertia of mind and criminal negligence in his two attendants, the poor king had run right into the custody of the very jailer whom his enemies would have selected by preference.

Thus, then, from fear of being made a prisoner, Charles had quietly walked into the military prison of Carisbrook Castle. The very security of this prison, however, might throw the governor off his guard. Another escape might be possible; and again an escape was arranged. It reads like some leaf torn from the records of a lunatic hospital, to hear its circumstances and the particular point upon which it split. Charles was to make his exit through a window. This window, however, was fenced by iron bars; and these bars had been to a certain extent eaten through with *aqua-fortis*. The king had succeeded in pushing his head through, and upon that result he relied for his escape; for he connected this trial with the following strange maxim or postulate, namely, that wheresoever the head could pass, there the whole person could pass. It need not be said that, in the final experiment, this absurd rule was found not to hold good. The king stuck fast about the chest and shoulders, and was extricated with some difficulty. Had it even been otherwise, the attempt would have failed; for, on looking down from amidst the iron bars, the king beheld, in the imperfect light, a number of people who were not amongst his accomplices.

Equal in fatuity, almost one hundred and fifty years later, were the several attempts at escape concerted on behalf of the French royal family. The abortive escape to Varennes is now familiarly known to all the world, and impeaches the good sense of the king himself not less than of his friends. The arrangements for the falling in with the cavalry escort could not have been worse managed had they

been intrusted to children. But even the general outline of the scheme, an escape in a collective family party — father, mother, children, and servants — and the king himself, whose features were known to millions, not even withdrawing himself from the public gaze at the stations for changing horses — all this is calculated to perplex and sadden the pitying reader with the idea that some supernatural infatuation had bewildered the predestined victims. Meantime an earlier escape than this to Varennes had been planned, namely, to Brussels. The preparations for this, which have been narrated by Madame de Campan, were conducted with a disregard of concealment even more astounding to people of ordinary good sense. "Do you really need to escape at all?" would have been the question of many a lunatic; "if you do, surely you need also to disguise your preparations for escape."

But alike the madness or the providential wisdom of such attempts commands our profoundest interest; alike — whether conducted by a Cæsar or by the helpless members of families utterly unfitted to act independently for themselves. These attempts belong to history, and it is in that relation that they become philosophically so impressive. Generations through an infinite series are contemplated by us as silently awaiting the turning of a sentinel round a corner, or the casual echo of a footstep. Dynasties have trepidated on the chances of a sudden cry from an infant carried in a basket; and the safety of empires has been suspended, like the descent of an avalanche, upon the moment earlier or the moment later of a cough or a sneeze. And, high above all,

ascends solemnly the philosophic truth, that the least things and the greatest are bound together as elements equally essential of the mysterious universe.