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FREE OPINIONS

FREELY EXPRESSED

ON

Certain Phases of Modern Social Life and Conduct

By

MARIE CORELLI

AUTHOR OF "GOD'S GOOD MAN" "TEMPORAL POWER"
"BARABBAS" "THE MASTER CHRISTIAN" ETC

LONDON
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A Toi, Sauvage !

"Si vous voulez combattre,
Il faut croire d'abord ;
Il faut que le lutteur
Affirme la justice ;
Il faut, pour le devoir
Qu'il s'offre au sacrifice,
Et qu'il soit le plus pur,
S'il n'est pas le plus fort."

EUGÈNE MANUEL.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

SOME of these social papers which are now collected together for the first time, have appeared before in various periodicals enjoying a simultaneous circulation in this country and the United States. Eleven of them were written for an American syndicate, which (for the purpose of copyright in Great Britain) sold them to a London weekly journal, wherein they were duly issued. "Pagan London," however, which caused some little public discussion, was not included among those supplied to the American syndicated press, that article having been written specially for readers in this country as a protest against Archdeacon Sinclair's sweeping condemnation of the lax morality and neglect of religion among the teeming millions that populate our great English metropolis,—a condemnation which I ventured, and still venture to think unfair, in the face of the open worldliness, and gross inattention to the spiritual needs of their congregations on the part of a very large majority of the clergy themselves. Certain people, whose brains must be of that peculiar density which is incapable of receiving even the impression of a shadow of common sense, have since accused me of attacking "all" the clergy. Such an accusation is unwarranted and unwarrantable, for no one appreciates more than I

that they cannot read, that statement is not intended to convey the idea that if a book or newspaper be given to them they do not understand the letters or the print in which the reading matter is presented to their eyes. They do. But such letters and such print impress no meaning upon their minds. Anyone can prove this by merely asking them what they have been reading. In nine cases out of ten they "don't know." And if they ever did know, during one unusual moment of brain-activity, they "forget." The thinking faculty is, with them, like a worn-out sieve, through which everything runs easily and drops to waste. The news of the day, be it set forth never so boldly in no matter what startlingly stout headlines, barely excites their interest for more than a second. They may perhaps glance at a couple of newspaper placards and lazily observe, "Russia at it again," but of the ins and outs of policy, the difficulties of Government, the work of nations, they grasp absolutely nothing. Thus it happens that when they are asked their opinion on any such events of the hour as may be making history in the future, they display their utter ignorance in such a frankly stupid fashion that any intelligent enquirer is bound to be stunned by their lack of knowledge, and will perhaps murmur feebly: "Have you not read the news?" to which will come the vague reply: "Oh, yes, I read all the newspapers! But I really don't remember the particulars just now!" What they do remember—these "cultured" persons, (and the more highly they are cultured, the more tenacious appears to be their memory in this respect)—is a divorce case. They always read that carefully over and over

again. They comment upon it afterwards with such gusto as to make it quite evident to the merest tyro, that they have learned all its worst details by heart. If they can only revel in the published shame and disgrace of one or two of their very "dearest" friends, they enjoy and appreciate that kind of mental fare more than all the beautiful poems and idyllic romances ever written.

The "million" have long ago learned to read,—and are reading. The last is the most important fact, and one which those who seek to govern them would do well to remember. For their reading is of a most strange, mixed, and desultory order—and who can say what wondrous new notions and disturbing theories may not leap out sprite-like from the witch's cauldron of seething ideas round which they gather, watching the literary "bubble, bubble, toil and trouble," wherein the "eye of newt and toe of frog" in the book line may contrast with something which is altogether outside the boiling hotch-potch,—namely that "sick eagle looking at the sky" which is the true symbol of the highest literary art. But the highest literary art, particularly in its poetic form, is at a discount nowadays. And why? Simply because even the million do not know "how" to read. Moreover, it is very difficult to make them learn. They have neither the skill nor the patience to study beautiful thoughts expressed in beautiful language. They want to "rush" something through. Whether poem, play, or novel, it must be "rushed through" and done with. Very few authors' work, if any, can be sure of an honest and unprejudiced reading, either by those whose business it is to review it for the

press, or those whose pleasure it is to "skim" it for themselves. "They have no time." They have time for motoring, cycling, card-playing, racing, betting, hockey and golf, — anything in short which does not directly appeal to the intellectual faculties,—but for real reading, they can neither make leisure, nor acquire aptitude.

This vague, sieve-like quality of brain and general inability to comprehend or retain impressions of character or events, which is becoming so common among modern so-called "readers" of books, can but make things very difficult for authors who seek to contribute something of their utmost and best to the world of literature. Most men and women who feel the "divine afflatus," and who are able to write in a style above the average, must be conscious of a desire to rise yet higher than any of their own attempted efforts, and to do something new, strong, and true enough to hold life and lasting in it when other contemporary work is forgotten. It is the craving of the "sick eagle looking at the sky" perhaps, nevertheless it is a noble craving. In taking an aim, it is as well to let fly at the moon, even if one only hits a tree. But when fiery-footed Pegasus would fain gallop away with its rider into the realms of imagination and enchantment,— when the aspiring disciple of literature, all aglow with freshness and fervour, strives to catch some new spirit of thought as it rushes past on its swift wings, or seeks to create some fair consoling idyll of human circumstance, then all the publishers stand massed in the way and cry "Halt!" "Don't let us have any great ideas!" they say—"They are above the heads of the public. Be domestic—

be matrimonially iniquitous,—be anything in the line of fiction but 'great.' Don't give us new things to think about,—the public have no time to think. What they want is just something to glance at between tea and dinner."

Now this condition of affairs, which is positively disastrous to all literary art, is brought about by the lack of the one vital point in the modern education of the British and American people, —namely, that they have not been taught "how" to read. As a result of this, they frequently pronounce a book "too long" or "too dull,"—too this, or too that, without having looked at more than perhaps twenty pages of its contents. They will skim over any amount of cheap newspapers and trashy society "weeklies" full of the unimportant movements and doings of he and she and they, but to take up a book with any serious intention of reading it thoroughly, is a task which only the thoughtful few will be found ready to undertake. What is called the appreciation of the "belles lettres" is indeed "caviare to the general." Knowledge brings confidence; and if it were made as much the fashion to read as it is to ride in motor-cars, some improvement in manners and conduct might be the happy result of such a prevailing taste. But as matters stand at the present day, there are a large majority of the "educated" class, who actually do not know the beginnings of "how" to read. They have never learned—and some of them will never learn. They cannot realize the unspeakable delight and charm of giving one's self up to one's author, *sans* prejudice, *sans* criticism, *sans* everything that could possibly break or mar

the spell, and being carried on the wings of gentle romance away from Self, away from the everyday cares and petty personalities of social convention, and observance, and living "with" the characters which have been created by the man or woman whose fertile brain and toiling pen have unitedly done their best to give this little respite and holiday to those who will take it and rejoice in it with gratitude.

Few there are nowadays who will so permit themselves to be carried away. Far larger is the class of people who take up a novel or a volume of essays, merely to find fault with it and fling it aside half unread. The attitude of the bad-tempered child who does not know what toy to break next, is the attitude of many modern readers. Nothing is more manifestly unfair to an author than to judge a book by the mere "skimming" of its pages, and this injustice becomes almost felonious when the merits or demerits of the work are decided without reading it at all. For instance, Smith meets Jones in the train which is taking them out to their respective "little places" in the country, and says:

"Have you read So-and-So's latest book? If not, don't!" Whereupon Jones murmurs: "Really! So bad as all that! Have *you* read it?" To which Smith rejoins rudely: "No! And don't intend! I've *heard* all about it!" And Jones, acquiescing feebly, decides that he must "taboo" that book, also its author, lest perhaps Mrs. Jones' virtue be put to the blush at the mention of either. Now if Smith dared to condemn a tradesman in this way, and depreciated his goods to

Jones in such wise that the latter should be led to avoid him altogether, that tradesman could claim damages for injuring his character and depriving him of custom. Should not the same rule apply to authors when they are condemned on mere hearsay? Or when their work is wilfully misrepresented and misquoted in the press?

It may not, perhaps, be considered out of place here to recall a "personal reminiscence" of the wilful misrepresentation made to a certain section of the public of a novel of mine entitled "Temporal Power." That book had scarcely left the printer's hands when W. T. Stead, of the *Review of Reviews*, wrote me a most cordial letter, congratulating me on the work, and averring that it was "the best" of all I had done. But in his letter he set forth the startling proposition that I "must have meant" King Edward, our own gracious Sovereign, for my "fictional" King, Queen Alexandra for the Queen, the Prince of Wales for my "Prince Humphry," and Mr. Chamberlain for the defaulting Secretary of State, who figures in the story as "Carl Perousse." I was so amazed at this curious free translation of my ideas, that at first I thought it was "Julia" who had thus persuaded Mr. Stead to see things upside down. But as his criticism of the book had not yet appeared in the *Review of Reviews*, I wrote to him at once, and earnestly assured him of the complete misapprehension he had made of my whole scope and intention. Despite this explanation on my part, however, Mr. Stead wrote and published a review of the book maintaining his own fabricated "case" against me, notwithstanding the fact that he held my

denial of his assertions in his possession *before* the publication of his criticism! And though a dealer in meat, groceries, and other food stuffs may obtain compensation if his wares are wilfully misrepresented to the buying public, the purveyor of thoughts or ideas has no remedy when such thoughts or ideas are deliberately and purposefully falsified to the world through the press. Yet the damage is surely as great,—and the injury done to one's honest intention quite as gratuitous. From this little incident occurring to myself, I venture to say in reference to the assertion that people do not know how to read, that if those who "rushed" through the misleading criticism of "Temporal Power" had honestly read the book so criticized for themselves, they would have seen at once how distorted was Mr. Stead's view of the whole story. But,—while many who had read the book and *not* the review, laughed at the bare notion of there being any resemblance between my fictional hero-king of romance and the Sovereign of the British Empire, others, reading the review only, foolishly decided that I must have written some "travesty" upon English royalty, and condemned the book *without reading it.* This is what all authors have a right to complain of,—the condemnation or censure of their books by persons who have not read them. For though there never was so much reading matter put before the public, there was never less actual "reading" in the truest and highest sense of the term than there is at present.

To read, as I take it, means to sit down quietly and enjoy a book in its every line and expression. Whether it be tragic or humourous, simple or ornate,

it has been written to beguile us from our daily routine of life, and to give us a little change of thought or mood. It may please us, or it may make us sad—it may even anger us by upsetting our pet theories and contradicting us on our own lines of argument; but if it has taken us away for a time from ourselves, it has fulfilled the greater part of its mission, and done us a good turn. Those who have really learned to read, are no encouragers of the Free Library craze. The true lover of books will never want to peruse volumes that are thumbed and soiled by hundreds of other hands—he or she will manage to buy them and keep them as friends in the private household. Any book, save the most expensive "édition de luxe," can be purchased for a few shillings,—a little saving on drugged beer and betting would enable the most ordinary mechanic to stock himself with a very decent library of his own. To borrow one's mental fare from Free Libraries is a dirty habit to begin with. It is rather like picking up eatables dropped by some one else in the road, and making one's dinner off another's leavings. One book, clean and fresh from the bookseller's counter, is worth half a dozen of the soiled and messy knock-about volumes, which many of our medical men assure us carry disease-germs in their too-frequently fingered pages. Free Libraries are undoubtedly very useful resorts for betting men. They can run in, glance at the newspapers for the latest "Sporting Items" and run out again. But why ratepayers should support such houses of call for these gentry remains a mystery which one would have to pierce through all the Wool and Wobble of Municipal Corporations

to solve. An American "professor"—(there are so many of them) spoke to me the other day in glowing terms of Andrew Carnegie. "He's cute, you bet!" he remarked, "he goes one better than Pears' Soap! Pears has got to pay for the upkeep of his hoardings, but Carnegie plants his down in the shape of libraries and gets the British ratepayer to keep them all going! Ain't he spry!"

Poor British ratepayer! It is to be feared he is easily gulled! But,—to return to the old argument—if he knew "how" to read—really knew,—he would not be so easily taken in, even by the schemes of philanthropy. He would buy his books himself, and among them he might even manage to secure a copy of a very interesting volume published in America, so I am given to understand, which tells us how Carnegie made his millions, and how he sanctioned the action of the Pinkerton police force in firing on his men when they "struck" for higher wages.

Apropos of America and things American, there is just now a pretty little story started in the press on both sides of the water, about British novels and British authors no longer being wanted in the United States. The Children of the Eagle are going to make their fiction themselves. All power to their elbows! But British authors will do themselves no harm by enquiring carefully into this report. It may even pay some of them to send over a private agent on their own behalf to study the American book stores, and take count of the thousands of volumes of British fiction which are selling there "like hot cakes," to quote a choice expression of Transatlantic slang. It is quite

evident that the Children of the Eagle purchase British fiction. It is equally evident that the publishers who cater for the Children of the Eagle are anxious to get British fiction cheap, and are doing this little deal of the "No demand" business from an acute sense of urgency. It is all right, of course! If I were an American publisher and had to pay large prices to popular British authors for popular British fiction (now that "piracy" is no longer possible), I should naturally tell those British authors that they are not wanted in America, and that it is very good and condescending of me to consider their wares at all. I should give a well-known British author from £100 to £500 for the sole American rights of his or her newest production, and proceed to make £5,000 or £7,000 profit out of it. That kind of thing is called "business." I should never suspect the British author of being so base as to send over and get legal statements as to how his or her book was selling, or to take note of the thousands of copies stacked up every day in the stores, to be melted away as soon as stacked, in the hands of eager purchasers. No! As a strictly honourable person, I should hope that the British author would stay at home and mind his or her own business. But let us suppose that the American publisher's latest delicate "feeler" respecting the "No demand for British literature" were true, it would seem that Americans, even more than the British, require to be taught "how" to read. If one may judge from their own output of literature, the lesson is badly needed. Ralph Waldo Emerson remains, as yet, their biggest literary man. He

knew "how" to read, and from that knowledge learned "how" to write. But no American author has come after him that can be called greater than he, or as great. Concerning the art of fiction, the present American "make" is, whatever the immediate "catching on" of it may be, distinctly ephemera of the utmost ephemeral. Such "literature" would not exist even in America, if Americans knew "how" to read. What is called the "Yellow Journalism" would not exist either. Why? Because a really educated reader of things worth reading would not read it—and it would therefore be a case of the wicked ceasing to trouble and the weary being at rest.

There is a general complaint nowadays—especially among authors—of the "decadence" of literature. It is true enough. But the cause of the "decadence" is the same—simply and solely that people cannot and will not read. They do not know "how" to do it. If they ever did know in the bygone days of Dickens and Thackeray, they have forgotten. Every book is "too long" for them. Yet scarcely any novel is published now as long as the novels of Dickens, which were so eagerly devoured at one time by tens of thousands of admiring readers. A short, risky, rather "nasty" book, (reviewers would call it strong, but that is only a little joke of theirs,—they speak of this kind of literature as though it were cheese) finds most favour with the "upper" circles of society in Great Britain and America. Not so with the "million" though. The million prefer simpler fare—and they read a good deal—though scarcely in the right way. It is always more a case of "skimming"

than reading. If they are ever taught the right way to read, they may become wiser than any political government would like them to be. For right reading makes right thinking—and right thinking makes right living—and right living would result in what? Well! For one thing, members of councils and other "ruling" bodies would be lazier than ever, with less to do—and the Education Act would no longer be necessary, as the fact of simply knowing "how" to read, would educate everybody without further trouble.

Dear Sir or Madam,—read! Don't "skim"! Learn your letters! Study the pronunciation and meaning of words thoroughly first, and then you may proceed to sentences. Gradually you will be able to master a whole passage of prose or poetry in such a manner as actually to understand it. That will be a great thing! And once you understand it, you may even possibly remember it! And then,—no matter how much you may have previously been educated,—your education will only have just begun.



THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESS

Not very long ago a Royal hint was given by one of the wisest and most tactful among the great throned Rulers of the world, to that other ruling power which is frequently alluded to as "the Fourth Estate." Edward the Seventh, King by the Grace of God over Great Britain and all the dependencies which flourish under the sign of the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle, using that courteous and diplomatic manner which particularly belongs to him, expressed his "hope" that the Gentlemen of the Press would do their best to foster amity and goodwill between the British Empire and other nations. Now amongst the many kindly, thoughtful, sagacious and far-sighted things which His Majesty has done since he ascended the English Throne, that highest seat of honour in the world—perhaps this mild and friendly suggestion to the Press is one of the most pointed, necessary and admirable. It is a suggestion which, if accepted in the frank, manly and magnanimous spirit in which it has been conveyed, would make for the peace of Europe. Petty insult often begets serious strife, and the cheap sneer of a would-be "smart" journalist at another country's governmental mistakes may lead to consequences undreamt of in newspaper-office philosophy. Yet the journalist, *as* journalist, is scarcely to blame if, in a praiseworthy desire to give a "selling"

impetus to the paper on which he is employed, he gets up a little bit of speculative melodrama, such as "German Malignity," "Russian Trickery," "Mysterious Movements of the Fleet," "French Insult to the King," "America's Secret Treaty," or "Alarming Eastern Rumours." He is perhaps not in any way departing from his own special line of business if he counts on the general gullibility of the public, though in this matter he is often liable to be himself gulled. For the public have been so frequently taken in by mere "sensationalism" in war news and the like, that they are beginning to view all such rumours with more contempt than credence. Nevertheless the ambitious little Press boys (for they are only boys in their lack of discernment, whatever may be their external appearance as grown men) do not deserve so much reproof for their hot-headed, impulsive and thoughtless ways as the personages set in authority over them, whose business it is to edit their "copy" before passing it on to the printers. *They* are the responsible parties,—and when they forget the dignity of their position so much as to allow a merely jejune view of the political situation to appear in their journals, under flamboyant headlines which catch the eye and ensnare the attention of the more or less uninstructed crowd, one naturally deplores the lapse of their honourable duty. For in this way a great deal of harm may be done and endless misunderstanding and mischief created. It is quite wrong and wholly unpatriotic that the newspapers of any country should strive to foster ill-feeling between conflicting nations or political parties. When they engage in this kind of petty strife one

is irresistibly reminded of the bad child in the nursery who, seeing his two little brothers quarrelling, cries out: "Go it, Tom! Go it, Jack! Hit him in the eye!" and then, when the hit is given and mutual screams follow, runs to his mother with the news—"Ma! Tom and Jack are fighting!" carefully suppressing the fact that he helped to set them at it. And when the trouble begins to be serious, and national recriminations are freely exchanged, it is curious to note how quickly the Press, on both sides, assumes the attitude of an almost matronly remonstrance. One hears in every leading article the "How can you behave so, Jack? What a naughty boy you are, Tom! Positively, I am ashamed of you both!"

There would be no greater force existing in the world as an aid to civilization and human fraternity than the Press, if its vast powers were employed to the noblest purposes. It ought to resemble a mighty ship, which, with brave, true men at the helm, moves ever on a straight course, cleaving the waters of darkness and error, and making direct for the highest shores of peace and promise. But it must be a ship indeed,—grandly built, nobly manned, and steadily steered,—not a crazy, water-logged vessel, creaking with the thud of every wave, or bobbing backwards and forwards uncertainly in a gale. Its position at the present day is, or appears to be, rather the latter than the former. Unquestionably the people, taken in the mass, do not rely upon it. They read the newspapers—but they almost immediately forget everything in them except the headlines and one or two unpleasant police cases. And why do they forget? Simply because first

of all they are not sufficiently interested; and, secondly, because they do not believe the news they read. A working man told me the other day that he had been saving sixpence a week on two halfpenny papers which he had been accustomed to take in for the past year. "I found 'em out in ten lies, all on top of one another, in two weeks," he candidly explained; "and so I thought I might as well keep my money for something more useful. So I started putting the halfpence by for my little kiddie, and I'm going to stick to it. There's five shillings in the Savings Bank already!"

Glancing back to the early journalism of the past century, when Dickens and Thackeray wrote for the newspapers ("there were giants in those days"), one cannot help being struck by the great deterioration in the whole "tone" of the press at the present time, as contrasted with that which prevailed in the dawn of the Victorian era. There is dignity, refinement, and power in the leading articles of the *Times* and other journals then in vogue, such as must needs have compelled people not only to read, but to think. The vulgar "personal" note, the flippant sneer at this, that, or t'other personage,—the monkey-like mockery of women,—the senseless gibes flung at poets and poetry,—the clownish kick at sentiment,—were all apparently unknown.

True it is that the *Times* still holds its own as a journal in which one may look in vain for "sensationalism" but its position is rather like that of a grim old lion surrounded by cubs of all sizes and ages, that yap and snap at its whiskers and take liberties with its tail. It can be said, however, that all the better, higher-class periodicals

are in the same situation—the yapping and snapping goes on around them precisely in the same way—"Circulation Five Times as Large as that of any Penny Morning Journal," etcetera, etcetera. And the question of the circulation of any particular newspaper resolves itself into two points,—first, the amount of money it puts into the pockets of its proprietors or proprietor,—and secondly, the influence it has, or is likely to have, on the manners and morals of the public. The last is by far the most important matter, though the first is naturally the leading motive of its publication. Herein we touch the keynote of responsibility. How, and in what way are the majority of people swayed or affected by the statements and opinions of some one man or several men employed on the world's press? On this point it may perhaps be asked whether any newspaper is really justified in setting before readers of all ages and temperaments, a daily fare of suicides, murders, divorce-cases, sudden deaths, or abnormal "horrors" of every kind to startle, depress or warp the mind away from a sane and healthful outlook upon life and the things of life in general? A very brilliant and able journalist tells me that "if we don't put these things in, we are so deadly dull!" One can but smile at this candid statement of inefficiency. The idea that there can be any "lively" reading in the sorrowful details of sickness, crime or mania, leaves much room for doubt. And when it is remembered how powerfully the human mind is affected by suggestion, it is surely worth while enquiring as to whether the newspapers could not manage to offer their readers noble and

instructive subjects of thought, rather than morbid or degrading ones. Fortunately for all classes, the bulk of what may be called "magazine literature" makes distinctly for the instruction and enlightenment of the public, and though a "gutter press" exists in Great Britain, as in America, a great portion of the public are now educated enough to recognize its type and to treat it with the contempt it merits. I quote here part of a letter which recently appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* signed "Observer," and entitled:

"A PRESS-GOVERNED EMPIRE.

"To the Editor of the *Westminster Gazette.*

"SIR,—We have it on the highest authority that the Government acts on the same information as is at the disposal of 'the man in the street' (*vide* Mr. Balfour at Manchester). The man in the street obviously must depend on the Press for his information. How has the Press served him?

"Let me take a recent illustration. A great experiment was to be made by the Navy. A battleship with all its tremendous armament was to pound a battleship. Naturally the Press was well represented, and the public was eager for its report.

"In due course a narrative appeared describing the terrible havoc wrought. The greatest stress was laid upon the instant ignition and complete destruction by fire of all the woodwork on the doomed ship. Elaborate leading articles appeared enforcing the lesson that wood was no longer a

possible material for the accessory furniture of a battleship.

"A day or two after, a quiet answer in the House of Commons from Mr. Goschen informed the limited public who read it, that no fire whatever had occurred on the occasion so graphically described by the host of Press correspondents.

"The events dealt with on these occasions took place in our own country, and under our own eyes, so to speak. If such untrue reports are set forth with the verisimilitude of accurate and detailed personal description of eye-witnesses, what are we to say of the truth in the reports of events occurring at a distance?

"Special knowledge, special experience long continued, speaking under a sense of responsibility, are set at nought. The regular channels of information are neglected, and the conduct of affairs is based on newspaper reports. Any private business conducted and managed on these lines would be immediately ruined. The business of the Empire is more important, and the results of its mismanagement are more serious. For how long will it be possible to continue its management, trusting to the light thrown on events by an irresponsible Press?"

* * * * *

The "irresponsibility" here complained of comes out perhaps more often and most glaringly in those papers which profess to chronicle the sayings and doings of kings and queens, prime ministers, and personages more or less well known in the world of art, letters and society. In nine cases out of ten,

the journalist who reports these sayings and doings has never set eyes on the people about whom he writes with such a free and easy flippancy. Even if he has, his authority to make their conversation public may be questioned. It is surely not too much to ask of the editors of newspapers that they should, by applying directly to the individuals concerned, ascertain whether such and such a statement made to them is true before giving it currency. A couple of penny stamps expended in private correspondence would settle the matter to the satisfaction of both parties.

"Personalities," however, would seem to be greatly in vogue. Note the following:

"At seven o'clock the King left the hotel and walked to the spring to drink more of the water. Altogether, His Majesty has to drink about a quart of the water every morning, before breakfast.

"Standing among the throng, in which every type and nationality of humanity was represented, the King sipped his second pint glass of water.

"After drinking the quart of water, the regulations laid down for the 'cure' further require the King to walk for two hours before eating a morsel of food.

"This His Majesty performed by pacing up and down the promenade from the Kruez spring at one end, to the Ferdinand spring at the other.

"Notwithstanding all the appeals of the local authorities to the visitors, King Edward was [1] *much greatly* inconvenienced by the snobbish curiosity of the crowd."

[1] Copied *verbatim* from the Press report.

One may query whether "the snobbish curiosity of the crowd" or the snobbish information as to how "the King sipped his second pint glass of water" was the more reprehensible. Of course there are both men and women who delight in the personalities of the Press, especially when they concern themselves. Many ladies of rank and title are only too happy to have their dresses described to the man in the street, and their physical charms discussed by Tom, Dick and Harry. And when the Press is amiable enough to oblige them in these little yearnings for personal publicity, let us hope that the labourer, being worthy of his hire, hath his reward.

The following extract, taken from a daily journal boasting a large circulation, can be called little less than a pandering to the lowest tastes of the abandoned feminine snob, as well as a flagrant example of the positively criminal recklessness with which irresponsible journalists permit themselves to incite, by their flamboyant praise of the *demi-mondaine*, the envy and cupidity of thoughtless girls and women, who perhaps but for the perusal of such tawdry stuff, would never have known of, or half-unconsciously coveted the dress-and-diamond gew-gaws which are the common reward of female degradation and dishonesty:

"Miss W., a young American actress, has burst upon London. She has brought back from Paris to the Savoy Hotel, along with her golden hair and lovely brown eyes, an enormous jewel-case, innumerable dress-baskets—and a story. It concerns herself and how she made a fortune on the

Paris Bourse, and she told it to our representative yesterday.

"She is an American, and was eating candy when she met M. J—— L——. 'Ah!' said he, 'give up stick and buy stock.' She 'took the tip,' she says, and staked her fortune—every penny—on the deal. A fortnight later she came back one night to her flat in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, from the Olympia, where she plays a leading part. A telegram from her bankers was waiting. It said: 'You have been successful.' 'Next day,' says Miss W., 'I called on those bankers and picked up the £20,000 I had made.'

"INVETERATE GAMBLER.

"'Wonderful, wasn't it?' said Miss W., and our representative agreed that it was. 'Oh, but it was a mere nothing!' she said. 'I have gambled since I was seven. Then I used to bet in pop-corn and always won. At seventeen I was quite 'a dab' at spotting winners on the Turf.

"'Monte Carlo? Oh, yes. I won a trifle there this year—£800 or so. And Trouville! Why, you may not believe it, but I won £4,000 there this year in a few weeks.

"'Of course, I don't know the tricks of the Stock Exchange, though I was once chased by a bull,' observed Miss W., with a smile. 'Still, I think I'll stick to it.'

"Opposite the Bourse is a shop where fashionable Parisians buy their furs. She spent £1,600 in a sable coat and hat on the day that the Bourse made her. Her other purchases include:—

Paris hats to the value of £200.
A robe of baby lamb, £150.
Fifteen Paquin gowns.
Two long fur coats.
Five short fur coats.
Three sets of furs.

"She also admits that she bought such trifles in the way of jewellery as :—

A corsage with thirteen large diamonds.
Eighteen rows of pearls.
Eighteen diamond rings.
Two diamond butterflies.
One emerald ring.
Several pendants.

"Diamonds, says Miss W., are the joy of her life. Each night on the stage of the Olympia she wears between £30,000 and £40,000 worth of jewellery.'"

The woman who confides her wardrobe list and the prices of her clothes to a Fleet Street hack of the pen is far gone past recall, but her manner of misdemeaning herself should not be proclaimed in the Press under "headings" as if it were news of importance to the country; and it would not be so proclaimed were the Press entirely, instead of only partially, in the hands of educated men.

In olden days it would seem that a great part of the responsibility of the Press lay in its criticism of art and literature. That burden, however, no longer lies upon its shoulders. Since the people began to read for themselves, newspaper criticism, so far as books are concerned, carries little weight. When some particular book secures a great success, we read this kind of thing about it : "In argument,

intrigue and style it captures the fancy of the masses without attracting the slightest attention from the critical and discriminating few whose approval alone gives any chance of permanence to work." This is, of course, very old hearing. "The critical and discriminating few" in Italy long ago condemned Dante as a "vulgar" rhymer, who used the "people's vernacular." Now the much-abused Florentine is the great Italian classic. The same "critical and discriminating few" condemned John Keats, who is now enrolled among the chiefest of English poets. Onslaughts of the bitterest kind were hurled at the novels of Charles Dickens by the "critical and discriminating few"—in the great writer's time—but he "captured the fancy of the masses" and lives in the hearts and homes of thousands for whom the "critical and discriminating few" might just as well never have existed. And when we look up the names of the "critical and discriminating few" in our own day, we find, strange to say, that they are all disappointed authors! All of them have written poems or novels, which are failures. So we must needs pity their "criticism" and "discrimination" equally, knowing the secret fount of gall from which these delicate emotions spring. At the same time, the "responsibility" of the Press might still be appealed to in literary, dramatic and artistic matters as, for example:

Why allow an unsuccessful artist to criticize a successful picture?

Why ask an unlucky playwright who cannot get even a farce accepted by the managers, to criticize a brilliant play?

Why depute a gentleman or lady who has "es-

sayed a little unsuccessful fiction to "review" a novel which has "captured the fancy of the masses" and is selling well?

These be weighty matters! Common human nature is common human nature all the world over, and it is not in common human nature to give praise to another for qualities we ourselves envy. Every one has not the same fine endowment of generosity as Sir Walter Scott, who wrote an anonymous review of Lord Byron's poems, giving them the most enthusiastic praise, and frankly stating that after the appearance of so brilliant a luminary of genius, Walter Scott could no longer be considered worthy of attention as a poet. What rhymer of to-day would thus nobly condemn himself in order to give praise to a rival?

May it not, with due respect, be suggested to those who have the handling of such matters that neither the avowed friends nor the avowed foes of authors be permitted to review their books?—the same rule of criticism to apply equally to the works of musicians, painters, sculptors and playwrights? Neither personal prejudice nor personal favouritism should be allowed to interfere with the impression produced on the mind by a work of art. Vulgar abuse and fervid eulogy are alike out of place. In the productions of the human brain nothing is wholly bad and nothing is wholly good. Perfection is impossible of attainment on our present plane of existence. We do not find it in Nature,—still less shall we find it in ourselves. The critic can show good in everything if he himself is of a good mind. Or he can show bad in everything as easily, should his digestion be out of order. Unfor-

tunately the "wear and tear of life"—to quote the patent medicine advertisements, wreaks natural havoc on the physical composition of the gentleman who is perhaps set down to review twenty novels in one column of print for the trifling sum of a guinea. All sorts of difficulties beset him. For instance, he may be employed on a certain "literary" paper which, being the property of the relatives of a novelist, exists chiefly to praise that novelist, even though it be curiously called an "organ of English literature,"—and woe betide the miserable man who dares to praise anyone else! Knowing much of the ins and outs of the literary grind, I tender my salutations to all reviewers of books, together with my respectful sympathy. I am truly sorry for them, and I do not in the least wonder that they hate with a deadly hatred every scribbling creature who writes a "long" novel. Because the "pay" for reviewing such a book is never in proportion to its length, as of course it ought to be. But anyway it doesn't matter how much or how little of it is criticized. The bulk of the public do not read reviews. That is left to the "discriminating few." And oh, how that "discriminating few" would love to "capture the fancy of the masses" if they could only manage to do it! Yet—"Never mind!" they say, with the tragedian's glare and scowl—"Our names will be inscribed upon the scroll of fame when all ye are forgotten!" Dear things! Heaven grant them this poor comfort in their graves!

One cannot but regret that in these days of wonderful research, discovery and invention, so little is done to popularize science in the columns

of the daily Press. The majority of the public are appallingly ignorant of astronomy for instance. Would it not be as interesting to instruct them in a simple and easy style as to the actual wonders of the heavens about us, as to fill their minds with the details of a murder? I hardly like to touch on the subject of geography, for out of fifteen "educated" persons I asked the question of recently, not one knew the actual situation on the map, of Tibet. Now it seems to me that the Press could work wonders in the way of education,—much more than the "Bill" will ever do. Books on science and learning are often sadly dull and generally expensive, and the public cannot afford to buy them largely, nor do they ask for them much at the libraries. If the daily journals made it a rule to give bright picturesque articles on some grand old truths or great new discoveries of science, such a course of procedure would be far more productive of good than any amount of "Short Sermons" such as we have lately heard discussed in various quarters. For the Press is a greater educational force than the Pulpit. In its hands it has the social moulding of a people, and the dignity of a nation as represented to other nations. There could hardly be a nobler task,—there can certainly never be a higher responsibility.



"PAGAN LONDON"

LONDON is "a pagan city." Such was the uncompromising verdict lately pronounced upon it by the Venerable Archdeacon Sinclair, of great St. Paul's. "A pagan city"—he said, or was reported to say—"with churches glimmering here and there like fairy lamps twinkling in the spaces of darkness upon a lawn. Like fairy lamps, they serve to show the darkness rather than to illuminate it." It was in a manner striking and curious that the Archdeacon should have chosen such a simile as "fairy lamps" for the Churches. It was an unconsciously happy hit—no doubt absolutely unintentional. But it described the Churches of to-day with marvellous exactitude. They are "fairy lamps"—no more !—only fit for show—of no use in a storm—and quenched easily with a strong puff of wind. Fairy lamps !—not strong or steady beacons—not lighthouses in the rough sea of life, planted bravely on impregnable rocks of faith to which the drowning sailor may cling for rescue and haply find life again. Fairy lamps ! Multiply them by scores, good Archdeacon !—quadruple them in every corner of this "pagan" city of ours, over which the heart of every earnest thinker must yearn with a passion of love and pity, and they shall be no use whatever to light the blackness of one soul's midnight of despair ! "Pagan London !" The

roaring, rushing crowd—the broad deep river of suffering, working, loving, struggling humanity, sweeping on, despite itself, to the limitless sea of Death,—every unit in the mass craving for sympathy, praying for guidance, longing for comfort, trying to discover ways out of pain and grief, and hoping to find God somehow and somewhere—and naught but "fairy lamps"—twinkling doubtfully, making the gloom more visible, the uncertainty of the gathering shadows more confusing and misleading!—"fairy lamps" of which the "Church of the Laodiceans," so strongly reproved by the "Spirit" in the Revelation of St. John the Divine, must have been the originator and precursor—"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth!"

It is perhaps to be doubted whether any Churchman, no matter how distinguished, learned, fashionable or popular, has the right to call London or any city which is under the Christian dispensation "pagan." No one man can honestly say he has probed the heart of another,—and if this be true, as it undoubtedly is, still less can one man assume to judge the faith or the emotions of six million hearts —six million striving, working and struggling souls. That even a handful of the six million should still wander towards "fairy lamp" Churches, in the hope to find warmth and luminance for their poor lives in such flickering and easily quenched sparks of life, speaks volumes for the touching faith, the craving hope, the desire of ultimate good, which animates our "pagan" citizens. For, if after two thousand years of Christianity, some of them are

still passionately asking to be taught and guided, still praying for strength and courage to fight against many natural besetting sins, and still seeking after such pure ideals of work and attainment as can alone make life worth living, it is not they, surely, who merit the term "pagan." They should not be so much blamed as compassionated, if, when searching for God's fair and open sunshine, they only stumble at the "fairy lamps," and, angered thereby, turn altogether away into the outer darkness. Such a term as "pagan" can be applied with far more justice to their teachers and preachers, who, having all the means of help and consolation at their disposal, fail to perform their high duties with either power, conviction or effect. It is quite easy to say "Pagan London," but what if one spoke of "pagan clergy"? What of certain ecclesiastics who do not believe one word of the creed they profess, and who daily play the part of Judas Iscariot over again in taking money for a new betrayal of Christ? What of the ordained ministers of Christianity who are un-Christian in every word and act of their daily lives? What of the surpliced hypocrites who preach to others what they never even try to practise? What of certain vicious and worldly clerical *bon-vivants*, who may constantly be met with in the houses of wealthy and titled persons, "clothed in fine linen and faring sumptuously every day," talking unsavoury society scandal with as much easy glibness as any dissolute "lay" decadent that ever cozened another man's wife away from the path of honour in the tricky disguise of a "Soul"? What of the spiteful, small-minded, quarrelsome "local" parsons, who,

instead of fostering kindness, neighbourliness, goodwill and unity among their parishioners, set them all by the ears, and play the petty tyrant with a domineering obstinacy which is rather worse than pagan, being purely barbarous? Many cases could easily be quoted where the childish, not to say querulous, pettiness of the ruling vicar of a country parish has helped to narrow, coarsen, and deteriorate the spirit of a whole community, spreading mean jealousies, fostering cheap rivalries, and making every soul in the place, from Sunday school children up to poor workhouse octogenarians, irritable, discontented and unhappy. And if the word "pagan" be used at all, should it not be particularly and specially applied to those theatrical dignitaries of the Church whose following of the simple and beautiful doctrine of Christ consists in sheer disobedience to His commands—disobedience openly displayed in the ornate ritual and "vain repetitions" which Christ expressly forbade. "For all their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments." And while "enlarging the borders of their garments" they institute "processional" services and promenades round the "fairy lamp" churches, with various altar-bobbings and other foolish ceremonies, caring nothing for the *Spirit* of the faith, if only all forms and observances, imported from Rome, or from still older "pagan" rites than the Roman, namely, the Græco-Egyptian, may be in some way introduced into the simple and unaffected form of prayer authorized by the Church of England. Disloyal to both God and the King, the "pagan

clergy " are doing more at this present day to injure the cause of true religion among the masses than is any lack of zeal or want of faith that may exist in the people themselves. Who can blame sensible men and women for staying away from church, when in nine cases out of ten they know that the officiating minister is less Christian, less enlightened, less charitable and kind-hearted than themselves ? Canon Allen Edwards, in an admirable letter addressed to the Press, put the case of " pagan London " very clearly. He says : " We do not want new churches." True. No more " fairy lamps " are required for the general misleading of the straying sheep. He adds : " We want new men."

This is the real need—men ! Men of thought—men of heart,—men of true conviction, ardent faith, passionate exaltation, and unceasing devotion,—men who will not play about with " show " services, like amateur actors in a charity performance,—but who will sincerely care for and sympathize with their fellow-creatures, and will offer up the prayer and praise of humanity to an all-wise Omnipotence with that deep heartfelt fervour which is always expressed in the utmost simplicity of form and language,—men who have the intelligence to understand intelligent people, and who are as able to deal sympathetically with the spiritual troubles and perplexities of an educated person as with those of the ill-taught and frequently ill-fed rustic,—men who, if they preach, can find something to say of the marvels of this God-born creation of which we are a part—who will teach as well as admonish,—and who will take reverent care not

to set the Almighty Creator within a small circle of their own special form of orthodoxy, and condemn every creature that wanders outside that exclusive "fairy lamp" enclosure. Canon Allen Edwards further remarked that "The reason why the working classes do not go to church is the same reason why I do not go to the Derby, not because I think it wrong, for I have no opinion on the subject, but because I have no interest in the things that go on there. And this is the reason, and no other, why many men do not go to church. They are not interested in what is done there. . . . A large number of those who are going into the ministry to-day are, for one most essential part of their work, entirely without the first elements of equipment. They cannot preach, and they are not helped to try and learn, and yet preaching is that very part of their work for which the people expect, and have a right to expect, equipment of the highest order."

The Canon says: "they cannot preach." That is true enough, but why? I maintain that if they *felt* their mission, they could preach it. If they loved their fellow-creatures a thousand times better than themselves, as they should do, they would find much of greatness, beauty and truth to say! If they honoured and worshipped their Divine Master as they profess to honour and worship Him, there would be little lack of spirit or of eloquence! People always know when a speaker or a preacher is *in earnest*. He may have a faulty utterance—his elocution may be far from perfect, but if the *heart* attunes the voice, the voice carries. There are many hundreds of noble clergy—but they are

fewer than the ignoble of the same calling. And many there are, not only ignoble in themselves, but who attempt to pervert their very churches to illegitimate uses. I quote the following from a letter addressed to me on one occasion by a notorious "minister" of the Gospel.

"As the vicar of one of the largest parishes in England, I am often put to it how best to attract to the church the careless and the indifferent. Though a very strong High Anglican, I am an intense believer in the Priesthood of the Laity. It is the one weak spot in the Church's system that she does not, as do the non-conformists, make sufficient use of and properly appreciate the services of her lay members. It has occurred to me therefore this year that by way of a start in this direction I should ask the help of certain leading people in the Literary, Dramatic and Artistic worlds. My friend, Mrs. X., has already made a beginning by reciting two poems in my Church, and thereby moving intensely a congregation of upwards of 3,000 people." Now Mrs. X. was, and is, a well-known actress, and she recited the two poems in question *from the chancel steps at the conclusion of the Sunday evening service.* I am told, (though for this I will not vouch,) that money was taken at the church doors, and seats reserved and paid for, precisely as if the sacred building had been suddenly metamorphosed into a theatre or music hall. It never seemed to occur to the reverend gentleman who is the proprietor of this once "consecrated" building, that if he could not attract to his church "the careless and indifferent," the fault probably lay in himself and his general un-

fitness. As a "very strong High Anglican" he would naturally have leanings towards the theatre and its lime-light effects, and *certes*, the "Priesthood of the Laity," whatever may be meant by that term, is more to be believed in than the Priesthood of this particular ordained "priest" who instituted and encouraged a kind of stage recital from the steps of a sacred chancel, where the actor or actress concerned was invited to declaim his or her lines, with back turned to the Altar, the Communion-table serving as the "scenery." Such men as these are the real "pagans," and they do infinite harm to the dignity and purity of the Christian doctrine by their unworthy and debasing example. Churches under their dominance are less than "fairy lamps" in their influence for good,—they are the mere flare of stage footlights, showing up the grease-paint and powder of the clerical mime.

A deep religious sentiment lies at the hearts of the British people, as indeed of all peoples in the world. No nation, small or great, was ever entirely given over to atheism. If atheism and indifference affect a few, or even a majority of persons, the fault is assuredly with those who are elected to teach "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." They are chosen and solemnly ordained to be the friends, lovers and guides of humanity,—not to be selfish pedants, quarrelsome quidnuncs, and bigoted despots, exposing themselves, as they often do, to the righteous scorn, as well as to the careless contempt of the more honest laity. When they show themselves unworthy, the people fall away. When even one minister of religion appears as co-respon-

dent in a divorce case, tens of thousands of men and women turn their backs on the Church. When anything low, mean, despicable or treacherous is said or done by a professing "servant of Christ," the evil word or deed from such a source makes Christianity a byword to many more than the merely profane. When certain great dignitaries of the Church sit wine-bibbing at "swagger" dinner-parties, relating questionable or "spicy" anecdotes unfitting for the ears of decent women, they lose not only caste themselves, but they lay all the brethren of their order open to doubt. "Example is better than precept." We have all written that in our school copy-books,—and nothing has ever happened, or ever will happen, that is likely to contradict the statement. If London is indeed a "pagan" city, as Archdeacon Sinclair has solemnly declared from under the shadowy luminance of his own big "fairy lamp," St. Paul's Cathedral, then the clergy, and the clergy alone are responsible. On their "ordained" heads be it! For "pagan" people are merely the natural outcome of a "pagan" priesthood.

A QUESTION OF FAITH

PROPOUNDED TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

BEFORE fully entering on this paper, I should like those who may be inclined to read it to understand very distinctly, once and for all, that I am a Christian. I am sorry that the too-hasty misjudgment of others compels me to assert the fact. The term "Atheist" has been applied to me by several persons who should know better,—for it is an absolutely false, and I may add, libellous accusation. That it has been uttered unthinkingly and at random, by idle chatterers who have never read a line I have written I can well believe,—nevertheless it is a mischievous rumour, as senseless as wicked. Poor and inadequate as my service is, and must ever be, still I am a follower of the Christian Faith, as expounded in Christ's own words to His disciples. I believe that Christian Faith to be the grandest and purest in the world,—the most hopeful, the most strengthening, the most soul-supporting and ennobling religion ever taught to humanity. To me, in hours of the bitterest trial, it has proved not "a reed shaken by the wind,"—but a rock firmer than the foundations of the world, against which the waves of tribulation break in vain and disperse

to naught,—and when brought face to face with imminent death as I have been, it has kept me fearless and calm. I know—because I have experienced,—its priceless worth, its truth, its grand uplifting power; and it is because this simple Christian Faith is so dear to me, and so much a part of my every-day life, that I venture to ask a few straight questions of those who, calling themselves Christians, seem to have lost sight altogether of their Master and His commands. I like people who are consistent. Inconsistency of mind is like uncleanliness of body; it breeds discomfort and disease. And in this wonderful age of ours, in which there is so little real "greatness,"—when even the tried heroism of our leading statesmen and generals is sullied by contemptible jealousies and petty discussions of a quarrelsome nature,—when the minds of men are bent chiefly on money-making and mechanical inventions to save labour (labour being most unfortunately estimated as a curse instead of the blessing it indubitably is), I find inconsistency the chief ingredient of all modern thought. Things are jumbled up in a heterogeneous mass, without order, distinction or merit. And the principal subject on which men and woman are most wildly, glaringly inconsistent, is that which is supposed to be the guiding rule of life—Religion. I should like to try and help to settle this vexed question. I want to find out what the Christian Empire means by its "faith." I venture to lift up my voice as the voice of one alone in the wilderness, and to send it with as clear a pitch and true a tone as I can across the sea of discussion,—the stormy ocean of angry and contradictory tongues,—and

I ask bluntly and straightly, "What is it all about? DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR RELIGION, OR DO YOU NOT?"

It is an honest question, and demands an honest answer. Put it to yourselves plainly. DO YOU BELIEVE WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL IN THE FAITH YOU PROFESS TO FOLLOW?

Again—put it with equal plainness—DO YOU NOT BELIEVE ONE IOTA OF IT ALL? AND ARE YOU ONLY FOLLOWING IT AS A MATTER OF CUSTOM AND FORM?

Let us, my reader or readers, be round and frank with each other. If you are a Christian, your religion is to believe that Christ was a human Incarnation or Manifestation of an Eternal God, born miraculously of the Virgin Mary; that He was crucified in the flesh as a criminal, died, was buried, rose again from the dead, and ascended to heaven as God and Man in one, and there perpetually acts as Mediator between mankind and Divine Justice. Remember, that if you believe this, you believe in the PURELY SUPERNATURAL. But let any one talk or write of the purely supernatural as existent in any other form save this one of the Christian Faith, and you will probably be the first to scout the idea of the supernatural altogether. Why? Where is your consistency? If you believe in one thing which is supernatural, why not in others?

Now let us consider the other side of the question. You who do not believe, but still pretend to do so, for the sake of form and conventional custom, do you realize what you are? You consider yourself virtuous and respectable, no doubt; but facts are facts, and you, in your pretence at faith, are

nothing but a Liar. The honest sunshiny face of day looks on you, and knows you for a hypocrite—a miserable unit who is trying in a vague, mad fashion to cheat the Eternal Forces. Be ashamed of lying, man or woman, whichever you be! Stand out of the press and say openly that you do not believe; so at least shall you be respected. Do not show any religious leanings either to one side or the other "for the sake of custom"—and then we shall see you as you are, and refrain from branding you "liar." I would say to all, clergy and laity, who do not in their hearts believe in the Christian Faith, "Go out of all churches; stand aside and let us see who is who. Let us have space in which to count up those who are willing to sacrifice all their earthly well-being for Christ's sake (for it amounts to nothing less than this), and those who prefer this world to the next." I will not presume to calculate as to which will form the larger majority. I only say it is absurd to keep up churches, and an enormous staff of clergy, archbishops, bishops, popes, cardinals, and the like, for a faith in which we do not TRULY, ABSOLUTELY, AND ENTIRELY BELIEVE. It is a mere pageant of inflated Falsehood, and as such must be loathsome in the sight of God,—this always with the modern proviso, "if there indeed be a God." Yet, apart from a God altogether, it is degrading to ourselves to play the hypocrite with the serious facts of life and death. Therefore, I ask you again—Do you believe, or do you not believe? My object in proposing the question at all is to endeavour to show the spiritual and symbolic basis upon which the Christian Faith

rests, and the paramount necessity there is for accepting it in its pristine purity and beauty, if we would be wise. To grasp it thoroughly, we must view it, not as it now seems to look to us through the darkening shadows of sectarianism, BUT AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY FOUNDED. The time has come upon us that is spoken of in the New Testament, when "one shall be taken and the other left," and the sorting of the sheep from the goats has already commenced. It can be said with truth that most of our Churches, as they now exist, are diametrically opposed to the actual teachings of their Divine Founder. It can be proved that in our daily lives we live exactly in the manner which Christ Himself would have most sternly condemned. And when all the proofs are put before you plainly, and without disguise or hyperbole, in the simplest and straightest language possible, I shall again ask you, "DO YOU BELIEVE, OR DO YOU NOT BELIEVE?" If you do believe, declare it openly and live accordingly; if you do not believe, in God's name leave off lying!

The Symbolism of the Christian Faith has been, and is still, very much lost sight of, owing to the manner in which the unimaginative and unthinking majority of people will persist in looking at things from a directly physical, materialistic and worldly point of view. But if we take the life and character of Christ as a Symbolic representation of that Perfect Manhood which alone can be pleasing to God,—which alone can be worthy to call the Divine Source of Creation "Father!"—some of our difficulties may possibly be removed. Christ's Gospel was first proclaimed in the East,—and the Eastern

peoples were accustomed to learn the great truths of religion by a "symbolic," or allegorical method of instruction. Christ Himself knew this,—for 'He taught them many things by parables."

We shall do well to keep this spirit of Eastern symbolism in mind when considering the "miraculous" manner of Christ's birth. Note the extreme poverty, humility, well-nigh shame attending it! Joseph doubted Mary, and was "minded to put her away privily." Mary herself doubted the Angelic Annunciation, and said, "How shall this be?"

Thus, even with those most closely concerned, a cloud of complete disbelief and distrust environed the very thought, suggestion, and announcement of the God-in-Man.

It should be remembered that the Evangelists, Mark and John, have no account of a "miraculous" birth at all. John, supreme as a Symbolist, the "disciple whom Jesus loved," wrote, "The WORD was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Securing this symbolic statement for ourselves, we find that two of the chief things to which we attach importance in this world—namely, birth and position—are altogether set aside in this humanizing of the WORD, and are of no account whatever. And, that the helpless Child lying in a manger on that first Christmas morning of the world, was,—despite poverty and humility,—fore-destined to possess more power than all the kings and emperors ever born in the purple.

Thus, the first lessons we get from the birth of Christ are—Faith and Humility—these are indeed the whole spirit of His Divine doctrine.

Now,—How does this spirit pervade our social community to-day, after nearly two thousand years of constant preaching and teaching?

Look round on the proud array of the self-important, pugnacious, quarrelsome, sectarian and intolerant so-called "servants of the Lord." The Pope of Rome, and his Cardinals and his Monsignori! The Archbishop of Canterbury, and *his* Bishops, Deacons, Deans and Chapters and the like! The million "sects"—and all the cumbrous paraphernalia of the wealthy and worldly, "ordained" to preach the Gospel! Ask them for "proofs" of faith! For signs of "humility"! For evidences of any kind to show that they are in very soul and life and truth, the followers of that Master who never knew luxury, and had not where to lay His head!

And you, among the laity, how can you pray, or pretend to pray to a poor and despised "Man of Sorrows," in these days, when with every act and word of your life you show your neighbours that you love Money better than anything else in earth or in heaven!—when even you who are millionaires only give and do just as much as will bring you notoriety, or purchase you a "handle" to your names! Why do you bend your hypocritical heads on Sundays to the Name of "Jesus," who (so far as visible worldly position admitted) was merely the son of a carpenter, and followed the carpenter's trade, while on week-days you make no secret of your scorn of, or indifference to the "working-man," and more often than not spurn the beggar from your gates!

Be consistent, friends!—be consistent! IF YOU

ELIEVE IN CHRISTIANITY, you must also believe
n these three things :—

1. The virtue of poverty.
2. The dignity of labour.
3. The excellence of simplicity.

Rank, wealth, and all kinds of ostentation should
e to you pitiable—not enviable.

IS IT SO ? Do you prefer poverty, with a pure
onscience, to ill-gotten riches ? Would you rather
e a faithful servant of Christ or a slave of Mammon ?
ive the answer to your own soul,—but give it
onestly—if you can !

If you find, on close self-examination, that you
ove yourself, your own importance, your position,
our money, your household goods and clothes,
our place in what you call " society," more than the
teady working for and following of Christ,—
OU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN. That being the case,
e brave about it ! Say what you are, and do not
retend to be what you are not !

It ought to be quite easy for you to come to a
lear understanding with yourselves. Take down
he New Testament and read it. Read it as closely
nd carefully as you read your cheap newspapers,
nd with as much eagerness to find out " news."
or news there is in it, and of grave import. Not
ews affecting the things of this world, which pass
ike a breath of wind and are no more,—but news
which treats of Eternal Facts, outlasting the creation
nd re-creation of countless worlds. Read this book
or yourselves, I say, rather than take it in portions
n Sundays only from your clergy,—and devote your
arnest attention to the simple precepts uttered
by Christ Himself. If you are a Christian, you

believe Christ was an Incarnation of God,—then does it not behove you to listen when God speaks ? Or is it a matter of indifference to you that the Maker and Upholder of millions of universes should have condescended to come and teach you how to live ? If it is, then stand forth and let us see you ! Do not attend places of worship merely to be noticed by your neighbours. For,—apart from such conduct being strictly forbidden by Christ,—you insult other persons by your presence as a liar and hypocrite. This is what you may call a " rude " statement ;—plain-speaking and truth-telling are always called " rude." You will find the utmost plain-speaking in the Gospels upon which you profess to pin your faith. If you have any " fancy Ritualism " lurking about you, you will discover that " forms " are not tolerated by the Saviour of mankind.

" All their works they do for to be seen of men ; they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments."

" Shows " of religion are severely censured and condemned by Him whose commands we assume to try and obey—we can scarcely find even a peg whereon to hang an excuse for our practice of praying in public, while " vain repetitions " of prayer are expressly prohibited. I repeat—Read the Four Gospels ; they are very much mis-read in these days, and even in the Churches are only gabbled. See if your private and personal lives are in keeping with the commands there set down. If not, cease to play Humbug with the Eternities ;—they will avenge themselves upon your hypocrisy in a way you dream not of ! " Whosoever excuses himself accuses himself."

The true Christian faith has no dogma,—no form,—no sect. It starts with Christ as God-in-Man, in an all-embracing love for God and His whole Creation, with an explicit and clear understanding (as symbolized so emphatically in the Crucifixion and Resurrection), that each individual Soul is an immortal germ of life, in process of eternal development, to which each new "experience" of thought, whether on this planet or others, adds larger powers, wider intelligence, and intensified consciousness. There are no "isms" in this faith—no bigotry, and no intolerance. It leaves no ground for discussion.

"This is my commandment,—That ye love one another as I have loved you."

It is all there,—simple, straight and pure—no more, no less than this.

"Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility. It is, therefore, able to undertake all things, and it completes many things and warrants them to take effect where he who does not love would faint and lie down. Love is watchful, and, sleeping, slumbereth not. Though weary, it is not tired; though alarmed, it is not confounded, but, as a lively flame and burning torch, it forces its way upwards, and securely passes all. . . . Love is born of God and cannot rest but in God, above all created things."

Is our Gospel of modern life and society to-day one of love or of hate? Do we help each other more readily than we kick each other down? Do we prefer to praise or to slander our neighbours? Is it not absolutely true that "a cruel story runs on wheels, and every hand oils the wheels as they

run"? Can we leave anybody alone without covert or open detraction from his or her merits? Even in the most ordinary, every-day life do we not see people taking a malicious, insane delight in making their next-door neighbours as uncomfortable as possible in every petty way they can? These persons, by the way, are generally the class who go to Church most regularly, and are constant Communicants. Do they not by their profane attempt to assimilate the malignity of their dispositions with the gospel of Christ, deserve to be considered as mere blasphemers of the Faith?

Yet, as a matter of fact, it is much easier to love than to hate. Love is the natural and native air of the immortal soul. "While we fulfil the law of love in all our thoughts and actions, we cannot fail to grow." Hatred, discontent, envy, and pessimism, cramp all the higher faculties of the mind and very often actually breed disease in the body. To love all creation is to draw the responsive health and life of creation into one's own immortal cognizance. "Love easily loosens all our bonds. There is no discomfort that will not yield to its sovereign power." But it must not be a selfish love. It must be a Love which is the keynote of the Christian Faith—"Love one another as I have loved you."

It follows very plainly that if we truly loved one another there would be no wars, no envyings, no racial hatreds, no over-reaching of our brethren for either wealth, place or power. There would be no such hells as the Lancashire factories, for example, where, as Allen Clarke graphically tells us,[1]

[1] "Effects of the Factory System."—Allen Clarke.

"Amidst that sickening jerry-jumble of cheap bricks and cheaper British industry, over a hundred thousand men, women and children, toil and exist, sweating in the vast, hot, stuffy mills and sweltering forges—going, when young, to the smut-surrounded schools to improve their minds, and trying to commune with the living God in the dreary, dead, besmirched churches and grimy puritanical chapels; growing up stunted, breeding thoughtlessly, dying prematurely, knowing not, nor dreaming, except for here and there a solitary one cursed with keen sight and sensitive soul, of aught better and brighter than this sickening, steaming sphere of slime and sorrow." Contrast this picture with a crowded "supper-night" at the Carlton or any other fashionable Feeding-place of London, and then maintain, if you dare, that the men and women who are responsible for two such differing sides of life are "Christians"!

England is, we are told, in danger of becoming "Romanized." Priests and nuns of various "orders" who have been thrust out of France and Spain for intermeddling, are seeking refuge here, in company with the organ-grinders and other folk who have been found unnecessary in their own countries. From Paris official news was cabled on September 11, 1902, as follows:—

"JESUIT EXODUS FROM FRANCE.

"PARIS, *Wednesday, September* 11.

"It is announced officially that by the 1st of next month not a single Jesuit will be left in France. Most of them are emigrating to England, and will make Canterbury their headquarters.—DALZIEL."

France will not have the Jesuits; may it be asked why *we* are to have them? It is England's proud privilege to be an international workhouse for all the decrepit of the world, and for this cause a happy hunting ground is open to Rome among these same decrepit. There is no creed in the world which is better adapted for those who are morally weak, and frightened of themselves. All the millionaires who have gotten their goods by fraud, can, by leaving the greater part of these goods to Rome, secure a reserved seat in Rome's Heaven, with a special harp and crown. All the women with "soul-affinities" other than lawful, can, after a considerable wallow in social mire, enter the Church of Rome, and, after confession, be "cleansed" sufficiently to begin again a new life, approved of the saints. All the spiritualists and faith-healers can find support for their theories with Rome,—and the Roman hell, full of large snakes and much brimstone, is a satisfactory place to consign one's enemies to, when we have quite put aside Christ's command, "Love one another." Altogether Romanism is calculated to appeal to a very large majority of persons through the sensuous and emotional beauty of its ritual;—it is a kind of heavenly narcotic which persuades the believer to resign his own will into the hypnotic management of the priests. The church is made gorgeous with soft lights and colours,—glorious music resounds through the building, and the mind drowses gently under the influence of the Latin chanting, which we need not follow unless we like,—we are permitted to believe that a large number of saints and angels are specially looking after us, and that the

sweet Virgin Mary is ever ready with outstretched hands to listen to all our little griefs and vexations. It is a beautiful and fascinating Creed, hallowed by long antiquity, graced by deeds of romance and chivalry, sanctified by the memories of great martyrs and pure saints, and even in these degenerate days, glorified by the noble-hearted men and women who follow it without bigotry or intolerance, doing good everywhere, tending the sick, comforting the sorrowful, and gathering up the little children into their protecting arms, even as Jesus Himself gathered them. It would need an angel's pen dipped in fire, to record the true history of a faithful, self-denying priest of the Roman Church, who gives up his own advantage for the sake of serving others,—who walks fearlessly into squalid dens reeking with fever, and sets the pure Host between the infected lips of the dying,—who combats with the Demon of Drink, and drags up the almost lost reprobate out of that horrible chasm of vice and destruction. No one could ever give sufficient honour to such a man for all the immense amount of good he does, unostentatiously and without hope of reward. But many men like himself exist equally in the English Church as the Roman,—in the Presbyterian Church, in the Greek Church, in the Buddhist temples, among the Quakers, "Plymouth Brethren," and other sects—among the followers of Mahomet or of Confucius. For there are good men and good women in every Church, faithful to the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, and therefore, "Christians," even if called Jews or Hindoos.

Personally, I have no more objection or dislike to Romanism than I have to any other "ism" ever

formulated. From a student's point of view I admire the Roman Catholic priesthood, because they understand their business, and thoroughly know the material with which they have to deal. Wise as their Egyptian prototypes of old, they decline to unveil "mysteries" to the uninitiated vulgar—therefore the laity are not expected to read the Bible for themselves. Knowing the terrors of a guilty conscience, they are able to intimidate the uneducated ruffian of both sexes more successfully than all the majesty of the law. Thoroughly aware of the popular delight in "shows," they organize public processions on feast days, just as the "Masters of the Stars" used to do in Memphis, where, by the way (as those who take the trouble to study ancient Egyptian records will discover), our latest inventions, such as the electric light, the telephone, the phonograph, and many other modern conveniences, were used by the priests for "miraculous" effects. From the Egyptian priesthood we derive the beginnings of scientific discovery;—to the early Roman Catholic priesthood we owe the preservation of much history and learning. The one is, intellectually speaking, a lineal descendant of the other, and both deserve the utmost respect for their immense capacity as Rulers of the Ignorant.

The greater majority of persons have no force of will and no decided opinions, but only an undersense of coward fear or vexation at the possible unsuccessful or damaging result of their own ill-doings. Hence the power of the Roman Catholic dogma. It is not Christianity; it has not the delicate subtlety of Greek mythology; it is simply

pagan Rome engrafted on the conversion and repentance of the Jew, Peter, who, in the time of trial, "knew not the Man." Curiously enough, it is just the "Man," the real typical Christ, the pure, strong God-in-humanity who is still "not known" in the Roman Catholic ritual. There are prayers to the "Sacred Heart" and to other physical attributes of Jesus,—just as in old Rome there were prayers to the physical attributes of the various deities, but of the perfect "Man," as seen in Christ's dauntless love of truth and exposure of shams, His scourging of the thieves out of the holy temple, His grand indifference to the world's malice and hatred, and His conquest over death and the grave,—of these things we are given no clear or helpful image. Nevertheless, it is the "Man" we most need,—the "Man" who came to us to teach us how to live;—the brother, the friend, the close sympathizer,—the great Creator of all life mingling Himself with His human creation in a beautiful, tender, loving, wise and all-pitiful Spirit, wherein is no hate, no revenge, and no intolerance! This is the Christ;—this is His Christianity. Romanism, on the contrary, allows plenty of space for those who want to hate as well as to love, and it is as helpful or as useless as any of the thousand and one dogmas built up around Christ, dogmas which include bad passions as well as divine aspirations. The danger of such a creed gaining too much ground in England, the land where our forefathers fought against it and trampled it out with their own blood and tears, is not because it is a particular form of religious Faith, but because it is an intolerant system of secret Government. This has been

proved over and over again throughout history. Its leaders have not shown themselves as gentle pagans by any means, either now or in the past;—and intolerance in any form, from any sect, is no part of the Constitution of a free country.

Hence the real cause of the objection which has been entertained by millions of persons in the Empire to the suggested alteration of the King's Coronation oath. The British King is a Constitutional monarch,—and the words "Defender of the Faith" imply that he is equally Defender of the Constitution. He agrees, when he is crowned King of England, to uphold that Constitution,—he therefore tacitly rejects all that might tend to undermine it,—all secret methods of tampering with political, governmental or financial matters relating to the State. The wording of the Coronation Oath is, and must be distinctly offensive to thousands of excellent persons who are Roman Catholics,—nevertheless, in the times when it was so worded, the offending terms were made necessary by the conduct of the Roman Catholics themselves. Those times, we are assured, are past. We have made progress in education,—we are now broad-minded enough to be fair to foes, as well as to friends. We should, therefore, in common courtesy to a rival Church, consent to have this irritating formula altered. Perhaps we should,—but is it too much to ask our Roman Catholic brethren that they also should, if they wish for tolerance, exhibit it on their own side? When Queen Victoria died, was it not quite as offensive on the part of Pope Leo to publicly state that he "could not be represented at the funeral of a Protestant Queen"—as it may

be for our King to publicly repudiate the service of the Mass? Nothing could have been more calculated to gratuitously wound the feelings of a great People than that most unnecessary announcement made from an historical religious centre like the Vatican, at a time of universal grief for the death of a good Monarch. If the Pope's act was according to the rule of his Church, the King's oath is according to the rule of the British Constitution. No one could accuse the Pope of any particularly "Christian" feeling in declining to be represented at the last obsequies of the best Queen that ever reigned—no one can or would ever conscientiously accuse an English King of "religious intolerance" when he takes the oath as it is set down for him. Both acts are matters of policy. We have seen the foremost peer of England, the Duke of Norfolk, forgetting himself so far on one occasion as to drag his religious creed into the political arena, and publicly expressing the hope on behalf of all English Catholics that the Pope may soon regain temporal power (which means, to put it quite plainly, that the British Constitution should be disintegrated and laid under subjection to Rome): the natural consequence of such conduct is that an enormous majority of perfectly sensible broad-minded people doubt whether it is wise to leave an entirely loose rein on the neck of the papal Pegasus. Tolerance and equity on the one side must be met by tolerance and equity on the other, if a fair understanding is to be arrived at. And when the professors of any religious Creed still persecute heroism and intellect, or refuse reverence to the last rite of a noble Queen, whose

long reign was a blessing to the whole world, one may be permitted to question their fitness for the task of elevating and refining the minds and morals of those whom their teachings help to influence. And having, as a man of intellectual and keen perception, the full consciousness that such unuttered "questioning" was burning the hearts and minds of thousands, the late Cardinal Vaughan showed himself a master of the art of Roman Catholic diplomacy in his speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne on September 9, 1902. Speaking of the inrush of Roman Catholic priests into England, he said:—

"A statement from a London paper has been running through the provincial Press to the effect that I have deliberately outraged public feeling by inviting to England certain French religieux, some of those *confrères* who have made themselves particularly obnoxious by their constant attacks upon this country. The fact is that, upon the passing of the iniquitous law against the religious congregations, I gave a general invitation to any religieux who might wish, to come to my diocese until they could return to France. Among those who applied were three or four fathers, some of those *confrères* who do not love England. My invitation being general, I was not, and am not going to make distinctions. None will come who do not intend to obey the laws and follow my direction. And if there be any who have not been sufficiently enlightened to appreciate this country while living in France, they are the very people who had best come and make our acquaintance. This is the surest way to change their views. But while

England boasts of her generous hospitality to every kind of refugee, I shall certainly offer whatever hospitality I can to the men and women who have suffered for Christ's sake. *I am too broad an Englishman to know any other policy.*"

"Broad Englishman" as the Cardinal professed to be, he had no pity on the aged Dr. St. George Mivart, the circumstances of whose treatment are not yet forgotten.

Speaking of the Coronation oath, the Cardinal said: "I entirely and frankly accept the decision of the country that the King must be a Protestant. They believe that this is in some way bound up with the welfare of the Empire. WITHOUT GOING THIS LENGTH, I am convinced that in the present condition of the English people, HAUNTED AS THEY ARE BY FEARS AND SUSPICIONS, it is expedient that the King should be of the religion of the overwhelming majority. Besides, the King being, in virtue of Royal supremacy, head of the State Church, it is impossible that he should be other than a Protestant. Catholics have no difficulty in paying most loyal allegiance to a Protestant Sovereign. In this they seem to be of more liberal and confiding temper than those who would refuse allegiance to a King unless he professed their creed. The Catholic has no difficulty, because he gives his allegiance and his life, when needed, primarily to the civil power ordained of God."

(The Cardinal did not pause here to try and explain why God has thus "ordained" a Protestant sovereign instead of a Roman Catholic one! Yet no doubt he will admit that God knows best.)

"The Sovereign REPRESENTS THIS POWER, what-

ever be his religion. Was it not Catholic Belgium that placed the Protestant King Leopold upon the Throne, and gave to him at least as hearty a devotion as ever has been shown to his Catholic successor? Other Catholic States are ruled by Protestant Sovereigns. And who can say that the 16,000,000 of German Catholics are a whit less loyal to their German Protestant Emperor than the millions who are of the Protestant or of no religion? There are people, I believe, pursued by the conviction that we Catholics would do anything in the world to get a Catholic King upon the Throne; that the Pope would give us leave to tell lies, commit perjury, plot, scheme, and kill to any extent for such a purpose; that there is no crime we should stick at if the certainty, or even the probability of accomplishing such an end were in view. Now let me put it to our Protestant friends in this way. If the King of England were an absolute Monarch, the dictator of the laws to be enacted, and his own executive, there might be something of vital importance to our interests and to those of religion to excite in us an intense desire to have a Catholic King. Though even then the end could never, even remotely, justify the means suggested. But how do matters really stand? We have a Constitutional Monarch who is subject to the laws, and in practice bound to follow the advice of his Ministers. A Catholic King, under present circumstances, would be a cause of weakness, of perpetual difficulty, and of untold anxiety. We are far better off as we are. Our dangers and grievances, our hopes and our happiness, LIE IN THE WORKING OF THE CONSTITUTION, not in the

favour or power of any Sovereign. IT IS THE PARLIAMENT, THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, THAT WE MUST CONVERT, or at least strive to retain within the influence of Christianity. For the well-being of this country and the salvation of its people depend, above all other human things, UPON THE VIEW THAT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS CAN BE GOT TO TAKE OF ITS DUTY—to respect and obey the law of Christ. What we want is to get the House of Commons to maintain the Christian laws of marriage as the basis of society, and to secure to parents and their children a true and proper liberty in the matter of Christian education. And in this, remember well, THAT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DEPENDS NOT UPON THE KING, WHATEVER HIS RELIGION, BUT UPON OURSELVES. The people of this country must work out their own salvation. And here let me point out to you, in passing, that the next Session of Parliament may settle for ever the position of Christianity in this country. Secondary and middle-class education will be thrown into the melting-pot. In the process of the devolution of educational authority upon county councils, Christianity will run the risk of losing rights which it seems to have almost secured under the working of the Education Department. The adoption of a single clause or principle will have far-reaching and most vital results. There will be another educational struggle. Struggles will be inevitable until the Christian cause which is becoming more and more openly the cause of the majority has permanently triumphed."

Here we have four distinct "moves" on the plan of campaign.

1. "It is the Parliament, the House of Commons, that we must convert."

This means, that wherever influence can be brought to bear on the return of Roman Catholic members to the House, that influence will not be lacking.

2. "The next Session of Parliament may settle for ever the position of Christianity in this country."

Not CHRISTIANITY, for that is above all "settling,"—save with its Founder—but that the next or other Sessions may open the way to a more complete Roman Catholic domination is what is here hoped for.

3. "The adoption of a *single clause* or principle will have far-reaching and most vital results."

Precisely;—so far-reaching and vital that England must be on her guard against even a "single clause or principle" which endangers the liberty of the subject.

4. "Struggles will be inevitable until the Christian cause which is becoming more and more openly the cause of the majority has permanently triumphed."

For Cardinal Vaughan there was only one "Christian" cause—viz., the Roman Catholic, and he who runs may read the meaning of the above phrase without much difficulty.

Concerning the King's Declaration Oath, said the Cardinal:—

"It is not the King who is responsible for the drafting or the retention of this detestable Declaration. It is the Ministry, the Legislature, the Consti-

tution that are responsible for its retention, and for forcing its acceptance upon the Sovereign. The gravamen, therefore, lies against the State, not against the person of the King."

Quite true; and it is therefore against the State that the Vatican powers must, and possibly may, in time, be directed.

"And," went on the Cardinal, "do not devout clergymen swear every day in good faith to teach the Thirty-nine Articles, and find every day that conscience and good faith compel them to break their engagement by submitting to the Catholic Church? When a man fully realizes that by a promise or an oath he has pledged himself to something that is unjust, immoral, untrue, the engagement ceases to bind."

Ergo, the English Church, the particular "Faith" which our King undertakes to DEFEND, is "unjust, immoral and untrue."

And, "Could Englishmen see themselves as others see them, they would be more chary than they are of provoking hatred by such wanton contempt for the feelings of other nations."

Well, Englishmen have every chance of seeing themselves as others see them, when they have to chronicle a "Christian" Cardinal's indictment accusing them of "wanton contempt for the feelings of other nations." To whom do other nations turn in want or distress but England? From whom do the famine and fever-stricken in all corners of the world obtain relief? England! Where is there any Roman Catholic country that has poured out such limitless charity and pity to all in sorrow as England? And why should the "conversion

of England " be so valuable to the Roman Church ? Merely because of England's incalculable wealth and power !

Again, concerning the Declaration Oath, the Cardinal continued :—" Now, should it ever happen that the King became convinced, by God's grace, of the truth of the doctrines that he abjured, of what value would be the Declaration ? Absolutely none ! "

Of course not !—he would simply cease to be King, and would enjoy the complete liberty of the subject.

" By all means," went on his Eminence, warming with his theme, " let the majority, if it please, stand by the law, which exists apart from the Declaration, declaring that to reign over England the Sovereign must be a Protestant. Retain this law and enforce it ; but respect our creed, at least just so far as to ignore it, and to leave us alone. This, surely, is not a heavy demand to make upon the spirit of modern toleration."

Then why did not the Cardinal and all his followers " respect the creed " established in this country,—the religion of the State,—" just so far as to ignore it," and to leave those who honour it " alone " ? " This, surely, is not a heavy demand to make upon the spirit of modern toleration." It was not the Church of England which started any discussion on the Coronation Oath at the time of King Edward the Seventh's crowning,—the quarrel emanated entirely from the Roman Catholic side. And the Cardinal's speech was intended to be more aggressive than pacifying.

" But if," he continued, " after all, there must

be a Declaration *as a sop to certain fears and passions*, let there be one to the effect that the King is a Protestant—and stop there. Should, however, a denunciation of the Catholic religion be added to a profession of Protestantism, the whole world will understand it; it will understand it as a pitiable *confession of English fear and weakness*. And as to ourselves; well, we shall take it as a complimentary acknowledgment by our Protestant fellow-countrymen of the importance and power of faith—that it can not only remove mountains, but is capable of *moving even the fabric of the British Empire itself*. But I should like to conclude in another strain, and add to these observations a resolution to this effect:—

"That the Sovereign of this Empire ought to be raised high above the strife of all political and religious controversies, the more easily to draw to himself and to retain the unabated loyalty of all creeds and races within his Empire."

With the latter part of the Cardinal's harangue every one of every creed and class will agree, but "a pitiable confession of English fear and weakness" is a phrase that should never have been uttered by an Englishman, whether "broad" or narrow, cardinal or layman. "English fear and weakness" has never yet been known in the world's history. And as for "moving the fabric of the British Empire," that can only be done through the possible incompetence or demoralization of its own statesmen,—by shiftiness, treachery and corruption in State affairs—and even at this utmost worst, though England might be bent, she would never be broken.

All this, however, has nothing to do with the Christian faith as Christ Himself expounded it in His own commands. Quarrels and dissensions are as far from the teaching of the Divine Master as an earth's dusthole is from the centre of the sun. Differences of dogma are not approved in His eyes. Whether candles shall, or shall not, be set on the altar, whether incense shall, or shall not, be burnt, may be said to relegate to the "cleansing of the outside of the cup and platter," and are not a vital part of His intention—for He has nothing but condemnation for "forms" and "ceremonies." There is something both strange and unnatural in the provocative spirit which is at present being exercised by professing rulers of the Church of England against one another; and another matter too for deep regret is the attitude of favour maintained by certain political ministers, towards the practice of an almost theatrical display in the form of English Christian services. The various appointments of High Churchmen to important bishoprics shows the tendency towards extravagant ritualism; certainly the more simple and unaffected men of pure taste and dignity in Church ritual get little chance of encouragement; and that the path is being prepared for a second Cromwell is only too evident. It is lamentable indeed that any discussions should arise between the different sects as to "forms and ceremonies," and those who excite fanatical hatreds by their petty quarrels over unimportant "shows" and observances, are criminally to blame for any evils that are likely to ensue. What Christ commands is "Love one another";—what He desires is that all mankind

should be friends and brothers in His Name. And it is from this point of view that I again ask the question of those who may have glanced through this paper—DO YOU BELIEVE, OR DO YOU NOT BELIEVE? Are you a CHRISTIAN? Or a SECTARIAN? The one is not the other.

For my own part I would desire to see all the Sects cease their long quarrel,—all "dogmas" dropped—and all creeds amalgamated into one great loving family under the name of Christ. I should like to see an end to all bigotry, whether of Protestantism against Romanism, or Romanism against Protestantism,—a conclusion to all differences—and one Universal Church of simple Love and Thanksgiving, and obedience to Christ's own commands. "Temporal power" should be held as the poor thing which it is, compared to Spiritual power,—for Spiritual power, according to the Founder of the Christian Faith, is the transcendent force of Love—love to God and love to man,—"that perfect love which casteth out fear," and which, being "born of God, cannot rest but in God above all created things."

Thus it follows—That if we hate or envy or slander any person, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

If we prefer outward forms of religious ceremonial to the every-day practice of a life lived as closely as possible in accordance with the commands laid down for us in the Gospel, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

If we love ourselves more than our neighbours, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

If we care for money, position, and the ostentation attending these things, more than truth, simplicity and plain dealing, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

These ordinary tests of our daily conduct are quite enough to enable us to decide whether we are or are not of the faith. If we are *not*, we should cease to " sham " that we *are*. It will be far better for all those with whom we are brought in contact. For, thank God, there exist thousands of very real " Christians "—(" by their fruits ye shall know them "), doing unostentatious good everywhere, rescuing the lost, aiding the poor, comforting the sick, and helping the world to grow happier and better. They may be *called* Jews, or Baptists, Papists, or Buddhists,—but I hold them all as " Christians " if they perform those good deeds and live those good lives which are acceptable to Christ,—while many church-going hypocrites called " Christians " whose social existence is a scandal, whose dissipations, gross immoralities and pernicious example of living are open dangers to the whole community, do not deserve even such a complimentary term as " pagan " applied to them. For the pagans —aye, the earliest savages, believed in Something higher than themselves,—but these sort of people believe in nothing but the necessity of getting what they want at all costs, and are mere human cancers of evil, breeding infection and pestilence. And it is particularly incumbent on the clergy of all denominations at the present juncture to sift Themselves as to their calling and election while sifting others,—to ask Themselves whether they may not be in a great measure to blame for much of the infamy which reeks from our great cities—for much of the apathy and indifference to that bitter poverty, that neglected suffering which often gives birth to Anarchy,—for much of the open atheism

which shames the upper classes of society. Let them live such lives as may liberate them from all fear or hesitation in speaking out boldly to the souls they have in charge—let them "preach the Gospel" as they were commanded, rather than expound human dogmas. Sympathy, tenderness, patience, love for all living creatures, rejection of everything that is mean and cruel, false and cowardly,—a broad mind, open to all the beautiful and gracious influences of Nature—a spirit uplifted in thanksgiving to the loving God of all worlds, who is brought close to us and made the friend of man in the Divine Personality of Christ,—this surely is CHRISTIANITY,—a Faith which leaves no corner anywhere for the admission of hate, dissension or despair. Such is the Faith the Master taught, saying:

[1] "I have not spoken of myself, but of the Father which sent me; He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.

"And I know that His commandment is life everlasting—whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father taught me, so I speak."

So He speaks—but do we listen? And if we listen,—and believe,—why do we not obey?

[1] John xii. 49.

UNCHRISTIAN CLERICS

It is generally supposed that an ordained minister of the Gospel is a Christian. Whatever the faults, negligences and shortcomings of other people in other conditions of life, it is tacitly expected that the professing disciples of Christ, the priests, teachers and exponents of holy and spiritual things, should be more or less holy and spiritual in themselves. They are at any rate accredited with honest effort to practise, as well as to preach, the divine ethics of their Divine Master. Their position in the social community is one which, through old-time tradition, historical sentiment, and inborn national piety, is bound to command a certain respect from the laity. Any public disgrace befalling a clergyman is always accompanied by a strong public sense of shame, disappointment and regret. And when we meet (as most unhappily we often do), with men in "holy orders" who,—instead of furnishing the noble and pure examples of life and character which we have a distinct right to look for in them,—degrade themselves and their high profession by conduct unworthy of the lowest untutored barbarian, we are moved by amazement as well as sorrow to think that such wolves in sheep's clothing should dare to masquerade as the sacredly ordained helpers and instructors of the struggling human soul.

During the past few years there have been many examples of men belonging to the hierarchy of the Church, who have wantonly and knowingly outraged every canon of honour and virtue, and their sins appear all the blacker because of the whiteness of the faith they profess to serve. A criminal is twice a criminal when he adds hypocrisy to his crime. The clergyman of a parish, who has all doors thrown open to him,—who invites and receives the trust of his parishioners,—who is set among them to guide, help and comfort them in the devious and difficult ways of life, is a thousand times more to blame than any other man in a less responsible position, when he knowingly and deliberately consents to sin. Unless he is able to govern his own passions, and eschew every base, mean and petty motive of action, he is not fit to influence his fellow men, nor should he presume to instruct them in matters which he makes it evident he does not himself understand.

Quite recently a case was chronicled in the daily press of a clergyman who went to visit a dying woman at her own request. She wished to make a last confession to him, and so unburden her soul of its secret misery before she passed away, trusting in God's mercy for pardon and peace. The clergyman went accordingly, and heard what she had to say. When the unhappy creature was dead, however, he refused her poor body the sacred rites of burial! Now it surely may be asked what authority had he or any man calling himself a Christian minister to refuse the rites of burial even to the worst of sinners? Whatever the woman's faults might have been, vengeance wreaked on a corpse is both

futile and barbarous. There is nothing in Christ's pure and noble teaching that can endorse so unholy a spirit of intolerance,—one too, which is calculated to give the bitterest pain to the living friends and relations of the so coarsely-insulted dead, and to breed in them a relentless hostility to the Church and its representatives. For the poorest erring human creature that ever turned over the pages of the New Testament, knows that such conduct is not Christ-like, inasmuch as Christ had nothing but the tenderest pity, pardon and peace for the worst sinner at the last moment. When death steps in to close all accounts, it behoves man to be more than merciful to his brother man. "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses."

Still fresh in the minds of many must be the un-Christian conduct of the late Cardinal Vaughan in denying the rites of Christian burial to the venerable Dr. St. George Mivart. Dr. St. George Mivart was a man of science whose theories did not agree with the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church, and as he belonged ostensibly to that form of faith, one may call him, if one so chooses, a bad Catholic. But when it is remembered that within quite recent days, so-called "Christian" priests in Servia have given their solemn benediction to the assassins of the late King and Queen of that country, it is somewhat difficult to understand or appreciate the kind of "religion" that blesses murderers and regicides, yet refuses burial to a modern scientist who, as far as his intellectual powers allowed him, was working for the good and the wider instruction of the human race. At the time of the "inhibition" and sub-

sequent death of Dr. Mivart, I ventured to address an "Open Letter" to Cardinal Vaughan on the subject. This Letter was published in March 1900, and though no doubt the great "Prince of the Church" never deigned to read it, a large majority of the public did, and I have had much cause to rejoice that in the timorously silent acquiescence of the Christian world in a deed which shames the very name of Christ, I, at least, as one of the humblest among the followers of the Christian faith, did have sufficient courage to speak out openly against the wicked intolerance which made the Church itself seem mere "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," because lacking in that holy charity "which suffereth long and is kind." It was a barbarous act to "inhibit" Dr. Mivart,—it was still more barbarous to refuse his body the sacred burial-rites,—and though the great Cardinal has now followed his victim to that world where all the secrets of the soul are made manifest, his cruelty remains as a blot on his mortal career,—a black smirch, ugly to look upon in the chronicle of his various virtues and excellencies. No ordained minister of the Gospel has the right to be intolerant. He has not the slightest excuse for arrogating to himself any other code of ethics or conduct than that which is set out plainly for him in the New Testament. Away from that he should not dare to go, if he truly believes what he elects to preach,—and if he does not believe, he should at once resign his office and not live on the proceeds of what in his own private conscience he considers untrue.

Most of us have met with many a mean little curate,—many a sly, spiteful, scandal-mongering

hypocritical parson,—in the daily round of our common lives and duties. Most of us know the "salad" cleric,—the gentleman who is a doubtful compound of oil and vinegar, with a good deal of tough green vegetable matter growing where the brain should be,—coarse weed of bigotry, prejudice, and rank obstinacy. None of us are entirely ignorant of the sedately amorous parson who is either looking out for a wife on his own account, or attempting a "Christianly" conversion of the wife of somebody else. In country towns we can scarcely fail to have come across the domineering vicar,—the small and petty tyrant, who whips the souls committed to his charge with rods steeped in his own particular pickle of arrogance, austerity and coercion, playing the part of a little despot over terrorized Sunday-school children, and laying down the law for his parishioners by way of a "new dispensation" wherein the Gospel has no part. One such petty martinet, well known in a certain rural parish, plays regular "ogre" to his choir boys. It is always a case of "Fee, fi, fa, fo, fum, I smell the blood of a chorister," with him. Should one of these unfortunate minstrels chance to sneeze during service, this vicar straightway imposes a penny fine (sometimes more) on the unlucky little wretch for yielding to an irresistible nasal impulse! This kind of thing is, of course, ridiculous, and would merit nothing but laughter, were it not for the dislike, distrust and contempt engendered in the minds of the boys by the display of such a peevish spirit of trumpery oppression on the part of a man who is placed in the position he holds to be an ex-

ample of kindness, good temper, cheerfulness and amiability to all. True, the vicar in question is what may be called "liverish," and a small boy's sneeze may seem, to a mind perverted by bilious bodily secretions, like the collapse of a universe. But there are various ways of conquering even one's physical ills,—at least to the extent of sparing poor children the infliction of fines because they have noses which occasionally give them trouble.

The begging cleric is of all sacerdotal figures the one most familiar to the general community. One can seldom attend a church without hearing the mendicant's plea. If the collection taken were indeed for the poor, and one felt that it was really and truly going to help feed the starving and nourish the sick, how gladly most of us would contribute, to the very best of our ability! But sad experience teaches us that this is not so. There are "Funds" of other mettle than for the sick and poor,—"restoration" funds especially. For many years a famous church was in debt owing to "restorations," and Sunday after Sunday the vicar implored his congregation to lift "the burden" off its time-honoured walls—in vain! At last one parishioner paid the amount required in full. The vicar acknowledged the cheque,—put a recording line in the "Parish Magazine,"—wrote a formal letter of thanks regretting that the donor did not "show a good example by attending public worship on Sundays,"—after which, *for more than a year he did not speak to that parishioner again!* This is a fact. Neither he nor his wife during that time ever showed the slightest common civility to the one individual who, out of all the parish, had "lifted the burden,"

concerning which so many pious exordiums had been preached. *Till* the debt was paid, the vicar showed every friendliness to the person in question—but afterwards—well!—one can only suppose it was a case of "Othello's occupation gone!" He could beg no more,—not for that particular object. But I understand he has started fresh "restorations" lately, so till he finds another trusting sheep in the way of a too sympathetic parishioner, he will be quite happy.

There are some clerics who, to their sacred duties add "a little literary work." They are not literary men,—indeed very frequently they have no idea whatever of literature—they are what may be called "literary jobbers." Many clergymen have been, and are still, greatly distinguished in the literary calling—but I am not alluding to past or future Kingsleys. The men I mean are those who "do a bit of writing"—and help in compiling books of reference to which few ever refer. They are apt to be the most pertinacious beggars of their class,—beggars, not for others' needs, but for their own. They want introductions to "useful" people—people of "influence"—and they ask for letters to publishers, which they sometimes get. The publishers are not grateful. They are over-run, they say, with clergymen who want to write guide-books, books of travel, books of reference, books of reminiscence. One of these "reverend" individuals, pleading stress of poverty, was employed by a lady to do some copying work, for which, in a well-meant wish to satisfy the immediate needs of his wife and children, she paid him in advance the sum of Fifty Pounds. He sent her a signed receipt for the money with the following gushing epistle:

"DEAR —,

Could I write as you do, I might find words to express in part some of my feelings of gratitude to you for all your kindness. My little daughter owes to you untold happiness, and I believe the goodness you ever show her will brighten her whole future life. My dear wife you help to bear her many burdens of health and loneliness as no other has ever attempted to do; and my very mediocre self owes to you, a recognition, after many long struggles, I will not say of merit, for no one knows better than myself, my own shortcomings, but of 'effort.' In fact, you come to us as Amenhotep sung of the sun:—

Thou art very beautiful, brilliant and exalted above earth,
Thy beams encompass all lands, which thou hast made.
Thou art our sun.
Thou bindest us with thy love.
Thou art on high, but the day passes with thy going!

Even so, your kindly heart has shone upon our life, and made us feel the springs of life within us. May the Great Master of all things for ever bless you and yours!"

After this poetical effusion,[1] it is difficult to believe that this same "Christian" minister, in order to gratify the private jealousy, spite and malice of a few common persons whom he fancied might be useful to him on account of their "local" influence, wrote and published a scurrilous lampoon

[1] As some doubt has been expressed as to whether this incident is a true one, the author wishes it to be known that she holds the original letter written and signed by the reverend lampooner in question.

on the very friend who had tried to benefit him and his wife and family, and to whom he had expressed himself in the above terms of unmeasured gratitude! But such, nevertheless, was the case. Report says that he was handsomely paid for his trouble, which may perhaps serve as his excuse,—for in many cases, as we know, money outweighs principle, even with a disciple of Christ. It did so in the case of Judas Iscariot, who, however, "went out and hanged himself" promptly. Perhaps the "very mediocre" cleric who owed to the woman he afterwards insulted, "a recognition after many long struggles," will do the same morally and socially in due course. For it would be as great a wrong to the Church to call such a man a "Christian" as it would be to canonize Judas. Even the untutored savage will not injure one with whom he has broken bread. And to bite the hand that has supplied a need, is scarcely the act of a mongrel cur,—let us hope it is a sufficiently rare performance among mongrel clerics.

Among other such "trifling" instances of the *un*-Christianity of Christian ministers may be quoted a recent instance of a letter addressed to a country newspaper by a clergyman who complained of the small fees allowed him for the burial of paupers! "The game," so he expressed it, "was not worth the candle." Christian charity was no part of the business. Unless one can make a margin of profit, by committing paupers to the hope of a joyful resurrection, why do it at all? Such appeared to be the sum and substance of the reverend gentleman's argument. Another case in point is the following: A poor man of seventy-five years old, getting the

impression that Death was too long in coming to fetch him, committed suicide by hanging himself in a coal-shed. His widow, nearly as aged as he was, went tottering feebly along to the clergyman of the parish, to relate the disaster and seek for help. The first thing the good minister told her was, that her husband, by committing suicide, had gone to hell. He then relaxed his sternness somewhat, and kindly said that, considering her age, infirmity and trouble, she "might call at the rectory every afternoon for the tea-leaves." This gracious invitation meant that the bereaved old creature could have, for her consolation, the refuse of the afternoon tea-pot after it had been well drained by this "Christian" gentleman, his wife and family! Of other help she got none, and life having become too hard for her to manage alone, despite the assistance of the clergyman's tea-leaves, she very soon, fortunately for herself, died of grief and starvation. "He that giveth to the poor" in this fashion, truly "lendeth to the Lord."

"Christianity" and "Christian" are beautiful words, emblematic of beautiful thoughts and beautiful deeds. The men who profess to teach the value of those thoughts, the influence of those deeds, should be capable in themselves of practically illustrating what they mean by their faith, in their own lives and actions. Inspired by the purest Creed that was ever taught to mankind for its better hope and enlightenment, they should express in their attitude to the world, a confident and constant joy and belief in God's goodness, and should remember that if He, their divine Master "so loved us," equally should they, His ordained min-

isters, love us, ay, even the worst of us, in their turn, When, on the contrary, they do things for which the poorest peasant or dockyard labourer would have the right, and the honest right too, to despise them,—when they commit base actions for money or advancement,—when they are harsh, unyielding, discourteous and obstinate to the degree of even declining to aid a good cause or assist in some benefit to the nation at large, merely because *they* have not been consulted as to ways and methods, they do not deserve to be called " Christian " at all. They are of that class, unhappily increasing in number, who cry out : " Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name ? " to whom will be given the answer : " I never knew you ; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity ! " Great and noble beyond all praise are true " Christian " ministers,—and thousands of them are to be found in all parts of the world, working silently and bravely for the rescue of bodies as well as souls, giving practical as well as spiritual help and sympathy to their fellow-men in trouble. But just because their labours are so valuable, one resents all the more deeply the conduct of certain members of the clergy who cast dishonour upon their whole calling,—and just because the vocation of " priest " is so high, we intensely deplore every action that tends to debase it. The un-Christian cleric belongs to no spiritual form of faith whatsoever, and should not be allowed to pretend that he does. He has but one religion,—Self. And from the professor of Self, no man need ask either help or instruction.

THE SOCIAL BLIGHT

PEOPLE who live in the country know what is meant by a "blight"—a thing which is neither mist nor storm, neither cloud nor rain,—a fever of the atmosphere, without any freshening or cleansing force in its composition. Like a dull stretch of smoky fog, it hangs for hours and often for days over the face of the landscape, poisoning the wholesome fruit and grain in the orchards and fields, and leaving trails of noxious insect pests behind it upon trees and flowers, withering their foliage, and blackening all buds of promise with a destroying canker to their very core. It is a suffocating, malodorous miasma, clinging to the air, for which there is no remedy but a strong, ay, even a tempestuous wind,—a wind which vigorously pierces through the humid vapour and disperses it, tearing it to shreds, and finally working up such a storm as shall drown it out of existence in torrents of purifying rain. Then all nature is relieved,—the air is cleared,—health and gladness re-assert their beneficent influences, and the land lies open to renewed life and easy breathing once more.

Even as "blight" is known in things natural, so is it known and easily recognizable in things moral and social. It occurs periodically and with more or less regularity, between certain changing,

and not always progressive phases or epochs of human civilization. It visited Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon ; it loomed over Nineveh and Babylon,—and in our day it is steadily spreading its pall over Europe and America. Its gloom is heavy and pronounced,—it would seem to be darkening into the true sable or death colour, for there is no light of faith to illumine it. It is the outcome of the infected breath of peoples who are deliberately setting God aside out of their countings, and living for Self and the Hour alone. So-called "scientists," scraping at the crust-covering of the mine of knowledge, and learning of its hidden treasure about as much as might be measured with a finger-nail, have boldly asserted that there is no God, no Supreme Intelligent Force back of the universe,—no future life,—nothing but death and destruction for the aspiring, fighting, working human soul,—and that, therefore, having been created out of caprice, a "sport" of chance and the elements, and having nothing to exist for but to make chance and the elements as agreeable as possible during his brief conscious experience of them, the best thing for man to do is to "eat, drink, and be merry all the days of his life," though even this, according to Solomon, is "also vanity." For of eating comes indigestion, of drink stupefaction, and of merriment satiety. Strange it is that if there is no higher destiny for man than this world and its uses, he should always be thrown back upon himself dissatisfied! Give him millions of money, and when he has them, he cares little for what they can bring ; grant him unlimited power and a few years suffice to weary him of its use.

And stranger still it is to realize, that while those who do not admit God's existence, strut forth like bantams on a dunghill, crowing their little opinions about the sun-rise, we are all held fast and guided, not only in our physical, but in our moral lives by immutable laws, invisible in their working, but sooner or later made openly manifest. Crime meets with punishment as surely as night follows day. If the retribution is not of man's making,—if human law, often so vicious and one-sided in itself, fails to give justice to the innocent, then Something or Someone steps in to supply man's lack of truth and courage, and executes a judgment from which there is no appeal. What it is or Who it is, we may not presume to declare,—the Romans called it Jove or Jupiter ;—we call it God, while denying, with precisely the same easy flippancy as the Romans did just before their downfall, that such a Force exists. It is convenient and satisfying to Mammonites and sensualists generally, to believe in nothing but themselves, and the present day. It would be very unpleasant for them to have to contemplate with any certainty a future life where neither Money nor Sex prevail. And because it would be unpleasant, they naturally do not admit its possibility. Nevertheless, without belief in the Creator and Ruler of all things,—without faith in the higher spiritual destiny of man as an immortal and individual soul, capable of progressing ever onwards to wider and grander spheres of action, life in this world appears but a poor and farcical futility.

Yet it is precisely the poor, farcical and futile view of life that is taken by thousands of European

and American people in our present period. Both press and pulpit reflect it; it is openly shown in the decadence of the drama, of art, of literature, of politics, and of social conduct. The "blight" is over all. The blight of atheism, infidelity, callousness and indifference to honourable principle,—the blight of moral cowardice, self-indulgence, vanity and want of heart. Without mincing matters, it can be fairly stated that the aristocratic Jezebel is the fashionable woman of the hour, while the men vie with one another as to who shall best screen her from her amours with themselves. And so far as the sterner sex are personally concerned, the moneyed man is the one most sought after, most tolerated, most appreciated and flattered in that swarm of drones called "society" where each buzzing insect tries to sting the other, or crawl over it in such wise as to be the first to steal whatever honey may be within reach. And worst of all things is the selfish apathy which pervades the majority of the well-to-do classes. As little sympathy is shown among them for the living, as regret for the dead. The misfortunes of friends are far more often made subject for ill-natured mockery than for compassion,—the deaths of parents and relations are accepted with a kind of dull pleasure, as making way for the inheritance of money or estates. No real delight is shown in the arts which foster peace, progress and wisdom; and equally little enthusiasm is stirred for such considerations of diplomacy or government which help to keep nations secure. A great man dies one day, and is forgotten the next,—unless some clumsy and scandalous "biography" which rakes

up all his faults and mistakes in life, and publishes private letters of the most intimate and sacred character, can be hawked to the front by certain literary vultures who get their living by tearing out the heart of a corpse. Say that a dire tragedy is enacted,—such as the assassination of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, or the atrocious murder of the late King and Queen of Servia,—or, what is to many minds almost as bad,—the heartless and un-Christian conduct of Leopold, King of the Belgians, to his unhappy daughter Stéphanie,—and though each event may be as painful and terrible as any that ever occupied the attention of the historian, they appear to excite no more human emotion than a few cold expressions of civil surprise or indifference. Feeling,—warm, honest, active, passionate feeling for any cause, is more difficult to rouse than the Sloth from its slumbers. It would, in truth, seem to be dead. The Church cannot move it. The Drama fails to stir it. Patriotism,—National Honour,—have no power to lift it from the quagmire of inertia. But let there be a sudden panic on the Stock Exchange,—let the Paris Bourse be shaken,—let Wall Street be ablaze with sinister rumour—and then hey and halloo for a reckless, degrading, humiliating, miserable human stampede! Like infuriated maniacs men shriek and stamp and wrestle;—with brains on fire, they forget that they were born to be reasoning creatures capable of self-control;—their much boasted-of "education" avails them nothing,—and they offer to the gods a spectacle of frantic fear and ignominy of which even an untaught savage might well be ashamed.

But perhaps the most noxious sign of the blight in the social atmosphere is the openly increasing laxity of morals, and the frankly disgraceful disregard of the marriage tie. Herein the British aristocracy take the lead as the choicest examples of the age. Whatever Europe or America may show in the way of godless and dissolute living, we are unhappily forced to realize that there are men in Great Britain, renowned for their historic names and exclusive positions, who are content to stand by, the tame witnesses of their own marital dishonour, accepting, with a cowardice too contemptible for horsewhipping, other men's children as their own, all the time knowing them to be bastards. We have heard of a certain "nobleman" who,—to quote Holy Writ,—"neighed after" another man's wife to such an extent, that to stop the noise, the obliging husband accepted £60,000, a trifling sum, which was duly handed over. Whether the gentleman who neighed, or the gentleman who paid, was the worst rascal, must be left to others to determine. It was all hushed up quite nicely,—and both parties are received "in the best society," with even more attention than would be shown to them if they were clean and honest, instead of being soiled and disreputable. The portrait of the lady whose damaged virtue was plastered up for £60,000 is often seen in pictorials, with appended letterpress suitably describing her as a lily-white dove of sweet purity and peace. One blames the sinners in this sordid comedy less than the "fashionable" folk who tolerate and excuse their conduct. Sinners there are, and sinners there always will be,—modern Davids will always exist who seek

after Bathsheba, and do their level best to get Uriah the Hittite comfortably out of the way,—but that they should be encouraged in their sins and commended for them, is quite another story. Apart from the pernicious influence they exercise on their own particular "set," the example of conduct they give to the nation at large, not only arouses national contempt, but in some cases, where certain notable politicians are concerned, may breed national disaster.

With looseness of morals naturally comes looseness of conversation. The conversation of many of the Upper Ten, in England at least, shows a remarkable tendency towards repulsive subjects and objectionable details. It is becoming quite a common thing to hear men and women talking about their "Little Marys," a phrase which, though invented by Mr. J. M. Barrie, is not without considerable vulgarity and offence. Before the brilliant Scottish novelist chose this title for a play dealing with the digestive apparatus, it would have done him no harm to pause and reflect that with a very large portion of the Christian world, namely the Roman Catholic, the name of Mary is held to be the most sacred of all names, second to none save that of the Divine Founder of the Faith. I am told on good authority that Americans,—especially the best of the American women,—have been amazed and more or less scandalized at the idea that any portion of the "cultured" British public should be found willing to attend a dramatic representation dealing with matters pertaining to the human stomach. I hope this report is true. My admiration for some American women is con-

siderable, but it would go up several points higher if I were made quite sure that their objection to this form of theatrical enterprise was genuine, permanent, and unconquerable. I like Mr. Barrie very much, and his Scottish stories delight me as they delight everybody, but I want him to draw the line at the unbeautiful details of dyspepsia. People are already too fond of talking about the various diseases afflicting various parts of their bodies to need any spur in that way from the romantic drama. One of the most notorious women of the day has attained her doubtful celebrity partially by conversing about her own inner mechanism and other people's inner mechanisms in a style which is not only "free," but frankly disgusting. But,—"she is so amusing!" say the Smart Set,—"One cannot repeat her stories, of course—they go *rather* far! —but—but—you really ought to hear her tell them!" This kind of thing is on a par with certain lewd fiction lately advertised by certain enterprising publishers who announce—"You must have this book! The booksellers will not show it on their bookstalls. They say you ought NOT to read it. GET IT!"

All homage to the booksellers who draw the line at printed garbage! One must needs admire and respect them for refusing to take percentages on the sale of corrupt matter. For business is always business,—and when business men see that the tendency of a certain portion of the reading public is towards prurient literature, they might, were they less honourable and conscientious than they are, avail themselves financially of this morbid and depraved taste. Especially as there are a large

number of self-called "stylists" who can always be relied upon to praise the indecent in literature. They call it "strong," or "virile," and reck nothing of the fact that the "strong" stench of it may poison previously healthy minds, and corrupt otherwise innocent souls. Prurient literature is always a never-failing accompaniment of social "blight." The fancy for it arises when wholesome literary fare has become too simple for the diseased and capricious mental appetite, and when the ideal conceptions of great imaginative minds, such as the romances of Scott and Dickens, are voted "too long and boresome!—there's really no time to read such stories nowadays!" No,—there is no time! There's plenty of time to play Bridge though!

Poetry—the greatest of the arts—is neglected at the present day, because nobody will read it. Among the most highly "educated" persons, many can be met with who prattle glibly about Shakespeare, but who neither know the names of his plays nor have read a line of his work. With the decline of Poesy comes as a matter of course the decline of Sculpture, Painting, Architecture and Music. For Poesy is the parent stem from which all these arts have sprung. The proofs of their decline are visible enough amongst us to-day. Neither Great Britain, nor Europe, nor America, can show a really great Poet. England's last great poet was Tennyson,—since his death we have had no other. Similarly there is no great sculptor, no great painter, no great novelist, no great architect, no great musician. I use the word "great," of course, in its largest sense, in the sense wherein we speak of Michael Angelo, Raffaelle, or Beethoven. There

are plenty of clever "sketchy" artists,—"impressionist" painters and fictionists, "rococo" sculptors, and melodious drawing-room song-writers,—but we wait in vain for a new "grand" opera, a nobly-inspired statue, a novel like "Guy Mannering," or a Cathedral, such as the devout old monks designed in the intervals between prayer and praise. The beautiful and poetic ideals that made such work possible are, if not quite dead, slowly dying, under the influence of the "blight" which infects the social atmosphere,—the blight which is thick with Self and Sensuality,—which looms between man and his Maker, shutting out every hopeful glimpse of the sun of faith, whose life-giving rays invigorate the soul. And those who see it slowly darkening —those who have been and are students of history, and are thereby able to recognize its appearance, its meaning, and its mission, and who know the mischief wrought by the poison it exhales, will pray for a Storm!

"Come but the direst storm and stress that Fate
Can bring upon us in its darkest hour,
Then will the realm awake, however late,
From the warm sloth in which we yawn and cower,
And pass our sordid lives in greed, or mate
With animal delights in luxury's bower;
Then will the ancient virtues bloom anew,
And love of country quench the love of gold;
Then will the mocking spirits that imbue
Our daily converse fade like misty cold
When the clear sunshine permeates the blue;
Men will be manly as in days of old,
And scorn the base delights that sink them down
Into the languid waters where they drown!"

THE DEATH OF HOSPITALITY

THERE is an old song, a very old song, the refrain of which runs thus: "'Twas merry in the hall, when the beards wagged all, We shall never see the like again, again!—We shall never see the like again!" Whether there was anything particularly hilarious in the wagging of beards we may not feel able to determine, but there is unquestionably a vague sense of something festive and social conveyed in the quaint lines. We feel, without knowing why, that it was, it *must* have been, "merry in the hall," at the distant period alluded to,—while at the present time we are daily and hourly made painfully aware that whether it be in hall, drawing-room or extensive "reception gallery," the merriment formerly so well sung and spoken of exists no longer. The Harp that once through Tara's Halls—no!—I mean the Beards that once wagged in the Hall, wag no more. Honest laughter has given place to the nanny-goat sniggering bleat now common to polite society, and understood to be the elegantly trained and "cultured" expression of mirth. The warm hand-shake has, in a very great measure, degenerated into the timorous offer of two or three clammy fingers extended dubiously, as with a fear of microbes. And Hospitality, large-hearted, smiling, gracious Hospitality, is dead and

wrapped in its grave-clothes, waiting in stiff corpse-like state for its final burial. Public dinners, public functions of all kinds,—in England at any rate,—are merely so many funeral feasts in memory of the great defunct virtue. Its spirit has fled,—and there is no calling it back again. The art of entertaining is lost,—together with the art of conversation. And when our so-called "friends" are "at home," we are often more anxious to find reasons for declining rather than for accepting their invitations, simply because we know that there is no real "at home" in it, but merely an "out-of-home" arrangement, in which a mixed crowd of people are asked to stand and swelter in an uneasy crush on staircases and in drawing-rooms, pretending to listen to music which they can scarcely hear, and scrambling for tea which is generally too badly made to drink. Indeed, it may be doubted whether, of all the various ludicrous social observances in which our progressive day takes part, there is anything quite so sublimely idiotic as a smart "At Home" in London during the height of the season. Nothing certainly presents men and women in such a singularly unintelligent aspect. Their faces all wear more or less the same expression of forced amiability,—the same civil grin distorts their poor mouths—the same wondering and weary stare afflicts their tired straining eyeballs—and the same automatic arm-movement and hand-jerk works every unit, as each approaches the hostess in the conventional manner enjoined by the usages of that "cultured" hypocrisy which covers a multitude of lies. Sheep, herding in a field and cropping the herbage in the comfortable unconsciousness

that they are eating merely to be eaten, are often stated to be the silliest of animals,—but whether they are sillier than the human beings who consent to be squashed together in stuffy rooms where they can scarcely move, under the sham impression that they are "at home" with a friend, is a matter open to question. Of course to some minds it may be, and no doubt is, extremely edifying to learn by the society papers that Mrs. So-and-So, or Lord and Lady Thingummy will "entertain a great deal this season." People who have no idea what this kind of "entertaining" means, may have glittering visions thereof. They may picture to themselves scenes of brilliancy where "a thousand hearts beat happily, and when, Music arose with its voluptuous swell, Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again, And all went merry as a marriage-bell!" Only these things do not happen. Anything but love is "looked" from soft eyes and hard eyes equally;—derision, contempt, indifference, dejection, malice, and (so far as champagne, ices and general messy feeding are concerned) greed, light up these "windows of the soul" from time to time during the progress of such festivities; but love, never! The women are far too busy finding standing-room wherein to show themselves and their newest frocks off to advantage, to waste any moment in mere sentiment, and it is a Christianly beautiful sight to see how the dear things who wear the dressmaker's latest "creations" elbow and push and hustle and tread on the toes of their sisters who are less highly favoured than themselves in the matter of mere clothes. As for the men,—if they have, by dint of hard exertion,

managed to get in at the "crush," and near enough to the hostess to bow and touch her hand, their sole attention henceforward becomes concentrated on the business of getting out again as rapidly as possible. For let it be said to the praise, honour and glory of the sterner sex, that taken in the rough majority, they detest the fashionable "At Home," with vigorous and honest intensity,—and unless they are of that degenerate class who like to be seen hanging round some notoriously press-puffed "professional beauty," or some equally notoriously known leader of the Smart Set, they are seldom seen at such gatherings. They feel themselves to be incongruous and out of place,—and so they are. "At Homes" are curious sort of social poultry-yards, where the hens have it all their own way, and do most distinctly crow.

But if "At Homes" are bad enough, the smart, the very smart dinner-party is perhaps a little worse in its entire lack of the true hospitality which, united to grace and tact and ready conversation, should make every guest feel that his or her presence is valuable and welcome. A small private dinner, at which the company are some six or eight persons at most, is sometimes (though not by any means always) quite a pleasant affair, but a "big" dinner in the "big" sense of the word, is generally the most painful and dismal of functions, except to those for whom silent gorging and after repletion are the essence of all mental and physical joy. I remember—and of a truth it would be impossible to forget—one of these dinners which took place one season in a very "swagger" house—the house of a member of that old British nobility

whose ancestors and titles always excite a gentle flow of saliva in the mouths of snobs. The tables—there were two,—were, to use the formal phrase, "laid for forty covers"—that is to say that each table accommodated twenty guests. The loveliest flowers, the most priceless silver, the daintiest glass, adorned the festive boards,—everything that taste could suggest or wealth supply, had its share in the general effect of design and colour,—the host was at the head of one table,—the hostess at the other—and between-whiles a fine string band discoursed the sweetest music. But with it all there was no real hospitality. We might as well have been seated at some extra-luxurious table-d'hôte in one of the "Kur" houses of Austria or Germany, paying so much per day for our entertainment. Any touch of warm and kindly feeling was altogether lacking; and to make matters worse, a heavy demon brooded over the brave outward show of the feast,—a demon with sodden grey wings that refused to rise and soar,—the demon of a hopeless, irremediable Stupidity! Out and alas!—here was the core of the mischief! For sad as it is to lack Heart in the entertaining of our friends, it doubles the calamity to lack Brain as well! Our host was stupid;—dull to a degree unimaginable by those who do not know what some lordly British aristocrats can be at their own tables,—our hostess, a beautiful woman, was equally stupid, being entirely engrossed in herself and her own bodily charms, to the utter oblivion of the ease and well-being of her guests. What a meal it was! How interminably it dragged its slow length along! What small hydraulic bursts of meaningless talk

spurted out between the entrées and the game! —talk to be either checked by waiters proffering more food, or drowned in the musical growling of the band! I believe one man hazarded a joke,—but it was not heard,—and I know that a witty old Irish peer told an anecdote which was promptly "quashed" by a dish of asparagus being thrust before him, just as he was, in the richest brogue, arriving at the "point." But as nobody listened to him, it did not matter. Nobody does listen to anybody or anything nowadays at social functions. Everybody talks with insane, babbling eagerness, apparently indifferent as to whether they are heard or not. Any amount of people ask questions and never think of waiting for the answers. Should any matters, small or great, require explanation, scarce a soul has the patience or courtesy to attend to such explanation or to follow it with any lucidity or comprehension. It is all hurry-skurry, helter-skelter, and bad, shockingly bad, manners.

I am given to understand that Americans, and Americans alone, retain and cherish the old-fashioned grace of Hospitality, which is so rapidly becoming extinct in Great Britain. I would fain believe this, but of myself I do not know. I have had no experience of social America, save such as has been freely and cordially taught me by Americans in London. Some of these have indeed proved that they possess the art of entertaining friends with real friendly delight in the grace and charm and mutual help of social intercourse,—others again, by an inordinate display of wealth, and a feverish yearning for the Paragraph-Man (or Woman), have plainly shown that Hospitality is, with them, a far

less concern than Notoriety. However this may be, no sane person will allow that it is "hospitality" to ask a number of friends into your house and there keep them all standing because you have managed that there shall be no room to sit down, while strong, half-cold tea and stale confectionery are hastily dispensed among them. It is not "hospitality" to ask people to dinner, and never speak a word to them all the evening, because you, if a man, are engaged upon your own little "business affair," or, if a woman, are anxious not to lose hold of your special male flatterer. If friends are invited, they should surely be welcomed in the manner friendly, and made to feel at home by the personal attention of both host and hostess. It is not "hospitality" to turn them loose in bewildered droves through grounds or gardens, to listen to a band which they have no doubt heard many times before,—or to pack them all into a stuffy room to be "entertained" by a professional musician whom they could hear to much more comfortable and independent advantage by paying for stalls at the legitimate concert hall. What do we really mean by Hospitality? Surely we mean friendship, kindness, personal interest, and warm-hearted openness of look and conduct,—and all of these are deplorably missing from the "smart" functions of up-to-date society in London, whatever the state of things may be concerning this antique virtue in New York and Boston. It would appear that the chief ingredients of Hospitality are manners,—for as Emerson says: "Manners are the *happy way* of doing things." This "happy way" is becoming very rare. Society, particularly the

"Upper Ten" society,—is becoming, quite noticeably, very rude. Some of the so-called "smartest" women are notoriously very vulgar. Honesty, simplicity, sympathy, and delicacy of feeling are, or seem to be, as much out of date as the dainty poems of Robert Herrick, and the love-sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney. Time goes on, say the iconoclasts —and we must go with it—we must, if our hurrying civilization requires it, pass friends by with a cool nod, mock at the vices of the young, and sneer at the failings of the old;—we are all too busy to be courteous,—too much in a hurry grabbing gold to be kind, and much too occupied with ourselves to be thoughtful of others. So let us bury Hospitality decently once and for all, and talk no more about it! It was a grand old Virtue!—let us inter it with honour,—and cease to hold our funeral feasts and entertainments in its name. For, being dead, 'tis dead and done with,—and amid all our twentieth-century shams, let us at least drop, for shame, our base imitations of the great-souled splendid Grace that was meant to link our lives more sweetly together, to engender love, and to make home more home-like. For nowadays, few of us are simple and truthful enough in our lines of conduct even to understand Hospitality in its real meaning. "Between simple and noble persons,"—says a great philosopher—"there is always a quick intelligence; they recognize at sight; and meet on a better ground than the talents and skills they may chance to possess, namely, on sincerity and uprightness." Sincerity and uprightness are the very fibre and life-blood of true Hospitality. But the chief canon of modern society is hypocrisy,

to begin with. Insincerity and lack of principle naturally follow, with their usual accompaniment, moral cowardice,—and so men and women sneak and crawl, and flatter base persons for what they can get, and reject all chances of faithful friendship for mere ephemeral show. Under such conditions as these, what can good old Hospitality do but draw its last breath with a gentle sigh of expiring sorrow for the mistaken world which prefers a lie to a truth, and still to this day crucifies all its loving would-be redeemers on miserable Calvarys of desolation! No happiness does it gain thereby, but only increased bitterness and weariness,—and the fact that all our social customs have greatly changed since the old time when households were wisely ruled and very simply ordered, is no advantage to the general social community. We may, if we choose,—(and we very often do so choose,) fly from one desire to another and thence to satiety, and back again from satiety to desire, but we shall never, in such pursuit, find the peace engendered by simplicity of life, or the love and lasting joy inspired by that honourable confidence in one another's best and noblest attributes, which should frankly and openly set the seal on friendship, and make Hospitality a glad duty as well as a delight. "Old-fashioned" as it may be, no new fashion can ever replace it.

THE VULGARITY OF WEALTH

THERE are certain periods in the lives of nations when the balance of things in general would seem to be faultily adjusted; when one side of the scale almost breaks and falls to the ground through excess of weight, and the other tips crazily upward, well-nigh to overturning, through an equally undue excess of lightness. The inequality can be traced with mathematical precision as occurring at regular intervals throughout the world's history. It is as though the clock of human affairs had been set correctly for a certain limited time only, and was then foredoomed to fall out of gear in such a manner as to need cleansing and winding up afresh. A good many people, including some of the wisest of our few wise men, have openly expressed the opinion that we, of the proudest and greatest Empire at present under the sun, have almost reached that particularly fatal figure on the Eternal Dial,

When all the wheels run down,

and when the scales of Justice are becoming so dangerously worn out and uneven, as to suggest an incapacity for holding social and political weights and measures much longer. One of the symptoms of this overstrained condition of

our latter-day civilization is precisely the same danger-signal which has in all ages accompanied national disaster—a pernicious influence, like that of the planet "Algol," which, when in the ascendant, is said to betoken mischief and ruin to all who see it rise on the horizon. Our evil Star, the evil star of all Empires, has long ago soared above the eastern edge; fully declared, it floods our heaven with such lurid brilliancy that we can scarce perceive any other luminary. And its name is Mammon. The present era in which we are permitted by Divine law to run through our brief existence and make our mark or miss it, as we choose, is principally distinguished by an insane worship of Wealth. Wealth in excess—wealth in chunks—wealth in great awkward, unbecoming dabs, is plastered, as it were, by the merest hap-hazard toss of fortune's dice, on the backs of uncultured and illiterate persons, who, bowed down like asses beneath the golden burden, are asininely ignorant of its highest uses. The making of millions would seem to be like a malignant fever, which must run its course, ending in either the death or the mental and physical wreck of the patient. He who has much money seems always to find it insufficient, and straightway proceeds to make more; while he who has not only much, but superabundance of the dross, scatters it in every direction broadcast, wherever it can best serve as an aid to his own self-advertisement, vanity and ostentation. Once upon a time wealth could not purchase an entrance into society; now it is the only pass-key. Men of high repute for learning, bravery, and distinctive merit, are "shunted" as it were off the line to make way

for the motor-car traffic of plutocrats, who, by dint of "push," effrontery, and brazen impudence, manage to shout their income figures persistently in the ears of those whose high privilege it is to "give the lead" in social affairs. And to the shame of such exalted individuals be it said, that they listen, with ears stretched wide, to the yell of the huckster in stocks and shares; and setting aside every thought for the future of Great Britain and the highest honour of her sons and daughters, they sell their good word, their influence, and their favour easily, for so much cash down. Men and women who have the privilege of personally knowing, and frequently associating with the Royal Family, are known to accept payment for bringing such and such otherwise obscure persons under the immediate notice of the King; and it is a most unfortunate and regrettable fact that throughout the realm the word goes that no such obscure persons ever dine with their Sovereign without having paid the "middle man" for the privilege. It would be an easy matter for the present writer to name at least a dozen well-known society women, assuming to be "loyal," who make a very good thing out of their "loyalty" by accepting huge payments in exchange for their recommendation or introduction to Royal personages, and who add considerably to their incomes by such means, bringing the names of the King and Queen down to their own sordid level of bargain and sale, with a reckless disregard of the damaging results of such contemptible conduct. These are some of the very ladies who are most frequently favoured by notice at Court, and who occupy the position of

being in the "swagger set." Whereas, the men and women who are faithful, who hold the honour of their King dearer than their own lives, who refuse to truckle to the spirit of money-worship, and who presume to denounce the sickening hypocrisy of modern society life and its shameless prostitution of high ideals, are "hounded" by those portions of the Press which are governed by Jew syndicates, and slandered by every dirty cad that makes his cheap living by putting his hand secretly in his neighbour's pocket. Never, in all the ages of the world, have truth-tellers been welcome; from Socrates to Christ the same persecution has followed every human being who has had enough of God in him or her to denounce shams; and the Christian religion itself is founded on the crucifixion of Honesty by the priests of Hypocrisy. It is a lesson that can hardly be too deeply dwelt upon at the present notable time of day, which seems, for many students of national affairs, the crucial point of a coming complete change in British history.

On every side, look where we may, we see an almost brutal dominance of wealth. We see the Yankee Trade-octopus, stretching out greedy tentacles in every direction, striving to grasp British shipping, British industries, and British interests everywhere, in that devouring and deadly grip, which, if permitted to hold, would mean mischief and loss of prestige to our country, though, no doubt, it might create rejoicing in America. For America is by no means so fond of us as certain interested parties would have us suppose. She would dearly like to "patronise" us, but she does

not love us, though at present she hides her hand. In a case of struggle, she would not support the "old country" for mere sentimental love of it. She would naturally serve only her own best interests. As a nation of bombast and swagger, she is a kind of "raree-show" in the world's progress; but her strength is chiefly centred in dollars, and her influence on the social world teaches that "dollars are the only wear." English society has been sadly vulgarized by this American taint. Nevertheless, it is, as it has always been, a fatal mistake for any nation to rely on the extent of its cash power alone. Without the real spirit which makes for greatness—without truth, without honour, without sincere patriotism and regard for the real well-being and honest government of the majority—any national system, whether monarchical or republican, must inevitably decay and perish from the face of the earth.

Unblemished honesty is the best policy for statesmen; but that such has been their rule of conduct in these latter years may perhaps be open to question. The late Mr. W. E. H. Lecky, whose broad-minded, impartial views of life, commend themselves forcibly to every literary student, writing of Cecil Rhodes, whose funeral service was celebrated with such almost royal pomp in St. Paul's Cathedral, gives us a sketch which should make the most casual "man in the street" pause and reflect as to whether those solemn public rites and tributary honours from both the King and Queen were not somewhat out of place on such an occasion.

"What Mr. Rhodes did," wrote Mr. Lecky, in

his strong, trenchant way, "has been very clearly established. When holding the highly confidential position of Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and being at the same time a Privy Councillor of the Queen, he engaged in a conspiracy for the overthrow of the Government of a neighbouring and friendly State. In order to carry out this design, he deceived the High Commissioner whose Prime Minister he was. He deceived his own colleagues in the Ministry. He collected under false pretences a force which was intended to co-operate with an insurrection in Johannesburg. Being a Director of the Chartered Company, he made use of that position without the knowledge of his colleagues to further the conspiracy. He took an active and secret part in smuggling great quantities of arms into the Transvaal, which were intended to be used in the rebellion; and at a time when his organs in the Press were representing Johannesburg as seething with spontaneous indignation against an oppressive Government, he, with another millionaire, was secretly expending many thousands of pounds in that town in stimulating and subsidizing the rising. He was also directly connected with the shabbiest incident in the whole affair, the concoction of a letter from the Johannesburg conspirators absurdly representing English women and children at Johannesburg as in danger of being shot down by the Boers, and urging the British to come at once and save them. It was a letter drawn up with the sanction of Mr. Rhodes many weeks before the raid, and before any disturbance had arisen; and kept in reserve to be dated and used in the last moment for the purpose of

inducing the young soldiers in South Africa to join in the raid, and of subsequently justifying their conduct before the War Office, and also for the purpose of being published in the English Press at the same time as the first news of the raid in order to work upon English opinion, and persuade the English people that the raid, though technically wrong was morally justifiable. . . . No reasonable judge can question that in these transactions he was more blamable than those who were actually punished by the law for taking part in the raid, far more blamable than those young officers who were, in truth, the most severely punished and who had been induced to take part in it under false representation of the wishes of the Government at home, and a grossly false representation of the state of things at Johannesburg. The failure of the raid, and his undoubted complicity with its design, obliged Mr. Rhodes to resign the post of Prime Minister, and his directorship of the Chartered Company. . . . But what can be thought of the language of a Minister who volunteered to assure the House of Commons that in all the transactions I have described, Mr. Rhodes, though he had made 'a gigantic mistake,' a mistake perhaps as great as a statesman could make, had done nothing affecting his personal honour ? "

What has been thought, and what *is* thought of the matter, has been largely suppressed by party politicians. The War Enquiry was conducted with secrecy ; Cabinet Ministers held their Councils, as it were, with locked doors. An eager desire to conceal the real state of affairs in the

country, and an unfortunate tendency to "hush up" such matters as are the plain right of ratepayers to know, are the betraying signs of many of our statesmen's inward disquiet. Because, as many people instinctively feel, the trail of finance is likely to be openly traced to an unlawful, and in some cases, dishonourable extent, over much recent political work. Honour, however, is due to those Ministers who valiantly endeavour to screen greater names than their own behind their skilful diplomacy; and one naturally admires the zeal and courage with which they fight for this cause, even as M. Maurepas and M. Necker fought a similar campaign long ago in the dark days of France, when, as Carlyle writes, it was "clearly a difficult point for Government, that of the dealing with the masses—if indeed it be not rather the sole point and problem of Government, and all other points were incidental crotchets, superficialities, and beatings of the wind! For let Charter-chests, Use and Wont, Law, common and special, say what they will, the masses count to so many millions of units, made to all appearance by God, whose earth this is declared to be. Besides, the people are not without ferocity; they have sinews and indignation."

At the immediate moment, the masses in our country are, rightly or wrongly, vaguely conscious of two things which they view as forms of injustice, namely, that they are asked to pay rates for an educational system which a large bulk of them do not approve, and that they are taxed for the expenses of a war, the conduct of which was discussed "secretly," as though its methods implied

some dishonour to those concerned in it. Moreover, they understand, with more or less bewilderment, that though the King is now "Supreme Lord of the Transvaal" there is no chance whatever for British subjects to make fortune there, the trades being swamped by Germans, and the mines controlled by Jews. Therefore, in their inability to follow the devious paths of reasoning by which politicians explain away what they term "ignorant and illiterate" conclusions, some of them begin to think that the blood of their sons has been shed in hard battle, not so much for the glory and good of the many, as for the private greed of the few. They are no doubt wrong; but it will take something more than "secret" enquiries to set them right.

Meanwhile, the passing of the social pageant interests them more deeply than is apparent on the frothy surface of social things. Their contempt is aroused and kept sullenly alive by daily contemplation of the flagrant assertion of money-dominance over every other good. They hear of one Andrew Carnegie strewing Free Libraries over the surface of the country, as if these institutions were so many lollipops thrown out of a schoolboy's satchel; they follow the accounts of his doings with a mingling of wonder and derision, some of them up in Scotland openly and forcibly regretting the mischief done to the famed "grit and grip" of Scottish students, who are not now, as of yore, forced by hard necessity to work for their University education themselves, and win it, as it were, by the very skin of their teeth. Hard necessity is a fine taskmaster, and turns out splendid

scholars and useful men. But when educational advantages are thrown headlong at aspiring students, and Universities are opened freely, as though they were a species of pauper-refuge, the delights of learning are apt to be proportionately cheapened and lessened. Lads with real ability naturally and invariably seek to do something that shall prove their own capabilities of pluck and endurance; and a truly independent spirit not only chafes at, but absolutely resents, assistance. Thus it has come to pass that Mr. Carnegie's Free Libraries are looked upon by hosts of people as so many brick and mortar advertisements of his own great wealth and unfailing liberality. A labour leader of some repute among his own class, remarked the other day that "the Carnegie libraries were like 'So-and-So's Pills,' posted up everywhere lest the inventor's name should be forgotten!" This was an unkind, and perhaps an ungrateful observation, but we have to recollect that a People, taken *as* a People, do not want to be grateful for anything. They want to work for all they get, and to feel that they have honestly deserved their earnings. It is only the drones of the hive that seek to be taken care of. The able citizen strenuously objects to be helped in obtaining sustenance for either his soul or his body. What is necessary for him, that he will fight for, and, having won the battle, he enjoys the victory. There is no pleasure in conquering an enemy, if a policeman has helped you to knock him down.

Thus, with many of the more independently-thinking class, millionaire Carnegie's money, pitched at the public, savours of "patronage" which they

resent, and ostentation which they curtly call "swagger." Free Libraries are by no means essential to perfect happiness, while they may be called extremely detrimental to the prosperity of authors. A popular author would have good reason to rejoice if his works were excluded from Free Libraries, inasmuch as his sales would be twice, perhaps three times as large. If a Free Library takes a dozen copies of a book, that dozen copies has probably to serve for five or six hundred people, who get it in turn individually. But if the book could not possibly be obtained for gratuitous reading in this fashion, and could only be secured by purchase, then it follows that five or six hundred copies would be sold instead of twelve. This applies only to authors whose works the public clamour for, and insist on reading; with the more select "unpopular" geniuses the plan, of course, would not meet with approval. In any case, a Free Library is neither to an author, nor to the reading public, an unmitigated boon. One has to wait for months sometimes for the book specially wanted; sometimes one's name is 1,000 on the list, though certain volumes known as "heavy stock" can always be obtained immediately on application, but are seldom applied for. Real book-lovers buy their books and keep them. Reading which is merely haphazard and casual is purely pernicious, and does far more harm than good. However, Carnegie, being the possessor of millions, probably does not know what else to do with the cash except in the way of Libraries. To burden a human biped with tons of gold, and then set him adrift to get rid of it as best he may, is one of the scurviest tricks of Fortune.

Inasmuch as ostentation is the trade mark of vulgarity, and a rich man cannot spend his money without at least *appearing* ostentatious. The revival of the spinning and silk-weaving industries in England would be a far nobler and more beneficial help to the country and to the many thousands of people, than any number of Free Libraries, yet no millionaire comes forward to offer the needful assistance towards this deserving end. But perhaps a hundred looms set going, with their workers all properly supported, would not be so prominently noticed in the general landscape as a hundred Free Libraries.

Apart from the manner in which certain rich men spend their wealth, there is something in an overplus of riches which is distinctly "out of drawing," and lop-sided. It is a false note in the musical scale. Just as a woman, by wearing too great a number of jewels, vulgarizes whatever personal beauty she may possess by the flagrant exhibition of valuables and bad taste together, so does a man who has no other claim upon society than that of mere wealth, appear as a kind of monstrosity and deformity in the general equality and equilibrium of Nature. When such a man's career is daily seen to be nothing more than a constant pursuit of his own selfish ends, regardless of truth, honour, high principle, and consideration for his fellow-men, he becomes even more than a man-camel with a golden hump—he is an offence and a danger to the community. If, by mere dint of cash, he is allowed to force his way everywhere—if no ruling sovereign on the face of the earth has sufficient wisdom or strength of character to draw a line against the entrance into

society and politics of Money, for mere Money's sake, then the close of our circle of civilisation is nearly reached, and the old story of Tyre and Sidon and Babylon will be re-told again for us with the same fatal conclusion to which Volney, in his *Ruins of Empires* impressively calls attention, in the following passage:

"Cupidity, the daughter and companion of ignorance, has produced all the mischiefs that have desolated the globe. Ignorance and the love of accumulation, these are the two sources of all the plagues that infest the life of man. They have inspired him with false ideas of his happiness, and prompted him to misconstrue and infringe the laws of nature, as they related to the connection between him and exterior objects. Through them his conduct has been injurious to his own existence, and he has thus violated the duty he owes to himself; they have fortified his heart against compassion, and his mind against the dictates of justice, and he has thus violated the duty he owes to others. By ignorant and inordinate desire, man has armed himself against man, family against family, tribe against tribe, and the earth is converted into a bloody theatre of discord and robbery. They have sown the seeds of secret war in the bosom of every state, divided the citizens from each other, and the same society is constituted of oppressors and oppressed, of masters and slaves. They have taught the heads of nations, with audacious insolence, to turn the arms of society against itself, and *to build upon mercenary avidity the fabric of political despotism*, or they have a *more hypocritical and deep-laid project, that imposes, as the dictate of heaven, lying*

sanctions and a sacrilegious yoke, thus rendering avarice the source of credulity. In fine, they have corrupted every idea of good and evil, just and unjust, virtue and vice; they have misled nations in a *labyrinth of calamity and mistake.* Ignorance and the love of accumulation! These are the malevolent beings that have laid waste the earth; these are the decrees of fate that have overturned empires; these are the celestial maledictions that have struck these walls, once so glorious, and converted the splendour of populous cities into a sad spectacle of ruins!"

Laughable, yet grievous, is the childish conduct of many American plutocrats who are never tired of announcing in the daily Press that they are spending Three Thousand Pounds on roses for one afternoon's "At Home," or Five Thousand Pounds on one single banquet! After this, why should we call the Roman Heliogabalus a sensualist and voluptuary? His orgies were less ostentatious than many social functions of to-day. It is not, we believe, recorded that he paid any "fashion-papers" (if there were any such in the Roman Empire) to describe his "Feasts of Flowers," though a lively American lady, giving out her "social experiences" recently at an "Afternoon tea" said gaily: "I always send an account of my dinners, my dresses, and the dresses of my friends to '*The* ——' with a cheque. Otherwise, you know, I should never get myself or my parties mentioned at all!" One is bound to entertain the gravest doubts as to the truth of her assertion, knowing, of course, that of all institutions in the world, the Press, in Great Britain at any rate, is

the last to be swayed by financial considerations. One has never heard (in England at least) of any "Company" paying several thousand pounds to the Press for "floating it." Though such things may be done in America, they are never tolerated here. But, the Press apart, which in its unblemished rectitude "shines like a good deed in a naughty world," most things in modern politics and society are swayed by money considerations, and the sudden acquisition of wealth does not in many cases improve the morality of the person so favoured, or persuade him to discharge such debts as he may have incurred in his days of limited means. On the contrary, he frequently ignores these, and proceeds to incur fresh liabilities, as in the striking case of a lady "leader of society" at the present day, who, having owed large sums to certain harmless and confiding tradesmen for the past seven or eight years, ignores these debts or "shunts them," and spends six thousand pounds recklessly on the adornment of rooms for the entertainment of Royalty—which fact most notably proclaims her vulgarity, singularly allied to her social distinction. The payment of her debts first, and the entertainment of great personages afterwards, would seem to be a nobler and more becoming thing.

But show and vanity, pride and "bounce," appear to have taken the place of such old-fashioned virtues as simplicity, sincerity, and that genuine hospitality which asserts nothing, but gives all.

> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood.

In very few cases does immense wealth seem to

go hand in hand with refinement, reserve and dignity. Millionaires are for the most part ill-mannered and illiterate, and singularly uninteresting in their conversation. A certain millionaire, occupying during some seasons one of the fine old Scottish Castles whose owners still take pride in the fact that its walls once sheltered "bonnie Prince Charlie," can find little to do with himself and his "house-party," but fill the grand old drawing-room with tobacco-smoke and whisky-fumes of an evening, and play "Bridge" for ruinous stakes on Sundays, of all days in the week. During other hours and days he goes out shooting, or drives a motor-car. Intellectually speaking, the man is less of a real personality than the great Newfoundland dog he owns. But measured by gold he is a person of enormous importance—a human El Dorado. And his banking-account is the latch-key with which he opens the houses of the great and intrudes his coarse presence through the doors of royal palaces; whereas if by some capricious stroke of ill-luck he had not a penny left in the world, those same doors would be shut in his face with a bang.

The vulgarity of wealth is daily and hourly so broadly evidenced and apparent, that one can well credit a strange rumour prevalent in certain highly exclusive circles, far removed from the "swagger set," to the effect that with one more turn of blind Fortune's wheel, the grace of Poverty will become a rare social distinction. The Poor Gentleman, it is said, will be eagerly sought after, and to be seen in his company will entitle one to respect. The man of money will stand outside the ring of this Society,

which is in process of formation for the revival of the Art of Intelligent Conversation and the Cultivation of Good Manners. Ladies who dress with a becoming simplicity, and who are not liable to the accusation of walking about with clothes unpaid for, will be eligible for membership,—and young men who are not ashamed to emphatically decline playing cards on Sunday will be equally welcome in the select coterie. Limited means will be considered more of a recommendation than a drawback, and visits will be interchanged among the members on the lines of unaffected hospitality, offered with unassuming friendship and sincerity. Kindness towards each other, punctilious attention to the smallest courtesies of life, unfailing chivalry towards women, and honour to men, will be the prevailing "rules" of the community, and every attempt at "show," either in manners or entertainment, will be rigorously forbidden and excluded. The aim of the Society will be to prove the truth of the adage that "Manners makyth the man," as opposed to the modern reading, "Money makyth the nobleman." Bearing in mind that the greatest reformers and teachers of the world were seldom destitute of the grace of Poverty, it will be deemed good and necessary to make a stand for this ancient and becoming Virtue, which as a learned writer says, "doth sit on a wise man more becomingly than royal robes on a king." Many who entertain this view are prepared to unite their forces in making well-born and well-bred Poverty the fashion. For in such a scheme, singular as it may appear, there is just a faint chance of putting up a barrier against boorish Plutocracy (which is a more un-

wieldy and offensive power than Democracy), and also of asserting the existence of grander national qualities than greed, avarice, and self-indulgence, which humours, if allowed to generate and grow in the minds of a people, result in the ravaging sickness of such a pestilence of evil as cannot be easily stayed or remedied. There has been enough, and too much of the Idolatry of Money-bags—it is time the fever of such insanity should abate and cool down. To conclude with another admirable quotation from Mr. Lecky: "Of colossal fortunes only a very small fraction can be truly said to minister to the personal enjoyment of the owner. The disproportion in the world between pleasure and cost is indeed almost ludicrous. The two or three shillings that gave us our first Shakespeare would go but a small way towards providing one of the perhaps untasted dishes on the dessert table. The choicest masterpieces of the human mind—the works of human genius that through the long course of centuries have done most to ennoble, console, brighten, and direct the lives of men, might all be purchased—I do not say by the cost of a lady's necklace, but by that of one or two of the little stones of which it is composed. Compare the relish with which the tired pedestrian eats his bread and cheese with the appetites with which men sit down to some stately banquet; compare the level of spirits at the village dance with that of the great city ball whose lavish splendour fills the society papers with admiration; compare the charms of conversation in the college common room with the weary faces that may be often seen around the millionaire's dinner table, and

we may gain a good lesson of the vanity of riches."

And, we may add, of the vulgarity of those who advertise their wealth by ostentation, as well as of those who honour Purses more than Principles.

AMERICAN WOMEN IN ENGLAND

WHY is the American woman so popular in English society? Why is her charmingly assertive personality acknowledged everywhere? Why is she received by knights and earls and belted churls with such overpowering enthusiasm? Surely something subtle, elusive and mysterious, clings to her particular form, nature and identity, for more often than not, the stolid Britisher, while falling at her feet and metaphorically kissing the hem of her garment, wonders vaguely how it is that she manages to make such a fool of him! To which, she might reply, on demand, that if he were not a fool already, she would not find her task so easy! For the American woman is, above all women in the world, clever—or let us say "brainy" to an almost incredible height of brainyness. She is "all there." She can take the measure of a man in about ten minutes and classify him as though he were a botanical specimen. She realizes all his limitations, his "notions," and his special and particular fads,—and she has the uncommonly good sense not to expect much of him. She would not "take any" on the lily-maid of Astolat, the fair Elaine, who spent her time in polishing the shield of Lancelot, and who finally died of love for that most immoral

but fascinating Knight of the Round Table. No, she wouldn't polish a shield, you bet! She would make Lancelot polish it himself for all he was worth, and polish her own dear little boots and shoes for her into the bargain. That is one of her secrets—masterfulness—or, let us say queenliness, which sounds better. The Lord of creation can do nothing in the way of ordering *her* about,—because, as the Lady of creation she expects to order *him* about,—and she does! She expects to be worked for, worshipped and generally attended to,—and she gets her way. What she wants, she will have,—though "Companies" smash, and mighty Combines split into infinite nothingness; and more than any tamer of wild forest animals she makes all her male lions and bears dance at her bidding.

Perhaps the chief note in the ever-ascending scale of her innumerable attractions is her intense vitality. The mixed blood of many intelligent races courses through her delicate veins and gives a joyous lightness to the bounding of her heart and the swift grace of her step. She is full of energy as well as charm. If she sets out to enjoy herself, she enjoys herself thoroughly. She talks and laughs freely. She is not a mere well-dressed automaton like the greater majority of upper-class British dames. She is under the impression,—(a perfectly correct one) that tongues were given to converse with, and that lips, especially pretty ones, were made to smile with. She is, taken at her best, eminently good-natured, and refreshingly free from the jaundiced spite against others of her own sex which savours the afternoon chitter-chatter of nine out of every ten English spinsters and matrons

taken together in conclave. She would, on the whole, rather say a kind thing than a cruel one. Perhaps this is because she is herself always so triumphant in her social career,—because she is too certain of her own power to feel "the pangs of unrequited love," or to allow herself to be stung by the "green-eyed monster," jealousy. Her car is always rolling over roses,—there is always a British title going a-begging,—always some decayed or degenerate or semi-drunken peer, whose fortunes are on the verge of black ruin, ready and willing to devour, monster-like, the holocaust of an American virgin, provided bags of bullion are flung, with her, into his capacious maw. Though certainly one should look upon the frequent marriages of American heiresses with effete British nobles, as the carrying out of a wise and timely dispensation of Providence. New blood—fresh sap, is sorely needed to invigorate the grand old tree of the British aristocracy, which has of late been looking sadly as though dry rot were setting in,—as though the woodlice were at work in its heart, and the rats burrowing at its root. But, by the importation of a few clean-minded, sweet-souled American women, some of the most decayed places in the venerable stem have been purged and purified,—the sap has risen, and new boughs and buds of promise are sprouting. And it is full time that this should be. For we have had to look with shame and regret upon many of our English lords caught in gambling dens,—and shown up in dishonourable bankruptcies;—some of them have disported themselves upon the "variety" stage, clad in women's petticoats and singing comic songs

for a fee,—others have "hired themselves out" as dummy figures of attraction at evening parties, accepting five guineas for each appearance,—and they have become painfully familiar objects in the Divorce Court, where the stories of their most unsavoury manners and customs, as detailed in the press, have offered singular instruction and example to those "lower" classes whom they are supposed to more or less influence. A return to the old motto of "noblesse oblige" would not be objectionable; a re-adopting of old *un*-blemished scutcheons of honour would be appreciated, even by the so-called "vulgar,"—and a great noble who is at the same time a great man, would in this present day, be accepted by all classes with an universal feeling of grateful surprise and admiration.

But, *revenons à nos moutons*,—the social popularity of the American woman in English society. That she *is* popular is an admitted and incontestable fact. She competes with the native British female product at every turn,—in her dress, in her ways, in her irresistible vivacity, and above all in her intelligence. When she knows things, she lets people know that she knows things. She cannot sit with her hands before her in stodgy silence, allowing other folks to talk. That is an English habit. No doubt the English girl or woman knows quite as much as her American sister, but she has an unhappy knack of assuming to be a fool. She says little, and that little not to much purpose,—she looks less,—it is dimly understood that she plays hockey, tennis and golf, and has large feet. She is an athletic Enigma. I write this, of course, solely concerning those British women, young,

middle-aged and elderly, who make "sport" and out-door exercise the chief aim and end of existence. But I yield to none in my love and admiration for the real, genuine, *un*modernised English maiden, at her gentlest and best,—she is the rosebud of the world. And I tender devout reverence and affection to the *un*-fashionable, single-hearted, dear, loving and ever-beloved English wife and mother—she is the rose in all its full-blown glory. Unfortunately, however, these English rosebuds and roses are seldom met with in the sweltering, scrambling crowd called "society." They dwell in quiet country-places where the lovely influences of their modest and retiring lives are felt but never seen. Society likes to be seen rather than felt. There is all the difference. And in that particular section of it whose aim is seeing to be seen, and seen to be seeing, the American woman is as an oasis in the desert. She also wants to be seen,—but she expresses that desire so naïvely, and often so bewitchingly, that it is a satisfaction to every one to grant her request. She also would see,—and her eyes are so bright and roving and restless, that Mother Britannia is perforce compelled to smile indulgently, and to open all her social picture-books for the pleasure of the spoilt child of eternal Mayflower pedigree. It has to be said and frankly admitted too, that much of the popularity attending an American girl when she first comes over to London for a "season" is due to an idea which the stolid Britisher gets into his head, namely, that she has, she *must* have, Money. The American girl and Money are twins, according to the stolid Britisher's belief. And when the stolid Britisher fixes some-

thing—anything—into the passively-resisting matter composing his brain, it would take Leviathan, with, not one, but several hooks, to *un*fix it. And thus it often happens that the sight of a charmingly dressed, graceful, generally "smart" American girl attracts the stolid Britisher in the first place because he says to himself—"Money!" He knows all the incomes of all the best families in his own country,—and none of them are big enough to suit him. But the American girl arrives as more or less of a financial mystery. She may have thousands,—she may have millions,—he can never be quite sure. And he does all he can to ingratiate himself with her and give her a good time "on spec." to begin with, while he makes cautious and diplomatic enquiries. If his hopes rest on a firm basis, his attentions are redoubled—if, on the contrary, they are built on shifting sand, he gradually diminishes his ardour and like a "wilting flower" fades and "fizzles" away.

I am here reminded of a certain Earl, renowned in the political and social world, who, when he was a young man, went over on a visit to America and there fell, or feigned to fall, deeply in love with a very sweet, very beautiful, very gentle and lovable American girl. In a brief while he became engaged to her. The engagement was made public—the wedding day was almost fixed. The girl's father was extremely wealthy, and she was the only child and sole heiress. But an unfortunate failure,—a gigantic collapse in the money market, made havoc of the father's fortunes, and as soon as his ruin was declared beyond a doubt, the noble Earl, without much hesitation or ado, broke off his engagement,

and rapidly decamped from the States back to his own country, where, as all the world knows, he did very well for himself. Strange to say, however, the girl whom he had thus brutally forsaken for no fault of her own, had loved him with all the romantic and trusting tenderness of first love, and the heartless blow inflicted upon her by his noble and honourable lordship was one from which she never recovered. The Noble and Honourable has, I repeat, done very well for himself, though it is rumoured that he sleeps badly, and that he has occasionally been heard muttering after the fashion of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,—"Oh God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space were it not that I have bad dreams!"

Marriage, however, is by no means the only, or even the chief resource in life of the American woman. She evidently looks with a certain favour on the holy estate of matrimony and is quite willing to become an excellent wife and mother if the lines of her destiny run that way, but if they should happen to branch out in another direction, she wastes no time in useless pining. She is too vital, too capable, too intelligent and energetic altogether to play the *rôle* of an interesting martyr to male neglect. She will teach, or she will lecture,—she will sing, or she will act,—she will take her degrees in medicine and surgery,—she will practise for the Bar,—she will write books, and the days are fast approaching when she will become a high priestess of the Church, and will preach to the lost sheep of Israel as well as to the equally lost ones of New York or Chicago; —she will be a "beauty doctor," a "physical culture" woman, a "medium," a stock-broker, a

palmist, a florist, a house-decorator, a dealer in lace and old curiosities,—ay! she will even become a tram-car conductor if necessity compels and the situation is open to her,—and she will manage a cattle ranch as easily as a household, should opportunity arise. Marriage is but one link in the long chain of her general efficiency, and like Cleopatra, "age cannot wither her, nor custom stale Her infinite variety." A curious fact and one worth noting is, that we seldom or never hear Americans use the ill-bred expression "old maid" when alluding to such of their feminine relatives or friends who may happen to remain unmarried. They know too well that these confirmed and settled spinsters are as capable and as well to the front in the rush of life as the wedded wives, if not more so,—they know that among these unmarried feminine forces they have to reckon with some of the cleverest heads of the day, to whom no opprobrious term of contempt dare be applied,—women who are editors and proprietors of great newspapers,—women who manage famous schools and colleges,—women who, being left with large fortunes, dispense the same in magnificently organized but *un*advertised charities,—women who do so command by their unassisted influence certain social movements and events, that if indeed they *were* to marry, something like confusion and catastrophe might ensue among the circles they control by the introduction of a new and possibly undesirable element. "Old maid," may apply to the unfortunate female who has passed all the days of her youth in talking about men and in failing to catch so much as one of the wandering tribe, and who, on arriving at forty years,

meekly retires to the chimney corner with shawl over her shoulders and some useful knitting,—but it carries neither meaning nor application to the brisk, brilliant American spinster who at fifty keeps her trim svelte figure, dresses well, goes here, there and everywhere, and sheds her beaming smile with good-natured tolerance, and perchance something of gratitude as well, on the men she has escaped from. Life does not run only in one channel for the American Woman. She does not "make tracks" solely from the cradle to the altar, from the altar to the grave. She realizes that there is more fun to be got out of being born than just this little old measure meted out to her by the barbaric males of earliest barbaric periods, when women were yoked to the plough with cattle. And it is the innate consciousness of her own power and intelligent ability that gives her the dominating charm,—the magnetic spell under which the stolid Britisher falls more or less stricken, stupefied and inert. He is never a great talker; she is. Her flow of conversation bewilders him. She knows so much too—she chatters of Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, Keats—and he thinks he has heard of these people somewhere before. He listens dumbly. Sometimes he scratches his head,—occasionally he feels his moustache, if he has one. When she laughs, he smiles slowly and dubiously. He hopes she is not laughing at *him*. He feels—he feels—dontcherknow—that she is "ripping." He couldn't tell you what he means by "ripping" to save his life. But painfully accustomed as he is to the dull and listless conversation of the British materfamilias, and to the half-hoydenish conduct of the British

tom-boy girl who *will* insist on playing golf and hockey with him in order not to lose him out of her sight, he is altogether refreshed and relieved when the American Woman dawns upon his cloudy horizon, and instead of waiting upon *him*, commands him to wait upon *her*, with one dazzling look of her bright, audacious eye. The American Woman is not such a fool as to go play hockey with him at all times and in all weathers, thereby allowing him to take the unchecked measure of her ankles. She is too clever to do anything that might possibly show her in an unlovely or ungraceful light. She takes care to keep her hands soft and small and white, that they may be duly caressable,—and makes the best and prettiest of herself on all and every occasion. And that she has succeeded in taking English society by storm is no matter of surprise. English society, unmixed with any foreign element, is frequently said to be the dullest in the world. It is an entertainment where no one is entertained. A civil apathy wraps each man and woman in its fibrous husk, and sets them separately apart behind barricades of the most idiotic conventionality. The American Woman is the only being that can break down these barricades and tear the husk to shreds. No wonder she is popular! The secret of her success is in her own personal charm and vivacious intelligence,—in her light scorn of stupid ceremonies,—in the frank geniality of her disposition (when she can manage to keep it unspoilt by contact with the reserved hypocrisy of the "Smart Set,") and the delightful spontaneity of her thoughts which find such ready expression in equally spontaneous speech. Altogether the American Woman is a

valuable importation into Great Britain. She is an incarnation of the Present, and an embryo of the Future. She is a gifted daughter of the British race, holding within her bright, vital, ambitious identity many of the greater possibilities of Britain. And to the question "Why is she popular?" the answer is simple—"Because she deserves to be!"

THE AMERICAN BOUNDER

EVERYTHING in America is colossal, stupendous and pre-eminent,—it follows, therefore, that the American "bounder" is the most colossal, stupendous and pre-eminent bounder in existence. None of his tribe can match him in "brass,"—none of his European forbears or connections can equal him in brag. He is an inflated bladder of man, swollen out well-nigh to bursting with the wind of the Yankee Doodle Eagle's wing. His aim in life appears to be to disgrace his country by his manners, his morals and his conversation. He arrives in Europe with the air of laying Europe under a personal debt of obligation to Providence for having kindly permitted him to be born. As befits a son of the goddess Liberty, he sets his proud foot on the "worn out" soil of the Old World and prances there, even as the "wild ass" mentioned in Holy Writ. As a citizen of the greatest Republic over which any starred or striped flag ever flew, he extends his gracious patronage to tottering monarchies, and allows it to be understood that he tolerates with an amused compassion that poor, drivelling, aged and senile institution known as the Aristocracy. He alludes to "my friend the Duke," casually, as one might speak of a blind beggar. He throws in a remark quite

unexpectedly at times concerning "Betty—*you've* heard of her surely? Countess Betty—the Countess of Hockyfield—oh yes!—you English snobs rather 'kotow' to her, but *I* call her Betty!—she likes it!" He may frequently be found in residence on the fourth floor back of a swagger hotel, occupying a "bed-sitting room" littered with guide books, "yellow" journalism, and dubious French novels, with an impressionist sketch of the newest Paris "danseuse" in her most suggestive want of attire set conspicuously forward for inspection. If chance visitors happen to notice flowers on his table, he at once seethes into a simmering scum of self-adulation. "Charming, are they not!" he says—"So sweet! So dear of the Duchess to send them!—she knows how fond I am of Malmaisons!—did you notice that Malmaison?—the Duchess gathered it for me herself—it is from one of the Sandringham stock. Of course you know the carnation houses at Sandringham? Alex. delights in Malmaisons!" And when guileless strangers gasp and blink as they realize that it is England's gracious Queen-Consort who is being spoken of as "Alex." in the company of the soiled literature and the portrait of the Paris "danseuse" the Bounder is delighted. He feels he has made a point. He chortles cheerfully on—"What a rotten old country this is after all, eh? Just crawling alive with snobs! Everyone's on their knees to a title, and the sight of a lord seems to give the average Britisher a fit. Now look at me! I don't care a cent about your dukes and earls. Why should I? I'm always with 'em—fact is, they can't bear to have me out of their sight!

Lady Belinda Boomall—second daughter of the Duke of Borrowdom,—she's just mad on me! She thinks I've got money, and I let her! It's real fun! And as to the Marchioness Golfhouse—she's up to some games *I* tell you! *She* knows a thing or two! My word!" Here he gives vent to a sound suggestive of something between a sneeze and a snigger which is his own particular way of rendering the laugh satirical. "I always get on with your blue-blooded girls!"—he proceeds; "I guess they're pretty tired of their own men hulking round! They take to an Am*urr*ican as ducks take to water. See all those cards?"—pointing in a casual way to half a dozen or so of pasteboard slips littered on the mantelshelf, among which the discerning observer might certainly see one or two tradesmen's advertisements—"They just shower 'em on me! I've got an 'at home' to-night and a ball afterwards—to-morrow I breakfast at Marlborough House;—then lunch with Lady Adelaide Sparkler,—she drives me in the Park afterwards—and in the evening I dine at St. James' Palace and go to the Opera with the Rothschilds. It's always like that with me! I never have a moment to myself. All these people want me. Lady Adelaide Sparkler declares she cannot possibly do without me! I ought to have been at Stafford House this afternoon—great show on there—but I can't be bothered!—the Duchess is just too trying for words sometimes! Of course it's all a question of connection;—they know who I am and all about my ancestors, and that makes 'em so anxious to have me. You know who my ancestors were?"

Now when the American Bounder puts this question, he ought to receive a blunt answer. Perhaps if Britishers were as rude as they are sometimes reported to be, one of them would give such an answer straight. He would say "No, I do not; but I expect you sprang from a convict root of humanity thrown out as bad rubbish from an over-populated prison and cast by chance into American soil beside an equally rank native Indian weed—and that in your present bad form and general condition, you are the expressive result of that disastrous combination." But, as a rule, even the most truculent Britisher's natural pluck is so paralysed by the American Bounder's amazing capacity for lying, that in nine cases out of ten, he merely murmurs an inarticulate negative. Whereat the Bounder at once proceeds to enlighten him—"I am the direct descendant of the Scroobys of Scrooby in Yorkshire,"—he resumes—"*My* name's not Scrooby—no!—but that has nothing to do with it. The families got mixed. Scrooby of Scrooby went over to Holland in 1607 and joined the Pilgrim Fathers. He was quite a boy, but Elder Brewster took care of him! He held the Bible when Brewster first fell upon his knees and thanked God. So you see I really come from Yorkshire. Real old Yorkshire ham 'cured' into an Am*urr*ican!"

After this, there is nothing more to be said. Questions of course might be asked as to how the "Yorkshire ham" not being "Scrooby" now, ever started from "Scrooby" in the past, only it is not worth while. It never is worth while to try and certify an American Bounder's claim to

being sprung from a dead and gone family of English gentlemen. Regard for the dead and gone English gentlemen should save them from this affront to their honourable dust.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the American Bounder after his free and easy familiarities with "Bertie" (the King) "Alex." (the Queen) and "Georgie and May" (the Prince and Princess of Wales) is his overweening, self-satisfied, complacent and arrogant ignorance. The most blatant little local tradesman who, through well-meaning Parliamentary short-sightedness in educational schemes, becomes a "governor" of a Technical School in the provinces, is never so blatantly ignorant as he. He talks of everything and knows nothing. He assumes to have the last word in science, art and literature. He will tell you he is "great chums" with Marconi and Edison, and that these famous discoverers and inventors always lay their heads on his bosom and tell him their dearest confidences. He knows just what is going to be done by everybody with everything. He is friends with the Drama too. Beerbohm Tree rings him up on the telephone at all manner of strange hours, thirsting for his advice on certain "scenes" and "effects." He is—to use his own words—"doing a great thing" for Tree! Sarah Bernhardt is his very dearest of dear ones! She has fallen into his arms, coming off the stage at the side wings, exhausted, and exclaiming—"Toi, mon cher! Enfin! Maintenant, je respire!" Madame Réjane is always at home to him. In fact all Paris hails him with a joy too deep for tears. He would not be a true "Am*urr*ican"

if *he* did not love Paris, and if Paris did not love *him*.

But though he is completely "at one," according to his own statement, with most of the celebrated personages of the day, if not all, he cannot tell you the most commonly known facts about them to save his life. And though—again according to his own statement—he has read every book ever published, visited every picture gallery, "salon" and theatre in Europe, he cannot pronounce the name of one single foreign author or artist correctly. His English is bad enough, but his French is worse. He seldom makes excursions into the Italian language—"Igh—talian" as he calls it, but it is quite enough for the merest beginner in the Tuscan tongue to hear him say "gondòla" to take the measure of his capacity. "Gòndola" is a word so easily learned and so often used in Italian, that one might think any child could master its pronunciation from twice hearing it—but the American Bounder makes the whole tour of Italy without losing a scrap of his own special nasal lingo, and returns in triumph to talk of the "gondòla" and the "bella ràgg-azza" (instead of ragàzza) till one's ears almost ache with the hideous infliction of his abominable accent. In Switzerland he is always alluding to "Mount Blank"—the "Can*tone* Gry-son"—"N*oo*-shatell"—and the "Mountain Vert"—and in Great Britain he has been heard to speak of Lo*che* Kay-trine and Ben *Nee*vis, as well as of Con*iss*ton and Cornwàll. But it is quite "correct" he will tell you—it is only the English people who do not know how to talk English. The actual, true, pure pronunciation of the English

language went over to the States with the Scroobys of Scrooby, and he their descendant and Bounder, has preserved it intact. Even Shakespeare's river Avon becomes metamorphosed under the roll of his atrocious tongue. He will not pronounce it with the English A, as in the word "b*a*y,"—he calls it A'von, as the "a" is sounded in the word *a*varice—so that the soft poetic name of the classic stream appears to have been bitten off by him and swallowed like a pop-corn. But it would be of no use to argue with him on this or on any other point, because he is always right. No real American Bounder was ever wrong.

One cannot but observe what a close acquaintance the Bounder has with Debrett and various "County" Directories. His study of these volumes is almost as profound as that of Mr. Balfour must have been when writing "The Foundations of Belief." Between Debrett and Baedeker he manages to elicit a certain useful stock of surface information which he imparts in a kind of cheap toy-cracker fashion to various persons, who, politely listening, wonder why he appears to think that they are not aware of facts familiar to them from their childhood. His modes of appearing "to know, you know!" are exceedingly simple. For example, suppose him to be asked to join a "house-party" in Suffolk. He straightway studies the "County Directory" of that quarter of England, and looks up the principal persons mentioned therein in various other books of handy reference. When, in due course, he arrives at the house to which he has been invited, he manages to faintly surprise uninitiated persons by his (apparently) familiar

acquaintance with the pedigree and history of this or that "county" magnate, and his (apparently) intimate knowledge of such and such celebrated paintings and "objets d'art" as adorn the various historical mansions in the district—knowledge for which he is merely indebted to Baedeker. He is as loquacious as a village washerwoman. He will relate any number of scandalous stories in connection with the several families of whose ways and doings he pretends to have such close and particular information—and should any listener interrupt him with a mild "Pardon me!—but, having resided in this neighbourhood all my life I venture to think you must be mistaken";—he merely smiles blandly at such a display of "native" ignorance. "Lived here all your life and not know that!" he exclaims—"My word! It takes an Am*urr*ican to teach you what's going on in your own country!"

Offensive as is this more or less ordinary type of American Bounder who makes his "home in Yew-rope" on fourth floors of fashionable hotels, a still worse and more offensive specimen is found in the Starred-and-Striped Bounding Millionaire. This individual—who has frequently attained to a plethora of cash through one of two reprehensible ways—either by "sweating" labour, or by fooling shareholders in "trust" companies,—comes to Great Britain with the fixed impression that everything in the "darned old place" can be bought for money. Unfortunately he is often right. The British—originally and by nature proud, reserved, and almost savagely tenacious of their freedom and independence—have been bitten by

the Transatlantic madness of mere Greed, and their blood has been temporarily poisoned by infection. But one may hope and believe that it is only a passing malady, and that the old healthy life will re-invest the veins of the nation all the more strongly for partial sickness and relapse. In the meantime it occasionally happens that the "free" Briton bows his head like a whipped mongrel cur to the bulging Bank-Account of the American Millionaire-Bounder. And the American Millionaire-Bounder plants his flat foot on the so foolishly bent pate and walks over it with a commercial chuckle. "You talk of your 'Noblesse oblige,' your honour, your old historic tradition and aristocratic Order!" he says, sneeringly—"Why there isn't a man alive in Britain that I couldn't buy, principles and all, for fifty thousand pounds!"

This kind of vaunt at Britain's expense is common to the American Millionaire-Bounder—and whether it arises out of his conscious experience of the British, or his braggart conceit, must be left to others to query or determine. Certain it is that he *does* buy a good deal, and that the owners of such things as he wants seem always ready to sell. Famous estates are knocked down to him—manuscripts and pictures which should be the preciously guarded property of the nation, are easily purchased by him,—and, laughing in his sleeve at the purblind apathy of the British Government, which calmly looks on while he pockets such relics of national greatness as unborn generations will vainly and indignantly ask for,—he congratulat s himself on possessing, as he says, "the only few things the old country has got left worth having." One can but look

gloomily through the "Calendar of Shakespearean Rarities," collected by Halliwell Phillips, which were offered to the wealthy city of Birmingham for £7,000, and reflect that this same wealthy city disgraced itself by refusing to purchase the collection and by allowing everything to be bought and carried away from England by "an American" in 1897. We do not say this American was a "Bounder"—nevertheless, if he had been a real lover of Shakespeare's memory, rather than of himself, he would have bought these relics for Shakespeare's native country and presented them for Shakespeare's sake to Shakespeare's native people, who are not, as a People, to blame for the parsimony of their Governments. They pay taxes enough in all conscience, and at least they deserve that what few relics remain of their Greatest Man should be saved and ensured to them.

But perhaps the American Millionaire-Bounder is at his best when he has bought an English newspaper and is running it in London. Then he feels as if he were running the Imperial Government itself—nay, almost the Monarchy. He imagines that he has his finger on the very pulse of Time. He hugs himself in the consciousness that the British people,—that large majority of them who are not behind the scenes—buy his paper, believing it to be a British paper, not a journal of "Am*urr*ican" opinion, that is, opinion as ordered and paid for by one "Am*urr*ican." He knows pretty well in his own mind that if they understood that such was the actual arrangement, they would save their pence. Unfortunately the great drawback of the "man in the street" who buys newspapers, is

that he has no time to enquire as to the way in which the journals he confides in are "run." If he knew that the particular view taken of the political situation in a certain journal, was merely the political view *ordered* to be taken by one "Am*urr*ican"—naturally he would not pin his simple faith upon it. Perhaps the Man in the Street will some day wake up to the realization that in many cases, (though not all) with respect to journalism, he only exists to be "gulled."

Like all good and bad things, the American Bounder, whether millionaire or only shabby-genteel, has a certain height beyond which he can no further go—a point where he culminates in a blaze of ultra Bounder-ism. This brilliant apotheosis is triumphantly reached in the Female of his species. The American Female Bounder is the quintessence of vulgarity, and in every way makes herself so objectionable even to her own people and country that Americans themselves view her departure for "Yew-rope" with perfect equanimity, and hope she will never come back. Once in what she calls "the old country" she talks all day long through her quivering nose of "Lady This" and "Countess That." One of this class I recall now as I write, who spoke openly of a "Mrs. Countess So-and-So"—and utterly declined to be instructed in any other form of address. She was not content to trace her lineage to such humble folk as the "Scroobys of Scrooby"—no indeed, not she! Kings were *her* ancestors; her "family tree" sprouted from Richard the Lion-Heart, according to her own bombastic assertion, and she, with her loud twanging voice, odious manners

and insufferable impertinence, was "genuine stock" of royallest origin. Of course it is quite possible that, as in horticulture, a once nobly cultivated human plant may, if left without wholesome or fostering influences, degenerate into a weed—but that so rank a weed as the American Female Bounder should be the dire result of the Conqueror's blood is open to honest doubt. She generally has a "mission" to reform something or somebody,—she is very often a "Christian science" woman, or a theosophist. Sometimes she "takes up" Art as though it were a dustpan, and sweeps into it under her "patronage" certain dusty and doubtful literary and musical aspirants who want a "hearing" for their efforts. Fortunately for the world, a "hearing" under the gracious auspices of the American Female Bounder means a silence everywhere else. She is fond of "frocks and frills"—and wears an enormous quantity of jewels, "stones" as she calls them. She "pushes" herself in every possible social direction, and wherever she sees she is not wanted, there, more particularly than elsewhere, she contrives to force an entry. She embraces the game of "Bridge" with passionate eagerness because she sees that by keeping open house, with card-tables always ready, she can attract the loafing "great ones of the earth," and possibly persuade a "Mrs. Countess" to befriend her. If she is fairly wealthy, she can generally manage to do this. All Mrs. Countesses have not "that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere." Some of them find the American Female Bounder useful—and precisely in the manner she offers herself, even so they take her.

And thus it often happens that one frequently meets her where she has no business to be. One is not surprised to find her at Court, or in the Royal enclosure at Ascot, because so many of her British sisters in the Bounder line are in these places, ready to give her a helping hand—but one *is* occasionally startled and in a manner sorry to discover her making herself at home among certain "exclusive" people who are chiefly distinguished for their good-breeding, culture and refinement. In one thing, however, we can take much comfort, and this is, that whatever the American Bounder, Male or Female, may purchase or otherwise insidiously obtain in the Old World, neither he nor she can ever secure respect. Driven to bay as the Britisher may be by consummate and pertinacious lying, he can and does withhold from the liars his honest esteem. He may sell a valuable manuscript or picture to a "bounding" Yankee, out of sheer necessitous circumstance, but he will never be "friends" with the purchaser. He will call him "bounder" to the crack of doom, and Doomsday itself will not alter that impression of him.

It may be, and it is I think, taken for granted that America itself is very glad to get rid of its "bounders." It regards them with as much shame and distress as we feel when we see certain specimens of "travelling English" disporting themselves upon the Continent in the 'Arry and Jemima way. We always fervently hope that our Continental neighbours will not take these extraordinary roughs as bona-fide examples of the British people, and in the same way America trusts all the nations of Europe not to accept their "Bounders" as

examples of the real pith and power of the United States. The American People are too great, too broad-minded, sane, and thorough, not to wish to shake off these *aphides* on their rose of life. They watch them "clearing out" for "Yew-rope" with perfect satisfaction. Said a charming American woman to me the other day—"What a pity it is that English people *will* keep on receiving Americans here who would not be tolerated for a moment in New York or Boston society! It surprises us very greatly. Sometimes indeed we cannot help laughing to see the names of women figuring among your 'haute noblesse' who would never get inside a decent house anywhere in the States. But more often we are sorry that your social 'leaders' are so easily taken in!"

Here indeed is the sum total of the matter. If Great Britain—and other countries in Europe—but Great Britain especially—did not "receive" and encourage the American Bounder and Bounderess, these objectionable creatures would never be known or heard of. Therefore it is our fault that they exist. Were it not for our short-sighted foolishness, and our proneness to believe that every "Am*urr*ican" with money must be worth knowing, we should be better able to sort the sheep from the goats. We should add to the pleasures of our social life and intercourse an agreeable knowledge of the real American ladies, the real American gentlemen; and though these are seldom seen over here, for the very good reason that they are valued and wanted in their own country, they could at least be certain, when they did come, of being received at their proper valuation, and not

set to herd with the "Bounders" of their country, whom their country rejects. For one may presume that there is some cogent reason why an American citizen of the Greatest Republic in the world, should elect to desert his native land and "settle down" under "rotten old monarchies." People do not leave the home of their birth for ever unless they find it impossible to live there for causes best known to themselves. The poor are often compelled to emigrate, we know, in the hope to find employment and food in other countries—but when the rich "slope off" from the very centres where they have made their capital, one may be permitted to doubt the purity of their intentions. Anyway, surrounded as we are to-day socially by American Bounders of every description,—American Bounders who think themselves as good as any one else "and a darned sight better"—American Bounders who declare that they are the "real old British race renewed,"—American Bounders who "run" British journals of "literary opinion" and so forth,—American Bounders who thrust themselves into the company of unhappy kings and queens,—those crowned slaves who in such earthquaking days as these have to be more than common careful "not to offend,"—American Bounders who themselves claim kinship with the blood royal,—the one straight and simple fact remains—namely, that all the best Americans still live in America!

COWARD ADAM

AMONG the numerous fascinating and delightful members of the male sex whom I have the honour to count as friends, there is one very handsome and devotedly attentive gentleman of four years old, who is particularly fond of reciting to me in private the following striking poem on the Fall of Man.

When Mister Sarpint did deceive
Poor little silly Missis Eve,
The Lord he spied an apple gone
From off the branch it hanged upon;
That apple was a heavy loss,
And so the Lord got very cross,
He searched the garden through and through,
And called "Hi Adam! where are you?"
But Mister Adam, he,
Clum up a tree.

There is something in this graphic narrative which appears to tickle my young cavalier's fancy immensely, for whenever he says "Mister Adam, he, Clum up a tree," he opens his big blue eyes very widely, claps his tiny hands very loudly, and gives vent to ecstatic shrieks of laughter. It is quite evident that he entirely understands and appreciates Adam's position. Young as he is, he has the instinctive knowledge within him that when the time comes, he will likewise adopt the "Clum up a

tree" policy. For Adam is the same Adam still, and nothing will ever change him. And when things are getting rather "mixed" in his career, and the forbidden fruit he has so readily devoured turns out to be rather more sour and tasteless than he had anticipated,—when his Garden of Eden is being searched through and through for the causes of the folly and disobedience which have devastated its original fairness, the same old story may be said of him—"Mister Adam, he, Clum up a tree." Perhaps if he only climbed a tree one might excuse him,—but unfortunately he talks while climbing, —talks as though he were an old babbling grandam instead of a lord of creation,—and grandam-like puts the blame on somebody else. He says—"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Coward Adam! Observe how he at once transfers the fault of his own lack of will and purpose to the weaker, more credulous, more loving and trusting partner;—how he leaves her defenceless to brave the wrath which he himself dreads,—and how he never for one half second dreams of admitting himself to be the least in the wrong! But there is always one great satisfaction to be derived from the perusal of the strange old Eden story, and this is that "Mister Sarpint" was of the male gender. Scripture leaves no room for doubt on this point. It says: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And *he* said unto the woman——" So that a "he" tempted a woman, before "she" ever tempted a "he." Women should be duly thankful for the sex of "Mister Sarpint," and

should also bear in mind that this particular "he" was "more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." On many an occasion it will be found a salutary and useful fact to remember.

Once upon a time, so we are told, there was an Age of Chivalry. The word "chivalry" is stated in the dictionary to be derived from the French "cheval" a horse, and "chivalrous" men were, in the literal meaning of the term, merely men who rode about on horseback. But chivalry has somehow come to imply respect, devotion, and reverence for women. The "chivalrous" knight is supposed to have gone all over the world, wearing the glove or the ribbon of his "ladye faire," in his helmet, and challenging to single combat every other knight that dared to question the supremacy of her beauty and virtue. I confess at once that I do not believe in him. If he ever existed he must have been a most unnatural and abnormal product of humanity, as unlike his first progenitor Adam as he could well be. For even in the "Round Table" romances one finds an entire lack of chivalry in the so-called chivalrous knights of King Arthur. Their moral principles left much to be desired, and the conduct of Sir Meliagraunce who betrayed the loves of Lancelot and the Queen was merely that of a common sneak. Coward Adam spoke in him, as in many of the Arthurian heroes,—and that they were more "chivalrous" than the modern male gossips who jeer away a woman's name and honour in their smoking and gaming rooms, is a legend which like that of the Tree of Good and Evil itself, requires stronger confirmation than history as yet witnesseth.

Coward Adam, taking him as he appears in the present day, has lately shown himself off in various odd phases and lamentable positions. During the South African War he came out strong in some of our generals, who put the blame of certain military mishaps on one another like quarrelsome children, thereby losing dignity and offering a most humiliating spectacle to the amazed British public. Coward Adam's policy, after making a blunder, is to adopt any lie, rather than say frankly and boldly—"I did it!" He will eat dirt by the bushel in preference to the nobler starvation act of singly facing his foes. He is just now exhibiting himself to his usual advantage in the British Parliament, while the nation looks on, waiting for the inevitable finale of his various hesitations and inefficiencies—the "Mister Adam, he, Clum up a tree." For in most matters of social, political, and moral progress, the great difficulty is to obtain an upright, downright, honest and impartial opinion from any leading public man. The nation may be drifting devilwards, but statesmen are judged to be more statesmanlike, if they hold their tongues and watch it go. They must not speak the truth. It would offend so many people. It would upset so many interests. It would create a panic on the Stock Exchange. It would throw Wall Street into hysterics. The world's vast public, composed of thinking, working, and more or less educated and intelligent people, may and do crave for a bold utterance, a truth openly enunciated and bravely maintained, but to the weavers of political intrigue and the self-seeking schemers in Governmental departments, the public is considered merely as a

Big Child, to be soothed with lollipop phrases and tickled by rattle promises. If the Big Child cries and screams because it is hungry, they chirp to it about Fair Trade,—if it complains that its ministers of religion are trying to make it say its prayers backwards, they promise a full "enquiry into recent abuses in the Church." But fine words butter no parsnips. Coward Adam always climbs up a tree as quickly as he can when instead of fine words, fine deeds are demanded. Physical feats of skill, physical gymnastics of all kinds he excels in, but a moral difficulty always places him as it did in the Garden of Eden, in what he would conventionally term "an awkward position."

"Never kiss and tell" is I believe an "unwritten law of chivalry." This law, so I understand, Coward Adam does sometimes manage to obey, albeit reluctantly. Because he would like to tell,—he would very much like to tell,—if—if the story of the kiss did not involve himself in the telling! But at this juncture "the unwritten laws of chivalry" step in and he is saved. And chivalry is the tree up which he climbs, chattering to himself the usual formula—"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me,"—etcetera, etcetera. Alas, poor woman! She has heard him saying this ever since she, in an unselfish desire to share her food with him, gave him the forbidden apple. No doubt she offered him its rosiest and ripest side! She always does,—at first. Not afterwards! As soon as he turns traitor and runs up a tree, she takes to pelting him, metaphorically speaking, with cocoa-nuts. This is quite natural on her part. She *had* thought him a man,—and when he suddenly changes into a

monkey, she doesn't understand it. To this cause may possibly be attributed some of the ructions which occasionally jar the harmonious estate of matrimony.

Coward Adam does very well in America. He sees his position there quite plainly. He knows that if he climbs his tree too often, hundreds of feminine hands will pull him down. So he resigns himself to the inevitable. He is not slow to repeat the customary whine—"The woman whom thou gavest me"—but he says it quietly to himself between whiles. Because he knows that *she* knows all his share in the mischief! So he digs and delves, and finds gold and silver and limitless oil wherewith to turn into millions of dollars for her pleasure; he packs pork, lays railway tracks, starts companies, organizes "combines"—and strains every nerve and sinew to "do" every other Adam save himself in his own particular line of business, so that "the woman" (or may we say the women?) "whom thou gavest" may be clothed in Paris model gowns, and wear jewels out-rivalling in size and lustre those of all the kings and queens that ever made their sad and stately progress through history. Indeed, Coward Adam, in the position he occupies as a free citizen of that mighty Republic over which the wild eagle screams exultingly, looks a little bit like a beaten animal. But he bears his beating well, and is quite pleasant about it. In regard to "the woman whom thou gavest me" he is nearer the imaginary code of "chivalry" than his European brother. If the original Adam had learned the ways of a modern American gentleman of good education and fine manners, one can quite imagine

him saying—"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me generously offered me a share of the apple, and I did eat. But the Serpent whom thou didst permit to tell lies to my amiable partner concerning this special kind of fruit, was ch efly to blame."

Coward Adam, as he is seen and known among the lower classes, crops up every day in newspapers, which duly chronicle his various acts, such as promising marriage to poor working girls and robbing them of all their little savings, as well as of their good names,—kicking his wife, starving his children, and spending every penny he earns in the public-house. But he is just as frequently met with in the houses of the Upper Ten. He will wear the garb of a lord with ease, and, entering the house of another lord, will cozen his host's wife away from loyalty to her husband in quite the manner "friendly." He is likewise to be found occasionally in the walks of literature, and where a woman is concerned in matters artistic will "down" her if he can. He has always done his best to hinder woman from receiving any acknowledgment for superior intellectual ability. Notably one may quote the case of Madame Curie, the discoverer of radium. Coward Adam says she discovered it by "a fluke"—that is to say, by chance. Most great discoveries occur, even to men, in the same way. In the present instance the "chance" came to a woman. Why should she not therefore have all the honour due to her?—the same honour precisely as would fall to the lot of a man in her place? Columns upon columns of praise would be bestowed upon her were she of Adam's sex, and all

the academies of science would contend with each other as to which should offer her the best and most distinctive award. But Coward Adam cannot abide the thought that "the woman whom thou gavest" should take an occasionally higher rank than his own among the geniuses of his age. He must have everything or nothing. He tries to ignore the fact that woman is winning equal honours with himself in University degrees; he would fain forget that the two greatest monarchs Great Britain ever had were women—Elizabeth and Victoria. There is a brave Adam, of course—a civilized creature who owns and admits the brilliant achievements of woman with pride and tenderness,—I am only just now speaking of the coward specimen. The brave Adam does not turn tail or climb trees, and he appears to have had nothing to do with the Garden of Eden. Very likely he was born somewhere else. For *he* says—"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me is the joy of my life,—the companion of my thoughts. To her my soul turns,—for her my heart beats—in her I rejoice,—her triumphs are my pride,—her success is my delight! If danger threatens her, I will be her defender, not her accuser,—should she be blamed for aught, I will take her fault upon myself, and will serve as a strong shield between her and calumny. This is the least I can do to prove my love towards her—for without her I should be the worst of creatures,—a lonely soul in an empty world!"

So says, or may say brave Adam! But his coward brother does not understand such high-flown sentiments. Coward Adam's main object in life is to "avoid a scene" with either the Lord

Almighty, Mister Sarpint or Missis Eve. He likes to wriggle out of difficulties, both public and private, in a quiet way. He does not understand the " methods " of plain blunt people who tell him frankly what a sneak he is. He is very ubiquitous, and much more frequently to be met with than his braver twin. And if he should chance to read what I have here set down concerning him, he will probably say as usual: " The woman whom thou gavest " in various forms of anonymous vituperation. But his active policy will remain the same as it ever was—" Mister Adam, he, Clum up a tree ! "

ACCURSËD EVE

WHEN the masculine Serpent, "who was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord had made," tempted the mother of mankind to eat of the forbidden fruit, the Voice in the Garden said to her—"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow!" It can scarcely be denied that this curse has been fulfilled. So manifold and incessant have been the sorrows of Woman since the legendary account of the creation of the world, that one cannot help thinking the whole business somewhat unfair, if,—for merely being "beguiled" by a beast of the field who was known to be more "subtil" than any other, and afterwards being "given away" by Coward Adam,—Eve and all the descendants of her sex should be compelled to suffer centuries of torture. The injustice is manifestly cruel and arbitrary,—yet it would seem to have followed poor Accursëd Eve from then till now. "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow!" And sorrow has been multiplied to such an aggravated and barbarous extent upon her unfortunate head, that in the Jewish ritual to this very day there is a part of the service wherein the men, standing in the presence of women, individually say: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast not made me a

woman!" thus deliberately insulting, in their very house of worship, the sex of their mothers!

But from the earliest times, if we are to accept historical testimony, the Jews of the ancient world appear to have treated women in the majority as "Something worser than their dog, a little lower than their horse." Save and except those rare cases where the Jewish woman suddenly found out her latent powers and employed them to advantage, the Jewish man made her fetch and carry for him like a veritable beast of burden. He yoked her to his plough with oxen,—he sold and exchanged her with his friends as freely as any other article of commerce,—his "base uses" of her were various, and seldom to his credit,—while, such as they were, they only lasted so long as they satisfied his immediate humour. When done with, she was "cast out." The kind of "casting out" to which she was subjected is not always explained. But it may be taken for granted that in many instances she was either killed immediately, or turned adrift to die of starvation and weariness. The Jews in their Biblical days were evidently not much affected by her griefs. They were God's "chosen" people,—and the fact that women were the mothers of the whole "chosen" race, appeared to call for no claim on their chivalrous tenderness or consideration.

Looking back through the vista of time to that fabled Eden, when she listened to the tempting of the "subtil" one, the wrongs and injustices endured by Accursëd Eve at the hand of Coward Adam make up a calendar of appalling, almost superhuman crime. Man has taken the full licence allowed him by the old Genesis story (which, by the

way, was evidently invented by man himself for his own convenience). "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." And among all tribes, and in all nations he *has* ruled with a rod of iron! The Christian dispensation has interfered somewhat with his former reign of tyranny, for with the birth of Christ came, to a certain extent, the idealization and beatification of womanhood. The Greeks and Romans, however, had a latent glimmering idea of what Woman in all her glory should be, and of what she might possibly attain to in the future,—for all their grandest symbols of life, such as Truth, Beauty, Justice, Fortune, Fame, Wisdom, are always represented by their sculptors clothed in the female form, divine. It is a curious fact, that in those early periods of civilization, when Literature and Art were just dawning upon the world, man, though aggregating to his own Ego nearly everything in the universe, paused before representing himself as a figure of Justice, Mercy or Wisdom. He evidently realized his unfitness to stand, even in marble, before the world as a symbol of moral virtue. He therefore, with a grace which well became him in those "pagan" days, bent the knee to all noble attributes of humanity as represented in Woman. Her fair face, her beauteous figure, greeted him in all his temples of worship;—as Venus and Diana she smiled upon him; as the goddess of Fortune or Chance, she accepted his votive wreaths,—as Fame or Victory, she gave him blessing whenever he went to war, or returned in triumph from the field;—and all this was but the embryo or shadowing-forth of woman's higher future and better

possibilities, when the days of her long and cruel probation should be accomplished, and her "curse" in part be lifted. There are signs and tokens that this happy end is in sight. Accursëd Eve is beginning to have a good time. And the only fear now is, lest she should overstep the mark of her well-deserved liberty and run headlong into licence. For Eve,—with or without curse,—is naturally impulsive and credulous; and being too often forgetful of the little incident which occurred to her in the matter of the Tree of Good and Evil, is still far too prone to listen to the beguiling of "subtil" personages worse "than any beast of the field which the Lord hath made."

Accursëd Eve, having broken several of her old-time fetters, and beginning to feel her feet as well as her wings, just now wants a word in politics. As one of her cursëd daughters, I confess I wonder that she should wish to put herself to so much unnecessary trouble, seeing that she has the whole game in her hands. Politics are generally hustled along by Coward Adam,—unless, by rarest chance, Brave Adam, his twin brother, suddenly steps forth unexpectedly, when there ensues what is called a "collapse of the Government." In any question, small or great, Accursëd Eve has only to offer Coward Adam the apple, and he will eat it. Which metaphor implies that even in politics, if she only moves him round gradually to her own views in that essentially womanly way which, while persuading, seems not to persuade, he is bound to yield. Personally speaking, I do not know any man who is not absolutely under the thumb of at least one woman. And I will not believe

that there is any woman so feeble, so stupid, so lost to the power and charm of her own individuality, as not to be able to influence quite half a dozen men. This being the case, what does Accursëd Eve want with a vote? If she is so unhappy, so ugly, so repulsive, so deformed in mind and manners as to have no influence at all on any creature of the male sex whatever, neither father, nor brother, nor uncle, nor cousin, nor lover, nor husband, nor friend,—would the opinion of such an one be of any consequence, or her vote of any value? I assert nothing,—I only ask the question.

Speaking personally as a woman, I have no politics, and want none. I only want the British Empire to be first and foremost in everything, and I tender my sincerest homage to all the men of every party who will honestly work towards that end. These being my sentiments, I deprecate any strong separate parliamentary attitude on the part of Accursëd Eve. I say that she has much better, wider work to do than take part in tow-rows with the rather undignified personages who often make somewhat of a bear-garden of the British House of Commons. That she would prove a good M.P. were she a man, I am quite sure; but as a woman I know she "goes one better," in becoming the wife of an M.P.

Accursëd Eve! Mother of the world! What higher thing does she seek? Mother of Christianity itself, she stands before us, a figure symbolic of all good, her Holy Child in her arms, her sweet, musing, prayerful face bending over it in gravely tender devotion. From her soft breast humanity springs renewed,—she represents the youth, the

hope, the love of all mankind. Wronged as she has been, and as she still is, her patience never fails. Deceived, she "mends her broken shell with pearl," and still trusts on. Her sweet credulousness is the same as ever it was;—the "subtil" one can always over-reach her through her too ready confidence in the idea that "all things work together for good." Her "curse" is the crime of loving too well,—believing too much. Should a "subtil" one say he loves her, she honestly thinks he does. When he turns out, as often happens, to be looking after her money rather than herself, she can scarcely force her mind to realize that he is not so much hero as cad. When she has to earn her own living in any of the artistic professions, she will frequently tell all her plans, hopes and ambitions to "subtil" ones with the most engaging frankness. The "subtil" ones naturally take every advantage of her, and some of them put a stopgap on her efforts if they can.

How many times men have tried to steal away the honour of a woman's name and fame in literature need not here be chronicled. Of how many books, bearing a woman's name on the title-page it is said—"Her husband helped her,"—or "She got Mr. So-and-So to write the descriptive part!" "George Eliot" has often been accused of being assisted in her novels by Mr. Lewes. A little incident,—touching enough to my mind,—is related in the memoirs of Charlotte Brontë. After her marriage, and when she was expecting the birth of her child, she was reading some of the first chapters of an intended new novel to her husband, —who, as he listened, said in that peculiarly en-

couraging way which is common to men who have gifted women to deal with—"You seem to be repeating yourself. You must take care not to repeat yourself." Poor little soul! She never "repeated" herself,—she just died. No one can tell how her husband's thoughtless phrase may have teazed or perplexed her sensitive mind in a critical condition of health, and helped to hasten the fatal end.

Edward Fitzgerald's celebrity as a scholar is not, and never will be wide enough to blot out from remembrance his brutal phrase on hearing of the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning—

"Mrs. Browning is dead. Thank God we shall have no more Aurora Leighs!"

While, far more creditable to Algernon Charles Swinburne than his own praise of himself now unfortunately affixed to the newly collected edition of his works, is the praise he bestows on this noble woman-genius in his preface to her great poem. I quote one line of it here—

"No English contemporary poet by profession has left us work so full of living fire."

For once, and in this particular instance, Accursëd Eve in literature has, in such a verdict, won her merited literary honours.

But as a rule honours are withheld from her, and the laurel is filched from her brows by Coward Adam ere she has time to wear it. One flagrant case is well known, of a man who having lived entirely on a woman's literary earnings for years, went about in the clothes her pen had paid for, among the persons to whom, through her influence, he had been introduced, boasting that he assisted her to write

the greater part of her books. To their shame be it said, a great many people believed him; and not till he was dead, and the woman went on writing her books as before, did they even begin to see the wrong they had done her. They would not have dared to calumniate the false boaster as they calumniated the innocent hard worker. The boaster was a man,—the worker was a woman;—therefore the dishonour of passing off literary work not one's own, must, so they imagined, naturally belong to Accursëd Eve,—not to Coward Adam! Of their humiliation when the real truth was known, history sayeth nothing.

Yet with all the weight of her curse more or less upon her, and with all her sorrows, shattered ideals, wrecked hopes, and lost loves, Accursëd Eve is still the most beautiful, the most perfect figure in creation. Her failings, her vanities, her weaknesses, her sins, arise in the first place from love—even if afterwards, through Coward Adam's ready encouragement, they degenerate into vice and animalism. Her first impulse in earliest youth is a desire to please Adam,—the same impulse precisely which led her to offer him the forbidden apple in the first days of their mutual acquaintance. She wishes to charm him,—to win his heart,—to endear herself to him in a thousand tender ways,—to wind herself irretrievably round his life. If she succeeds in this aim, she is invariably happy and virtuous. But if she is made to feel that she cannot hold him on whom her thoughts are centred,—if his professed love for her only proves weak and false when put to trial,—if he finds it easy to forget both sentiment

and courtesy, and is quick to add insult to injury, then all the finer and more delicate émotions of her nature become warped and unstrung,—and though she endures her suffering because she must, she resents it and takes vengeance when she can. Of resentfulness against wrong and revenge for injustice, come what are called "bad women." Yet I would humbly venture to maintain that even these "bad" were not bad in the first instance. They were born in the usual way, with the usual Eve impulse,—the desire to please, not themselves, but the opposite sex. If their instinctive efforts have been met with cruelty, oppression, neglect, desertion and sometimes the most heartless and cowardly betrayal, they can scarcely be blamed if they play the same tricks on the unloving, disloyal churls for whom they have perhaps sacrificed the best part of their lives. For innocent faith and trusting love *are* the best part of every woman's life; and when these are destroyed by the brutalizing touch of some Coward Adam, the woman may well claim compensation for her soul's murder.

Accursëd Eve! Still she loves,—to find herself fooled and cheated; still she hopes, even while hope eludes her,—still she waits, for what she may never win,—still she prays prayers that may never be answered,—still she bears and rears the men of the future, wondering perchance whether any of them will ever help to do her justice,—will ever place her where she should be, as the acknowledged queenly "help-meet" of her stronger, but less enduring partner! Beautiful, frail, trusting, loving, Accursëd Eve! She bends beneath the curse,—but the clouds are lifting!—there is light in the

sky of her future dawn! And it may be that a worse malediction than the one pronounced in Eden, will fall on those who make her burden of life heavier to bear!

"IMAGINARY" LOVE

My love
Is as the very centre of the earth
Drawing all things to it.
—*Troilus and Cressida.*

THERE is perhaps no emotion more elevating or more deceptive than that sudden uplifting of the heart and yearning of the senses which may be called "imaginary" Love. It resembles the stirring of the sap in the roots of flowers, thrilling the very ground with hints and promises of spring,—it is the unspeakable outcoming of human emotion and sympathy too great to be contained within itself,—the tremulous desire,—half vague and wholly innocent,—of the human soul for its mate. The lower grades of passion have not as yet ruffled the quivering white wings of this divinely sweet emotion, and the being who is happy enough to experience it in all its intensity, is, for the time, the most enviable on earth. Youth or maiden, whichever it be, the world is a fairyland for this chosen dreamer. Nothing appears base or mean,—God's smile is reflected in every ray of sunshine, and Nature offers no prospect that is not pleasing. It is the season of glamour and grammarye,—a look over the distant hills is sufficient to engage

the mind of the dreaming girl with brilliant fancies of gallant knights riding from far-off countries, with their lady's colours pinned to their breasts "to do or die" for the sake of love and glory,—and the young boy, half in love with a pretty face he has seen on his way home from school or college, begins to think with all the poets, of eyes blue as skies, of loves and doves, and hearts and darts, in happy unconsciousness that his thoughts are not in the least original. Yet with all its ethereal beauty and gossamer-sense of pleasure, this "imaginary" love is often the most pathetic experience we have or ever shall have in life. It is answerable for numberless griefs,—for bitter disillusions,—occasionally, too, for broken hearts. It glitters before us, a brilliant chimera, during our very young days,—and on our entrance into society it vanishes, leaving us to pursue it through many phases of existence, and always in vain. The poet is perhaps the happiest of all who join in this persistent chase after the impossible,—for he frequently continues to imagine "imaginary" love with ecstasy and fervour to the very end of his days. Next in order comes the musician, who in the composition of a melancholy nocturne or tender ballad, or in the still greater work of a romantic opera, imagines "imaginary" love in strains of perfect sound, which waken in the hearts of his hearers all the old feverish longings, all the dear youthful dreams, all the delicious romances which accompanied the lovely white-winged Sentiment in days past and dead for ever. Strange to say, it often happens that the musician, while thus appeasing his own insatiable thirst for "imaginary"

love, is frequently aware that he is arousing it in others; and could he probe to the very fibres of his thinking soul, he would confess to a certain keen satisfaction in the fact of his being able to revivify the old restless yearning of a pain which is sweeter to the lonely soul than pleasure.

Now this expression of the "lonely soul" is used advisedly, because, in sad truth, every human soul is lonely. Lonely at birth,—still more lonely at death. During its progress through life it gathers around it what it can in the way of crumbs of love, grains of affection, taking them tenderly and with tears of gratefulness. But it is always conscious of solitude,—an awful yet Divine solitude over which the Infinite broods, watchful yet silent. Why it is brought into conscious being, to live within a material frame and there perform certain duties and labours, and from thence depart again, it cannot tell. All is a mystery,—a strange Necessity, in which it cannot truly recognize its part or place. Yet it is,—and one of the strongest proofs of its separate identity from the body is this "imaginary" love for which it yearns, and which it never obtains. "Imaginary" love is not earthly,—neither is it heavenly,—it is something between both, a vague and inchoate feeling, which, though incapable of being reduced to any sort of reason or logic, is the foundation of perhaps all the greatest art, music and poetry in the world. If we had to do merely with men as they are, and women as they are, Art would perish utterly from the face of the earth. It is because we make for ourselves "ideal" men, "ideal" women, and endow these fair creations with the sentiment of "imaginary" love, that

we still are able to communicate with the gods. Not yet have we lowered ourselves to the level of the beasts,—nor shall we do so, though things sometimes seem tending that way. Realism and Atheism have darkened the world, as they darken it now, long before the present time, and as defacements on the grandeur of the Universe they have not been permitted to remain. Nor will they be permitted now,—the reaction will, and must inevitably set in. The repulsive materialism of Zola, and others of his school,—the loose theories of the "smart" set, and the moral degradation of those who have no greater God than self,—these things are the merest ephemera, destined to leave no more mark on human history than the trail of a slug on one leaf of an oak. The Ideal must always be triumphant,—the soul can only hope to make way by climbing towards it. Thus it is with "imaginary" Love,—it must hold fast to its ideal, or be content to perish on the plane of sensual passion, which exhausts itself rapidly, and once dead, is dead for ever and aye.

With all its folly, sweetness, piteousness and pathos, "imaginary" love is the keynote of Art,—its fool-musings take shape in exquisite verse, in tales of romance and adventure, in pictures that bring the nations together to stand and marvel, in music that makes the strong man weep. It is the most supersensual of all delicate sensations,—as fine as a hair, as easily destroyed as a gnat's wing!—a rough touch will wound it,—a coarse word will kill it,—the sneer of the Realist shuts it in a coffin of lead and sinks it fathoms deep in the waters of despair. Strange and cruel as the

fact may seem, Marriage appears to put an end to it altogether.

> Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife
> He would have written sonnets to her all his life ?

inquires Byron. He certainly would not. The "imaginary" love of Petrarch was the source of his poetic inspiration; if he had ever dragged it down to the level of the commonplace Actual, he would have killed his Muse. In a similar way the love of Dante for Beatrice was of the "imaginary" quality. Those who read the "Vita Nuova" will scarcely fail to see how the great poet hugs his love-fancies and feeds himself with delicious extravagances in the way of idealized and sublimated soul-passion. He dissects every fine hair of a stray emotion, and writes a sonnet on every passing heart-beat. Dante's wife never became so transfigured in her husband's love. Why? Alas, who can say! No reason can be given save that perchance "familiarity breeds contempt," and that the Unattainable seems always more beautiful than the Attained. The delight of possession would appear to be as brief as the flowering of a rose. Lovers are in haste to wed,—but when the knot is once irrevocably tied, in nine cases out of ten they wish it could be untied again. They no longer imagine "imaginary" love! The glamour is gone. Illusions are all over. The woman is no longer the removed, the fair, the chaste, the unreachable,—the man ceases to be the proud, the strong hero endowed with the attributes of the gods. "Imaginary" love then resolves itself into one of two things,—a firm, every-day, close

and tender *friendship*, or else a sick disappointment, often ending in utter disgust. But the divine emotion of "imaginary" love has fled,—the Soul is no longer enamoured of its Ideal—and the delicate psychic passion which inspires the poet, the painter, the musician, turns at once to fresh objects of admiration and pursuit. For it is never exhausted, —unlike any purely earthly sense it knows no satiety. Deceived in one direction, it flies in another. Dissatisfied with worldly things, it extends its longing heavenwards,—there at least it shall find what it seeks,—not now, but hereafter! Age does not blunt this fine emotion, for, as may often be remarked with some beautiful souls in the decline of bodily life, the resigning of earthly enjoyments gives them no pain,—and the sweet placidity of expectation, rather than the dull apathy of regret, is their chief characteristic. "Imaginary" love still beckons them on;—what has not been found Here will be found There!

Happy, and always to be envied, are those who treasure this aerial sentiment of the spiritual brain! It is the dearest possession of every true artist. In every thought, in every creative work or plan, "imaginary" love goes before, pointing out wonders unseen by less enlightened eyes,—hiding things unsightly, disclosing things lovely, and making the world fair to the mind in all seasons, whether of storm or calm. Intensifying every enjoyment, adding a double thrill to the notes of a sweet song, lending an extra glow to the sunshine, an added radiance to the witchery of the moonlight, a more varied and exquisite colouring to the trees and flowers, a charm to every book, a delight to every

new scene, "imaginary" love, a very sprite of enchantment, helps us to believe persistently in good, when those who love not at all, neither in reality nor in idealization, are drowning in the black waters of suicidal despair.

So it is well for us—those who can—to imagine "imaginary" love! We shall never grasp the Dream in this world—nevertheless let us fly after it as though it were a Reality! Its path is one of sweetness more than pain,—its ways are devious, yet even in sadness still entrancing. Better than rank, better than wealth is this talisman, which with a touch brings us into close communication with the Higher worlds. Let us "imagine" our friends are true; let us "imagine" we are loved for our own sakes alone,—let us "imagine," as we welcome our acquaintances into our homes, that their smiles and greetings are sincere—let us imagine "imaginary" love as the poets do,—a passion tender, strong and changeless—and pursue it always, even if the objects, which for a moment its passing wings have brushed, crumble into dust beneath that touch of fire! So shall our lives retain the charm of constant Youth and Hope,—so shall the world seem always beautiful to us,—so shall the Unimaginable glory of the future Real-in-Love shine nearer every day in our faithful, fond pursuit of its flying Shadow!

THE ADVANCE OF WOMAN

Follow Light and do the Right—for man can half
control his doom—
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant
tomb!
—TENNYSON, *Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After.*

SIXTY years ago! To us of the present day it seems a very long time—a kind of "dark ages" period wherein we peer backward dubiously, wondering what everybody was like then. History, taking us by the hand, shows us, as in a magic glass, the Coronation of Victoria, one of the best Queens that the world has ever known, and tells us of the great men and masterly intellects of that past time, whose immortal works we still have with us, but whose mere mortal place knows them no more. Much may be seen in the backward glimpse that some of us may possibly regret and wish that we possessed again. Men of power and dominance, for example—great writers, great thinkers, great reformers—surely we lack these! Surely we need them sorely! But it seems to be a rule of Nature that if we gain in one direction we must lose in another, and whatever we have lost in that far-gone period, we have certainly gained much in the forward direction. One of the most remarkable changes, perhaps, that has taken place in the

passing of the years is the different position assigned to Woman from that which she occupied when Dickens and Thackeray wrote their wonderful novels, and when Charlotte Brontë astonished the world by her woman's genius, to be followed by the still more powerful and Scott-like display of brain-power in Mary Ann Evans ("George Eliot"). At that time men were still chivalrous. Woman was so rarely brilliant—or, shall we put it, she so rarely had the chance of asserting the brilliant qualities that are her natural endowment—that man was content to acknowledge any unusual talent on her part as an abnormal quality, infrequent enough to be safely admired. In this spirit, more or less, Sir Walter Scott paid tribute to Jane Austen, and Thackeray to Charlotte Brontë; but as time has progressed, and women have arisen one after another in the various departments of Art and Literature, men have begun to fall back and look askance, and somewhat threateningly, on the fair trespassers in their hitherto guarded domains. And the falling back and the looking askance continue in exact proportion to the swift and steady onward march of the white-robed Amazons into the Battle of Life. Braced with the golden shield of Courage, helmeted with Patience, and armed with the sword of Faith, the women-warriors are taking the field, and are to be seen now in massed ranks, daily marshalling themselves in more compact order, firm-footed and fearless, prepared to fight for intellectual freedom, and die rather than yield. They, too, will earn the right to live; they, too, will be something greater than the mere vessels of man's desire—whether maids, wives, or mothers,

they will prove themselves worthy to be all these three, and more than these, to the very utmost extent of their moral and intellectual being!

Perhaps there is nothing more entertaining to the wit of a cultured and intelligent woman than the recurrent piping wail of man's assertion that "woman has no creative power." Her place, says the didactic male, is the kitchen, the nursery, and beside the cradle. *Certes*, she can manage these three departments infinitely better than he can, especially the cradle part of it, wherein his fractious disposition is generally well displayed the moment he starts in life. But, as a matter of fact, there is hardly any vocation in which she cannot, if she puts her mind to it, distinguish herself just as easily and successfully as he can if he will only kindly stand out of her way. He makes himself ludicrous by persistently "crying her down" when all the world *en masse* beholds her taking the highest University honours over his head, and beating him intellectually on his own ground. In physical force he certainly outstrips her. Item,—he can kick her as heartily and skilfully as he can kick a football, *vide* the daily police reports. Item,—he can eat and drink much more than she can, because he devotes a great deal more time and attention to the study of gastronomy. Item,—he can smoke more. Item,—he can indulge freely in unbridled licentiousness, and amply prove his original savage right to be considered a polygamous animal, without being banned from "good, society," or anything being said against his moral character. This a woman cannot do. If she has many lovers, her conduct is severely criticized. But if she

has none, she is still more bitterly condemned, especially if she happens to be in the least good-looking. And why? Simply because her indifference "reflects" on the male sex generally. The ugliest of masculine creatures experiences a vague sense of offence when he meets a charming woman who neither seeks his advice nor his company. And here we have the gist of the whole matter: man is a vain animal and wants to be admired. Like the peacock, he struts forward and spreads out his glittering tail. The central feature of the landscape, as he considers himself, he waits for the pea-hen to worship him. If, instead of the humble pea-hen, he finds another sort of bird entirely—with not only a tail as brilliant as his own, but wings which will carry it over his head, he is mightily incensed, and his shrill cry of rage echoes through that particular part of the universe where he is no longer "monarch of all he surveys." His "other world" must be pea-hens or none!

And yet Man's delightful and utter want of the commonest logic is never more flagrantly exhibited than in this vital matter of his estimate of Woman, taking it all round in a broad sense. Daily, hourly, in the household and in the market-place, he may be heard cheapening her abilities, sneering at such triumphs as she attains, cracking stale jests at her "love of gossip," "love of dress" (for he is seldom original even in a joke), and her "incessant tongue," blissfully ignoring the fact that his own is wagging all the time; and yet no one can twist him so limply and helplessly round the littlest of her little fingers as she can. Moreover, throughout all the ages, so far as the keenest explorer or historical

student can discover, his highest ideals of life have been depicted in the Feminine form. Fortune, Fame, Justice, the Arts and Sciences, are all represented by female figures lovingly designed by male hands. Evidently conscious in himself that a woman's purity, honesty, fidelity, and courage are nobler types of these virtues than his own, Man apparently is never weary of idealizing them as Woman womanly. Thoroughly aware of the supreme sovereignty Woman can exercise whenever he gives her the chance, he, while endeavouring to bind and hold her intellectual forces by his various edicts and customs, takes ever an incongruous satisfaction in doing her full justice by the magnitude of his feminine ideals. The divine spirit of Nature itself, called "Egeria," is always depicted by man as a woman. Faith, Hope and Charity, are represented as female spirits, as are the Three Graces. The Muses are women; so are the Fates. Hence, as all the virtues, morals, arts, and sciences are shown by the highest masculine skill as wearing woman's form and possessing woman's attributes, it is easy to see that man has always been perfectly aware in his inward intelligence of Woman's true worth and right place in creation, though, by such laws as he has made for his own better convenience, he has put up whatever barriers he can in the way of the too swift advancement of so superior and victorious a creature. Now that she is beginning to take an important share in the world's work and progress, he is becoming vaguely alarmed. In each art, in each profession he sees her gaining step by step to higher intellectual dominance. He watches her move

from plane to plane of study, learning, as she goes, that the mere animalism of unthinking subservience to his passions is not her only heritage. And straightway the long-spoilt child begins to whimper. "A woman has no creative power!" he cries. "No imagination!—no originality!—no force of character! What she does in the Arts is so very little——!"

Stop, oh Man! You have had a very long, long innings, remember! From the time of Abraham, and ages before that worthy patriarch ever turned Hagar out into the wilderness, you have been setting Woman alongside your cattle, and curling your whip with a magnificent carelessness round both at your pleasure, yea! even offering both with indifferent readiness for sale and barter. You have enjoyed centuries of liberty; it is now woman's turn to taste the sweets of freedom. She does very little in the Arts, you say? I grant you that in the first of them, Poetry, she does little indeed. I do not think we shall ever have a female Shakespeare, for instance. But, at the same time, I equally do not think we shall ever again have a male one! Yet it is to be admitted that none of the leading women poets can compare for an instant with the leading men in that most divine and primæval of Arts. But I should not like to assert that the great woman-Dante or woman-Shelley may not yet arise, for it is to be borne in mind that woman's education and woman's chances have only just begun. In Music, again, she is deemed deficient. Yet we are confronted at the present day by the fact that many of the most successful and charming of song writers are women.

And the following appears in the Dresden *Neueste Nachricten* (October 18, 1902) :—

"Up to the present date we have always entertained the opinion that the composition of music was a gift denied to the female sex, elegant trifles (as exceptions) only confirming our doubts. And now an English lady appears on the scene, amazing the musical world of Dresden. She was as a young girl already a distinguished artist, a virtuoso on the piano, and played—as 'Miss Bright,'—under the direction of Dr. Wullner, a piano concerto of her own composition, with extraordinary success. Then marriage separated her from her art for several years. Now (after the death of her husband), the young widow, Mrs. Knatchbull, has composed an opera—text, music, and instrumentation all being her own work—and has brought it with her to Dresden. The music is so captivating, and above all, holds one so strongly that one exclaims in astonishment, 'Can this be the work of a woman?' It is more than probable that the opera will be produced at the Dresden Opera House."

Here followeth an instructive story :—A recent opera performed with considerable success at Monte Carlo and other Continental resorts is the work of a woman, stolen by a man. The facts are well known, as are the names of the hero and heroine of the sordid tragedy. A little love-making on the part of the male composer, who could show nothing of ability save the composition of a few amorous drawing-room songs—a confiding trust on the part of the woman-genius, whose brain was full of God-given melody—these were the motives of the drama. She played the score of her opera

through to him—he listened with admiration—with words of tender flattery, precious to her who was weak enough to care for such a rascal; and then he took it away to be "transcribed," as he said, and set out for the orchestra. He loved her, so the poor credulous soul thought!—and she trusted him—such an old story! He copied her opera in his own manuscript—stole it, in short, and left for the Continent, where he had it produced as his own composition. Had she complained, the law would have gone against her. She had no proof save that of her love. Before a grinning, jesting court of law she would have had to publish the secret of her heart. People would have shaken their heads and said, "Poor thing! A case of self-delusion and hysteria!" He himself would have shaken his dirty pate and said, "Poor soul! Mad—quite mad! Many women have had their heads turned likewise for love of me!" So it chances that only those "in the know" are aware of the story, and the man-Fraud is left unmolested; but it is a curious and suggestive fact that he produces no more operas.

There is one thing that women generally, in the struggle for intellectual free life, should always remember—one that they are too often apt to forget—namely, that the Laws, as they at present exist, are made *by* men, *for* men. There are no really stringent laws for the protection of women's interests except the Married Woman's Property Act, which is a great and needful boon. But take the following instances of the eccentricities of English law, both of which have come under my own knowledge as having occurred to personal

friends. A certain foreign nobleman residing in England made a will leaving all his fortune to his mistress. His legitimate children were advised to dispute the will, as under the law of his native country he could not dispossess his lawful heirs of their inheritance. He had not naturalized himself at any time as a British subject, and the plain proof of this was, that but a year before his death, he had applied to the Government of his own country for permission to wear a certain decoration, which permission was accorded him. The nature of his application proved that he still considered himself a subject of his own native land. The case came before an English judge, who had apparently eaten some very indigestible matter for his luncheon. With an apoplectic countenance and an injured demeanour, the learned gentleman declined to go into any of the details of the case, and administered "justice" by deciding the whole thing on "a question of domicile"—namely, that as the man had lived in England twenty-five years, he was, naturalized or unnaturalized, a British subject and could make his will as he liked. The fortune was, therefore, handed over to his mistress, and the legal wife and legitimately-born children were left out in the cold! Another case is that of a lady, well-born and well-educated, who married a man with a fortune of some twenty thousand a year. After the expiration of about fifteen years, when she had borne her husband three children, he suddenly took a fantastic dislike to her, and an equally fantastic liking for a chorus girl. He promptly sought a divorce. As there was no ground for divorce, he failed to obtain it. He,

therefore, adopted a course of action emanating entirely from his own brilliant brain. Starting for a cruise on board his yacht, in company with the bewildering chorus girl, he left orders with his solicitor to have the whole of his house dismantled of its furniture and "cleared." This was promptly done, the wife and children being left without so much as a bed to lie upon, or a chair to sit upon. The unfortunate lady told her story to a court, and applied for "maintenance." This, of course, the recalcitrant husband was forced to pay, but the sum was cut down to the smallest possible amount, under the supervision of the blandly approving court, with the result that this man's wife, accustomed from her girlhood to every home comfort and care, now lives with her children in a condition of genteel penury more degrading than absolute poverty. *There is no remedy for these things.* One welcomes heartily the idea of women lawyers, in the hope that when their keen, quick brains learn to grasp the huge, unwieldy, and complex machinery of the muddle called Legal Justice, they may, perhaps, be able to effect some reforms on behalf of their own sex. As matters at present stand, the unbridled and extravagant licentiousness of men, and the consequent degradation of women, are *protected* by law. Even a fraudulent financial concern is so guarded by "legal" advice that it would take the lifetime's earning of an honest man to bring about any exposure. We want women-lawyers—Portias, with quick brains, to see the way out of a difficulty into which men plunge only to flounder more hopelessly. "Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

In Medicine, women have made more than a decided mark of triumph. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the priceless value of the work done by women doctors and women surgeons in the harems of India and Turkey, where the selfishness and jealousy of the Eastern sybarite would give his women over to cruel agonies of disease and death, rather than suffer them to be so much as looked upon by another of his own sex. Yet, though perfectly conscious that Woman's work in this branch of science is day by day becoming more and more precious to suffering humanity, we have quite recently been confronted by the spectacle of a number of men deciding to resign their appointments at a certain hospital, rather than suffer a woman to be nominated house-surgeon. Her skill and efficiency were as great as theirs, and she had all the qualifications necessary for the post; but no! sooner than honour a woman's ability, they preferred to resign. Comment on this incident is needless, but it is one of the straws that show which way the wind blows.

Much excellent work is done, and remains yet to be done by women, as inspectors of schools. They alone are really fitted for the task of ascertaining the conditions under which children are made to study, and they are not likely, while examining infant classes, to make such ponderous statements as that passed by a certain male inspector, who, according to an amusing story told me by Sir John Gorst, found the babies (not above five years old) "deplorably deficient in mental arithmetic!" It takes a man to deplore "lack of mental arithmetic" in a baby. A woman

would never be capable of such weighty stupidity. Perhaps it will be just as well to glance casually at the state of things in this country respecting the education of mere infants, as arranged by certain laws drawn up by men, laws in which women, who are the mothers of the race, are not allowed to have a voice.

1. The law *allows* them to enter at three years old, and *compels* them to enter at five years old.

2. Men inspectors constantly examine children of four years old in arithmetic, and the "mental arithmetic of the baby class," is constantly mentioned in reports.

3. Needlework is taught before five years old; two to three hours form the staple instruction. Needlework injures the eyesight at such a tender age, and two or three hours are a cruelty and a waste of time for tiny children.

4. Desks, blackboards, slates and books are everywhere in excess of "Kindergarten" occupations, and the "development of the spontaneous activity in the child" is twisted into the development of uniformity. To differ from the usual is to be naughty; every one must do the same thing at the same time. Every one must build a like house, a like table, a like chair; each brick must be on the table at the same minute.

5. Despite male inspectors, the babies sleep. They fall off their seats and bump their foreheads against the desks, and their spines are twisted and crooked as they lie on their arms, heads forward, upon the hard supports. Curvature must be produced in many cases, solely from these causes.

6. To maintain order, corporal punishment

is habitual, and "fear" the chief motive for right-doing. To quote from a letter of Sir John Gorst's:—

"The reform of this system is not a matter of sentiment. These babies are the future scholars of our improved schools that the Education Act is intended to produce, and the future citizens by whom our Imperial position is to be maintained. If we prematurely addle their intellects by schooling—for which their tender years are unfit; if we cripple their bodies by cooping them up in deforming desks; if we destroy their sight by premature needlework, and confuse their senses by overstudy of subjects which they are too young to understand, we shall neither have fit scholars for our future schools, nor fit citizens to uphold the Empire."

Starting on these premises it will surely be acknowledged that women have an indisputable right to be inspectors of schools. They have the natural instinct to know what is best for the health and well-being of children, and they are also capable of correctly judging by that maternal sympathy which is their inherited gift, how a child's mental abilities should best be encouraged and trained.

I have often been asked if I would like to see women in Parliament. I may say frankly, and at once, that I should detest it. I should not like to see the sex, pre-eminent for grace and beauty, degraded by having to witness or to take part in such "scenes" of heated and undignified disputation as have frequently lowered the prestige of the House of Commons. On the same lines I may say that I do not care to see women playing "hockey" or indulging in any purely "tom-boy"

sports and pastimes. They lose "caste" and individuality. One of the many brilliant and original remarks of mankind concerning the female sex is that women should be cooks and housekeepers. So they should. No woman is a good housekeeper unless she understands cooking, nor can she be a good cook unless she be a good housekeeper. The two things are inseparable, and combine to make comfort with economy. A woman should know how to cook and keep house for *herself*, not only for man. Man says to her: "Be a cook,"—because of all things in the world he loves a good dinner; loves it better than his wife, inasmuch as he will often "bully" the wife if the dinner fails. But a woman must also eat, and she should learn to cook *for her own comfort*, quite apart from his. In the same way she should study housekeeping. If she lives a single life, she will find such knowledge eminently useful. But to devote all her energy and attention to cooking and housekeeping, as most men would have her do, would be a waste of power and intelligence. As well ask a great military hero to devote his entire time to the canteen.

In breaking her rusty fetters, and stepping out into the glorious liberty of the free, Woman has one great thing to remember and to strive for,—a thing that she is at present, in her newly emancipated condition, somewhat prone to forget. In claiming and securing intellectual equality with Man, she should ever bear in mind that such a position is only to be held by always maintaining and preserving as great an Unlikeness to him as possible in her life and surroundings. Let her imitate him in

nothing but independence and individuality. Let her eschew his fashions in dress, his talk and his manners. A woman who wears "mannish" clothes, smokes cigars, rattles out slang, gambles at cards, and drinks brandy and soda on the slightest provocation, is lost altogether, both as woman and man, and becomes sexless But the woman whose dress is always becoming and graceful, whose voice is equable and tender, who enhances whatever beauty she possesses by exquisite manner, unblemished reputation, and intellectual capacity combined, raises herself not only to an equality with man, but goes so far above him that she straightway becomes the Goddess and he the Worshipper. This is as it should be. Men adore what they cannot imitate. Therefore when men are drunken, let women be sober; when men are licentious, let women be chaste; when men are turf-hunters and card-players, let women absent themselves from both the race-course and the gambling-table; and while placing a gentle yet firm ban on laxity in morals and disregard of the binding sanctity of family life, let them silently work on and make progress in every art, every profession, every useful handicraft, that they may not be dependent for home or livelihood on man's merely casual fancy or idle whim. The mistake of Woman's progress up to the present, has been her slavish imitation of Man's often unadmirable tastes, and a pathetic "going down" under his lofty disdain. Once grasp the fact that his disdain is not "lofty" but merely comic, and that his case is only that of the Distressful Peacock, hurt by indifference to his tail, things will right themselves. Nature has

already endowed Woman with the contrasting elements of beauty, delicacy, and soft charm, as opposed to man's frequent ugliness and roughness; let Woman herself continue to emphasize the difference by bringing out her original and individual qualities in all she does or attempts to do. Of course for a long time yet, Man will declare "feminine individuality" to be non-existent; but as we know the quality is as plain and patent as "masculine individuality," we have only to insist upon it and assert it, and in due course it will be fully admitted and acknowledged. Meantime, while pressing on towards the desired goal, Woman must learn the chief lesson of successful progress, which is, not to copy Man, but to carefully preserve her beautiful Unlikeness to him in every possible way, so that, while asserting and gaining intellectual equality with him, she shall gradually arrive at such ascendancy as to prove herself ever the finer and the nobler Creature.

THE PALM OF BEAUTY

It would seem, according to the society press, that beauty is a very common article. Indeed, if we are to accept the innocent ebullitions of the callow youths who drink beer and play skittles in the Social-Paragraph line of journalism, and who in their soft guilelessness are taken in and "used" by certain ladies of a type resembling Miss Skeggs and Lady Blarney in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, we are bound to believe that beautiful women are as common as blackberries, only more so. In the columns devoted by newspaper editors to the meanderings of those intelligent persons, male and female, who sign themselves as Onlookers, Observers, Butterflies, Little Tomtits, and what may be called "I Spys!" generally, one hardly ever sees the name of a lady without the epithet "beautiful" tacked on to it, especially if the lady happens to have money. This is curious, but true. And supposing the so-called Beautiful One has not only money, commonly speaking, but heaps of money, mines of money, she is always stated to be "young" as well. The heavier the bullion, the more assured the youthfulness. If unkind Time shows her to be the mother of a family where the eldest sprout is some twenty odd years of age, the complaisant

"I Spy" is equal to the occasion and writes of her thus—"The beautiful Mrs. Juno-Athene brought her eldest girl, looking more like her sister than her mother." Whereat Mrs. Juno-Athene is satisfied,—everybody smiles, and all things are cosy and comfortable. If any one should dare to say, especially in print, that Mrs. Juno-Athene is not "beautiful" at all, nor "youthful" in either looks or bearing, there would be ructions. Somebody would get into trouble. The "I Spy" might even be dismissed from his or her post of social paragraphist to the Daily Error. Heaven forbid that such a catastrophe should happen through the indiscretion of a mere miserable truth-monger! Let Mrs. Juno-Athene be beautifully and eternally young, by all means, so long as she can afford to pay for it. The humbug of it is at any rate kindly and chivalrous, and does nobody any harm, while it puts money in the purse of the hardworking penster, who is compelled to deal delicately with these little social matters sometimes, or else ruminate on a dinner instead of eating it.

Nevertheless, despite the "I Spys," and the perennial charms of Mrs. Juno-Athene, beauty is as rare and choice a thing as ever it was in the days of old when men went mad for it, and Greeks and Trojans fought for Helen, who, so some historians say, was past forty when her bewitching fairness set the soul of Troy on fire. A really beautiful woman is scarcely ever seen, not even in Great Britain, where average good looks are pleasantly paramount. Prettiness,—the prettiness which is made up of a good skin, bright eyes, soft and abundant hair, and a supple figure,—is quite ordinary. It can

be seen every day among barmaids, shop girls, and milliners' *mannequins*. But Beauty—the divine and subtle charm which enraptures all beholders,—the perfect form, united to the perfect face in which pure and noble thought is expressed in every feature, in every glance of eye, in every smile that makes a sweet mouth sweeter,—this is what we may search for through all the Isles of Britain, ay, and through Europe and America and the whole world besides, and seldom or never find it.

Nine-tenths of the women who are styled "beautiful" by the society paragraphist, possess merely the average good looks;—the rest are generally more particularly distinguished by some single and special trait which may perchance be natural, and may equally be artificial, such as uncommon-coloured hair (which may be dyed), a brilliant complexion (which may be put on), or a marvellously "svelte" figure (which may be the happy result of carefully designed corsets, well pulled in). Most of the eulogized "beauties" of the Upper Ten to-day, have, or are able to get, sufficient money or credit supplied to them for dressing well,—and not only well, but elaborately and extravagantly, and dress is often the "beauty" instead of the woman. To judge whether the woman herself is really beautiful without the modiste's assistance, it would be necessary to see her deprived of all her fashionable clothes. Her bought hair should be taken off and only the natural remainder left. She should be content to stand *sans* paint, *sans* powder, *sans* back coil, *sans* corsets, in a plain white gown, falling from her neck and shoulders to her feet, and thus cheaply, yet decently clad, submit

herself to the gaze of her male flatterers in full daylight. How many of the "beautiful" Mrs. Juno-Athenes or the "lovely" Lady Spendthrifts could stand such a test unflinchingly? Yet the simplest draperies clothe the Greek marbles when they are clothed at all, and jewels and fripperies on the goddess Diana would make her grace seem vulgar and her perfection common. Beauty, real beauty, needs no "creator of costume" to define it, but is, as the poets say, when unadorned, adorned the most.

Now it is absolutely impossible to meet with any "unadorned" sort of beauty in those circles of rank and fashion where the society paragraphist basks at his or her pleasure. On the contrary, there is so much over-adornment in vogue that it is sometimes difficult to find the actual true colour and personality of certain ladies whose charms are daily eulogized by an obliging press. Layers of pearl enamel picked out with rouge, entirely conceal their human identity. It is doubtful whether there was ever more face-painting and "faking up" of beauty than there is now,—never did beauty specialists and beauty doctors drive such a roaring trade. The profits of beauty-faking are enormous. Some idea of it may be gained by the fact that there is a certain shrewd and highly intelligent "doctor" in Paris, who, seeing which way the wind of fashion blows, brews a harmless little mixture of rose-water, eau-de-cologne, tincture of benzoin and cochineal, which materials are quite the reverse of costly, and calling it by a pretty *sobriquet*, sells the same at twenty-five shillings a bottle! He is making a fortune out of women's stupidity, is this good

" doctor," and who shall blame him ? Fools exist merely that the wise may use them. One has only to read the ladies' papers, especially the advertisements therein, to grasp a faint notion of what is being done to spur on the " beauty " craze. Yet beauty remains as rare and remote as ever, and often when we see some of the ladies whose " exquisite loveliness " has been praised for years in nearly every newspaper on this, or the other side of the Atlantic, we fall back dismayed, with a sense of the deepest disappointment and aggravation, and wonder what we have done to be so deceived ?

Taken in the majority, the women of Great Britain are supposed to hold the palm of beauty against all other women of the nations of the world, and if the word " beauty " be changed to prettiness, the supposition is no doubt correct. It is somewhat unfortunate, however, that either through the advice of their dressmakers or their own erroneous conceptions of Form, they should appear to resent the soft outlines and gracious curves of nature, for either by the over-excess of their outdoor sports, or the undue compression of corsets, they are gradually doing away with their originally intended shapes and becoming as flat-chested as jockeys under training. No flat-chested woman is pretty. No woman with large hands, large feet, and the coarse muscular throat and jaw developed by constant bicycle-riding, can be called fascinating. The bony and resolute lady whose lines of figure run straight down without a curve anywhere from head to heel, may possibly be a good athlete, but her looks are by no means to her advantage. Men's hearts are not enthralled or captured by a Something

appearing to be neither man nor woman. And there are a great many of these Somethings about just now. I am ignorant as to whether American women go in for mannish sports as frequently and ardently as their British sisters, but I notice that they have daintier hands and feet, and less pronounced "muscle."

At the same time American women on an average, are not so pretty as British women on the same average. The American complexion is unfortunate. Often radiant and delicate in earliest youth, it fades with maturity like a brilliant flower scorched by too hot a sun, and once departed returns no more. The clear complexion of British women is their best feature. The natural rose and white skin of an English, Irish or Scottish girl,—especially a girl born and bred in the country, is wonderfully fresh and lovely and lasting, and often accompanies her right through her life to old age. That is, of course, if she leaves it alone, and is satisfied merely to keep it clean, without any "adornment" from the beauty doctor. And, though steadily withholding the divine word "beauty" from the greater portion of the "beauties" at the Court of King Edward VII. it is unquestionably the fact that the prettiest women in the world are the British. Americans are likely to contest this. They will, as indeed in true chivalry they must, declare that their own "beauties" are best. But one can only speak from personal experience, and I am bound to say that I have never seen a pretty American woman pretty enough to beat a pretty British woman. This, with every possible admission made for the hard-working society paragraphist,

compelled to write of numerous "beautiful" Ladies So-and-So, and "charming" Mrs. Cashboxes, who, when one comes to look at them are neither "beautiful" nor "charming" at all.

But British feminine prettiness would be infinitely more captivating than it is, if it were associated with a little extra additional touch of vivacity and intelligence. When it is put in the shade, (as frequently happens,) by the sparkling allurements of the Viennese coquette, the graceful *savoir faire* of the French *mondaine*, or the enticing charm of lustrous-eyed sirens from southern Italy, it is merely because of its lack of wit. It is a good thing to have a pretty face; but if the face be only like a wax mask, moveless and expressionless, it soon ceases to attract. The loveliest picture would bore us if we had to stare at it dumbly all day. And there is undeniably a stiffness, a formality, and often a most repellent and unsympathetic coldness about the British fair sex, which re-acts upon the men and women of other more warm-hearted and impulsive nations, in a manner highly disadvantageous to the ladies of our Fortunate Isles. For it is not *real* stiffness, or *real* formality after all,—nor is it the snowy chill of a touch-me-not chastity, by any means,—it is merely a most painful, and in many cases, most absurd self-consciousness. British women are always more or less wondering what their sister women are thinking about them. They can manage their men all right; but they put on curious and unbecoming airs directly other feminine influences than their own come into play. They invite the comment of the opposite sex, but they dread the criticism of their own. The

awkward girl who sits on the edge of a chair with her feet scraping the carpet and her hands twiddling uneasily in her lap, is awkward simply because she has, by some means or other, been made self-conscious,—and because, in the excess of this self-consciousness she stupidly imagines every one in the room must be staring at her. The average London woman, dressed like a fashion-plate, who rustles in at afternoon tea, with her card-case well in evidence, and her face carefully set in proper "visiting lines," offers herself up in this way as a subject for the satirist, out of the same disfiguring self-consciousness, which robs her entirely of the indifferent ease and careless grace which should,—to quote the greatest of American philosophers, Emerson,—cause her to "repel interference by a decided and proud choice of influences," and to "inspire every beholder with something of her own nobleness." She is probably not *naturally* formal,—she is no doubt exceedingly constrained and uncomfortable in her fashionable attire,—and one may take it for granted that she would rather be herself than try to be a Something which is a Nothing. But Custom and Convention are her bogie men, always guarding her on either side, and investing her too often with such deplorable self-consciousness that her eye becomes furtive, her mouth hard and secretive, her conversation inane, and her whole personality an uncomfortable exhalation of stupidity and dullness.

Nevertheless, setting Custom and Convention apart for the nonce, and bidding them descend into the shadows of hypocrisy which are their native atmosphere, the British woman remains the prettiest

in the world. What a galaxy of feminine charms can be gathered under the word "British"! England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland offer all together such countless examples of woman's loveliness, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to give the prize for good looks to one portion of Britain more than to the other. America, so far as her samples have been, and are, seen in Europe, cannot outrival the "Old Country" in the prettiness of its women. But it is prettiness only; not Beauty. Beauty remains intrinsically where it was first born and first admitted into the annals of Art and Literature. Its home is still in "the Isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sung."

Nothing that was ever created in the way of female loveliness can surpass the beauty of a beautiful Greek woman. True, she is as rare as a butterfly in a snow storm. True, the women of Athens and of Greece generally, taken in the rough majority, are not on an average, even pretty. Nevertheless the palm of beauty remains with them—because there are always two,—or may be three of them, who dawn year by year upon the world in all the old perfection of the classic models, and who may truly be taken for newly-descended goddesses, so faultlessly formed, so exquisitely featured are they. They are not famed by the paragraphist, and they probably will never get the chance of moving in the circles of the British "Upper Ten" or the American "Four Hundred." But they are the daughters of Aphrodite still, and hold fast their heavenly mother's attributes. It is easy to find a hundred or more pretty British and American women for one beautiful Greek—but when found, the beautiful Greek eclipses

them all. She is still the wonder of the world,—the crown of womanly beauty at its best. She shows the heritage of her race in her regal step and freedom of movement,—in the lovely curves of her figure, in the classic perfection of her face with its broad brows, lustrous eyes, arched sweet lips and delicate contour of chin and throat, and perhaps more than all in the queenly indifference she bears towards her own loveliness. So,

> Fill high the bowl with Samian wine,
> On Suli's bank and Parga's shore,
> Exists the remnant of a line
> Such as the Doric mothers bore;
> And there perhaps some seed is sown
> The Heracleidan blood might own!

And there still, may be found the perfection of womanhood—the one rare Greek lily, which blossoming at few and far intervals shows in its exquisite form and colouring what Woman should be at her fairest. To her, therefore, must be given the Palm of Beauty. But after the lily, then the rose! —or rather the roses, multitudinous, varied, and always sweet—of the Fortunate Isles of Britain.

THE MADNESS OF CLOTHES

To dress well is a social duty. Every educated self-respecting woman is bound to clothe her person as neatly, as tastefully and becomingly as she can. But just as a virtue when carried to excess develops into a vice, so the art of dressing well, when allowed to overstep its legitimate uses and expenditure, easily runs into folly and madness. The reckless extravagance of women's dress at the present day is little short of criminal insanity. A feverish desire to outvie one another in the manner and make of their garments appears to possess every feminine creature whose lot in life places her outside positive penury. The inordinately wealthy, the normally rich, the well-to-do middle class and the shabby genteel are all equally infected by the same hysterical frenzy. And it is a frenzy which is humoured and encouraged on all sides by those who should have the sense, the intelligence and the foresight to realize the danger of such a tendency, and the misery to which in many cases it is surely bound to lead.

Latterly there have been certain growlings and mutterings of discontent from husbands who have had to pay certain unexpectedly long bills for their wives' " creations in costume "—but, as a matter of fact, it is really the men who are chiefly to blame for the wicked waste of money they afterwards resent

and deplore. They are the principal instigators of the mischief,—the aiders and abettors of the destruction of their own credit and good name. For they openly show their admiration for women's clothes more than for the women clothed,—that is to say, they are more easily captured by art than by nature. No group of male flatterers is ever seen round a woman whose dress is un-stylish or otherwise "out-of-date." She may have the sweetest face in the world, the purest nature and the truest heart, but the "dressed" woman, the dyed, the artistically "faked" woman will nearly always score a triumph over her so far as masculine appreciation and attention are concerned.

The "faked" woman has everything on her side. The Drama supports her. The Press encourages her. Whole columns in seemingly sane journals are devoted to the description of her attire. Very little space is given to the actual criticism of a new play *as* a play, but any amount of room is awarded to glorified "gushers" concerning the actresses' gowns. Of course it has to be borne in mind that the "writing up" of actresses' gowns serves a double purpose. First, the "creators" of the gowns are advertised, and may in their turn advertise,—which in these days of multitudinous rival newspapers, is a point not to be lost sight of. Secondly, the actresses themselves are advertised and certain gentlemen with big noses who move "behind the scenes," and are the lineal descendants of Moses and Aaron, may thereby be encouraged to speculate in theatrical "shares." Whereas criticism of the play itself does no good to anybody nowadays, not even to the dramatic author. For if such criticism be un-

favourable, the public say it is written by a spiteful enemy,—if eulogistic, by a "friend at court," and they accept neither verdict. They go to see the thing for themselves, and if they like it they keep on going. If not, they stay away, and there's an end.

But to the gowns there is no end. The gowns, even in an *un*-successful play, are continuously talked of, continuously written about, continuously sketched in every sort of pictorial, small and great, fashionable or merely provincial. And the florid language,—or shall we say the 'fine writing'?—used to describe clothes generally, on and off the stage, is so ravingly sentimental, so bewilderingly turgid, that it can only compare with the fervid verbosity of the early eighteenth century romancists, or the biting sarcasm of Thackeray's *Book of Snobs*, from which the following passage, descriptive of 'Miss Snobky's' presentation gown, may be aptly quoted :—

"*Habit de Cour* composed of a yellow nankeen illusion dress, over a slip of rich pea-green corduroy, trimmed *en tablier* with bouquets of Brussels sprouts, the body and sleeves handsomely trimmed with calimanco, and festooned with a pink train and white radishes. Head-dress, carrots and lappets."

By way of a modern pendant to the above grotesque suggestion, one extract from a lengthy "clothes" article recently published in a daily paper will suffice :

"Among the numerous evening and dinner gowns that the young lady has in her *corbeille*, one, *a l'Impératrice Eugénie*, is very lovely. The foundation is of white Liberty, with a tulle overdress on which are four flounces of Chantilly lace arranged

in zig-zags, connected together with shaded pink *gloria* ribbons arranged in waves and wreaths. This is repeated on the low corsage and on the long drooping sleeves of the high bodice.

"A richer toilette is of white Liberty silk, with a flounce of magnificent Brussels lace festooned by leaves of the chestnut, formed of white satin wrought in iris beads and silver on white tulle. The whole gown is strewn with like leaves of graduating sizes, and the low corsage has a *berthe* of Brussels lace ornamented with smaller chestnut leaves as are also the sleeves." And so on, in unlimited bursts of enthusiasm.

I cannot say I am in the least sorry when "modistes" who 'create' costumes at forty, fifty and even one hundred and two hundred guineas per gown, are mulcted of some of their unlawful profits by defaulting creditors. In nine cases out of ten they richly deserve it. They are rightly punished, when they accept, with fulsome flattery and servile obsequiousness a "title" as sufficient guarantee for credit, and in the end find out that Her Grace the Duchess, or Miladi the Countess is perhaps more wickedly reckless and unprincipled than any plain Miss, or Mrs. ever born, and that these *grandes dames* frequently make use of both rank and position to cheat their tradespeople systematically. The tradespeople are entirely to blame for trusting them, and this is daily and continuously proved. But the touching crook-knee'd worship of mere social rank still remains an ingredient of the mercantile nature,—it is inborn and racial,—a kind of microbe in the blood generated there in old feudal times, when, all over the world, pedlars humbly sought

the patronage and favour of robber chieftains, and unloaded their packs in the 'Castle hall' for the pleasure of the fair ladies who were kept at home in "durance vile" by their rough, unwashen lords. And so perhaps it has chanced through long custom and heritage, that at this present day there is nothing quite so servile in all creation as the spectacle of the 'modiste' in attendance on a Duchess, or a 'ladies' tailor' bending himself double while deferentially presuming to measure the hips of a Princess. It is quaint,—it is pitiful,—it is intensely, deliciously comic. And when the price of the garment is never clearly stated, and the bill never sent in for years lest offence is given to 'Her Grace' or 'Her Highness'—by firms that will, nevertheless, have no scruple in sending dunning letters and legal threats to *un*-titled ladies, who may possibly keep them waiting a little for their money, but whose position and credit are more firmly established than those of any 'great' personages with handles to their names, it is not without a certain secret satisfaction that one hears of such fawning flunkeys of trade getting well burnt in the fires of loss and disaster. For in any case, it may be taken for granted that they always charge a double, sometimes treble price for a garment or costume, over and above what that garment or costume is really worth, and one may safely presume they base all their calculations on possible loss. It is no uncommon thing to be told that such and such an evening blouse or bodice copied 'from the Paris model' will cost Forty Guineas—"We *might* possibly do it for Thirty Five,"—says the costumier meditatively, studying with well-assumed gravity

the small, flimsy object he is thus pricing, a trifle made up of chiffon, ribbon, and tinsel gew-gaws, knowing all the while that everything of which it is composed could be purchased for much less than ten pounds. Twenty-five guineas, forty-five guineas, sixty-five guineas are quite common prices for gowns at any of the fashionable shops to-day. One cannot, of course, blame the modistes and outfitting firms for asking these absurd fancy prices if they can get them. If women are mad, it is perhaps wise, just, and reasonable to take financial advantage of their madness while it lasts. Certainly no woman of well-balanced brain would give unlimited prices for gowns without most careful inquiry as to the correct value of the material and trimming used for them,—and the feminine creature who runs into the elaborate show-rooms of Madame Zoë or Berenice, or Faustina, and orders frocks by the dozen, saying chirpingly: "Oh, yes! *You* know how they ought to be made! Your taste is always perfect! Make them *very* pretty, won't you?—*much* prettier than those you made for Lady Claribel! Yes!—thanks! I'll leave it all in your hands!" this woman, I say, is a mere lunatic, gibbering nonsense, who could not, if she were asked, tell where twice two making four might possibly lead her in the sum-total of a banking account.

Not very long ago there was held a wonderful "symposium" of dress at the establishment of a certain modiste. It was intensely diverting, entertaining and instructive. A stage was erected at one end of a long room, and on that stage, with effective flashes of lime-light played from the "wings" at intervals, and the accompaniment

of a Hungarian band, young ladies wearing "creations" in costume, stood, sat, turned, twisted and twirled, and finally walked down the room between rows of spectators to show themselves and the gowns they carried, off to the best possible advantage. The whole thing was much better than a stage comedy. Nothing could surpass the quaint peacock-like vanity of the girl *mannequins* who strutted up and down, moving their arms about to exhibit their sleeves and swaying their hips to accentuate the fall and flow of flounces and draperies. It was a marvellous sight to behold, and it irresistibly reminded one of a party of impudent children trying on for fun all their mother's and elder sisters' best "long dresses" while the unsuspecting owners were out of the way. There was a "programme" of the performance fearfully and wonderfully worded, the composition, so we were afterwards "with bated breath" informed, of Madame la Modiste's sister, a lady, who by virtue of having written two small skits on the manners, customs and modes of society, is, in some obliging quarters of the Press called a "novelist." This programme instructed us as to the proper views we were expected to take of the costumes paraded before us, as follows:

FOR THE DINNER PARTY

Topas
Elusive Joy
Pleasure's Thrall
Red Mouth of a Venomous Flower

The "Red Mouth of a Venomous Flower" was a harmless-looking girl in a bright scarlet toilette,—

neither the toilette nor the sensational title suited her. But perhaps the "Cult of Chiffon" presented the most varied and startling phases to a properly receptive mind. Thus it ran:

THE CULT OF CHIFFON

The Dirge O'er the Death of Pleasure
The Fire Motif
The Meaning of Life is Clear
Moss and Starlight
Incessant Soft Desire
A Frenzied Song of Amorous Things
A Summer Night Has a Thousand Powers

Faint gigglings shook the bosoms of the profane as the "Incessant Soft Desire" glided into view, followed by "A Frenzied Song of Amorous Things," —indeed it would have been positively unnatural and inhuman had no one laughed. Curious to relate, there were quite a large number of "gentlemen" at this remarkable exhibition of feminine clothes, many of them well known and easily recognizable. Certain *flaneurs* of Bond Street, various loafers familiar to the Carlton "lounge," and celebrated Piccadilly-trotters, formed nearly one half of the audience, and stared with easy insolence at the "Red Mouth of a Venomous Flower" or smiled suggestively at "Incessant Soft Desire." They were invited to stare and smile, and they did it. But there was something remarkably offensive in their way of doing it, and perhaps if a few thick boots worn on the feet of rough but honest workmen had come into contact with their smooth personalities on their way out of Madame Modiste's establishment, it might have done them good and taught

them a useful lesson. Needless to say that the prices of the Madame Modiste who could set forth such an exhibition of melodramatically designated feminine apparel as "The Night has a Thousand Eyes," or "Spring's Delirium," were in suitable proportion to a "frenzied song of amorous things." Such amorous things as are "created" in her establishment are likely to make husbands and fathers know exactly what "a frenzied song" means. When the payment of the bills is concerned, they will probably sing that "frenzied song" themselves.

It is quite easy to dress well and tastefully without spending a very great deal of money. It certainly requires brain — thought — foresight — taste — and comprehension of the harmony of colours. But the blind following of a fashion because Madame This or That says it is "chic" or "le dernier cri," on some parrot-like recommendation of the sort, is mere stupidity on the part of the followers. To run up long credit for dresses, without the least idea how the account is ever going to be paid, is nothing less than a criminal act. It is simply fraud. And such fraud re-acts on the whole community.

Extravagant taste in dress is infectious. Most of us are impressed by the King's sensible and earnest desire that the Press should use its influence for good in fostering amity between ourselves and foreign countries. If the Press would equally use its efforts to discourage florid descriptions of dress in their columns, much of the wild and wilful extravagance which is frequently the ruin of otherwise happy homes, might be avoided. When Lady A sees her loathëd rival Lady B's dress described in half a column of newspaper "gush" she straight-

way yearns and schemes for a whole column of the same kind. When simple country girls read the amazing items of the "toilettes" worn by some notorious "demi-mondaine," they begin to wonder how it is she has such things, and to speculate as to whether they will ever be able to obtain similar glorified apparel for themselves. And so the evil grows, till by and by it becomes a pernicious disease, and women look superciliously at one another, not for what they are, but merely to estimate the quality and style of what they put on their backs. Virtue goes to the wall if it does not wear a fashionable frock. Vice is welcomed everywhere if it is clothed in a Paris "creation." Nevertheless, Ben Jonson's lines still hold good:

> Still to be neat, still to be drest,
> As you were going to a feast;
> Still to be powder'd, still perfumed:
> Lady, it is to be presumed,
> Though art's hid causes are not found
> All is not sweet, all is not sound.

"All is not sweet, all is not sound," when women think little or nothing of ordering extravagant costumes which they well know they will never be able to pay for, unless through some dishonourable means, such as gambling at Bridge for example. Madame Modiste is quite prepared for such an exigency, for she does not forget to show "creations" in clothes which, she softly purrs, are "suitable for Bridge parties." They may possibly be called—"The Tricky Trump"—or "The Dazzling of a Glance too long" or "The Deft Impress of a Finger nail"! One never knows!

Any amount of fashion papers find their way into

the average British household, containing rabid nonsense such as the following:

"There were wonderful stories afloat about Miss B's dresses. Rumour has it that a dressmaker came over specially from New York to requisition the services of the most important artistes in Paris, and gold lace and hand embroidery were used with no frugal hand; yet, *despite this* and the warm welcome accorded her by an English audience, Miss B does not seem to have made up her mind to stay with us long, for it is said the end of June will see the end of her season. We have sketched her in her pink chiffon wrap, which is made in the Empire shape covered with chiffon and decorated with bunches of chiffon flowers and green leaves held with bows of pink satin—a most dainty affair, full of delicate detail and pre-eminently becoming."

"Despite this,"—is rich indeed! Despite the fact that "gold lace and hand-embroidery" were used "with no frugal hand," Miss B is determined to leave "the gay, the gay and glittering scene," and deprive us of her "pink chiffon wrap in the Empire shape"! A positively disastrous conclusion! Nay, but hearken to the maudlin murmurs of the crazed worshippers of Mumbo-Jumbo "Fashion"—

"Do you yearn for a grey muslin dress? Half my 'smart girl' acquaintances are buying grey muslins as though their lives depended on it. I fell in love with one of them that was in bouilloné gathers all round the skirt to within eight inches of the hem, while the yoke had similar but smaller bouillonés run through, well below the shoulder-line, with a wide chiné ribbon knotted low in front. Beneath this encircling ribbon the bodice pouched in

blouse fashion over a chiné waist-ribbon to match, with long pendant ends one side; the sleeves were a distinct novelty, being set in a number of small puffs below one big one, a chiné ribbon being knotted around the arm between each puff."

"Do you 'yearn' for a grey muslin dress?" O ye gods! One is reminded of a comic passage in the "Artemus Ward" papers, where it is related how a lady of the "Free Love" persuasion rushed at the American humorist, brandishing a cotton umbrella and crying out: "Dost thou not yearn for me?" to which adjuration Artemus replied, while he "dodged" the umbrella—"Not a yearn!"

"I should like,"—says one of the poor imbecile "dress" devotees, "the skirt finished off with a wadded hem, or perhaps a few folds of satin, but otherwise it should be left severely plain. These satin, brocade, or velvet dresses should stand or fall by their own merits, and never be over-elaborated."

True! And is it "a wadded hem" or a padded room that should "finish off" these people who spread the madness of clothes far and wide till it becomes a positively dangerous and immoral infection? One wonders! For there is no more mischievous wickedness in society to-day than the flamboyant, exuberant, wilful extravagance of women's dress. It has far exceeded the natural and pretty vanity of permissible charm, good taste and elegance. It has become a riotous waste,—an ugly disease of moral principle, ending at last in the disgrace and death of many a woman's good name.

THE DECAY OF HOME LIFE IN ENGLAND

WHEN people tell the truth they are generally disliked. From Socrates, to the latest of his modern philosophic imitators, the bowl of death-dealing hemlock has always been mixed by the world and held to the lips of those who dare to say uncomfortably plain things. When the late W. E. H. Lecky set down the truth of Cecil Rhodes, in his book entitled *The Map of Life*, and I, the present writer, ventured to quote the passage in "The Vulgarity of Wealth," when that article was first published, a number of uninformed individuals rashly accused me of "abusing Cecil Rhodes." They were naturally afraid to attack the greater writer. Inasmuch, said they: "If Mr. Lecky had *really* suggested that Cecil Rhodes was not, like Brutus, 'an honourable man,' he, Mr. Lecky, would never have received the King's new 'Order of Merit,' nor would Mr. Rhodes have been the subject of so much eulogy. For, of course, the King has read *The Map of Life*, and is aware of the assertions contained in it." Now I wish, dear gossips all, you would read *The Map of Life* for yourselves! You will find, if you do, not only plain facts concerning Rhodes, and the vulgarity, i.e. the ostentation of wealth, but much useful information on sundry other matters closely

concerning various manners and customs of the present day. For one example, consider the following :

" The amount of pure and almost spontaneous malevolence in the world is probably far greater than we at first imagine. . . . No one, for example, can study the anonymous press, without perceiving how large a part of it is employed *systematically*, *persistently* and *deliberately* in fostering class, or individual or international hatreds, and often *in circulating falsehoods to attain this end.* Many newspapers notoriously depend for their existence on such appeals, and more than any other instruments, they inflame and perpetuate those permanent animosities which most endanger the peace of mankind. The fact that such newspapers are becoming in many countries the main and almost exclusive reading of the million, forms the most serious deduction from the value of modern education."

Let it be noted, once and for all, that it is not the present writer who thus speaks of " the anonymous press," but the experienced, brilliant and unprejudiced scholar who was among the first to hold the King's " Order of Merit." And so once again to our muttons :—

" Some of the very worst acts of which man can be guilty are acts which are commonly untouched by law, and only faintly censured by opinion. Political crimes, which a false and sickly sentiment so readily condones, are conspicuous among them. Men who have been gambling for wealth and power with the lives and fortunes of multitudes ; men who for their own personal ambition are prepared

to sacrifice the most vital interests of their country; men, who in time of great national danger and excitement deliberately launch falsehood after falsehood in the public press, in the well-founded conviction that they will do their evil work before they can be contradicted, may be met shameless and almost uncensured in Parliaments and drawing-rooms. The amount of false statements in the world which cannot be attributed to mere carelessness, inaccuracy or exaggeration, but which is plainly both deliberate and malevolent, can hardly be overrated. Sometimes it is due to a mere desire to create a lucrative sensation, or to gratify a personal dislike, or even to an unprovoked malevolence which takes pleasure in inflicting pain. * * * Very often it (i.e. the false statement in the press) is intended for purposes of stock-jobbing. The financial world is percolated with it. It is the common method of raising or depreciating securities, attracting investors, preying upon the ignorant and credulous, and enabling dishonest men to rise rapidly to fortune. When the prospect of speedy wealth is in sight, there are always numbers who are perfectly prepared to pursue courses involving the utter ruin of multitudes, endangering the most serious international interests, perhaps bringing down upon the world all the calamities of war. . . . It is much to be questioned whether the greatest criminals are to be found within the walls of prisons. Dishonesty on a small scale nearly always finds its punishment. Dishonesty on a gigantic scale continually escapes. . . . In the management of companies, in the great fields of industrial enterprise and speculation, gigantic fortunes are acquired

by the ruin of multitudes; and by methods which though they avoid legal penalties are essentially fraudulent. In the majority of cases these crimes are perpetrated by educated men who are in possession of all the necessaries, of most comforts, and of many luxuries of life, and some of the worst of them are powerfully favoured by the conditions of modern civilization. There is no greater scandal or moral evil in our time than the readiness with which public opinion excuses them, and the influence and social position it accords to mere wealth, even when it has been acquired by notorious dishonesty, or when it is expended with absolute selfishness or in ways that are absolutely demoralising. In many respects the moral progress of mankind seems to me incontestable, but it is extremely doubtful whether in this respect, social morality, especially in England and America, has not seriously retrograded."

Now had I written the foregoing lines, some hundred or so of pleasant newspaper friends would have accused me of "screaming" out a denunciation of wealth, or of "railing" against society. But as Lecky,—with the King's "Order of Merit," appended to his distinguished name,—was the real author of the quotation, I am not without hope that his views may be judged worthy of consideration, even though his works may not be as thoughtfully studied as their excellence merits. It is not I—it was Mr. Lecky, who doubted whether "social

morality both in England and America, had not seriously retrograded." But, if it has so retrograded, there need be very little difficulty in tracing the retrogression to its direct source,—namely, to the carelessness, vanity, extravagance, lack of high principle, and entire lapse of dignity in the women who constitute and lead what is called the Smart Set. These women cannot be termed as of the Aristocracy, for the Aristocracy, (by which term I mean those who are lineally entitled to be considered the actual British nobility, and not the mushroom creations of yesterday), will, more often than not, decline to have anything to do with them. True, there are some "great" ladies, who have deliberately and voluntarily fallen from their high estate in the sight of a scandalised public, and who, by birth and breeding, should assuredly have possessed more pride and self-respect, than to wilfully descend into the mire. But the very fact that these few have so lamentably failed to support the responsibilities of their position, makes it all the sadder for the many good and true women of noble family who endeavour, as best they may, to stem the tide of harmful circumstance, and to show by the retired simplicity and intellectual charm of their own lives, that though society is fast becoming a disordered wilderness of American and South African "scrub," there yet remains within it a flourishing scion of the brave old English Oak of Honour, guarded by the plain device "Noblesse Oblige."

The influence of women bears perhaps more strongly than any other power on the position and supremacy of a country. Corrupt women make

a corrupt State,—noble, God-fearing women make a noble, God-fearing people. It is not too much to say that the prosperity or adversity of a nation rests in the hands of its women. They are the mothers of the men,—they make and mould the characters of their sons. And the centre of their influence should be, as Nature intended it to be, the Home. Home is the pivot round which the wheel of a country's highest statesmanship should revolve,—the preservation of Home, its interests, its duties and principles, should be the aim of every good citizen. But with the "retrogression of social morality," as Mr. Lecky phrased it, and as part and parcel of that backward action and movement, has gone the gradual decay of home life, and a growing indifference to home as a centre of attraction and influence, together with the undermining of family ties and affections, which, rightly used and considered, should form the strongest bulwark to our national strength. The love of home,—the desire to *make* a home,—is far stronger in the poorer classes nowadays than in the wealthy or even the moderately rich of the general community. Women of the "upper ten" are no longer pre-eminent as rulers of the home, but are to be seen daily and nightly as noisy and pushing frequenters of public restaurants. The great lady is seldom or never to be found "at home" on her own domain,—but she may be easily met at the Carlton, Prince's, or the Berkeley (on Sundays). The old-world châtelaine of a great house who took pride in looking after the comfort of all her retainers, —who displayed an active interest in every detail of management,—surrounding herself with choice

furniture, fine pictures, sweet linen, beautiful flowers, and home delicates of her own personal make or supervision, is becoming well-nigh obsolete. "It is such a bore being at home!" is quite an ordinary phrase with the gawk-girl of the present day, who has no idea of the value of rest as an aid to beauty, or of the healthful and strengthening influences of a quiet and well-cultivated mind, and who has made herself what is sometimes casually termed a "sight" by her skill at hockey, her speed in cycling, and her general "rushing about," in order to get anywhere away from the detested "home." The mother of a family now aspires to seem as young as her daughters, and among the vanishing graces of society may be noted the grace of old age. Nobody is old nowadays. Men of sixty wed girls of sixteen, women of fifty lead boys of twenty to the sacrificial altar. Such things are repulsive, abominable and unnatural, but they are done every day, and a certain "social set," smirk the usual conventional hypocritical approval, few having the courage to protest against what they must inwardly recognize as both outrageous and indecent. The real "old" lady, the real "old" gentleman will soon be counted among the "rare and curious" specimens of the race. The mother who was *not* "married at sixteen," will ere long be a remarkable prodigy, and the paterfamilias who never explains that he "made an unfortunate marriage when quite a boy," will rank beside her as a companion phenomenon. We have only to scan the pages of those periodicals which cater specially for fashionable folk, to see what a frantic dread of age pervades all classes

of pleasure-loving society. The innumerable nostrums for removing wrinkles, massaging or "steaming" the complexion, the "coverings" for thin hair, the "rays," of gold or copper or auburn, which are cunningly contrived for grey, or to use the more polite word, "faded," tresses, the great army of manicurists, masseurs and "beauty-specialists," who, in the most clever way, manage to make comfortable incomes out of the general panic which apparently prevails among their patrons at the inflexible, unstoppable march of Time, —all these things are striking proofs of the constant desperate fight kept up by a large and foolish majority against the laws of God and of Nature. Nor is the category confined to persons of admittedly weak intellect, as might readily be imagined, for just as the sapient Mr. Andrew Lang has almost been convicted of a hesitating faith in magic crystals, (God save him!) so are the names of many men, eminent in scholarship and politics, "down on the list" of the dyer, the steamer, the padder, the muscle-improver, the nail-polisher, the wrinkle-remover, and the eye-embellisher. Which facts, though apparently trivial, are so many brief hints of a "giving" in the masculine stamina. "It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman." Vide *Hamlet*. Such it may be,—let us hope that such it is.

No doubt much of this fantastic dread of "looking old," arises from the fact that nowadays age, instead of receiving the honour it merits, is frequently made the butt of ignorant and vulgar ridicule. One exception alone is allowed in the case of our gracious Queen Alexandra, who supports

her years with so much ease and scarcely diminished beauty. But there are hosts of other women beside the Queen whom it would seem that "age cannot wither,"—Sarah Bernhardt, for example, whose brilliant vitality is the envy of all her feminine compeers; while many leading "beauties" who never scored a success in their teens, are now trampling triumphantly over men's hearts in their forties. Nevertheless the boorish sections of the Press and of society take a special delight, (Mr. Lecky calls it "pure malevolence,") in making the advance of age a subject for coarse jesting, whereas if rightly viewed, the decline of the body is merely the natural withering of that chrysalis which contains the ever young and immortal Soul. Forced asunder by the strength of unfolding wings, the chrysalis *must* break; and its breaking should not cause regret, but joy. Of course if faith in God is a mere dead letter, and poor humanity is taught to consider this brief life as our sole beginning and end, I can quite imagine that the advance of years may be looked upon with dislike and fear,—though scarcely with ridicule. But for the happy beings who are conscious that while the body grows weaker, the Soul grows stronger,—who feel that behind this mere passing "reflection" of Life, the real Life awaits them, age has no drawbacks and no forebodings of evil. The prevailing dread of it, and the universal fighting against it, betoken an insecure and wholly materialistic mental attitude.

Of the feminine indulgence in complexion cures, combined with the deplorable lack of common sense, which shows itself in the constant consultation of palmists and clairvoyants, while home and

family duties are completely neglected or forgotten, the less said the better. By such conduct women appear to be voluntarily straying back to the dark ages when people believed in witches and soothsayers, and would pay five shillings or more to see the faces of their future husbands in the village well. Happy the man who, at the crucial moment, looked over the shoulder of the enquiring maiden! He was sure to be accepted on the value of his own mirrored reflection, apart altogether from his possible personal merits. To this day in Devonshire, many young women believe in the demoniacal abilities of a harmless old gentleman who leads a retired life on the moors, and who is supposed to be able to "do something to somebody." It would be a hard task to explain the real meaning of this somewhat vague phrase, but the following solution can be safely given without any harm accruing. It works out in this way: If you know "somebody," who is unpleasant to you, go to this old gentleman and give him five shillings, and he will "do something"—never mind what. It may be safely prophesied that he will spend the five shillings; the rest is involved in mystery. Now, however silly this superstition on the part of poor Devonshire maids may be, it is not a whit more so than the behaviour of the so-called "cultured" woman of fashion who spends a couple of guineas in one of the rooms or "salons," near Bond Street, on the fraudulent rascal of a "palmist," or "crystal-gazer," who has the impudence and presumption to pretend to know her past and her future. It is a wonder that the women who patronize these professional cheats have not more self-respect than

to enter such dens, where the crime of "obtaining money on false pretences" is daily practised without the intervention of the law. But all the mischief starts from the same source,—neglect of home, indifference to home duties, and the constant "gadding-about" which seems to be the principal delight and aim of women who are amply supplied with the means of subsistence, either through inherited fortune, or through marriage with a wealthy partner, and who consider themselves totally exempt from the divine necessity of Work. Yet these are truly the very ones whose duty it is to work the hardest, because "Unto whom much is given even from him (or her) shall much be required." No woman who has a home need ever be idle. If she employs her time properly, she will find no leisure for gossiping, scandal-mongering, moping, grumbling, "fadding," fortune-telling or crystal-gazing. Of course, if she "manages" her household merely through a paid housekeeper, she cannot be said to govern the establishment at all. The housekeeper is the real mistress, and very soon secures such a position of authority, that the lady who employs and pays her scarcely dare give an order without her. Speaking on this subject a few days ago with a distinguished and mild-tempered gentleman, who has long ceased to expect any comfort or pleasure in the magnificent house his wealth pays for, but which under its present government might as well be a hotel where he is sometimes allowed to take the head of the table, he said to me, with an air of quiet resignation:—"Ladies have so many more interests nowadays than in my father's time. They do so many things. It is really be-

wildering! My wife, for example, is always out. She has so many engagements. She has scarcely five minutes to herself, and is often quite knocked up with fatigue and excitement. She has no time to attend to housekeeping, and of course the children are almost entirely with their nurse and governess." This description applies to most households of a fashionable or "smart" character, and shows what a topsy-turveydom of the laws of Nature is allowed to pass muster, and to even meet with general approval. The "wife" of whom my honourable and distinguished friend spoke to me, rises languidly from her bed at eleven, and occupies all her time till two o'clock in dressing, manicuring, "transforming" and "massaging." She also receives and sends a few telegrams. At two o'clock she goes out in her carriage and lunches with some chosen intimates at one or other of the fashionable restaurants. Lunch over, she returns home and lies down for an hour. Then she arrays herself in an elaborate tea gown and receives a favoured few in her boudoir, where over a cup of tea she assists to tear into piecemeal portions the characters of her dearest friends. Another "rest" and again the business of the toilette is resumed. When *en grande tenue* she either goes out to dinner, or entertains a large party of guests at her own table. A *tête-à-tête* meal with her husband would appear to her in the light of a positive calamity. She stays up playing "Bridge" till two or three o'clock in the morning, and retires to bed more or less exhausted, and can only sleep with the aid of narcotics. She resumes the same useless existence, and perpetrates the same wicked waste of

time again the next day and every day. Her children she scarcely sees, and the management of her house is entirely removed from her hands. The housekeeper takes all the accounts to her husband, who meekly pays the same, and lives for the most part at his club, or at the houses of his various sporting friends. "Home" is for him a mere farce. He knew what it was in his mother's day, when his grand old historical seat was a home indeed, and all the members of the family, young and old, looked upon it as the chief centre of attraction, and the garnering-point of love and faith and confidence; but since he grew up to manhood, and took for his life-partner a rapid lady of the new Motor-School of Morals, he stands like Marius among the ruins of Carthage, contemplating the complete wreckage of his ship of life, and knowing sadly enough that he can never sail the seas of hope again.

The word "Home" has, or used to have, a very sacred meaning, and is peculiarly British. The French have no such term. "Chez-moi" or "chez-soi" are poor substitutes, and indeed none of the Latin races appear to have any expression which properly conveys the real sentiment. The Germans have it, and their "Heimweh" is as significant as our "home-sickness." The Germans are essentially a home-loving people, and this may be said of all Teutonic, Norse and Scandinavian races. By far the strongest blood of the British is inherited from the North,—and as a rule the natural tendency in the pure Briton is one of scorn for the changeful, vagrant, idle, careless and semi-pagan temperament of southern nations. As the

last of our real Laureates sang in his own matchless way:

> Oh, tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each
> That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
> And dark and true and tender is the North!
>
> Oh, tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown;
> Say that I do but wanton in the South,
> But in the North, long since, my nest is made!

"My nest is made," is the ultimatum of the lover,—the "nest" or the home being the natural centre of the circle of man's ambition. A happy home is the best and surest safeguard against all evil; and where home is not happy, there the devil may freely enter and find his hands full. With women, and women only, this happiness in the home must find its foundation. They only are responsible; for no matter how wild and erring a man may be, if he can always rely on finding somewhere in the world a peaceful, well-ordered, and *undishonoured* home, he will feel the saving grace of it sooner or later, and turn to it as the one bright beacon in a darkening wilderness. But if he knows that it is a mere hostelry,—that his wife has no pride in it,—that other men than himself have found the right to enter there,—that his servants mock him behind his back as a poor, weak, credulous fool, who has lost all claim to mastership or control, he grows to hate the very walls of the dwelling, and does his best to lose himself and his miseries in a whirlpool of dissipation and folly, which too often ends in premature breakdown and death.

One often wonders if the "smart" ladies who

cast aside the quiet joys of home life, in exchange for a jostling "feed" at the Carlton or other similar resorts, have any idea of the opinion entertained of their conduct by that Great Majority, the People? The People,—without whom their favoured political candidates would stand no chance of election,—the People, without whose willing work, performed under the heavy strain of cruel and increasing competition, they would be unable to enjoy the costly luxuries they deem indispensable to their lives,—the People, who, standing in their millions outside "society" and its endless intrigues,—outside a complaisant or subsidized Press,—outside all, save God and the Right,—pass judgment on the events of the day, and entertain their own strong views thereon, which, though such views may not find any printed outlet, do nevertheless make themselves felt in various unmistakable ways. Latterly, there has been a great clamour about servants and the lack of them. It is quite true that many ladies find it difficult to secure servants, and that even when they do secure them, they often turn out badly, being of an untrained and incompetent class. But why is this? No doubt many causes work together to make up the sum of deficiency or inefficiency, but one reason can be given which is possibly entirely unsuspected. It is a reason which will no doubt astonish some, and awaken the tittering ridicule of many, but the fact remains unalterable, despite incredulity and denial. There is really no lack of competent domestic servants. On the contrary, there are plenty of respectable, willing, smart, well-instructed girls in the country, who would make what are

called "treasures" in the way of housemaids, parlourmaids and lady's-maids, but whose parents stubbornly refuse to let them enter any situation until they know something of the character of the mistress with whom they are expected to reside, and the general reputation of the house or "home" they are to enter. I could name dozens of cases where girls, on enquiry, have actually declined lucrative situations, and contented themselves with work at lower wages, rather than be known as "in service" with certain distinguished ladies. "My girl," says a farmer's wife, "is a clean, wholesome, steady lass; I'd rather keep her by me for a bit than see her mixing herself up with the fashionable folk, who are always getting into the divorce court." This may be a bitter pill of information for the "smart set" to swallow; but there is no exaggeration in the statement that the working classes have very little respect left nowadays for the ladies of the "Upper Ten," and many of the wives of honest farmers, mechanics and tradesmen would consider that they were voluntarily handing over their daughters to temptation and disgrace by allowing them to enter domestic service with certain society leaders, who, though bearing well-known names, are branded by equally well-known "easy virtue."

Does any one at this time of day recall a certain chapter in the immortal story of *Bleak House*, by Charles Dickens, when Mr. Rouncewell, the iron-master, a mere tradesman in the opinion of that haughty old aristocrat, Sir Leicester Dedlock, desires to remove the pretty girl, Rosa, lady's-maid to Lady Dedlock, at once from her situation, if

she is to marry his son? An extract from this scene may not here be altogether out of place.

Lady Dedlock has enquired of the iron-master if the love-affair between her lady's-maid and his son is still going on, and receives an answer in the affirmative.

"'If you remember anything so unimportant,' he says—'which is not to be expected—you would recollect that my first thought in the affair was directly opposed to her remaining here.'

"Dismiss the Dedlock patronage from consideration? Oh! Sir Leicester is bound to believe a pair of ears that have been handed down to him through such a family, or he really might have mistrusted their report of the iron-gentleman's observation!

"'It is not necessary,' observes my Lady, in her coldest manner, before he can do anything but breathe amazedly, 'to enter into these matters on either side. The girl is a very good girl; I have nothing whatever to say against her; but she is so far insensible to her many advantages and her good fortune, that she is in love—or supposes she is, poor little fool—and unable to appreciate them.'

"Sir Leicester begs to observe that wholly alters the case. He might have been sure that my Lady had the best grounds and reasons in support of her view. He entirely agrees with my Lady. The young woman had better go.

"'As Sir Leicester observed, Mr. Rouncewell, on the last occasion when we were fatigued by this business,' Lady Dedlock languidly proceeds,

'we cannot make conditions with you. Without conditions, and under present circumstances, the girl is quite misplaced here and had better go. I have told her so. Would you wish to have her sent back to the village, or would you like to take her with you, or what would you prefer ? '

" ' Lady Dedlock, if I may speak plainly——'

" ' By all means.'

" ' I should prefer the course which will the sooner relieve you of the encumbrance, *and remove her from her present position.*'

" ' And to speak as plainly,' she returns, with the same studied carelessness, " ' so should I. Do I understand that you will take her with you ? '

" The iron-gentleman makes an iron bow.

* * * * *

" ' Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock,' says Mr. Rouncewell, after a pause of a few moments ; ' I beg to take my leave with an apology for having again troubled you. I can very well understand, I assure you, how very tiresome so small a matter must have become to Lady Dedlock. If I am doubtful on my dealing with it, it is only *because I did not at first quietly exert my influence to take my young friend here away* without troubling you at all. I hope you will excuse my want of acquaintance with the polite world."

As a matter of fact, certain rumours against Lady Dedlock's reputation, and hints as to her " past," have come to the ears of the honest tradesman, and he prefers to remove his son's betrothed wife from the contact of a possible pernicious influ-

ence. The very same thing is done scores of times over in many similar cases to-day.

No one knows the real character and disposition of the mistress of a home better than the servants she employs, and if she is honoured and loved by her domestics, she stands on surer ground than the praise or flattery of her fashionable friends. It is all a question of "home" again. A real home is a home to all connected with it. The very kitchen-maid employed in it, the boy who runs errands for the house; indeed every servant, from the lowest to the highest, should feel that their surroundings are truly "homelike,"—that things are well-ordered, peaceful and happy; that the presiding spirit of the place, the mistress, is contented with her life, and cheerfully interested in the welfare of all around her,—then "all things work together for good," and the house becomes a bulwark against adversity, a harbour in storm, a "nest" indeed, where warmth, repose, and mutual trust and help make the days sweet and the nights calm. But where the mistress is scarcely ever at home,—when she prefers public restaurants to her own dining-room,—when with each change of the seasons she is gadding about somewhere, and avoiding home as much as possible, how is it to be expected that even servants will care to stay with her, or ever learn to admire and respect her? Peace and happiness are hers to possess in the natural and God-given ways of home life, if she chooses,—but if she turns aside from her real sovereignty, throws down her sceptre and plays with the sticks and straws of the "half-world," she has only herself to blame if the end should prove but dire confusion and the bitterness of strife.

Apart altogether from the individual dignity and self-poise which are invariably lacking to the "vagrant," or home despising human being, the decay of home life in England is a serious menace to the Empire's future strength. If our coming race of men have been accustomed to see their mothers indulging in a kind of high-class public house feasting, combined with public house morals, and have learned from them an absolute indifference to home and home ties, they in their turn will do likewise and live as "vagrants,"—here, there and everywhere, rather than as well-established, self-respecting citizens and patriots, proud of their country, and proud of the right to defend their homes. Even as it is, there are not wanting signs of a general "wandering," tendency, combined with morbid apathy and sickly inertia. "One place is as good as another," says one section of society, and "anything is better than the English climate," says another, preparing to pack off to Egypt or the Riviera at the first snap of winter. These opinions are an exact reversion of those expressed by our sturdy, patriotic forefathers, who made the glory of Great Britain. "There is no place like England" was their sworn conviction, and "no place like home" was the essence of their national sentiment. The English climate, too, was quite good enough for them, and they made the best of it. When will the "Smart Set" grasp the fact that the much-abused weather, whatever it may be, is pretty much the same all over Europe? The Riviera is no warmer than the Cornish coast, but *certes* it is better provided with hotels, and—chiefest attraction of all—it

has a Gambling Hell. The delights of Monte Carlo and "Home," are as far apart as the poles; and those who seek the one cannot be expected to appreciate the other. But such English women as are met at the foreign gambling-tables, season after season, may be looked upon as the deliberate destroyers of all that is best and strongest in our national life, in the sanctity of Home, and the beauty of home affections. The English Home used to be a model to the world;—with a few more scandalous divorce cases in high life, it will become a by-word for the mockery of nations. The following from the current Press is sufficiently instructive:

"The crowd of well-dressed women who daily throng the court during the hearing of the . . . case and follow with such intense eagerness every incident in the dissection of a woman's honour afford a remarkable object-lesson in contemporary social progress.

"Ladies, richly garbed, who drive up in smart broughams, emblazoned carriages, and motor-cars, and are representative of the best known families in the land, fight and scramble for a seat, criticize the proceedings in a low monotone, and, without the smallest indication of a blush, balance every point made by counsel, and follow with keen apprehension the most suggestive evidence.

"Others, no less intensely interested in the sordid details of divorce, come on foot—women of the great well-to-do middle-class, who have all their lives had the advantage of refined and educated surroundings. Some are old, with silvery

hair; others are middle-aged women, who bring comely daughters still in their teens; others are in the first flush of womanhood; but they all crowd into the narrow court and struggle to get a glimpse of the chief actors in the drama, and listen to the testimony which would convict them of dishonour."

No one in their sober senses will call any of these women fit to rule their homes, or to be examples to their children. Unblushingly indecent, and unspeakably vulgar, their brazen effrontery and shameless interest in the revolting details of a revolting case, have shown them to be beyond the pale of all true womanhood, and utterly unfit to be the mothers of our future men, or guardians of the honour of home and family. There is no "railing" against society in this assertion; the plain facts speak for themselves.

The charm of home depends, of course, entirely on the upbringing and character of the inmates. Stupid and illiterate people make a dull fireside. Morbid faddists, always talking and thinking about themselves, put the fire out altogether. If I were asked my opinion as to the chief talent or gift for making a home happy, I should without a moment's hesitation, reply, "Cheerfulness." A cheerful spirit, always looking on the bright side, and determined to make the best of everything, is the choicest blessing and the brightest charm of home. People with a turn for grumbling should certainly live in hotels and dine at restaurants. They will never understand how to make, or to keep, a home as it should be. But, given a cheerful,

equable, and active temperament, there is nothing sweeter, happier or safer for the human being than Home, and the life which centres within it, and the duties concerning it which demand our attention and care. There is no need for women to wander far afield for an outlet to their energies. Their work waits for them at their own doors, in the town or village where they reside. No end of useful, kind and neighbourly things are to hand for their doing,—every day can be filled, like a basket of flowers, full of good deeds and gentle words by every woman, poor or rich, who has either cottage or mansion which she can truly call "Home." Home is a simple background, against which the star of womanhood shines brightest and best. The modern "gad-about" who suggests a composition of female chimpanzee and fashionable "Johnny" combined, is a kind of sexless creature for whom "Home" would only be a cage in the general menagerie. She (or It) would merely occupy the time in scrambling about from perch to perch, screaming on the slightest provocation, and snapping at such other similar neuter creatures who chanced to possess longer or more bushy tails. And it is a pity such an example should be thought worthy of imitation by any woman claiming to possess the advantage of human reason. But the Chimpanzee type of female is just now singularly *en evidence,* having a habit of pushing to the front on all occasions, and performing such strange antics as call for public protest, and keep the grinding machinery of the law only too busy. The Press, too, pays an enormous amount of unnecessary attention to the performances of these more or less immodest

animals, so that it sometimes seems to our Continental neighbours as if we, as a nation, had no real women left, but only chimpanzees. There are, however, slight stirrings of a movement among the true "ladies" of England, those who stand more or less aloof from the "smart set,"—a movement indicative of "drawing the line somewhere." It is possible that there may yet be a revival of "Home" and its various lost graces and dignities. We may even hear of doors that will not open to millionaires simply *because* they are millionaires. Only the other day a very great lady said to her sister in my hearing: "No, I shall not 'present' my two girls at all. Society is perfectly demoralised, and I would rather the children remained out of it, so far as London is concerned. They are much happier in the country than in town, and much healthier, and I want to keep them so. Besides, they love their home!"

Herein is the saving grace of life,—to love one's home. Love of home implies lovable people dwelling in the charmed circle,—tender hearts, quick to respond to every word of love, every whisper of confidence, every caress. The homeless man is the restless and unhappy man, for ever seeking what he cannot find. The homeless woman is still more to be pitied, being entirely and hopelessly out of her natural element. And the marked tendency which exists nowadays to avoid home life is wholly mischievous. Women complain that home is "dull," "quiet," "monotonous," "lonely," and blame it for all sorts of evils which exist only in themselves. If a woman cannot be a few hours alone without finding her house "dull," her mind

must be on the verge of lunacy. The sense of being unable to endure one's own company augurs ill for the moral equilibrium. To preserve good health and sound nerves, women should always make it a rule to be quite alone at least for a couple of hours in the course of each day. Let them take that space to think, to read, to rest, and mentally review their own thoughts, words and actions in the light of a quiet conscience-time of pause and meditation. Home is the best place so to rest and meditate,—and the hours that are spent in thinking how to make that home happier will never be wasted. It should be very seriously borne in mind that it is only in the home life that marriage can be proved successful or the reverse, and, to quote Mr. Lecky once more:

"A moral basis of sterling qualities is of capital importance. A true, honest and trustworthy nature, capable of self-sacrifice and self-restraint, should rank in the first line, and after that, a kindly, equable and contented temper, a power of sympathy, a habit of looking at the better and brighter side of men and things. Of intellectual qualities, judgment, tact and order, are perhaps the most valuable. . . . Grace and the charm of manner will retain their full attraction to the last. They brighten in innumerable ways the little things of life, and life is mainly made up of little things, exposed to petty frictions, and requiring small decisions and small sacrifices. Wide interests and large appreciations are in the marriage relation more important than any great constructive or creative talent, and the power to soothe, to sym-

pathize, to counsel and to endure than the highest qualities of the hero or the saint. It is by this alone that the married life attains its full perfection."

And when we hear, as we so often do, of the complete failure and deplorable disaster attending many marriages, let us look for the root of the evil at its foundation,—namely the decay of home life, the neglect and avoidance of home and home duties,—the indifference to, or scorn of home influence. For whenever any woman, rich or poor, high in rank or of humble estate, throws these aside, and turns her back on Home, her own natural, beautiful and thrice-blessed sphere of action, she performs what would be called the crazed act of a queen, who, called to highest sovereignty, casts away her crown, breaks her sceptre, tramples on her royal robes, and steps from her throne, *down* ;—down into the dust of a saddened world's contempt.

SOCIETY AND SUNDAY

ACCORDING to the latest views publicly expressed by both Christian and un-Christian clerics, it would appear that twentieth-century Society is not at one with Sunday. It no longer keeps the seventh day "holy." It will not go to church. It declines to listen to dull sermons delivered by dull preachers. It openly expresses its general contempt for the collection-plate. It reads its 'up-to-date' books and magazines, and says: "The Sabbath is a Jewish institution. And though the spirit of the Jew pervades my whole composition and constitution, and though I borrow money of the Jew whenever I find it convenient, there is no reason why I should follow the Jew's religious ritual. The New Testament lays no stress whatever upon the necessity of keeping the seventh day holy. On the contrary, it tells us that 'the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'"

This is true enough. It is a difficult point to get over. And despite the fact that the sovereign rulers of the realm most strictly set the example to all their subjects of attending Divine service at least once on Sunday, this example is just the very one among the various leading patterns of life offered by the King and Queen which Society blandly sets aside with a smile. For, notwith-

standing the constant painstaking production of exquisitely printed Prayer-books, elegantly bound in ivory, silver, morocco leather, and silk velvet, Society is not often seen nowadays with these little emblems of piety in its be-ringed and be-bangled hands. It prefers a pack of cards. Its ears are more attuned to the hissing rush of the motor than to the solemn sound of sacred psalmody ; and the dust of the high-road, compounded with the oil-stench of the newest and fastest automobile, offers a more grateful odour to its nostrils than the perfume of virginal lilies on the altar of worship. *Autres temps, autres mœurs* ! People who believe in nothing have no need of prayer. A social " set " that grabs all it can for itself without a thank-you to either God or devil is not moved to praise. Self and the Hour ! That is the motto and watchword of Society to-day, and after Self and the Hour, what then ? Why, the Deluge, of course ! And, as happened in olden time, and will happen again, general drowning, stiflement, and silence.

There is certainly much to regret and deplore in the lack of serious thought, the neglect of piety, and the scant reverence for sacred things which, taken together, make up a spirit of callous indifferentism in our modern life, such as is likely to rob the nation in future of its backbone and nerve. It is a spirit which is gradually transforming the social community from thinking, feeling, reasonable human beings into a mere set of gambolling kangaroos, whose chief interest would seem to be centred in jumping over each other's backs, or sitting on their haunches, grinning foolishly and waving their short fore-paws at one another with

antic gestures of animal delight. They never get any "forrader," as it were. They do nothing particularly useful. They are amused, annoyed, excited, or angry (according to their different qualities of kangaroo nature) when one jumps a little higher than the other, or waves its paws a little more attractively; but their sentiments are as temporary as their passions. There is nothing to be got out of them any way, but the jumping and the paw-waving. At the same time it is extremely doubtful as to whether taking them to church on Sundays would do them good, or bring them back to the human condition. Things are too far gone—the metamorphosis is too nearly accomplished. One day is the same as another to the Society kangaroo. All days are suitable to his or her "hop, skip, and a jump." But shall there be no "worship"? What should a kangaroo worship? No "rest"? Why should a kangaroo rest? "Listen to the Reverend Mr. Soulcure's sermon, and learn how to be good!" Ya-ah! One can hear the animal scream as he or she turns a somersault at the mere suggestion and scuttles away!

Society's neglect of Sunday observance in these early days of the new century is due to many things, chiefest among these being the incapacity of the clergy to inspire interest in their hearers or to fix the attention of the general public. It is unfortunate that this should be so, but so it is. The ministers of religion fail to seize the problems of the time. They forget, or wilfully ignore, the discoveries of the age. Yet in these could be found endless subject-matter for the divinest arguments.

Religion and science, viewed broadly, do not clash so much as they combine. To the devout and deeply studious mind, the marvels of science are the truths of religion made manifest. But this is what the clergy seem to miss persistently out of all their teaching and preaching. Take, for example, the text: "In My Father's house there are many mansions." What a noble discourse could be made hereon of some of the most sublime facts of science!—of the powers of the air, of the currents of light, of the magnificent movements of the stars in their courses, of the plenitude and glory of innumerable solar systems, all upheld and guided by the same Intelligent Force which equally upholds and guides the destinies of man! Unhappily for the world in general, and for the churches in particular, preachers who select texts from Scripture in order to extract therefrom some instructive lesson that shall be salutary for their congregations, do not always remember the symbolic or allegorical manner in which such texts were originally spoken or written. To many of them the "literal" meaning is alone apparent, and they see in the "many mansions" merely a glorified Park Lane or Piccadilly, adorned with rows of elegantly commonplace dwelling-houses built of solid gold. Their conceptions of the "Father's house" are sadly limited. They cannot shake off the material from the spiritual, or get away from themselves sufficiently to understand or enter into the dumb craving of all human nature for help, for sympathy, for love—for sureness in its conceptions of God—such sureness as shall not run counter to the proved results of reason. For reason is as much the gift

of God as speech, and to kill one's intellectual aspiration in order, as some bigots would advise, to serve God more completely is the rankest blasphemy. The wilful refusal to use a great gift merely insults the Giver.

It is by obstinately declining to watch the branching-out, as it were, of the great tree of Christianity in forms which are not narrow or limited, but spacious and far-reaching, that the clergy have in a great measure lost much that they should have retained. Society has slipped altogether from their hold. Society sees for itself that too many clerics are either blatant or timorous. Some of them bully; others crawl. Some are all softness to the wealthy; all harshness to the poor. Others, again, devote themselves to the poor entirely, and neglect the wealthy, who are quite as much, if not more, in need of a "soul cure" as the most forlorn Lazarus that ever lay in the dust of the road of life. None of them seem able to cope with the great dark wave of infidelity and atheism which has swept over the modern world stealthily, but overwhelmingly, sucking many a struggling soul down into the depths of suicidal despair. And Society, making up its mind that it is neither edified nor entertained by going to church on Sunday, stays away, and turns Sunday generally to other uses. It is not particular as to what these uses are, provided they prove amusing. The old-fashioned notion of a "day of rest" or a "good" Sunday can be set aside with the church and the clergyman; the one desirable object of existence is "not to be bored." The spectre of "boredom" is always gliding in at every modern function, like the ghost

of Banquo at Macbeth's feast. To pacify and quash this terrible bogie is the chief aim and end of all the social kangaroos. The Sunday's observance used to be the bogie's great "innings"; but, with an advance in manners and morals, *nous avons changé tout cela!* And Society spends its Sundays now in a fashion which, if its great-grandmamma of the early Victorian era could only see its ways and doings, would so shock the dear, virtuous old lady that she would yearn to whip it and shut it up in a room for years on bread and water. And there is no doubt that such a wholesome régime would do it a power of good!

At the present interesting period of English history, Sunday appears to be devoutly recognized among the Upper Ten as the great "bridge" day. It is quite the fashion—the "swagger" thing—to play bridge all and every Sunday, when and whenever possible. During the London "season," the Thames serves as a picturesque setting for many of these seventh-day revelries. Little gambling-parties are organized "up the river," and houses are taken from Saturday to Monday by noted ladies of the half-world, desirous of "rooking" young men, in the sweet seclusion of their "country cots by the flowing stream"—an ambition fully realized in the results of the Sunday's steady play at bridge from noon till midnight. At a certain military centre not far from London, too, the Sunday "gaming" might possibly call for comment. It is privately carried on, of course, but—tell it not in Gath!—there is an officer's wife—there are so many officers' wives!—but this one in particular, more than the others,

moves me to the presumption of a parody on the Immortal Bard, thus :

An officer's wife had play-cards in her lap—
And dealt and dealt. "What tricks!" quoth I!
"They're tricks, you bet!" the smiling cheat replied—
"My husband is 'on duty' gone,
And 'green' young subalterns are all my game,
And till they're drained of gold and silver, too,
I'll do, I'll do, I'll do!"

And she does "do." She has found out the way to make those "green young subalterns" pay her bills and ruin themselves. It is a thoroughly up-to-date manner of spending the Sunday.

Country-house "week-end" parties are generally all bridge-parties. They are all carefully selected, with an eye to the main chance. The "play" generally begins on Saturday evening, and goes on all through Sunday up to midnight. One woman, notorious for her insensate love of gambling, lately took lessons in "cheating" at bridge before joining her country-house friends. She came away heavier in purse by five hundred pounds, but of that five hundred, one hundred and fifty had been won from a foolish little girl of eighteen, known to be the daughter of a very wealthy, but strict father. When the poor child was made to understand the extent of her losses at bridge, she was afraid to go home. So she purchased some laudanum "for the toothache," and tried to poison herself by swallowing it. Fortunately, she was rescued before it was too late, and her Spartan "dad," with tears of joy in his eyes, paid the money she had lost at cards thankfully, as a kind of ransom

to Death. But she was never again allowed to visit at that "swagger" house where she had been "rooked" so unmercifully. And when we remember how fond Society is of bragging of its little philanthropies, its "bazaars" and carefully-calculated "charities," we may, perhaps, wonder whether, among the list of good and noble deeds it declares itself capable of, it would set its face against bridge, and make "gambling-parties" once for all unfashionable and in "bad form"? This would be true philanthropy, and would be more productive of good than any amount of regular church attendance. For there is no doubt that very general sympathy is accorded to people who find that going to church is rather an irksome business. It is not as if they were often taught anything wonderfully inspiring or helpful there. They seldom have even the satisfaction of hearing the service read properly. The majority of the clergy are innocent of all elocutionary art. They read the finest passages of Scripture in the sing-song tone of a clerk detailing the items of a bill. It is a soothing style, and quickly induces sleep; but that is its only recommendation.

When not playing bridge, Society's "Sunday observance" is motoring. Flashing and fizzling all over the place, it rushes here, there, and everywhere, creating infinite dust, smelling abominably, and looking uglier than the worst demons in Dante's "Inferno." Beauty certainly goes to the wall in a motor. The hideous masks, goggles, and caps which help to make up the woman motorist's driving gear, are enough to scare the staunchest believer in the eternal attractiveness of the fair sex, while the general get-up of the men is on a par

with that of the professional stoker or engine-driver. Nevertheless, no reasonable woman ought to mind other women looking ugly if they like; while men, of course, are always men, and "masters of the planet," whether dirty or clean. And no one should really object to the "motor craze," seeing that it takes so many useless people out of one's immediate horizon and scatters them far and wide over the surface of the earth. Society uses Sunday as a special day for this "scattering," and perhaps it is doing itself no very great harm. It is getting fresh air, which it needs; it is "going the pace," which, in its fevered condition of living fast, so as to die more quickly, is natural to it; and it is seeing persons and places it never saw before in the way of country nooks and old-fashioned roadside inns, and rustic people, who stare at it with unfeigned amusement, and wonder "what the world's a'-comin' to!" Possibly it learns more in a motor drive through the heart of rural England than many sermons in church could teach it. The only thing one would venture to suggest is that in passing its Sundays in this fashion, Society should respect the Sundays of those who still elect to keep the seventh day as a day of rest. Fashionable motorists might avoid dashing recklessly through groups of country people who are peacefully wending their way to and from church. They might "slow down." They might take thoughtful heed of the little children who play unguardedly about in many a village street. They might have some little consideration for the uncertain steps of feeble and old persons who are perchance blind or deaf, and who neither see the "motor"

nor hear the warning blast of its discordant horn. In brief, it would not hurt Society to spend its Sundays with more thought for others than Itself. For the bulk and mass of the British people—the people who *are* Great Britain—still adhere to the sacred and blessed institution of a "day of rest," even if it be not a day of sermons. To thousands upon thousands of toiling men and women, Sunday is still a veritable God's day, and we may thank God for it! Nay, more; we should do our very best to keep it as "holy" as we can, if not by listening to sermons, at least by a pause in our worldly concerns, wherein we may put a stop on the wheels of work and consider within ourselves as to how and why we are working. Sunday is a day when we should ask Nature to speak to us and teach us such things as may only be mastered in silence and solitude—when the book of poems, the beautiful prose idyll, or the tender romance, may be our companion in summer under the trees, or in winter by a bright fire—and when we may stand, as it were, for a moment and take breath on the threshold of another week, bracing our energies to meet with whatever that week may hold in store for us, whether joy or sorrow. Few nations, however, view Sunday in this light. On the Continent it has long been a day of mere frivolous pleasure—and in America I know not what it is, never having experienced it. But the British Sunday, apart from all the mockery and innuendo heaped upon it by the wits and satirists of the present time and of bygone years, used to be a strong and spiritually saving force in the national existence. Dinner-parties, with a string band in attendance, and a

Parisian singer of the "café chantant" to entertain the company afterwards, were once unknown in England on a Sunday. But such "Sabbath" entertainments are quite ordinary now. The private house copies the public restaurant—more's the pity!

Nevertheless, though Society's Sunday has degenerated into a day of gambling, guzzling, and motoring in Great Britain, it is well to remember that Society in itself is so limited as to be a mere bubble on the waters of life—froth and scum, as it were, that rises to the top, merely to be skimmed off and thrown aside in any serious national crisis. The People are the life and blood of the nation, and to them Sunday remains still a "day of rest," though, perhaps, not so much as in old time a day of religion. And that it is not so much a day of religion is because so many preachers have failed in their mission. They have lost grip. There is no cause whatever for their so losing it, save such as lies within themselves. There has been no diminution in the outflow of truth from the sources of Divine instruction, but rather an increase. The wonders of the universe have been unfolded in every direction by the Creator to His creature. There is everything for the minister of God to say. Yet how little is said! "Feed my sheep!" was the command of the Master. But the sheep have cropped all the old ways of thought down to the bare ground, and their inefficient shepherds now know not where to lead them, though their Lord's command is as imperative as ever. So the flock, being hungry, have broken down the fences of tradition, and are scampering away in disorder to

fresh fields and pastures new. Society may be, and is, undoubtedly to blame for its lax manner of treating religion and religious observances; but, with all its faults, it is not so blameworthy as those teachers of the Christian faith, whose lack of attention to its needs and perplexities help to make it the heaven-scorning, God-denying, heart-sore, weary, and always dissatisfied thing it is. Society's Sunday is merely a reflex of Society's own immediate mood—the mood of killing time at all costs, even to the degradation of its own honour, for want of something better to do!

THE "STRONG" BOOK OF THE ISHBOSHETH

THERE are two trite sayings in common use with us all—one is: "Circumstances alter cases," which is English; the other is: "Autres temps, autres mœurs," which is French. But there lacks any similar epigrammatic expression to convey the complete and curious change of meaning, which by a certain occult literary process becomes gradually attached to quite ordinary words of our daily speech. "Strong," for instance, used to mean strength. It means it still, I believe, in the gymnasium. But in very choice literary circles it means "unclean." This is strange, but true. For some time past the gentle and credulous public has remained in child-like doubt as to what was really implied by a "strong" book. The gentle and credulous public has been under the impression that the word "strong" used by the guides, philosophers, and friends who review current fiction in the daily Press, meant a powerful style, a vigorous grip, a brilliant way of telling a captivating and noble story. But they have, by slow and painful degrees, found out their mistake in this direction, and they know now that a "strong" book means a nasty subject indeli-

cately treated. Whereupon they are beginning to "sheer off" any book labelled by the inner critical faculty as "strong." This must be admitted as a most unfortunate fact for those who are bending all their energies upon the writing of "strong" books, and who are wasting their powers on discussing what they euphoniously term "delicate and burning subjects"; but it is a hopeful and blessed sign of increasing education and widening intellectual perception in the masses, who will soon by their sturdy common sense win a position which is not to be "frighted with false fire." Congratulating the proprietors of *Great Thoughts* on its thousandth number, the sapient *Westminster Gazette* lately chortled forth the following lines: "A career such as our contemporary has enjoyed, shows that the taste for good reading is wider than some would have us believe. We wish *Great Thoughts* continued success." O wise judge! O learned judge! The public taste for good reading is only questioned when writers whom Thou dislikest are read by the base million!

"Art," says a certain M.A., "if it be genuine and sincere, tends ever to the lofty and the beautiful. There is no rule of art more important than the sense of modesty. Vice grows not a little by immodesty of thought." True. And immodesty of thought fulfils its mission in the "strong" book, which alone succeeds in winning the applause of that "Exclusive Set of Degenerates" known as the E.S.D. under the Masonic Scriptural sign of ISHBOSHETH (laying particular emphasis on the syllable between the "Ish" and the "eth,") who manage to obtain temporary posts on the ever-

changeful twirling treadmill of the daily press. The Ishbosheth singular is the man who praises the " strong " book—the Ishbosheth in the plural are the Exclusive Set who are sworn to put down Virtue and extol Vice. Hence the " strong " cult, also the " virile." This last excellent and expressive word has become seriously maltreated in the hands of the Ishbosheth, and is now made answerable for many sins which it did not originally represent. " Virile " is from the Latin *virilis*, a male—virility is the state and characteristic of the adult male. Applied to certain books, however, by the Ishbosheth it will be found by the discerning public to mean coarse—rough—with a literary " style " obtained by sprinkling several pages of prose with the lowest tavern-oaths, together with the name of God, pronounced " Gawd." Anything written in that fashion is at once pronounced " virile " and commands wide admiration from the Ishbosheth, particularly if it should be a story in which women are depicted at the lowest kickable depth of drab-ism to which men can drag them, while men are represented as the suffering victims of their wickedness. This peculiar kind of turncoat morality was, according to Genesis, instituted by Adam in his cowardly utterance : " The woman tempted me," as an excuse for his own base greed ; and it has apparently continued to sprout forth in various of his descendants ever since that time, especially in the community of the Ishbosheth. " Virility," therefore, being the state and characteristic of the adult male, or the adult Adam, means, according to the Ishbosheth, men's proper scorn for the sex of their mothers, and an

egotistical delight in themselves, united to a barbarous rejoicing in bad language and abandoned morals. It does not mean this in decent every-day life, of course; but it does in books—such books as are praised by the Ishbosheth.

"I don't want one of your 'strong' books," said a customer at one of the circulating libraries the other day. "Give me something I can read to my wife without being ashamed." This puts the case in a nutshell. No clean-minded man can read the modern "strong" book praised by the Ishbosheth and feel quite safe, or even quite manly in his wife's presence. He will find himself before he knows it mumbling something about the gross and fleshly temptations of a deformed gentleman with short legs; or he will grow hot-faced and awkward over the narrative of a betrayed milkmaid who enters into all the precise details of her wrongs with a more than pernicious gusto. It is true that he will probably chance upon no worse or more revolting circumstances of human life than are dished up for the general Improvement of Public Morals in our halfpenny dailies; but he will realize, if he be a man of sense, that whereas the divorce court and police cases in the newspaper are very soon forgotten, the impression of a "strong" book, particularly if the "strong" parts are elaborately and excruciatingly insisted upon, lasts, and sometimes leaves tracks of indelible mischief on minds which, but for its loathsome influence, would have remained upright and innocent. Thought creates action. An idea is the mainspring of an epoch. Therefore the corrupters of thought are responsible for corrupt deeds in an

individual or a nation. From a noble thought—from a selfless pure ideal—what great actions spring! Herein should the responsibility of Literature be realized. The Ishbosheth, with their "strong" books, have their criminal part in the visible putrescence of a certain section of society known as the "swagger set." Perhaps no more forcible illustration of the repulsion exercised by nature itself to spiritual and literary disease could be furnished than by the death of the French "realist" Zola. Capable of fine artistic work, he prostituted his powers to the lowest grade of thought. From the dust-hole of the frail world's ignorance and crime he selected his olla-podrida of dirty scrapings, potato-peelings, candle-ends, rank fat, and cabbage water, and set them all to seethe in the fire of his brain, till they emitted noxious poison, and suffocating vapours calculated to choke the channels of every aspiring mind and idealistic soul. Nature revenged herself upon him by permitting him to be likewise asphyxiated—only in the most prosy and "realistic" manner. It was one of those terribly grim jests which she is fond of playing off on those who blaspheme her sacred altars. A certain literary aspirant hovering on the verge of the circle of the Ishbosheth, complained the other day of a great omission in the biography of one of his dead comrades of the pen. "They should have mentioned," he said, "that he allowed his body to *swarm with vermin!*" This is true Ishbosheth art. Suppress the fact that the dead man had good in him, that he might have been famous had he lived, that he had some notably strong points in his character, but *don't* forget,

for Heaven's sake, to mention the "vermin"! For the Ishbosheth "cult" see nothing in a sunset, but much in a flea.

Hence when we read the criticism of a "strong" book, over the signature of one of the Ishbosheth, we know what to expect. All the bad, low, villainous and soiled side of sickly or insane human nature will be in it, and nothing of the healthful or sound. For, to be vicious is to be ill—to commit crime is to be mentally deformed—and the "strong" book of the Ishbosheth only deals with phases of sickness and lunacy. There are other "strong" books in the world, thank Heaven—strong books which treat strongly of noble examples of human life, love and endeavour—books like those of Scott and Dickens and Brontë and Eliot—books which make the world all the better for reading them. But they are not books admired of the Ishbosheth. And as the Ishbosheth have their centres in the current press, they are not praised in the newspapers. Binding as the union of the Printers is all over the world, I suppose they cannot take arms against the Ishbosheth and decline to print anything under this Masonic sign? If they could, what a purification there would be—what a clean, refreshing world of books—and perhaps of men and women! No more vicious heroes with short legs; no more painfully-injured milkmaids; no more "twins," earthly or heavenly—while possibly a new *Villette* might bud and blossom forth—another *Fortunes of Nigel*, another brilliant *Vanity Fair*—and books which contain wit without nastiness, tenderness without erotics, simplicity without affectation, and good English without slang, might

once again give glory to literature. But this millennium will not be till the "strong" book of the Ishbosheth ceases to find a publisher, and the Ishbosheth themselves are seen in their true colours, and fully recognized by the public to be no more than they are—a mere group of low sensualists, who haunt Fleet Street bars and restaurants, and who out of that sodden daily and nightly experience get a few temporary jobs on the Press, and "pose" as a cult and censorship of art. And fortunately the very phrase "strong book" has become so much their own that it has now only to be used in order to warn off the public from mere pot-house opinion.

ON THE MAKING OF LITTLE POETS

GREAT Poets discover themselves. Little Poets have to be " discovered " by somebody else. Otherwise they would live and die in the shadow of decent obscurity, unheard, unseen, unknown. And it is seriously open to question whether their so living and dying would not be an advantage to society in the abating of a certain measure of boredom. Looking back upon the motley crowd of Little Poets who had their day of " discovery " and " boom " at the very period when the thunderous voice of the Muse at her grandest was shaking the air through the inspired lips of Byron, Shelley and Keats, and noting to what dusty oblivion their little names and lesser works are now relegated without regret, it is difficult to understand why they were ever dragged from the respectable retirement of common-place mediocrity by their critic-contemporaries. Byron was scorned, Shelley neglected, and Keats killed by these same critics ;— neither of the three were " discovered " or " made." Their creation was not of man, but of their own innate God-given genius, and, according to the usual fate attending such divine things, the fastidious human *dilettante* of their day would have none of them. He set up his own verse-making Mumbo-

Jumbo; and one Pye was Laureate. Pye was Laureate,—yet Byron lived, and there was a reigning monarch in England, strange as these assorted facts will seem to all intellectual posterity. For a monarch's word,—even a prince's word,—must always carry a certain weight of influence, and one asks wonderingly how, under such circumstances, that word came to be left unsaid? No voice from the Throne called the three greatest geniuses of the era to receive any honour due to their rare gifts and quality. On the contrary they were cast out as unvalued rubbish from their native land, and the Little Poets had their way. Pye continued to write maudlin rhymes unmolested, never dreaming that the only memory we should keep of him or of his twaddle, would be the one scathing line of the banished Byron:

Better to err with Pope than shine with Pye!

And feeble penny whistles played trumpery tunes to the languid votaries of "cultchaw" in those days, and pennywhistle verse was voted "classic" and supreme; but ever and anon the Nation turned a listening ear across the seas and caught the music made by its outlawed singers,—music it valued even then, and treasures now among its priceless and imperishable glories. For the Nation knows what true Poetry is,—and no "discoverer" will ever force it to accept a tallow candle for a star.

The gulf between Great Poets and Little is a wide one,—wider than that which yawned between Lazarus in heaven and Dives in hell. The Great Poet is moved by an inspiration which he himself

cannot analyse, and in which neither the desire of money nor the latent hope of fame have the chiefest part. He sings simply because he must sing. He does not labour at it, piecing his thoughts and words together with the tardy and tame patience of a worker in mosaics, for though such exact execution be admirable in mosaic-work, it is dull and lifeless in poetry. Colour, fire, music, passion, and intense, glowing vitality are the heritage of the Great Poet; and when the torrent of unpremeditated love-song, battle-chant, dirge and prophecy pours from his lips, the tired world slackens its pace to listen, and listening, silently crowns him Laureate in its heart of hearts, regardless of Prime Minister or Court Chamberlain. But the Little Poet is not able so to win attention; he cannot sing thus "wildly well" because he lacks original voice. He can only trim a sorry pipe of reed and play weak echoes thereon; derivative twists of thought and borrowed fancies caught up from the greater songs already ringing through the centuries. And when he first begins piping in this lilliputian fashion he is generally very miserable. He pipes "for pence; Ay me, how few!" Nobody listens; people are too much engrossed with their own concerns to care about echoes. Their attention can only be secured by singing them new songs that will stir their pulses to new delights. The too-tootling of the Little Poet, therefore, would never be noticed at all, even by way of derision, unless he went down on all-fours and begged somebody to "discover" him. The "discoverer" in most cases is a Superannuated-literary-gentleman, who has tried his own hand

at poetry and failed ignominiously. Incapacity to do any good work of one's own frequently creates a thirsty desire to criticize the work of other people; thus, in the intervals of his impotent rage at the success of the deserving, the Superannauted, resolved to push himself into notice somehow, takes to "discovering" Little Poets. It is his poor last bid for fame; a final forlorn effort to get his half-ounce of talent to the front by tacking it on to some new name which he thinks (and he is quite alone in the idea) may by the merest chance in the world, like a second-rate horse, win a doubtful race. To admire any Great Poet who may happen to exist among us, is no part of the Superannuated's programme. He ignores Great Poets generally, fearing lest the mere mention of their names should eclipse his dwarfish nurslings.

Now the public, mistakenly called fools, are perfectly aware of the Superannuated. They see his signature affixed to many of the Little Poets Booms, and ask each other with smiling tolerance, "What has he done?" Nothing. "Oh! Then how does he know?" Ah, that is his secret! He thinks he knows; and he wants you, excellent Fool-Public, to believe he thinks he knows! And, under the pleasing delusion that you always have your Fool's Cap on, and never take it off under any circumstances, he "discovers" Mr. Podgers for you. Who is Mr. Podgers? A poet. If we are to credit the Superannuated, he is "a new star on the literary horizon, of the first magnitude." The "first magnitude"!—the public shakes its caps and bells in amused scepticism. Another Shelley? Another Byron? These were of the "first magni-

tude," and shall we thank a bounteous heaven for one more such as these? No, no, nothing of the sort, says the Superannuated with indignation, for it is high time you put this sort of Shelley-Byron stuff behind you. Mr. Swinburne has distinctly said that "Byron was no poet." Learn wisdom, therefore, and turn from Byron to Podgers. He has written a little book, has Podgers, for which those who desire to possess it must pay a sum out of all proportion to its size. What shall we find in this so-little book? Anything to make our hearts beat in more healthful and harmonious tune? No. Nothing of this in Podgers. Nothing, in fact, of any kind in Podgers which we have not heard before. There are a few lines that we remember as derived from Wordsworth, and one stanza seems to us like a carefully transposed bit of Tennyson;—but for anything absolutely new in thought or in treatment we search in vain. Unless we make exception for a set of verses which are a tribute to the art of Log-Rolling, namely Podgers's "Ode" to Podgers's favouring critic. We confess this to be somewhat of a novelty, and we begin to pity Podgers. He must have fallen very low to write (and publish) an "Ode" to the Superannuated, his chief flatterer on the Press, and he must be very short-sighted if he imagines that action is a millstone *without* a hole in it. And so, despite the loud eulogies of the Superannuated (who is naturally proud to be made the subject of any "Ode" however feeble) we do not purchase Podgers's book, though it is urged upon us as being a "limited" edition. But the Superannuated is not herein baffled. If, he says, if you are so asinine, so crass,

so dull and dense of comprehension as to reject this marvellous, this classic Podgers, what say you to Stodgers? Stodgers is a "young" poet (forty-five last birthday), entirely free from "manner" and manners. He has resorted to the last and lowest method employed by Little Poets for obtaining temporary notoriety, namely,—outraging decency. Coarseness and blasphemy are the prevailing themes of his verse, but to the Superannuated these grave blemishes constitute "power." A "strong" line is a lewd line; a "masterful" stanza contains a prurient suggestion. It suits the purpose of the Superannuated to compare his two "discoveries," Podgers and Stodgers, and to work them against each other in those quarters of the Press he controls, like the "toy millers" one buys for children. It is a case of "Podgers come up and Stodgers come down," as fits his humour and digestion. Meanwhile the vital test of the whole matter is that notwithstanding all this energetic "hawking about" of the Little Poets by the Superannuated, neither Podgers nor Stodgers *sell*. Everything is done to secure for them this desired result; unavailingly. And it is not as if they came out in a "common" way, Podgers and Stodgers. No publishing-firm with a simple name such as Messrs. Smith or Brown would suit the Little Poets. They must come out singularly, and apart from others. So they elect a publisher who, as it were, puts up a sign, as though he were a Tavern. "Published at the Dragon's Mouth" or "At the Sign of the Flagon" would seem to be more convincing than "Published by Messrs. So and So." Now Podgers's little book has a fanciful title-page stating that it

is published at the "Goose and Gridiron." Stodgers, we find, bursts upon the world at "The Blue Boar." There is something very delusive about all this. A flavour of ale and mulled wine creeps insidiously into the air, and we are moved to yearn for good warm drinks, whereas we only get indifferent cold verse. Now if the proprietors of the "Goose and Gridiron" and the "Blue Boar" would only sell inspiring liquids instead of uninspired rhymes, how their trade would improve! No longer would they bend, lean and furrowed, over their account-books—no longer would they have to scheme and puzzle over the "making" of Little Poets; because it must not be imagined that the Superannuated "discoverer" is the only one concerned in the business. "Goose and Gridiron" and "Blue Boar" have to deal in many small tricks of trade to compass it. Of course it is understood that the Little Poets get no money out of their productions. What they stipulate for with "Blue Boar" and likewise with "Goose and Gridiron" is a "hearing." This "hearing" is obtained variously. Podgers got it in this way, as followeth: His verses, which had appeared from time to time in Sunday papers and magazines, were issued in a "limited edition." Such "limited edition" was at once dispersed among booksellers in different parts of the country "on sale or return," and while thus doubtfully awaiting purchasers, "Goose and Gridiron" tipped the trade-wink and perhaps something else more substantial besides, to the Superannuated,—who straightway seized his pen and wrote: "We hear that the first edition of Mr. Podgers's poems is exhausted, and that original copies are already at a premium." This done, and

"passed" through many papers, the publisher followed it up with an advertisement to the effect that "The first edition of Mr. Podgers's poems being exhausted, a Second will be ready in a few days." And here, it may as well be said for the rectitude of "Goose and Gridiron," things came to a standstill. Because the Little Poets seldom get beyond a second edition. When Podgers's first editions came back unsold from the provinces (as they did), attempts were made to dispose of them at fancy prices as a last resource,—such attempts naturally ending in disaster. The times are too hard, and people have too much to do with their money to part with any of it for first editions of Podgers or Stodgers. The public is a very shrewd one, moreover, and is not to be "taken in" by gnat-rhymers dancing up and down for an hour in the "discoverer's" artificial sunbeams. And the Superannuated, in his eager desire to assert himself as an oracular personage, forgets one very important fact, and this is, that being a Nobody he cannot be accepted as warrant for a Somebody. The public is not his child; he cannot whip it into admiring Mr. Podgers, or coerce its judgment respecting Mr. Stodgers. Its ways are wilful, and it has a ridiculous habit (considering what a Fool the critic imagines it to be) of preferring its own opinion to that of the Superannuated. It is capable, it thinks, what with Compulsory Education and the rest of it, of making its own choice. And on the whole it prefers the Great Poet,—the man who scorns to be "discovered" by an inferior intellect, and who makes his own way independently and with a grand indifference to the squabbling of

Log-rollers. He is not "made"; he forms part of the country's blood and life; he chants the national thought in haunting rhythm as did the prophet bards of old; he, careless of "pence," praise or fame, does so mix himself with his land's history, that he becomes, as it were the very voice of the age in which he lives, and the Superannuated may ignore him as he will, he cannot get him out of the nation's heart when he has once got in. But of the feeble, absurdly conceited tribe of Little Poets who come jostling one upon another nowadays in such a puling crowd, piping out their wretchedly small personalities in versed pessimism or coarse metaphor,—men "made" by the Tavern-publisher and the Superannuated Failure;—we have had enough of these, and more than enough. Too much good paper, good ink and good binding are wasted on their totally undesired productions. Life with us now is lived at too hard and too difficult a pace for any one to need poetry that is *only* verse. Hearts break every day in the truest sense of that sentimental phrase; brains reel into insanity and the darkness of suicide; and it is no Little Poet's personal pangs about "pence" and such trifles, that can, like David's harp of old, soothe or dismiss the dark spirit brooding over the latter-day Saul. It is the Great Poet we care for, whose singing-soul mystically comprehends our unuttered thoughts of love or glory; who chants not only his pains, but ours; not his joy, so much as the whole world's joy. Such a man needs no "discoverer" to prove his existence; he is self-evident. When we grow so purblind as to need a still blinder Mole to point us out the

sun, then, but not till then shall we require the assistance of the Superannuated to "discover" what we understand by a Poet. At present we are actively conscious both of the orb of day, and the true quality of genius; and though the Poet we choose for ourselves and silently acknowledge as worthy of all honour, may not be, and seldom is, the recommended favourite of a clique, we are fully aware of him, and show our love and appreciation by setting his book among our household gods. No "limited edition" will suffice for such a man; we need to have his poems singing about us wherever we go. For the oft-repeated truth is to-day as true as ever,—that the Great Poet is "born," and never has been and never will be "made."

THE PRAYER OF THE SMALL COUNTRY M.P.

WHICH HE PRAYETH DAILY

O THOU Especial Little God of Parliaments and Electors, with whom the greater God of the Universe has nothing whatever to do!—I beseech Thee to look upon me, Thy chosen servant, with a tolerant and favourable Eye!

Consider with Leniency the singular and capricious Chance which has enabled me to become a Member of the Government, and grant me Thy protection, so that my utter Incapacity for the Post may never be discovered! Enable me, I implore Thee, to altogether dispense with the assistance of a certain Journalist and Press-Reporter in the composition of my Speeches! His Terms are high, and I am not sure of his Discretion!

Impart unto me by spiritual telegraphy such Knowledge of the general Situation of Affairs that I may be able to furnish forth an occasional Intelligent Remark to the farmers of this Constituency, whose Loyalty to the Government is as firm as their Trust in the Power of Beer! Give me the grace of such shallow Profundity and Pretension as shall convince Rustic minds of my complete Superiority to them in matters concerning their

Interest and Welfare; and teach me to use their Simplicity for the convenient furtherance of my own Cunning! Fill me with such necessary and becoming Arrogance as shall make me overbearingly insolent to Persons of Intellect, while yet retaining that sleek Affability which shall cause me to appear a Fawning Flunkey to Persons of Rank! Enable me to so condescendingly patronize the Electors who gave me their Majority that it shall seem I was returned through Merit only, and not through Bribes and Beer! And mercifully defend me, O Beneficent little Deity, from all possibility of ever being called upon to address the House! I am no speaker,—and even if I were, I have no Ideas whereon to hang a fustian sentence! Thou Knowest, All-Knowing-One, that I have not so much as an Opinion, save that it is good for me, in respect of Social Advantage, to write M.P. after my name! And surely Thou dost also know that I have paid Two Thousand Pounds for the purchase of this small portion of the Alphabet, making One Thousand Pounds per letter, which may humbly be submitted to Thee, O Calculating Ruler of Parliamentary Elections, as somewhat dear!

But I have accepted these Conditions and paid the Sum without murmuring; therefore of Thy goodness, be pleased to spare me from the utterance of even one word in the presence of my peers, concerning any Matter for the Advancement of Which I have been elected! For lo,—if I said as much as "Yea," it might be ill-advised; and yet again, if I said "Nay," it might be ill-timed! Inasmuch as I am compelled to rely on the Journalist and Press-Reporter before mentioned, for what-

soever knowledge of matters political I possess, and it is just possible that he might,—through an extra dose of whisky-soda,—mislead me by erroneous information! O Lord of Press-Agencies and Grub Street Eating-Houses, if it be possible unto Thee, relieve me of this Man! He charges more, so I am credibly informed, per Hundred Words than any other Inventor of Original Eloquence in the pay of the Unlettered and Inarticulate of the House! And it is much to be feared that he does not always keep his own Counsel! Wherefore, gracious Deity, I would be Released with all convenient Speed from the Exercise of his Power! Rather than be constantly compelled to rely upon this Journalistic Wretch for Advice and Instruction, it will more conduce to my Comfort,—though possibly to my Fatigue,—to commit to Memory such portions of long-forgotten speeches spoken by Defunct Members of the House in the Past, as may be found suitable to the present needs of the Rural Population. The Corn-growing and Cattle-breeding Electors will not know from what Sources I derive my Inspiration, and the Editor of the Local Newspaper has not yet taken a degree in Scholarship. Moreover, the Dead are happily unable to send in any Claim for Damages against the Theft of their Ideas, which are as free to Independent Pilferers as the Original Plots of New and Successful Romances are free to the Dramatizing Robbers in the Stage-Purlieus, thanks to the Admirable Attitude of Dignified Indolence assumed by that Government to which I, one Fool out of Many, have the honour to belong!

Finally, O Beneficent Lilliputian Deity which

governeth matters Parliamentary,—grant me such a sufficient amount of highly-respectable Mendacity as shall enable me to pass successfully for what I am not, at least, so far as Society in the Country is concerned! Fully aware am I, O Lord, that a Simulation of Ability will not always meet with approval in Town, though it has been occasionally known to do so! Therefore I am well content to sit in the House as one MUM, thus representing through myself an inaudible County! But in the County itself it shall seem to the Uninitiated that my thoughts are too deep for speech; while I retain in my own mind the knowledge of the Fact that my Humbug is too great for Expression!

To Thee, gentle yet capricious Deity, I commend all my Desires, praying Thee to keep the people whom I represent as Dumb and Inert as myself, in matters concerning their own Welfare, for if they should chance to consider the Situation by the light of Common Sense, and me by the shrewd Appreciation of a Native Wit, it might occur to them to prefer a Man rather than a Wooden-headed Nonentity to Proclaim their Existence to the King's faithful Commons! Wherefore, at the next General Election I should lose my Seat,—which would be Disagreeable to me personally, as well as a Cause of Rage in my Wife, to whom my present Condition of a Parliamentary Microbe is much more important and advantageous than it is to the Country! And Thou knowest, O Lord, that when my Wife is moved by the Impetuous Persuasion of a difficult Temper, it is necessary for me, by reason of her Superior Height, Size, and Aggressiveness, to retire from the domestic Fighting-

ground, considerably worsted in the unequal Combat. Protect me, merciful Deity, from her Tongue!—which is as a Sword to slay all thoughts of Peace! And, concerning the accursed, ubiquitous Journal-list-Reporter-Paragraphist-Correspondent-Attached-to-all-Newspapers Man, who, for my sins, wrote my "speech to the Electors" at a high charge, and agreed,—and therefore expects,—to write all my other public utterances on the same terms, I beseech Thee, when he next waits upon me with his Bill, ready to Counsel or to Command, grant me the Strength and Courage to tell a more barefaced Lie than is habitual to me, and to boldly say that I can do Without him!

AMEN!

THE THANKSGIVING OF THE SMALL COUNTRY M.P's WIFE,

WHICH SHE OFFERETH WEEK-END-LY

To Thee, O Bland and Blessëd Deity of Surplus Cash and Social Advancement, whose favours are never bestowed upon the Poor or the Wise, but only on the Rich and the Foolish, I give praise, honour and glory!

I thank Thee that Thou hast made of that Supreme Ass, my Husband, a Member of the Government, so that, despite his utter Lack of Wit and Hopeless Incompetency, he may at least pass muster for having Brains in a particularly Brainless Constituency!

I acknowledge Thy mercy and goodness in permitting that for the moderate cost of Two Thousand Pounds and upwards,—a sum not greatly in excess of my dressmaker's annual bill,—I may set my foot on the two dumb and prostrate Letters of the Alphabet now attached to my said Husband's new calling and Election, and may mount thereon to those heights of County Society where, ever since I was born I have eagerly thirsted to be! For though County Society be often duller than the fabled Styx, nevertheless the leaden

weight of its Approval is as necessary to my special comfort and welfare as the Gilded chain of Office is to the swelling chest of a Provincial Mayor. Thou knowest, O little Lord of Communities Narrow, Parochial and Politic, that I am called, even by the Profanest of Press-Reporters, "a fine figure of a woman," and that I am deserving of Public Notice and Commendation, not only for my Physical Attractions, but for my Social Qualifications, which, despite the fact that Fate has wedded me to a Fool, have enabled me to successfully represent the said Fool to his bovine Electors as an Intelligent Personality! Great is the Tact which is needed to palm off a Sparrow for an Eagle, a Mouse for an Elephant, or a Donkey for a Statesman! But I swear to Thee, O Thou gracious Little Neptune who ruleth that Limited Ocean called the "Society Swim" that I am equal to all this and more! Thou seest me as I am, a Fashionable Feminine Insincerity! Thou beholdest the subtle cleverness of my Social Smile, which radiates sweetly upon the faces of such persons as I conceive may be useful in Election times, but which fades into a Supercilious Sneer when I discover, as I often do, that many of these persons are unblushingly "of no political party," and have no interest whatever in keeping my Husband in His Seat! Now if my Husband were not in His Seat, I should become that most deplorable of human beings, a Provincial Nonentity! Hence arises my natural and lawful Desire that in His Seat my Husband shall remain, inasmuch as were he left without a Seat, I should be left without a "Set"!

But thanks be unto Thee, O Thou amiable and

complaisant God of the British Social Status, there seems to be at present no cause for alarm that the Rustics whom my Husband, with unintelligent dumbness represents in the House of Commons will ever Rise! Chiefly inspired as they are by Drugged Beer, it is safe to presume that they will not easily awaken from their Public-House Torpor, or in a species of vulgar "horse-play" pull my Husband's seat from under him,—even as a lubberly child pulls away a chair from the Unsuspecting Visitor who would fain sit down upon it,—and so precipitate my Husband into the unenviable rank of Unimportant Provincials! I myself am ready to guarantee,—always with Thy support, O Favourer of Paid Parliamentary Press-Puffery,—that so dire a Catastrophe as this shall not happen! For My weight,—which is both materially and mentally Considerable,—would have to be thrown into the Balance,—whereby the tottering Seat, even if partially overthrown, would, and needs Must,—under the force of my impetuous Clutch,—regain the Perpendicular!

Being by unredeemed nature a Stupid Woman, I acknowledge freely and with gratitude Thy Omnipotent Guidance in Matters purely Snobbish! I praise and bless Thee for showing me the quickest way out of Things Intellectual into Things Conventional! I thank Thee for Thy unfailing assistance afforded to me in the beaten paths of County Flunkeydom, wherein I walk with virtuous circumspection, taking care to leave my impressive Visiting-Cards and likewise those of my Husband, on Houses only, and never on People! For People may be dangerous acquaintances, while Houses

never are. A Family Residence is always more respectable than a Family!

I give Thee glory that I am made of such stubborn Flesh and Quality as never to recognize that any other Woman exists who, by the Inconvenient Attributes of Either Beauty, Wit or Intelligence, deserves to be considered my Superior, and that when any such Intrusive and Obtrusive Female is accidentally forced upon my Notice, I have the good sense to diplomatically ignore Her. I am gratefully conscious that the Meaningless Insipidity of my Manner has favourably impressed the Uneducated Majority of my Husband's Constituents. And also, that having once obtained their Unreasoning Votes, their Bucolic Lethargy is such, that I need do little further to retain their Credulous Admiration save to put in an Occasional Well-Dressed Appearance at a "local" Bazaar, or Charity Ball. Concerning any aims or hopes they may, in their blundering Dulness, have ever entertained towards the Betterment of their Condition, and the Representation of these Addle-pated desires to His Majesty's Government, I am as Profoundly Indifferent as my Husband is Voluntarily Ignorant. For, as the larger number of the Faithful Commons are aware, no Act is more fatal to the Social Prestige and County Influence of a Member of the House, than that he should, when in office, fulfil the Rash Promises made to his Electors during a Critical state of the Poll! Inasmuch as the only Reasonable object to be attained by the Purchase of the Letters M. and P. is the Betterment of One's Self and One's Social Position on the lines of such Conventional Hypocrisies as are agreeable to the

Best County Houses. For the taking of any bold or conspicuous part in any National Matter of Interest or Importance has long been sagaciously avoided by every County Member who desires to retain His Seat. And that one Man should do what his Colléagues dare not attempt, would be a Heroism which, thanks unto Thee, O Prudent Presiding Deity of Grandmotherly Westminster, is fortunately not to be expected of my Husband!

Finally I thank Thee, O Wise and All-Discerning, for the Gracious Consolation which Thou hast imparted unto me in the fact that though my Husband is the Embodiment of county Vacuity, the Majority of the King's Faithful Commons are as Vacuous as He! For, as in the multitude of Ants in an Anthill, One insect more industrious or intelligent than the rest is not easily discovered, even so, in the goodly array of Stupid Members, the Stupidest of them all may conveniently sit in his Seat without public Comment.

And for the Constant Enjoyment of my own Admitted Position among the Tea-Drinking, Fox-Hunting and Bucolic *élite* of the Neighbourhood,—for the graceful Ease with which I assume to be what I am not, by reason of the Two Letters attached to my Husband's Name, which gives much more importance to Me than to Him,—and for the general comfortable Self-Assertiveness in which I live and move and have my being, I bless Thee, O Potent little Deity of the Polling-Booth, and acknowledge Thy Manifold Mercies! May the Seat of my Husband continue firm in Thy Sight, unmoved by any Popular Caprice of the Vulgar, until such time as my eldest Hopeful Son, the very pattern

of His Father, shall slip into it Unopposed after Him, and so preserve in those Unsophisticated Rural Districts whereby we are surrounded, the Unblemished Honour of a Unique Reputation for Highly Educated Political Incompetence in this Advanced and Enlightened Age!

AMEN!

THE VANISHING GIFT

THE unseen rulers of human destiny are, on the whole, very kindly Fates. They appear beneficently prone to give us mortals much more than we deserve. Gifts of various grace and value are showered upon us incessantly through our life's progress,—gifts for which we are too often ungrateful, or which we fail to appreciate at their true worth. Apart from the pleasures of the material senses which we share in common with our friends and fellows of the brute creation, the more delicate and exquisite emotions of the mind are ministered to with unfailing and fostering care. Music—Poetry, Art in all its brilliant and changeful phases,—these things are offered for the delectation of our thoughts and the refinement of our tastes; but the most priceless boon of the Immortals is the talisman which alone enables us to understand the beauty of life at its highest, and the perfection of ideals at their best. I mean Imagination,—that wonderful spiritual faculty which is the source of all great creative work in Art and Literature. Some call it "Inspiration"; others, the Divine Fire; but whatever its nature or quality, there is good cause to think—and to fear—that it is gradually dwindling down and disappearing altogether from the world of to-day.

The reasons for this are not very far to seek. We are living in an age of feverish unrest and agitation. If we could picture a twentieth century Satan appearing before the Almighty under the circumstances described in the Book of Job, to answer the question, "Whence comest thou?"—the same reply would suit not only his, but our condition—"From going to and fro in the earth, and wandering up and down within it." We are always going to and fro in these days. We are forever wandering up and down. Few of us are satisfied to remain long in the same place, among the same surroundings—and in this way the foundations of home life,—formerly so noble and firm a part of our national strength—are being shaken and disorganized. A very great majority of us appear to be afflicted with the chronic disease of Hurry, which generally breeds a twin ailment—Worry. We have no time for anything somehow. We seem to be always under the thrall of an invisible policeman, commanding us to "Move on!" And we do move on, like the tramps we are becoming. Moveover, we have decided that we cannot get over the ground quickly enough on the limbs with which Nature originally provided us—so we spin along on cycles, and dash about on motor cars. And it is confidently expected that by-and-by the mere earth will not be good enough for us, and that we shall "scorch" through the air—when a great change may be looked for in house accommodation. People will return, it is said, to the early cave dwellings, in order to avoid the massacre likely to be caused by tumbling air-ships over which the captains have lost control.

There is something humourous in all this modern hurry-skurry; something almost grotesque in this desire for swift movement—this wish to save time and to stint work;—but there is something infinitely pathetic about it as well. It is as if the present Period of the world's civilization felt itself growing old—as if, like an individual human unit, it knew itself to be past its prime and drawing nigh to death, as if,—with the feeble restlessness of advancing age, it were seeking to cram as much change and amusement as possible into the little time of existence left to it. Two of the most notable signs of such mental and moral decay are, a morbid craving for incessant excitement, and a disinclination to think. It is quite a common thing nowadays to hear people say, "Oh, I have no time to think!" —and they seem to be more proud than ashamed of their loss of mental equilibrium. But it is very certain that where there is no time to think, there is less time to imagine—and where there is neither thought nor imagination, creative work of a high and lasting quality is not possible.

We, in our day, are fortunate in so far that we are the inheritors of the splendid work accomplished in the youth and prime of all that we know of civilization. No doubt there were immense periods beyond our ken, in which the entire round of birth, youth, maturity, age and death, was fulfilled by countless civilizations whose histories are unrecorded—but we can only form the faintest guess at this, through the study of old dynasties which, ancient as they are, may perhaps be almost modern compared to the unknown empires which have utterly passed away beyond human recovery.

But if we care to examine the matter, we shall find among all nations, that as soon as a form of civilization has emerged from barbarism, like a youth emerging from childhood, it has entered on its career with a glad heart and a poetic soul,—full of ideals, and richly endowed with that gift of the gods—Imagination. It has invariably expressed itself as being reverently conscious of the Highest source of all creation; and its utterance through all its best work and achievement can be aptly summed up in Wordsworth's glorious lines :—

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting—
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's star
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar,—
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come,
> From God who is our home!

While these "trailing clouds of glory" still cling to the soul, the limits of this world,—the mere dust and grime of material things,—do not and cannot satisfy it; it must penetrate into a realm which is of its own idea and innate perception. There it must itself create a universe, and find expression for its higher thought. To this resentful attitude of the soul against mere materialism, we owe all art, all poetry, all music. Every great artistic work performed outside the needs of material and physical life may be looked upon as a spiritual attempt to break open the close walls of our earthly prison-house and let a glimpse of God's light through.

As a matter of fact, everything we possess or

know of to-day, is the visible outcome of a once imagined possibility. It has been very grandly said that "the Universe itself was once a dream in the mind of God." So may we say that every scientific law, every canon of beauty—every great discovery—every splendid accomplishment was once a dream in the mind of man. All the religions of the world, with their deep, beautiful, grand or terrific symbols of life, death and immortality, have had their origin in the instinctive effort of the Soul to detach itself from the mere earthly, and to imagine something better. In the early days, this strong aspiration of humanity towards a greater and more lasting good than its own immediate interest, was displayed in the loftiest and purest conceptions of art. The thoughts of the "old-world" period are written in well-nigh indelible characters. The colossal architecture of the temples of ancient Egypt—and that marvellous imaginative creation, the Sphinx, with its immutable face of mingled scorn and pity—the beautiful classic forms of old Greece and Rome—these are all visible evidences of spiritual aspiration and endeavour, —moreover, they are the expression of a broad, reposeful strength,—a dignified consciousness of power. The glorious poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures—the swing and rush of Homer's Iliad, —the stately simplicity and profundity of Plato, —these also belong to what we know of the youth of the world. And they are still a part of the world's most precious possessions. We, in our day, can do nothing so great. We have neither the imagination to conceive such work, nor the calm force necessary to execute it. The artists of a former

time laboured with sustained and tireless, yet tranquil energy; we can only produce imitations of the greater models with a vast amount of spasmodic hurry and clamour. So, perchance, we shall leave to future generations little more than an echo of "much ado about nothing." For, truly, we live at present under a veritable scourge of mere noise. No king, no statesman, no general, no thinker, no writer, is allowed to follow the course of his duty or work without the shrieking comments of all sorts and conditions of uninstructed and misguided persons, and under such circumstances it is well to remember the strong lines of our last great poet Laureate :—

> Step by step we gain'd a freedom, known to Europe,
> known to all,—
> Step by step we rose to greatness,—through the
> *tonguesters* we may fall !

But our chief disablement for high creative work, —and one that is particularly noticeable at this immediate period of our history, is, as I have said, the "vanishing of the gift"—the lack of Imagination. To be wanting in this, is to be wanting in the first element of artistic greatness. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, or the musician must be able to make a world of his own and live in it, before he can make one for others. When he has evolved such a world out of his individual consciousness, and has peopled it with the creations of his fancy, he can turn its "airy substance" into reality for all time. For the things we call "imaginative" are often far more real than what we call "realism." All that we touch, taste and see, we call "real."

Now we cannot touch, taste or see Honour—but surely it is real! We cannot weigh out Courage in a solidified parcel—yet it is an actual thing. So with Imagination—it shows us what we may, if we choose, consider "the baseless fabric of a vision"—but which often proves as real and practical in its results as Honour and Courage. Shakespeare's world is real;—so real that there are not wanting certain literary imposters who grudge him its reality and strive to dispossess him of his own. Walter Scott's world is real—so real, that a shrine has been built for him in Edinburgh, crowded with sculptured figures of men and women, most of whom never existed, save in his teeming fancy. What a tribute to the power of Imagination is the beautiful monument in the centre of Princes Street, with all the forms evoked from one great mind, lifted high above us, who consider ourselves "real" people! And now the lesser world of thought is waiting for the discovery of a Cryptogram in the Waverley Novels, which shall prove that King George the Fourth wrote them with the assistance of Scott's game-keeper, Tom Purdie,—and that his Majesty gave Scott a baronetcy on condition that he should never divulge the true authorship! For, according to the narrow material limits of some latter-day minds, no one man could possibly have written Shakespeare's Plays. Therefore it may be equally argued that, as there is as much actual work, and quite as many characters in the Waverley Novels as in the plays of Shakespeare, they could not all have emanated from the one brain of Sir Walter Scott. Come forward then with a "Waverley cryptogram," little mean starvelings of litera-

ture who would fain attempt to prove a man's work is not his own! There are sure to be some envious fools always ready to believe that the great are not so great,—the heroic not so heroic, and that after all, they, the fools, may be wiser than the wisest men!

In very truth, one of the worst signs of the vanishing of the gift of Imagination in these days is the utter inability of the majority of modern folk to understand its value. The creative ease and exquisite happiness of an imaginative soul which builds up grand ideals of life and love and immortality with less effort than is required for the act of breathing, seems to be quite beyond their comprehension. And so—unfortunately it often follows that what is above them they try to pull down,—and what is too large for them to grasp, they endeavour to bind within their own narrow ring of experience. The attempt is of course useless. We cannot get the planet Venus to serve us as a lamp on our dinner table. We cannot fit the eagle into a sparrow's nest. But some people are always trying to do this sort of thing. And when they find they cannot succeed, they fall into a fit of the spleen, and revile what they cannot emulate. There is no surer sign of mental and moral decadence than this grudging envy of a great fame. For the healthy mind rejoices in the recognition of genius wherever or whenever it may be discovered, and has a keen sense of personal delight in giving to merit all its due. Hero-worship is a much finer and more invigorating emotion than hero-slander. The insatiate desire which is shown by certain writers nowadays, to pull down the great reputations of the

past, destroy old traditions, and cheapen noble attainment, resembles a sudden outbreak of insane persons who strive to smash everything within their reach. It is in its way a form of Imagination,—but Imagination diseased and demoralized. For Imagination, like all other faculties of the brain, can become sickly and perverted. When it is about to die it shows—in common with everything else in that condition,—signs of its dissolution. Such signs of feebleness and decay are everywhere visible in the world at the present time. They are shown in the constant output of decadent and atheistical literature—in the decline of music and the drama from noble and classic forms to the repulsive "problem" play and the comic opera—in the splashy daubing of good canvas called "impressionist" painting—in the acceptance, or passive toleration, of the vilest doggerel verse as "poetry"—and in the wretched return to the lowest forms of ignorance displayed in the "fashionable" craze for palmistry, clairvoyance, crystal-gazing, and sundry other quite contemptible evidences of foolish credulity concerning the grave issues of life and death,—combined with a most sorrowful, most deplorable indifference to the simple and pure teachings of the Christian Faith. Even in the Christian Faith itself, its chosen ministers seem unable to serve their Divine Master without quarrelling over trifles,—which is surely no part of their calling and election.

Everywhere there is a lack of high ideals,—and all the arts suffer severely in consequence. Modern education itself checks and cramps the growth of imaginative originality. The general tendency is

unhappily towards the basest forms of materialism, and a large majority of people appear to be smitten with a paralysing apathy concerning everything but the making of money. That art is pursued with a horrible avidity, to the exclusion of every higher and nobler pursuit. Yet it needs very little "imagination" to prophesy what the end of a nation is bound to be when the unbridled fever of avarice once sets in. History has chronicled the ruin of empires from this one cause over and over again for our warning; and as Carlyle said in his stern and strenuous way—"One thing I do know: Never on this earth was the relation of man to man long carried on by cash payment alone. If at any time a philosophy of Laissez-faire, Competition and Supply-and-Demand start up as the exponent of human relations, expect that it will soon end."

Perhaps some will say that Imagination is not a "vanishing gift"—and that Idealism and Romance still exist, at any rate among the Celtic races, and in countries such as Scotland, for instance, the home of so much noble tradition, song and story. I wish I could believe this. But unhappily the proofs are all against it. If the Imaginative Spirit were not decaying in Scotland as elsewhere, should we have seen the wanton and wicked destruction of one of its fairest scenes of natural beauty—the Glen and Fall of Foyers? There, where once the clear beautiful cascade whose praises were sung by Robert Burns, dashed down in its thundering glory among the heather and bracken, there are now felled trees, sorrowful blackened stumps, withering ferns and trampled flowers, dirty car-tracks, and all the indescribable muck which follows in the

wake of the merely money-grubbing human microbe. And where once the pulse was quickened to a sane and healthy delight in the grandeur of unspoilt Nature, and the mind was uplifted from sordid cares to high contemplation, we are now asked to buy an aluminium paper-knife for a shilling! Human absurdity can no further go than this. There can be little imagination left in the minds that could have tolerated the building of aluminium works where Foyers once poured music through the glen. And it is instructive to recall the action taken by the Belgian people—who are generally supposed to be very prosaic,—when some of their beautiful scenery on the river Amblève, was threatened with similar destruction. Mustering together, three to four thousand strong, they took a reduced model of the intended factory, burnt it on the spot, and threw its ashes into the river; performing such a terror-striking "carmagnole" of revolt, that the authorities were compelled to prohibit the erection of the proposed works, for fear of a general rising throughout the country. Would that such a protest had been offered by the people of Scotland against the destruction of Foyers!

And what of the pitiful ruin of Loch Katrine?—once an unspoilt gem of Highland scenery, doubly beloved for the sake of Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake"? What of the submerging of "Ellen's Isle"?—the ruthless uprooting of that "entangled wood"—

> Where Nature scattered, free and wild,
> Each plant or flower, the mountain's child,—
> Here eglantine embalmed the air,
> Heather and hazel mingled there.

> The wanderer's eye could barely view
> The summer heaven's delicious blue—
> So wondrous wild !—the whole might seem
> The scenery of a fairy dream !

I have been assured on the very best authority that all the beauty of Loch Katrine could have been left undisturbed, had the Scottish people taken any actively determined measures towards preserving it. The increasing water-supply necessary for Glasgow could have been procured from Loch Vennachar, which is a larger loch, and quite as good for the purpose. Only it would have cost more money, and that extra cash was not forthcoming, even for Sir Walter's sake ! It is a poor return to make to the memory of him who did so much for the fame of Scotland, to mutilate the scene he loved and immortalized ! The struggles and disasters of the Jacobite Cause, and the defeat at Culloden brought more gain than loss to Scotland, by filling the land with glorious song and heroic tradition,—the result of the noble idealistic spirit which made even failure honourable, —but the defacement of Loch Katrine, the scene of " The Lady of the Lake " is nothing but a disgrace to those who authorized it, and to those who kept silence while the deed was done.

But there are yet other signs and tokens of the disappearance of that idealistic and romantic spirit in Scotland, which has more than anything, helped to make its history such a brilliant chronicle of heroism and honour. There are " a certain class " of Scottish people who are ashamed of the Scotch accent, and who affect to be unable to read anything written in the Scotch dialect. I am told—though I would hope it is not true—that the larger majority

of Scottish ladies object to Scotch music, and do not know any Scotch songs. If this *is* true of any "certain class" of Scottish people, I am sorry for them. They have fallen down a long way from the height where birth and country placed them! I should like to talk to any Scot, man or woman, who is ashamed of the Scotch accent. As well be ashamed of the mountain heather! I should like to interview any renegade son or daughter of the Celtic race, who is not proud of every drop of Celtic blood, every word and line of Celtic tradition,—every sweet song that expresses the Celtic character. Nothing that is purely national should be set aside or allowed to perish. It is a thousand pities that the old Gaelic speech is dying out in the Highlands, along with the picturesque "plaid" and "bonnet" of the Highland shepherds. The Gaelic language is a rich and copious one, and should be kept up in every Scottish school and University. Some of the Gaelic music, too, is the most beautiful in the world,—and many a so-called "original" composer has taken the theme for an overture or a symphony from an ancient, long-forgotten Gaelic tune. A fine spirit of romance and idealism is the natural heritage of the Celtic race;—far too precious a birthright to be exchanged for the languid indifferentism of latter-day London fashion, which too often makes a jest of noble enthusiasm, and which would, no doubt, call Sir Walter Scott's fine novel of *The Heart of Midlothian*, "kailyard literature"—if it dared!

And who that understands anything about music is so foolish and ignorant as to despise a Scottish song? Where can we match, in all song literature,

the songs of Robert Burns? What German "lied" —what French or Italian "canzonet" or "chansonette" expresses such real human tenderness as "Of a' the airts" or "My Nannie O!"? And it should be remembered that the imaginative pathos of the Scottish song has its other side of imaginative humour—sly, dry humour, such as cannot be rivalled in any language or dialect of the world. And in spite of the incredible assertion that they are beginning to despise their native Doric, there are surely few real Scotsmen who, even at this time of day fail to understand the whimsical satire of the famous old Jacobite song:

Wha the deil hae we gotten for a king
But a wee, wee German lairdie,
An' he's brought fouth o' foreign trash
An' dibbled it in his yairdie,—
He's pu'd the rose o' England loons
An' broken the harp o' Irish clowns—
But our Scotch thistle will jag his thumbs!
The wee, wee German lairdie!

We shall not find anything of a bilious nature in a Scottish love-song. We shall not hear the swain asking his lady-love to meet him "in some sky," or "when the hay is in the mow," or any other vaguely indefinite place or period. The Scottish lover appears,—if we may judge him by his native song,—to be supremely healthy in his sentiments, and gratefully conscious of the excellence of both life and love. He takes even poverty with a light heart, and does not grizzle over it in trickling tears of dismal melody. No; he says simply and cheerily:

My riches a' my penny fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie O,—
But this world's gear ne'er fashes me,—
My thoughts are a' my Nannie O!

It will be a sad day indeed when this spirit of wholesome, tender and poetic imagination drifts away altogether from Scotland. We must not forget that the Scottish race has taken a very firm root in the New World Beyond Seas,—and that out in Canada and Australia and South Africa the memories and the traditions of home are dear to the hearts of thousands who call Scotland their mother. Surely they should be privileged to feel that in their beautiful ancestral land, the old proud spirit is still kept up,—the old legends, the old language, the old songs,—all the old associations, which—far away as they are forced to dwell—, they can still hand down to their children and their children's children. No king,—no statesman, can do for a country what its romancists and poets can,—for the sovereignty of the truly inspired and imaginative soul is supreme, and as far above all other earthly dominion as the fame of Homer is above the conquests of Alexander. And wh n the last touch of idealistic fancy and poetic sentiment has been crushed out of us, and only the dry husks of realism are left to feed swine withal, then may we look for the end of everything that is worth cherishing and fighting for in our much boasted civilization.

For with the vanishing gift, vanish many other things, which may be called in the quaint phrasing of an Elizabethan writer, "a bundle of good graces." The chivalrous spirit of man towards woman is one of those "good graces" which is rapidly dis-

appearing. Hospitality is another "good grace" which is on the wane. The art of conversation is almost a lost one. People talk as they ride bicycles — at a rush — without pausing to consider their surroundings. Elegant manners are also at a discount. The "scorching," steaming, spasmodic motor man-animal does not inspire reverence. The smoking, slangy horsey, betting, woman-animal is not a graceful object. In the days of classic Greece and Rome, men and women "imagined" themselves to be descended from the gods;—and however extravagant the idea, it was likely to breed more dignity and beauty of conduct than if they had "imagined" themselves descended from apes. A nation rounds itself to an Ideal, as the clay forms into shape on a potter's wheel. It is well, therefore, to see that the Ideal be pure and lofty, and not a mere Golden Image like that set up by King Nebuchadnezzar, who ended his days by eating grass,—possibly thistles. Some of our public men might perhaps be better for a little more Imagination, and a little less red tape. It might take them healthfully out of themselves. For most of them seem burdened with an absurd self-consciousness, which is apt to limit the extent of their view out on public affairs. Others again are afflicted by the hedge-hog quality of "stand-offishness" which they unfortunately mistake for dignity. And others affect to despise public opinion, and have a curious habit of overlooking the fact that it is the much-abused public which sets them in office and pays to keep them there. Their Ideal of public life and service partakes too much of Self to be nobly National.

What, after all, is Imagination? It is a great

many things. It is a sense of beauty and harmony. It is an instinct of poetry and of prophecy. A Persian poet describes it as an immortal sense of memory which is always striving to recall the beautiful things the Soul has lost. Another fancy, also from the East, is that it is "an instinctive premonition of beautiful things to come." Another, which is perhaps the most accurate description of all, is that it is "the Sun-dial of the Soul on which God flashes the true time of day." This is true, if we bear in mind that Imagination is always ahead of Science, pointing out in advance the great discovery to come. Shakespeare foretold the whole science of geology in three words—"Sermons in stones," —and the vast business of the electric telegraph in one line—"I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes." One of the Hebrew prophets "imagined" the phonograph when he wrote "Declare unto me the image of a voice." As we all know, the marks on the wax cylinder in a phonograph are "the image of a voice." The air-ship may prove a very marvellous invention, but the imagination which saw Aladdin's palace flying from one country to another was long before it. All the genii in the Arabian Nights stories were only the symbols of the elements which man might control if he but rubbed the lamp of his intelligence smartly enough. Every fairy tale has a meaning; every legend a lesson. The submarine boat in perfection has been "imagined" by Jules Verne. Wireless telegraphy appears to have been known in the very remote days of Egypt, for in a rare old book called *The History of the Pyramids*, translated from the Arabic, and published in France in 1672, we find

an account of a certain high priest of Memphis named Saurid,—who, so says the ancient Arabian chronicler, "prepared for himself a casket wherein he put magic fire, and shutting himself up with the casket, he sent messages with the fire day and night, over land and sea, to all those priests over whom he had command, so that all the people should be made subject to his will. And he received answers to his messages without stop or stay, and none could hold or see the running fire, so that all the land was in fear by reason of the knowledge of Saurid." In the same volume we find that a priestess named Borsa evidently used the telephone. For, according to her history, "She applied her mouth and ears unto pipes in the wall of her dwelling, and so heard and answered the requests of the people in the distant city."

Thus it would seem that there is nothing new under the sun to that "dainty Ariel" of the mind, Imagination. It sees all present things at a glance, and foretells what is yet to come. It may well be called the Sun-dial of the Soul; but it is a Dial that must be kept sound and clean. There must be no crack in it,—it must not be allowed to get overgrown with the slimy mosses and rank weeds of selfishness and personal prejudice,—the index hand must be firmly set,—and none of the numeral figures must be missing! So, perchance, shall God flash the true time of day upon it, for such as will hold themselves free to mark the Hour according to His will. And for those who do thus hold themselves free,—for those who care to keep this precious Sun-dial clear and clean in their souls, there shall always be light and love,—and such clear reflections of divine beauty

and peace as are described by the "Ettrick Shepherd" in his story of *Kilmeny in Fairyland:*

For Kilmeny had been, she knew not where,
And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare;
But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung,
And the airs of heaven played round her tongue!

THE POWER OF THE PEN

THE dignity of Literature is, or used to be, something more than a mere phrase. Days there were in the long-ago, when the thinkers and writers of a nation were held to be worthy of higher honour than trade-kings and stock-jobbers,—when each one that shone out was "a bright particular star" of genius, as frankly owned as an object of admiration in the literary firmament. At that time there was no "syndicated" press. The followers and disciples of Literature were not all herded together, as it were, in a kind of scribbling trades-union. The poet, the novelist, the essayist,—each one of these moved in his or her own appointed orbit, and their differing special ways of handling the topics of their time served to interest, charm and stimulate the intelligences of people who were cultured and appreciative enough to understand and honour their efforts. But now things are greatly changed. What has been generally understood as "cultured" society is rapidly deteriorating into baseness and voluntary ignorance. The profession of letters is so little understood, and so far from being seriously appreciated, that responsible editors will accept and publish magazine articles by women of "title" and "fashion," who prove themselves as ignorant of grammar as they are of spelling. The printer's reader corrects the spelling, but the

grammar is generally left as its "aristocratic" writer penned it, in majestic incompleteness. The newspapers are full, not of thoughtful, honestly expressed public opinion on the affairs of the nation, but of vapid "personalities," interesting to none save gossips and busy-bodies. A lamentable lack of strength is apparent in the whole "tone" of modern Literature, together with a still more lamentable lack of wit. All topics, say the pessimists, are exhausted. The quarrels of politicians have exhausted earth,—the recriminations of the Churches have exhausted Heaven,—and the bold immoralities of society have, almost, if not quite, exhausted Hell. Yet the topic which holds in itself a great many of the pleasures of earth and heaven—with perhaps a touch of the other nameless place also, is still the Power of the Pen. It remains, even in these days, the greatest power for good or evil in the world. With the little instrument which rests so lightly in the hand, whole nations can be moved. It is nothing to look at; generally speaking it is a mere bit of wood with a nib at the end of it—but when it is poised between thumb and finger, it becomes a living thing—it moves with the pulsations of the loving heart and thinking brain, and writes down, almost unconsciously, the thoughts that live—the words that burn.

To the power of the Pen we owe our laws, our government, our civilization, our very religion. For without it we should have no Bible—no New Testament. Our histories, our classics, our philosophies, our poetry, would all be lost with their originators. We should not know that Julius Cæsar ever

walked on the shores of Britain, or that Nero fiddled while Rome was burning. In fact we should still be in the dark ages, without so much as a dream of the magnificent era of progress through which we have come, and in which we, of this present generation, have our glorious share. And so I think and venture to say that the power of the Pen is one which commands more millions of human beings than any monarch's rule, and that the profession of the pen, called Literature, is the greatest, the highest, and the noblest that is open to aspiring ambition. Empires, thrones, commerce, war, politics, society—these things last but their brief hour —the Power of the Pen takes note of them as they pass—but outlives them all!

We should know nothing to-day of the grandeurs of old Egypt, or the histories of her forgotten kings, if it were not for the Rosetta stone—on which the engraver's instrument, serving as a pen. wrote the Egyptian hieroglyphics beside the Greek characters, thus giving us the clue to the buried secrets of a long past great civilization. The classic land of Greece, once foremost in all things which make nations great, particularly in the valour and victorious deeds of her military heroes, has almost forgotten her ancient glory—she might perhaps be forgotten by other nations altogether in the constant springing up of new countries and peoples if it were not for Homer! The blind, despised old man, who sang her golden days of pride and conquest, still keeps her memory green. And let us not forget that other glorious poet, who laid his laurel-wreath and life upon her shrine—our own immortal Byron—whose splendid lyric,

"The Isles of Greece" may stand beside the finest lines of Homer, and not be shamed.

What does all Italy, and particularly Florence, make chief boast of to-day? Not commerce, not wealth—simply Dante! In his lifetime he was made a subject for hatred and derision—he was scorned, cast out, and exiled by his fellow-townsfolk—yet now he is the great glory of his native city which claims respect from all the world for having been the birthplace of so supreme a soul. So, even after death, the Power of the Pen takes its revenge, and ensures its just recognition.

Yet there are many workers in Literature who say that the Power of the Pen gives them no joy at all,—that it is a "grind,"—that it is full of disappointment and bitterness, and that they never get paid enough for what they do. This last is always a very sore point with them. They brood on it, and consider it so often, that by and by the question of how much or how little payment they get, becomes the only way in which they regard their profession. It is the wrong way. It is the way that leads straight to biliousness and chronic dyspepsia. It is not my way. To me, what little power of the pen I possess, is a magic talisman which I would not exchange for millions of money. It makes life beautiful for me—it intensifies and transfigures all events and incidents—it shows me a whole history in the face of a child—a whole volume of poetry and philosophy in the cup of a flower. It enables me to see the loveliness of nature with keener and more appreciative gratitude—and it fills me with an inward happiness which no outward circumstance can destroy.

Of course just payment is to be demanded and expected for every kind of work. The rule of "give and take" holds good in all classes of employment. Each author's power of the pen commands its price according to the value set upon it by the public. But I, personally, have refused many considerable sums of money offered to me if I would consent to "work up" or "bring forward" certain schemes and subjects with which I have no sympathy. The largest cheque would never tempt me to write, against my own inclination. If I were given such a choice as this—to write something entirely opposed to my own feeling and conscience for a thousand pounds, or to write my honest thought for nothing, I would write my honest thought, and let the thousand pounds go. I am glad to say that some of my contemporaries are with me in this particular form of literary faith—but not as many as, for the honour of our calling, I could desire.

Then again, there is that vexed question of—the Public! I have often noticed, with a humility too deep for words, that all the great modern writers, or, I should say, all those who consider themselves the greatest, have a lofty contempt for the public. "'He,' or 'she' writes for the Public," is a remark which, when spoken with a withering sneer, is supposed to have the effect of completely crushing the ambitious scribbler whose Power of the Pen has attracted some little attention. Now if authors are not to write for the Public, who are they to write for? Certain of the "superior" folk among them will say that they write "for posterity." But then, Posterity is also the

Public! I really do not see how either the great or the small author is to get away from the Public anyhow! There is only one means of escape, and that is—not to write at all. But if those to whom the Power of the Pen is given, wish to claim and use their highest privileges, they will work always for the public, and try to win their laurels from the public alone. Not by the voice of any "clique," "club," or "set" will Time accept the final verdict of an author's greatness, but by the love and honour of an entire people. Because, whatever passing surface fancies may for awhile affect the public humour, the central soul of a nation always strives for Right, for Justice, and for final Good, and the author whose Power of the Pen helps strongly, boldly, and faithfully on towards these great ends, is not, and shall not be, easily forgotten.

I hope and I believe, that it is only a few shallow, ignorant and unsuccessful persons—fancying perhaps that they have the Power of the Pen when they have it not—who, in their disappointment, take a sort of doleful comfort in "posing" as unrecognized geniuses, whose quality of thought is too fine,—they would say too "subtle"—for the public taste. For, in my humble opinion, nothing is too good for the Public. They deserve the very best they can get. No "scamp" work should ever be offered to them. If a poet sings, let him sing his sweetest for them; if a painter paints pictures, let him give them his finest skill; if an author writes stories, essays or romances, let him do his very utmost to charm, to instruct, to awaken their thought and excite their interest. It is not a wise thing to start writing for "posterity."

Because, if the present Public will have nothing to do with you, it is ten to one whether the future will. All our great authors have worked for the public of their own immediate time, without any egotistical calculations as to their possible wider appreciation after death.

The greatest poet in the world, William Shakespeare, was, from all we can gather, an unaffected, cheery, straightforward Warwickshire man, who wrote plays to please the Public who went to the Globe Theatre. He did not say he was too good for the Public; he worked *for* the Public. He attached so little importance to his own genius, that he made no mention of his work in his will. So we may fairly judge that he never dreamed of the future splendour of his fame—when, three hundred years after his death, every civilized country in the world would have societies founded in his name; when, year after year, new discussions would be opened up concerning his Plays, new actors would be busy working hard to represent his characters, and, strangest compliment of all, when envious persons would turn up to say his work was not his own! For when genius is so varying and brilliant that a certain section of the narrow-minded cannot understand its many-sided points of view, and will not believe that it is the inheritance of one human brain, then it is great indeed! Three hundred years hence there will, no doubt, be other people to announce to the world that Walter Scott did not write, and could not have written, the Waverley Novels. For they are—in their own special way—as great as the plays of Shakespeare. He, too, was one of those who wrote for the Public.

With his magic wand he touched the wild mountains, lakes and glens of his native land, and transfigured them with the light of romance and beauty for ever. Can we imagine Scotland without Walter Scott and Robert Burns? No! Their power of the pen rules the whole country, and gives it over the heads of monarchs a free fairy kingdom to all classes and peoples who have the wish and will to possess it. There are certain superior people nowadays who declare that Walter Scott is "old-fashioned," and that they, for their parts, cannot read his novels. Well, I grant that Walter Scott *is* old-fashioned—as old-fashioned as the sunshine—and just as wholesome. He lived in a time when men still reverenced women, and when women gave men cause for reverence. I think if he could be among us now, and see the change that has come over society since his day, he would scarcely have the heart to write at all. The idolatry of wealth—the servile worship of the newest millionaire—would hardly inspire his pen, save perhaps to sorrow and indignation. But if he were with us and did write for us, I am sure he would employ some of his great power to protest against the lack of fine feeling, gentleness, forbearance and courtesy which unfortunately marks much of our latter-day society. I think he would have something to say about the school-girl who smokes,—I fancy his mind might revolt against the skirt-dancing peeress! I think he would implore women not to part with their chief charm—womanliness—and I am sure he would be very sorry to see children of ten and eleven so deplorably "advanced" as to be unable to appreciate a fairy tale.

And what of dear Charles Dickens—he, whom certain superfine persons who read Yellow Journalism presume to call "vulgar"? Is love, is pity, is tenderness, is faith "vulgar"? Is kindness to the poor, patience with the suffering, tolerance for all men and all creeds "vulgar"? If so, then Charles Dickens *was* vulgar!—not a doubt of it! Few authors have ever been so blessedly, gloriously "vulgar" as he! What marvellous pictures his "power of the pen" conjures up at once before our eyes!—pathetic, playful, humourous, thrilling—rising to grandeur in such scenes as the shipwreck in *David Copperfield;* or that wonderful piece of description in the *Tale of Two Cities,* when the tramping feet of the Spirit of the French Revolution sweep past in the silence of the night! Match us such a passage in any literature past or present! It is unique in its own way—as unique as all great work must be. There is nothing quite like it, and never will be anything quite like it. And when we "go" with such great authors as these—and by this I mean, when we are determined to be one with them—we shall win such victories over our hearts and minds, our passions and desires, as shall make us better and stronger men and women.

And this brings me to a point which I have often earnestly considered. One cannot help noticing that the present system of education is fast doing away with two great ingredients for the thorough enjoyment of life, and especially the enjoyment of Literature—Imagination and Appreciation. On the school-boy or school-girl who is "coached" or "crammed," the gates of fairyland and romance are shut with a bang. I had

once the pleasure of entertaining at my house a small gentleman of eleven, fresh from his London College—he was indifferent to, or weary of life; things generally, were a "bore," and he expressed his opinion of fairy tales in one brief word, "Rot!" Now altogether apart from that most revolting expression, which is becoming of frequent use, especially in the "upper circles," it seemed to me a real misfortune to consider, that for this child, Hans Andersen was a sealed book, and the wonders and beauties of the *Arabian Nights* a lost world. And in the same way I pity the older children—the grown men and women, who cannot give themselves up to the charm or terror of a book completely and ungrudgingly—who approach their authors with a carping hesitation and a doubtful preparatory sneer. By so doing they shut against themselves the gate of a whole garden of delights. Imagination is the supreme endowment of the poet and romancist. It is a kind of second sight, which conveys the owner of it to places he has never seen, and surrounds him with strange circumstances of which he is merely the spiritual eye-witness. One of the most foolish notions prevalent nowadays is that an author must personally go and visit the place he intends to describe. Nothing is more fatal. For accuracy of detail, we can consult a guide book—but for a complete picture which shall impress us all our lives long, we must go to the inspired author whose prescience or second-sight enables him to be something more than a mere Baedeker. Endless examples of this second-sight faculty could be given. Take Shakespeare as the best of them. He could never have per-

sonally known Antony and Cleopatra. He did not live in the time of Julius Cæsar. He was not guilty of murder because he described a murder in *Macbeth*. He could not have been a "fellow-student" of Hamlet's. And where do you suppose, among the grim realities of life, he could have met those exquisite creations, Ariel and Puck, if not in the heaven of his own peerless imagination, borne to him on the brilliant wings of his own thought, to take shape and form, and stay with us in our English language for ever! Walter Scott had never seen Switzerland when he wrote *Anne of Geierstein*. Thomas Moore never visited the East, yet he wrote *Lalla Rookh*. Charles Dickens never fought a duel, and never saw one fought, yet the duel between Mr. Chester and Haredale in *Barnaby Rudge* is one of the finest scenes ever written. Because an author is able to describe a certain circumstance, it does not follow that he or she has experienced that very circumstance personally. Very often it may be quite the contrary. The most romantic descriptions in novels have often been written by people leading very hum-drum, quiet lives of their own. We have only to think of *Jane Eyre*, and to remember the prosy, dull days passed by its author, Charlotte Brontë.

To refer once more to Hans Andersen—we all know that he never could have seen a Dresden China shepherdess eloping up the chimney with a Dresden China sweep. We know he never saw that dainty little shepherdess weeping on the top of a chimney because the world was so large, and because all her gilding was coming off. But when we are reading that fantastic little story, we feel

he *must* have seen it somehow, and we are conscious of a slight vexation that we never see such a curious and delightful elopement ourselves. This is a phase of the power of the pen—to make the beautiful, the quaint, the terrible, or the wonderful things of imagination seem an absolute reality.

But to get all the enjoyment out of an author's imagination, we, who read his books, must ourselves "imagine" with him. We must let him take us where he will; we must not draw back and refuse to go with him. We must not approach him in a carping spirit, or make up our minds before opening his book, that we shall not like it. We should not allow our particular views of life, or our pet prejudices to intervene between ourselves and the writer whose power of the pen may teach us something new. And above all things, we should prepare ourselves to appreciate—not to depreciate. Nothing is easier than to find fault. The cheapest sort of mind can do that. The dirty little street-boy can enter the British Museum and find fault with the Pallas Athene. But the Pallas Athene remains the same. To be Pallas Athene is sufficient. The power of appreciation is a great test of character. To appreciate warmly, even enthusiastically, is generally the proof of a kind and sunny disposition; to depreciate is to be in yourself but a sad soul at best! For depreciation in one thing leads to depreciation in another; and by and by the daily depreciator finds himself depreciating his Maker, and wondering why he was ever born! And he will never find an answer to that question till he changes his humour and begins to appreciate; then, and only then, will life explain its brightest meaning.

Of course, when vulgarity, coarseness, slang, and ribaldry are set forward as "attractions" in certain books and newspapers, it is necessary to depreciate what is not the power of the pen, but the abuse of the pen. Such abuse is easily recognizable. The libellous paragraph, the personal sneer, the society scandal—there is no need to enumerate them. But we do not call the writers of these things authors, or even journalists. They are merely on a par with the anonymous letter-writer whom all classes of society agree in regarding as the most contemptible creature alive. And they do not come at all under the heading of the power of the pen, their only strength being weakness.

I have already said that I believe the Power of the Pen to be the greatest power for good or evil in the world. And I may add that this power is never more apparent than in the Press. The Press nowadays is not a literary press; classic diction and brilliancy of style do not distinguish it by any means. It would be difficult to find a single newspaper or magazine to which we could turn for a lesson in pure and elegant English, such as that of Addison, Steele or Macaulay. But in the Scott or Byron days, the Press was literary to a very great extent, and as a natural consequence it had a powerful influence on the success or failure of an author's work. That influence is past. Its work to-day deals, not with books, but with nations.

National education, progressing steadily for years, has taught the Public to make up its own mind more quickly than ever it did before, as regards the books it reads. It will take what it wants and

leave the rest; and the Press can neither persuade it nor repel it against its own inclination. So that the author in these days has more difficulties and responsibilities than in the past. He has to fight his battle alone. He has many more rivals to compete with, and many more readers to please. And the Press cannot help him. The Press may recommend, may even "boom" his work; but several instances have occurred lately where such recommendation has not been accepted. For, sometimes the Public fight shy of a "boom." They think it has been worked up by the author's friends, and they are not always mistaken. And they silently express the fact that they are quite capable of choosing the books they wish to read, without advice or assistance. This being the case, the Press is beginning to leave books and authors alone to shift for themselves as best they may, and is turning to other pastime. Nations, peoples, governments! These are the great footballs it occasionally kicks in the struggle for journalistic pre-eminence. And I hope I shall not be misunderstood if I venture to say that it is a somewhat dangerous game! Because, however powerful the Press may be, it is not the People. It is the printed opinion of certain editors and their staff. The People are outside it altogether. And if some one on the Press insults a monarch or a nation, that insult should not be taken as a People's insult. It is the insult of the editor or proprietor who deliberately allows it to be printed in the particular journal he controls.

It is a thousand pities, for example, that a section of the lower *boulevard* press in Paris should be

accepted in any quarter, as being representative of the feeling of the whole French people. When flippant and irresponsible newspaper scribes resort to calumny for the sake of notoriety, they prove themselves unworthy to be trusted with the Power of the Pen. In any case it can only be a God-forsaken creature who seeks to earn his living by scurrility. Such an one may excite individual contempt, but does not merit the notice of a great nation.

As an author and as a lover of literature, I care very much for the honour and dignity of the British Press, and I cannot but earnestly deprecate the too free exchange of petty or malicious innuendo between foreign and English writers on their various respective journals. Bismarck used to say, "The windows which our Press breaks we shall have to pay for." The power of the pen is abused when *such* windows are broken as can only be mended by the sufferings of nations. If France or Germany sneers at us, or misreads our intentions, I do not see that we are called upon to sneer at them in return. That is mere schoolboy conduct. Our dignity should shame their flippancy. The Press of such an empire as Great Britain can afford to be magnanimous and dignified. It is too big and strong a boy to throw stones at its little brothers.

On such a subject as the Power of the Pen, one might speak endless discourses, and write endless volumes, for it is practically inexhaustible. It is a power for good and evil—as I have said—but the author wrongs his vocation if he does not always, most steadfastly and honestly, use it for Good. The Power of the Pen should define Right from

Wrong with absolute certainty,—it should not so mix the two together that the reader cannot tell one from the other. In what is called the "problem" novel or the "problem" play, the authors manage so to befuddle the brains of their readers, that they hardly know whether virtue is vice or vice virtue. This is putting the power of the pen to unfair and harmful uses. And when a writer—any writer—employs his or her power to promote the spirit of Atheism and Materialism, the pen is turned into a merely murderous tool of the utmost iniquity. And whosoever uses it in this sense will have to answer at a Higher Tribunal for much mischief and cruelty wrought in the world.

Many people are familiar with Shakespeare's town, Stratford-on-Avon, quaint and peaceful and beautiful in itself, and in all its surroundings. Outside it, many roads lead to many lovely glimpses of landscape; but there is one road in particular which winds uphill, and from which, at certain times, the town itself is lost sight of, and only the tapering spire of Holy Trinity Church—Shakespeare's Church—can be seen. Frequently at sunset, when the rosy hue of the low clouds mingles with the silvery mist of the river Avon, all the houses, bridges and streets are veiled in an opaque glow of colour—and look like "mirage," or a picture in a dream. And then, the spire of Shakespeare's Church, seen by itself, rising clear up from the surrounding haze, puts on the distinct appearance of a Pen,—pointing upwards, as though prepared to write upon the sky!

Often and often have I seen it so, and others have seen it with me, glittering against clouds, or

lit up by a flashing sunbeam. I have always thought it a true symbol of what the Power of the Pen should be—to point upwards. To point to the highest aims of life, the best, the greatest things; to rise clear out of the darkness and point straight to the sunshine! For, if so uplifted, the Power of the Pen becomes truly invincible. It can do almost anything. It can shame the knave—it can abash the fool. It can lower the proud,—it can raise the humble. It can assist the march of Science,—it can crush opposition. Armed with truth and justice, its authority is greater than that of governments,—for it can upset governments. It would seem impossible to dethrone an unworthy king; but it has been done—by the Power of the Pen! It is difficult to put down the arrogance of a county snob,—but it *can* be done!—by the Power of the Pen! It may seem a terrible task to root up lies, to destroy hypocrisies, shams, false things of every kind, and make havoc among rogues, sensualists, and scoundrels of both high and low degree,—but it can be done, by the Power of the Pen! And to those who are given this power in its truest sense, is also added the gift of prophecy—the quick prescience of things To Be—the spiritual hearing which catches the first sound of the approaching time. And beyond the things of time this spiritual sense projects itself, and hears, and almost *sees*, all that shall be found most glorious after death!

With the Power of the Pen we can uphold all noble things; we can denounce all vile things. May all who have that power so deal with it—and point us on—and upward! For as our great poet, Tennyson, says;—

What is true at last will tell;
Few at first will place thee well;
Some too low would have thee shine,
Some too high—no fault of thine!
Hold thine own and work thy will!

THE GLORY OF WORK

VERY commonplace and familiar—perhaps too commonplace and familiar is the subject of Work. Every one worthy the name of man or woman is, or desires to be a Worker, and none surely would voluntarily swell the distressed ranks of the Unemployed. For to be unemployed is to be miserable. To find nothing to do,—to be of no use to ourselves or to our fellow-creatures is to be more or less set aside and cast out from the ever-working Divine scheme of labour and fruition, ambition and accomplishment. Among all the blessings which the Creator showers so liberally upon us, there is none greater than WORK. And amid all the evils which Man wilfully accumulates on his own head through ignorance and obstinacy, there is none so blighting and disastrous as Idleness.

There are, however, certain people who have persuaded themselves to look upon Work as a curse. Many of these pin their theories on the Third Chapter of the Book of Genesis. There they read:

"Cursëd is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground."

But we may take comfort in the fact that the Book of Genesis shows some curious discrepancies. For in the Second Chapter God is represented as making *one* single man out of the dust of the ground, yet in the very First Chapter of the same Book we read that,—

"God created man in His own image; male and female created he *them*.

"And God blessed *them* and said unto *them* . . Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and *subdue* it: and have *dominion* over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Thus we find that the story of Adam and Eve and the Serpent does not occur till *after* the creation of mankind (in the plural) and *after* the Divine order that this same mankind (in the plural) should "replenish the earth and subdue it." No "curse" accompanied this command. On the contrary, it was sanctified by a blessing. "God blessed them." And whether Genesis be taken seriously, or only read as poetic legend founded on some substratum of actual events, the fact remains that "to replenish the earth and subdue it," literally means,—to WORK. The "dominion" of man over the planet he inhabits is not to be gained by sitting down with folded hands and waiting for food to drop into the mouth. It is evident that he was intended to earn his right to live. It is also evident that the blessing of God will be his, if from the first beginnings of conscious intelligence and aptitude he resolutely and honestly sets his shoulder to the wheel.

It is only when we are at work that we are vitally

and essentially a part of God's great creative scheme. Idleness is an abnormal condition. It is not to be found in nature. There everything works, and in the special task allotted to it, each conscious atom finds its life and joy. The smallest seed *works*, as it slowly but surely pushes its way up through the soil;—the bird *works*, as it builds its nest and forages the earth and air to find food for its young. We cannot point to the minutest portion of God's magnificent creation and say that it is idle. Nothing is absolutely at rest. There is—strictly speaking—no rest in the whole Universe. All things are working; all things are moving. Man clamours for rest,—but rest is what he will never get,—not even in the grave. For though he may seem dead, new forms of life germinate from his body, and go on working in their appointed way,—while, with the immortal part of himself which is his Soul, he enters at once into fresh fields of labour. Rest is no more possible than death, in the Divine scheme of everlasting progress where all is Life.

Nature is our mother, from whose gentle or severe lessons we must learn the problems of our own lives. And whenever we go to her for help or for instruction, we always find her working. She never sleeps. She never has a spare moment. "Without haste, without rest" is her eternal motto. When we, like fretful children, complain of long hours of toil, scant wages and short holidays, she silently points us to the Universe around us of which we are a part, and bids us set our minds "in tune with the Infinite." The Sun never takes holiday. With steady regularity it performs

its task. For countless ages it has worked without any attempt to swerve from its monotonous round of duty. It shines on the just and on the unjust alike; it gives life and joy equally to the gnat dancing in its beams, as to the human being who hails its glory and warmth as the simple expression of "a fine day." It gets no wages. It receives very little in the way of thanks. Its duty is so evident and is always so well done, that by the very perfection of its performance it has exhausted the far too easily exhausted sense of human gratitude. Like a visible lamp of God's love for us it generates beauty and brightness about us wherever we go,—and it invites us to look beyond the veil of creation to the Creator, who alone sustains the majestic fabric of life.

In some ways God Himself may be resembled to the Sun, seeing that He receives very little of our gratitude. We are so wonderfully guided by His wisdom that we sometimes think ourselves wiser than He. Of our own accord we give Him scarcely any of our real working powers, and were it not that we are all, in the mass, unconsciously swayed by His command, the little we do give would be less. Our ideas of serving Him too often consist in attending various sectarian places of worship where quarrelling is far more common than brotherly love and unity. In these places of worship we pray to Him for Ourselves and our own concerns. We ask Him for all we can possibly think of, and we seldom pause to consider that He has already given us more than we deserve. It very rarely enters into our heads to realize that we are required to show Him some return—that

we are bound to work—no matter in how small a degree—towards something in His vast design which has, or shall have, its place in the world's progress. We continue to implore Him to work for Us,—just as if He needed our urging! We petition Him to give us food and other material comforts,—yet if we study the laws of Nature we shall learn that we are intended to Work for our food and for all the things we want. We must Work for them in common with the rest of all our fellows in the animal, bird, and insect kingdoms. What a man does, that he has. We have no need to ask God for what He has already given us. He has provided all that is necessary for our health and sustenance on the earth,—but we must earn it,—deserve it,—and take a little intelligent trouble to understand the value of it, as well as to learn the laws by which we may gain and hold our own in life. We must, in fact, Work. All Creation visibly shows us that God Himself has worked and is still working. He, who has made us in "His own Image" must have from each one of us a strong and faithful effort to follow His Divine pre-ordained order of Labour and Progress. It may be asked—To what does the Labour and Progress tend? The answer of our last great Poet Laureate, Tennyson, is the best—the

> One far off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

Whether it be work with the hands, or work with the brain, it is work of some kind that we must do if we would prove ourselves worthy to be a part of the ever-working Universe. And if by

disinclination,—or by lethargy of mind and spirit, we decline to share in the splendid "onward and upward" march of toil, the time comes when great Mother Nature will accept us exactly at our own valuation. If we choose to be no more than clods of clay, then as clods of clay she will use us, to make soil for braver feet than our own. If, on the contrary, we strive to be active intelligences, she will equally use us for nobler purposes. The formation of our condition rests absolutely with ourselves. No one person can shape the life of another. The father cannot ensure the fortunes of his son. The mother cannot guarantee the happiness of her daughter. Both mother and father may do their best on these lines, but sooner or later the son and daughter will take their own way and make their own lives. Each individual man or woman must work out his or her own salvation. For this is the Law,—and it is a Law divine and eternal against which there is no appeal.

Let us realize, therefore, the Divine Necessity of Work,—and having realized it let us take an honest joy in being able to do any sort of work ourselves, no matter how humble or monotonous such work may be. There is nothing really common even in what is called "common" work. There is nothing undignified in the roughest labour. It is only the "loafer" who loses both self-respect and dignity. The peasant who turns the soil with his spade all day long is a noble and primeval figure in the landscape, and deserves our consideration and respect. The countless thousands of men, working in huge factories, patiently guiding the machinery of giant looms, sweltering their very

lives out in the fiery heat of huge furnaces where iron and steel are shaped for the uses of the world—these are the actual body of mankind—the nerves, the muscles, the sinews of humanity. They represent the nobility, the worth, the movement of the age. They are the Working People. And the Working People of this, or of any other nation are the People indeed—the People whose word—if they will only utter it—must inevitably become Law.

Sometimes, however, when we work,—when we perform some special round of duty more or less monotonous, we are unlike the rest of the working Universe. The Universe works without any grumbling at its work—but we—well!—we rather like to grumble. We want every one to know how hard our work is, and how badly paid we are. Many of us, who are men, would like to pass entire days, loafing about, our hands in our pockets, our pipes in our mouths, serving no purpose whatever in the world save that of replenishing the till of the nearest public-house. Others of us who are women, would love to dress up for all we are worth and meander through the streets, staring into shop-windows and coveting goods we have no money to buy. We forget that while we are wasting time in this fashion, we are consuming some of the very energy that should be at work to obtain for us whatever we desire. And we are also apt to forget that very often those who possess what we envy,—who hold all that we would win—have worked for it.

It is of course quite true that some workers are well rewarded while others get little if any reward

at all. But to understand the cause of this inequality we must examine the character of the work implied, and the spirit in which that work is done. Is it undertaken with cheerfulness and zeal? Or is it merely accepted as a "grind," to be shirked whenever possible and only half accomplished? I venture to think that the man who loves his work,—who is content to begin at the lowest rung of the ladder in order to master all the minutest details of his particular trade or profession—whose Work is dearer to him than either his wages or his dinner—is bound to be rewarded, bound to succeed in whatever calling of life he may be. It is the half-hearted worker who fails. It is the "scamp" worker who sticks in the rut. Every man should do his utmost best. When he does only his half or quarter best, he wrongs his own capability and intelligence even more than he wrongs his employer. To "scamp" even the simplest kind of work proves him to be out of tune with Nature. For in the natural world we find no "scamping." Each tiny leaf, each humble insect is as perfect in its way as the planet itself. A midge's wing seen through the microscope is as brilliant and beautiful as that of a butterfly. And so,—"looking up through Nature unto Nature's God" we hear everywhere the Divine command—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might."

I hardly think the love of Work, for Work's own sake, is a leading characteristic of the workers of the present day. There is a tendency to "rush" everything,—to get it done and over. It is a rare thing to meet a man who is so fond of his work that he can hardly be persuaded to leave it. Yet in

him is the real germ of success, and with him are the true possibilities of power. For the conscientious and painstaking worker more often than not may become the great discoverer. In the very earnestness with which he bends over his daily toil which may often seem the merest monotonous drudgery, it frequently chances that a little hint,—an unexpected clue,—is given out from the great factory of nature, which may revolutionize a whole handicraft, or quicken a failing industry. Nothing of value in science or art is ever vouchsafed to the mere "hustler." And there is by far too much "hustling," nowadays. I am an ardent lover of steady toil and continuous progress, provided the progress is accompanied by the growth of beauty, goodness and happiness, but I am no advocate of "rush" or "speed." Nothing is well done that is done in a hurry. Every scrap of time should be used as a precious gift,—not snatched up and devoured. For with haste comes carelessness and what is called "slop work." "As long as it's done never mind how it's done," is a kind of humour that is common enough and easily fostered. Haste by no means implies real swiftness or attention to details. We need not draw comparisons between the foreign workman and his British brother, because there is a maxim which says "Comparisons are odious." But in justice to the foreign workman, it must be said that he often shows great intelligence and artistic ability. Moreover that he sometimes works twelve hours a day against the British eight, at half the British workman's wages.

But my own love for everything British is so

deep and hearty that I should like to see British handicraft, British art, British work of all kinds at the head of creation. And I do most distinctly think it the duty of every British employer of labour to provide work for British workers first. Let the men who live in the land find means to live. It is surely the right of the British working man to have the first chance with a British employer. But this does not always happen. It is a "consummation devoutly to be wished," but it is not to be at once realized even by schemes of fiscal policy. It is only to be attained by the British working people themselves,—by the quality of the work they do and the spirit in which they do it. We talk a great deal about Education, technical and otherwise. What are the results? The fact seems to be that when there was no compulsory Education much better work was done. Houses were better built,—furniture was more strongly made. Compare the brick-and-a-half "modern villa" architecture, with its lath and plaster doors and window-frames, with the warm thick walls and stout oak timbers of a farm or manor-house of the sixteenth century! Put side by side the flimsy modern chair, and the serviceable oak one, hand made in the time of our forefathers! Connoisseurs and collectors of bric-à-brac are supposed to have a craze for "old" things, merely because they *are* "old." This is not altogether true. Old things are appreciated because they are good,—because they show evidences of painstaking and careful Work. An old oak staircase in a house is valued as a treasure, not only for its age, but for its artistic construction, which our best workers

can only imitate and never surpass. It must, I think, be conceded that our forefathers had better conceptions of the fitting and the beautiful in some ways of work than we have. We have only to compare the Cathedrals which they built for the worship of God, with our uninspired ugly modern Churches and chapels. We know that they appreciated the beauties of the landscape, and that they loved the grand old English trees, which our short-sighted County Councils are destroying every year. Nothing can be more pitiful to see than the ruthless and stupid cutting down of noble trees all over the country, under the rule that their branches shall not hang over the road. Thus, every grateful place of shade is ruined, as well as much natural beauty. Our ancestors, more individually free, showed finer taste. The roofs of their houses were picturesquely thatched or tiled, and gabled,—their eyes were never affronted by the dull appearance of cheap slate and corrugated iron. They left us a heritage of many lovely and lasting things; but it is greatly to be feared that we shall not do likewise to those that come after us. We are destroying far more than we are creating.

And when we come to the higher phases of intellectual work, we find that though we have plenty of "schools of art" we have no great British artists such as Gainsborough, Reynolds or Romney. And though every one is supposed to know how to read and write, we have no great literature such as that of Shakespeare, Scott, Thackeray or Dickens. These belonged to the days of non-compulsory Education. Poetry, too, the divinest of the arts,

is well-nigh dead. The great poets were born in so-called "uneducated" times. Our present system of Education is absolutely disastrous in one respect,—that of its tendency to depress and cramp rather than to encourage the aspiring student. Its mechanical routine works on the line of flattening all human creatures down to one level. Originality is often "quashed." Yet in all educational schemes there should be plenty of room left for the natural ability of the student or worker to expand and declare itself in some entirely new form wherever possible.

But despite our perpetual talk of the advantages of Education, here we are to-day with plenty of schools both before and behind us, but no very great men. And looking a long way back in history we see that when there was no Compulsory Education at all, there *were* very great men,—men who made the glory of England. Shall we leave anything after us, to match their heritage? It is open to doubt. Much of our modern work is "scamped" and badly done. And a great deal of the mischief arises from our way of "rushing" things. We are so anxious to catch Time by the forelock that we almost tear that forelock off. But why such haste? What is our object? Well,—we want to make money before we die. We want to make it, and then spend it on ourselves, or else leave it to our children, who will no doubt get rid of it all for us with the most cheerful rapidity. Or we want to have enough to "sit down and do nothing." This is some people's idea of perfect bliss. A servant of mine once very kindly reproached me for sticking at my desk so long. "If

I were a lady," said she—"I would sit down and do nothing." No more cruel torture can be imagined than this. We read in history of prisoners who, condemned to such a life, went mad with the misery of it. The only way to live happily and healthfully is to try with every moment of our time to accomplish something—even if it be only a thought. Thought, as we know, crystallizes into action. Yet very few people really think. Many get no further than to think they are thinking. To think is a kind of Work—too hard for many folks. In politics, for instance, some people let the Press think for them. They cannot be bothered to do it for themselves. And when the Press makes what is called a "corner" in any particular policy, they sometimes submit to be "cornered." There have been of late a great many rumours concerning a gigantic Press "combine" which is to be formed for the purpose of swaying the opinion of the British public and particularly the opinion of the British working man. In other words, opinion is no longer to be "free," but coerced by something like a Press "Trust" Company. Now if we are to believe this, we must likewise believe the British public fools. And we should surely be sorry to be forced to such a conclusion. Let us hope the British public has an opinion of its own entirely apart from the Press, and that it will declare that opinion bravely and openly. It is hard to imagine that it will allow its fondness for "prize-competitions" and "puzzle-pictures" to interfere with its common sense and honesty. I may say, however, that I have often marvelled at the generosity with which a large majority of people will

insist on filling the pockets of newspaper capitalists, by purchasing such quantities of the particular journals which contain these puzzles and competitions. The guileless innocence of childhood in the nursery is not more touching than the faith of the great British public in what is called a "Picture" or "Word" puzzle. Over this kind of thing I have seen otherwise sane though indolent people actually *work*! Once I made a calculation of the hours spent by a friend of mine in deciphering one of these newspaper problems, and found that he could certainly have obtained a very fair knowledge of French or Italian in the time, or he could have learned shorthand and typewriting. He was successful in the competition, and received for his pains the splendid sum of three-halfpence. It was explained to him that there were so many successful competitors that the hundred—or thousand pounds reward had to be divided among the crowd. Three half-pence therefore was his legitimate share.

I am no politician. I am simply a Worker—and I do such work as I can, quite independently of sect or party. But *as* a Worker, and looker-on at the events taking place around me, I cannot help feeling that this dear land of ours is on the verge of a great crisis in her history. We hear much of failing trade,—depression in this or that quarter,—yet apart from political agitators, it seems to me that Great Britain stands where she has always stood—at the top of the world! Whatever influences have set her there, surely there she is. And it is for all true workers to keep her there. It is not by what parties or Governments will do for

us that her position will be sustained and strengthened,—it is by what we, in the skill and excellence of our Work in all trades and professions, will do for Her. It is by our determination to excel in all kinds of Work that she will hold her own,—by our unstinted time, our ungrudging labour, our zeal, our cheerfulness, our love for her glory that she—and ourselves—will exist. It is necessary to "protect" her, and all things that may help to make her stronger and greater—but sometimes the word "Protection" may be made to apply chiefly to capitalists and "cornerers" of trade. Herein comes the hard work of Thinking. We must Think for ourselves. God has given us brains to work with. There is never any good reason why we should hastily adopt the political views of certain newspaper proprietors, who are perhaps under the impression that we have no brains at all, and that being thus sadly deficient, we are willing to buy their brains for a penny or a halfpenny! It is by the workers of the land that the land lives. And more than this,—it is from the workers that must come the great battle of Right against Might. It is for the Workers to put to shame by their own faith and honour, the wicked Atheism and open immorality which are disgracing some of our so-called "upper" classes to-day—and it is for the Workers to show by their upright, temperate lives, and their steady downright Work, that they are determined to keep the foundations of the Home secure, and the heart of England warm and true. What says brave Thomas Carlyle?

"All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something

of divineness. Labour, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. Sweat of the brow, and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart—which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, and Martyrdoms, up to that 'Agony of bloody sweat' which all men have called divine! O brother, if this is not 'worship,' then I say the more pity for worship, for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother!—see thy fellow Workmen there in God's eternity, surviving there, they alone surviving; sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind. Even in the weak Human memory they survive so long, as saints, as heroes, as gods, they alone surviving—peopling, they alone, the measured solitudes of Time. To thee, Heaven, though severe, is *not* unkind; Heaven is kind as a noble Mother—as that Spartan mother, saying while she gave her son his shield—"With it, my son, or upon it!" Thou too shalt return home in honour, brother Worker!—to thy far distant Home, in honour, doubt it not, if in the battle thou keep thy shield!"

THE HAPPY LIFE

Most people want to be happy if they can. I suppose it may be safely set down without fear of contradiction that no one who is sane and healthy wilfully elects to be miserable. Yet the secret of happiness seems to be solved by very few. People try to be happy in all sorts of queer ways —in speculation, land-grabbing, dram-drinking, horse-racing, bridge-playing, newspaper-running, and various other methods which are more or less suited to their constitutional abilities—but in many cases these channels, carefully dug out for the reception of a perpetual inflowing of the stream of happiness, appear very soon to run dry. I have been asked scores of times what I consider to be the happiest life in the world, and I have always answered without the least hesitation—the Life Literary. In all respects it answers perfectly to the description of the "Happy Life" portrayed by that gentle sixteenth-century poet, Sir Henry Wotton :——

> How happy is he born and taught
> That serveth not another's will,
> Whose armour is his honest thought,
> And simple truth his utmost skill.

Herein we have the vital essence of all delight—

honest thought and simple truth—and in the "serveth not another's will," glorious liberty. For chiefest among the joys of the Life Literary are its splendid independence, its right of free opinion, and its ability to express that opinion. An author is bound to no person, no place, and no party, unless he or she wilfully elects to be so bound. To him, or to her, all the realms of Nature and imagination are entrance-free—the pen unlocks every closed door—and not only is the present period of time set out like a stage-scene for contemplation and criticism, but all the past ages, with their histories, and the rise and fall of their civilizations, arrange themselves to command in a series of pictures for the pleasure of the literary eye and brain; and it is just as easy to converse in one's own library with Plato on the immortality of the soul as it is good-humouredly to tolerate Mr. Mallock and his little drawing-room philosophies. For a book is more or less the expression of the mind, or a part of the mind, of its writer, and, inasmuch as it is only with the moral and intellectual personalities of our friends and enemies that we care to deal, it matters little whether such personalities be three or four thousand years old, or only of yesterday. And to live the Life Literary means that we can always choose our own company. We can reject commoners and receive kings, or *vice versâ*. The author who is careful to hold and to maintain all the real privileges and rights of authorship is a ruler of millions, and under subjection to none. The position is unique and, to my thinking, unequalled.

There are many, of course, who will by no means

agree with me as to the superior charm of the Life Literary over all other lives—and such objectors will be found mostly in the literary profession itself. Unsuccessful authors—particularly those who are in any way troubled with dyspepsia—will be among them. "Tied" authors also—and by "tied" authors I mean the unhappy wretches who have signed contracts with publishers several years ahead, and are, so to speak, dancing in fetters. Authors who count the number of words they write per day, like potatoes, and anxiously calculate how much a publisher will possibly give for them per bushel, are not likely to experience any very particular "happiness" while they are measuring out halfpence in this fashion. And authors who run after "society" and want to be seen here, there, and everywhere, are bound to lose the gifts of the gods one by one as they scamper helter-skelter through the world's Vanity Fair, while they may be perfectly sure that the "great" or swagger persons with whom they seek to associate will be the first to despise and neglect them in any time of need or trouble, as well as the last to support or help them in any urgent cause which might be benefited by their assistance.

On this point we have only to remember the melancholy experience of Robert Burns, who, after having been flattered and feasted by certain individuals who were, in an ephemeral sense, influential for the time being, either through their rank or their wealth, was afterwards shamefully neglected by them, and finally, notwithstanding the various social attentions and courtesy he had at one time received, he was left, when ill and dying, in such

extremity as to be compelled to implore his publisher for the loan of five pounds! What had become of all his wealthy and "influential" friends? Why they were exactly where all "influential" persons would be now in a similar case—"otherwise engaged" when their help is needed. Nothing can well be more deplorable than the position of any author who depends for success on a clique of "distinguished" or "society" persons. He or she has exchanged independence for slavery—the nectar of the gods for a base mess of pottage—and the true "happiness" of the Life Literary for a mere miserable restlessness and constant craving after fresh excitement, which gradually breeds nervous troubles, and disturbs that fine and even balance of brain without which no clear or convincing thought is possible. Again, authors who deliberately prostitute their talents to the writing of lewd matter unfit to be handled by cleanly-minded men and women need never hope to possess that happy and studious peace which comes from the

> Pure intent to do the best
> Purely—and leave to God the rest.

For the highest satisfaction in the Life Literary is to think that perhaps, in a fortunate or inspired moment, one may have written at least a sentence, a line, a verse, that may carry comfort and a sense of beauty to the sorrowful, or hope to the forlorn; while surely the greatest pang would be to know that one had cast the already despairing soul into a lower depth of degradation, or caused the sinner to revel more consciously in his sin.

But are there no drawbacks, no disappointments, no sufferings in the Life Literary? Why, of course there are! Who would be such a useless block of stone, such a senseless lump of unvalued clay, as not to ardently wish for drawbacks, disappointments, and sufferings? Who that has a soul at all does not pray that it may be laid like glowing iron on the anvil of endurance, there to be beaten and hammered by destiny till it is of a strong and shapely mould, fit for combat, nerved to victory? And I maintain that such drawbacks, disappointments, difficulties, and sufferings as the profession of Literature entails are sweeter and nobler than the cares besetting other professions, inasmuch as they are always accompanied by never-failing consolations. If the pinch be poverty, the true servant of Literature can do with less of this world's goods than most people. Luxury is not called for when one is rich in idealism and fancy. Heavy feeding will not make a clear, quick brain. Extravagant apparel is a necessity for no one—and genius was never yet born of a millionaire.

If the "thorn in the flesh" is the petty abuse of one's envious contemporaries, that is surely a matter for rejoicing rather than grief, as it is merely the continuance of an apparently "natural law in the spiritual world" acting from the Inferior upon the Superior, which may be worded thus: "Whosoever will be great, let him be flayed alive!" Virgil was declared by Pliny to be destitute of invention; Aristotle was styled "ignorant, vain, and ambitious" by both Cicero and Plutarch; Plato was so jealous of Democritus that he proposed

to burn up all his works; Sophocles was brought to trial by his own children as a lunatic; Horace was accused of stealing from all the minor Greek poets; and so on in the same way down to our own times.

Pope went so far as to make a collection of all the libels passed upon him, and had them preserved and bound with singular care, though I believe no one now knows where to find these scandalous splutterings of Grub Street. Swift is reported to have said to the irate author of the "Dunciad": "Give me a shilling and I will ensure you that posterity shall never know one single enemy against you excepting those whose memory you *yourself* have preserved." Herein is a profound truth. The malicious enemies of a great author only become known to the public through the mistaken condescension of the great author's notice.

Milton's life was embittered by the contemptible spite of one Salmasius. Who was Salmasius? we ask nowadays. We do no task who was Milton. Salmasius was the author of the "Defensio Regi" or Defence of Kings, a poor piece of work long ago forgotten, and he was the procurer of foul libel against the author of "Paradise Lost," one of England's greatest and noblest men. What small claim he has to the world's memory arises merely from his viciousness, for not only did he make use of the lowest tools to aid him in conspiring against Milton's reputation, but he spread the grossest lies broadcast, even accusing the poet of having a hideous personal appearance—"a puny piece of man; a homunculus; a dwarf deprived of the human figure; a contemptible

pedagogue." When the despicable slanderer learned the fact that Milton, so far from answering to this description, was of a pleasing and attractive appearance, he immediately changed his tactics and began to attack his moral character—which, as even Milton's bitterest political enemies knew, was austerely above the very shadow of suspicion. It was said that the poet's over-zealousness in answering the calumnies of Salmasius cost him his eye-sight, which, if true, was surely regrettable. Salmasius died dishonoured and disgraced, as such a cowardly brute deserved to die; Milton still holds his glorious place in England's literary history. So it was, so it is, so it ever will be.

Greatness is always envied—it is only mediocrity that can boast of a host of friends. "When you have resolved to be great," says Emerson, "abide by yourself, and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world." It is impossible to quote one single instance of a truly great man existing without calumniators. And the Life Literary without any enemies would be a shabby go-cart; or, as our American cousins put it, a "one-horse concern." Some lines that were taught to me when I was a child seem apposite to this subject, and I quote them here for the benefit of any struggling units of the Life Literary who may haply be in need:—

You have no enemies, you say?
  Alas! my friend, the boast is poor—
He who has mingled in the fray
  Of duty, that the brave endure,
Must have made foes! If you have none,
Small is the work that you have done;
You've hit no traitor on the hip,

You've dashed no cup from perjured lip,
You've never turned the wrong to right—
You've been a coward in the fight![1]

But it is perhaps time that I should drop the masculine personal pronoun for the feminine, and, being a woman, treat of the Life Literary from the woman's point of view. In olden days the profession of literature was looked upon as a terrible thing for a woman to engage in, and the observations of some very kindly and chivalrous writers on this subject are not without pathos. To quote one example only, can anything be more quaintly droll at this time of day than the following :—

" Of all the sorrows in which the female character may participate there are few more affecting than those of an Authoress—often insulated and unprotected in society—with all the sensibility of the sex, encountering miseries which break the spirits of men ! "

This delicate expression of sympathy for a woman's literary struggles was written by the elder Disraeli as late as 1840. Truly we have raced along the rails of progress since then at express speed—and the " affecting " sorrows of an " Authoress " (with a capital A) now affect nobody except in so far as they make " copy " for the callow journalist to hang a string of cheap sneers upon. The Authoress must take part with the Author in the general rough-and-tumble of life—and she cannot too quickly learn the truth that when once she enters the literary arena, where men are already fisticuffing and elbowing each other remorselessly, she will be met chiefly with

[1] The late Charles Mackay, LL.D.

"kicks and no ha'pence." She must fight like the rest, unless she prefers to lie down and be walked over. If she elects to try for a first place, it will take her all her time to win it, and, when won, to hold it; and, in the event of her securing success, she must not expect any chivalrous consideration from the opposite sex, or any special kindness and sympathy from her own. For the men will consider her "out of her sphere" if she writes books instead of producing babies, and the women will, in nine cases out of ten, begrudge her the freedom and independence she enjoys, particularly if such freedom and independence be allied to fortune and fame. This all goes without saying. It has to be understood and accepted uncomplainingly. The "old-fashioned" grace of chivalry to women, once so proudly lauded by poets and essayists as the distinguishing trait of all manly men, is not to be relied on in the Life Literary—for there it is as dead as door-nails. Men can be found in the literary profession who will do anything to "down" a woman in the same calling, and, if they cannot for shame's sake do it openly, they will do it behind her back. "'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful"—for the men! But if the woman concerned has studied her art to any purpose she will accept calumny as a compliment, slander as a votive wreath, and "envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness" (from which, with pious hypocrisy, the most envious and uncharitable persons pray "Good Lord deliver us" every Sunday) as so many tokens and proofs of her admitted power. And none of these things need disturb the equanimity of the Life Literary. "Can

any man cast me out of the Universe ? He cannot ; but whithersoever I may go there will be the sun and the moon, and the stars and visions, and communion with the gods ! "[1]

Speaking as a woman, I can quite understand and appreciate all the little difficulties, irritations, and trials incident to a woman's career in literature ; and though I myself welcome such difficulties as so many incentives to fresh effort, I know that there are many of my sex who, growing weary and discouraged, are not able to adopt this attitude. And looking back into the past, one is bound to see a host of brilliant women done to death by cruel injustice and misrepresentation, a state of things which is quite likely to be continued as long as humanity endures.

But no useful object is served by brooding over this apparently incurable evil. " The noble army of martyrs " who praise the Lord in the " Te Deum " are likely to be of the sex feminine. But what does that matter ? It is more glorious to be martyred than to die of over-eating and general plethora. Moreover mental or intellectual martyrdom is a necessary ingredient for the " happy " life—a touch of it is like the toothache, helping one to be duly thankful when the pain ceases. For, if we never understood trouble, we should never taste the full measure of joy.

One thing can be very well dispensed with by both men and women who look for happiness in the Life Literary, and that is the uneasy hankering after what is called " Fame." Fame has a habit of setting its halo on the elected brows without

[1] Epictetus.

any outside advice or assistance. Those authors who are destined for it will assuredly win it, though all the world should intervene; those for whom it is not intended must content themselves with the temporary notoriety of pretty newspaper puffs and "stock" compliments, such as "the renowned" or "well-known" or "admired" author or authoress, and be glad and grateful for these meaningless terms, inasmuch as the higher Fame itself at its utmost is only a brief and very often inaccurate "line in history."

The rewards and emoluments of the happy life, such as I have always found the Life Literary to be, are manifold and frequently incongruous. They may be considered in two sections—the outward or apparent and the interior or invisible. Concerning these I can only, of course, speak from my own experience. The outward or apparent occur (so far as I myself am concerned) as follows:—

1. Certain payments, small or large, made by publishers who undertake to present one's brain work to the world in print, and who do the best they can for their authors, as well as for themselves.

2. Public appreciation and condemnation, about equally divided.

3. Critical praise and censure, six of one and half-a-dozen of the other.

4. Endless requests for autographs.

5. Innumerable begging letters.

6. Imperative, sometimes threatening, demands for "interviews."

7. Hundreds of love-letters.

8. Continual offers of marriage.

9. Shoals of MSS. sent by literary aspirants to be "placed" or "recommended."

10. Free circulation of lies, caricatures, and slanders concerning oneself, one's personality, friends, ways of work, and general surroundings.

11. The grudging and bitter animosity of rival contemporaries.

12. Persistent public and private mis-representation of one's character, aims, and intentions.

But all these things taken together weigh very little when compared with the other side of the medal—the interior and invisible delight and charm of the Life Literary—the unpurchasable and never-failing happiness which no external advantage can give, no inimical influence take away. It is well-nigh impossible to enumerate the pleasures that attend the lover and servant of Literature; they are multitudinous, and, like all things spiritual, outweigh all things temporal. Here are just a few among the kindly and constant favours of the gods:—

1. The power and affluence of creative thought.

2. A perpetual sense of intimate participation in the wonders of Nature and Art.

3. A keen perception of the beautiful.

4. Intense delight in the genius of all great men and women.

5. A cheerful and contented spirit.

6. Constant variety of occupation.

7. Joy in simple things.

8. The love of friends that are tried and true.

9. The never-wearying interest of working to try and give pleasure to one's reading public.

10. The gifts and glories of Imagination.

11. Tranquillity of mind.
12. Firm faith in noble ideals.

And, to quote from Walt Whitman what the inward sense of the "happiness" of the Life Literary really is, the disciple of Literature may say:—

"I will show that there is no imperfection in the present and can be none in the future. And I will show that, whatever happens to anybody, it may be turned to beautiful results."

Were all the lives in the world offered to me for my choice, from the estate of queens to that of commoners, I would choose the Life Literary in preference to any other, as ensuring the greatest happiness. It is full of the most lasting pleasure, it offers the most varied entertainment, all the arts and sciences group themselves naturally around it as with it and of it—for the literary student is, or should be, as devout a lover of music as of poetry, as ardent an admirer of painting and sculpture as of history and philosophy—that is, if complete enjoyment of the literary gift is to be possessed completely.

I take it, of course, for granted, in this matter of the "happy" life, that the individual concerned, whether male or female, is neither dyspeptic nor bilious, nor afflicted with the incurable *ennui* of utter selfishness, nor addicted to dram or drug drinking. Because under unnatural conditions the mind itself becomes unnatural, and the Life Literary is no more productive of happiness than any other life that is self-poisoned at its source. But, given a sane mind in a sound body, a clear brain, a quick perception, a keen imagination, a warm heart, and a never-to-be-parted-with ideal of humanity

at its best, noblest and purest, then the Life Literary, with all the advantages it bestows, the continuous education it fosters, the refinement of taste it engenders, the love and sympathy of unknown thousands of one's fellow-creatures which it brings, is the sweetest, most satisfying, most healthful and happy life in the world. Moreover it is a life of power and responsibility—a life that forms character and tests courage. We soon learn to know the force of a Thinker in our midst, whether man or woman. We soon realize who it is that sends the lightning of truth across our murky sky, when we see a sudden swarm of cowards scurrying away from the storm and trying to shelter themselves under a haystack of lies ; and we invariably respect whosoever has the valour of his or her opinions, and the strength to enunciate them boldly and convincingly with a supreme indifference to conventional conveniences. For " To know the truth," says an Arabian sage, " is a great thing for thyself ; but to tell the truth to others is a greater thing for the world ! "

THE SOUL OF THE NATION

At the present time, and during the present time's singularly loose notions of manners, morals, and dignity of behaviour, it was perhaps to be expected that some one or other of the daily newspapers would, in sagacious appreciation of free "copy," start a public discussion on the religious faith of this Christian Empire. It was perhaps as equally probable that considering the remarkable laxity of certain bishops and ordained ministers of the gospel generally, a "press" question should be put to the House of Tom, Dick and Harry—"Do We Believe?" Granting the premises, it was hardly to be wondered at that Tom, Dick and Harry should straightway arise in their strength and reply to the question,—and not only Tom, Dick and Harry of the laity, but Tom, Dick and Harry of the clergy likewise. Great was the discussion,—fast and furious waged the war of words, and the Penny Daily which provoked the combat was thus conveniently supplied with material for which the proprietors,—most of them Sons of Israel,—had nothing to pay. And now, the arguments being heard and ended, nobody is a whit the wiser, though some few may be several whits the sadder. For to speak honestly, nothing more reprehensible has ever smirched the

career of an English journal than the fact that it should have lent itself to the advertized questioning of the nation's religious faith. It was an open flaunting of infidelity in the face of the civilized world. To talk of the "conversion" of India, China or Japan, while a leading British newspaper openly invites the notoriety-hunting section of the British public to air their opinions of the Christian Faith in its columns, just as if the Faith itself were on public trial in a Christian country, is only one example of the many forms of utter Humbug in which we are nowadays so unfortunately prone to indulge. Our sometimes-called "heathen" ally, Japan, has lately taught us many lessons which perhaps we knew once and have forgotten, and which perhaps we need to learn again,—such as valour without conceit, strength without roughness, and endurance without complaint,—but one of the greatest lessons of all she has given us is that of her people's pious reverence for the Unseen and Eternal, and their belief in the ever-present "Spirits of the Dead" whom they honour and will not shame. What a deplorable contrast we make in our pandering to the lowest tastes of the mob when, without a word of protest, we permit *our* "Spirits of the Dead,"—the spirits of our gallant forefathers who fought for the pure Faith of England and sealed it with their blood,—to be degraded and insulted by a cheap newspaper discussion on the most private and sacred emotions of the soul, as though such a discussion were of a character suited to take its place among police-cases and quack medical advertisements! True, we are constantly being made aware that the British Press is no longer the clean,

sane, strong and reliable institution it once was, when "personalities" were deemed vulgar, and lies dishonourable,—and therefore we perhaps ought not to feel very greatly surprised when the name and possible attributes of the Almighty Creator Himself are dragged through the purlieus of "up-to-date" journalism,—but surely there is something very deplorable and disgraceful in the fact that any one professing to be a follower of the Christian Faith should have replied to what can only be termed, considering the quarter from whence it came, an ironical demand, "Do We Believe?" The best and wisest answer would have been complete silence on the part of the public. No more effectual "snubbing" to the non-Christian faction could have been given. But unfortunately there are a certain class of persons whose prime passion is to see themselves in print, and to this end they will commit any folly and write any letter to the newspapers, even if it be only to state that primroses were seen somewhat early in bloom in their back yards. And such, chiefly, were the kind of men and women who poured themselves into the channels of the "Do We Believe?" discussion, like water running down the streets into gutters and mains,—never seeming to realize that to the thinking and intellectual world, their foolish letters, addressed to such a public quarter, merely proved their utter loss of respect for themselves, not only as professing Christians and subjects of a Christian Empire, but as men and women. No real follower of a Faith—any Faith—would be so lost to every sense of decency as to discuss it in a daily newspaper. As for the clergy who took part in the boresome

palaver, one can only marvel at them and ask why they did not "veto" the whole thing at once? A penny paper is not the Hall of Pontius Pilate. As ministers of Christ they might have protested against a modern-vulgar "mock" trial of their Master. It was in their power to do so, and such a protest would have redounded to their honour. At any rate, they might themselves have abstained from joining in the foolish and unnecessary gabble. For gabble it was, and gabble it is. No useful cause has been served thereby and no advantage gained. The Sons of Israel have asked a question,—and some of the unwise among professing Christians, being caught in the Israelitish trap, have answered it. The manner in which both question was put and answer given, was unworthy of a country where the Christian Faith is the guiding light of the realm. Matters of religion are of course open to discussion in the treatise or book intended for quiet library reading, or even in the better-class magazines, but to hawk sacred subjects of personal sentiment and national creed about in the daily wear of newspaper columns which equally include murders, divorces, bigamies, stocks and shares, and the general *débris* cast off as flotsam and jetsam in the turgid waves of Mankind's ever-recurring mischief against itself, was to the last degree reprehensible and regrettable. And this, if only for the possible impression likely to be created by such an action among the peoples of those countries to whom, with ridiculous inconsistency, we presume to send missionaries for the purpose of "converting" them to a Creed we ourselves drag through the mire of doubt in our daily press. Fortunately, however, the matter, deplor-

ably as it has exhibited our "religion" to the eyes of "heathen" nations, has now come to an end. It has worked no change,—it has strengthened no weak places,—it has helped no struggling effort towards good. The Soul of the Nation has not been moved thereby, and it is the Soul of the Nation—that great, silent patient and labouring Soul with which all religion has to do,—that Soul, which the Christian Creed, ever since it was first preached in Britain, has raised to such a height of supremacy and power, that it needs all its reserve of sober courage and devout humility to help it bear its honours greatly. For has it not been said—"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!"

One may look upon the innate spirit of Revivalism, exemplified in the hysteric wave of preaching, praying and psalm-singing that has recently spread over Wales and other districts, as so much instinctive and natural popular rebellion against the insidious flood of atheism which has for the past ten years been striving to poison all the channels of man's better health and saner condition,—rebellion too against the apathetic coldness and shameless indifference of the ordained clergy to the clamorous needs of those neglected "flocks" which they are elected to serve. "Enough," say the People, "of shams and shows!—enough of ministers who only minister to themselves and their own convenience!—enough of the preaching of the Gospel by men who do not and will not fulfil a single one of its commands in their own lives and actions! Let us have something forcible and earnest,—let us be permitted to *feel*, even though we shout and sing ourselves

hoarse with the emotion which has been seething in us for years,—an emotion which we cannot explain to ourselves, but which craves, with a passion beyond all speech, for some touch of Heaven, some closer comprehension of that 'After-Death,' which God keeps back from us like a prize or a punishment for His obedient or rebellious children! Anything is better than the cold dead inertia of the Churches, sunk as they are in a blind lethargy from which they only bestir themselves dully when a chance is offered to them of engaging in some petty personal quarrel. We are weary of priestly humbug, selfishness and inefficiency—we will gather ourselves together and re-assert our faith in the world to come, as true disciples of the Lord!" And whether such Revivalists elect to march under the banner of Cocoa Cadbury, (an excellent advertisement for Cadbury,) or any other emblazoned device of a successful trading concern, is not a matter of much moment. Starving folk will march anywhere,—under anything or anybody,—if they are promised nourishment at the end of the journey. And the Soul of the Nation is, at this present period of time, starving to the point of inanition in all forms of spiritual food. The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep, but the underlings who care not for the flock have let the wolves into the fold.

A thing which would appear to be frequently forgotten by those who hold Governmental authority, is that the most vital, most powerful and most active principle of a Nation is this spark of the Divine which for want of any clearer mode of description we call the Soul. The Soul of a single

individual man or woman is the mere copy in miniature of the Soul of a race, or the Soul of a world. An involuntary, half-conscious, but nevertheless resistless impetus towards ultimate Good is the Soul's original quality and inborn Ideal. For, if the human weakness of the fleshly creature impel it towards temporary phases of evil, sooner or later the Soul will set to work to pull it out of the stifling quagmire. Material Nature is, as we all know, a remedial agent, and wherever mischief is wrought she seeks to amend it. Spiritual Nature is a still stronger healer. For every injury self-inflicted or wrought by others on the immortal Soul she has a saving balm,—and for every inch of progress which the Soul essays to make along the lines leading to good, she helps it forward a mile. Individuals find this out very soon in their own personal experience,—Nations discover it more slowly, first, because they have a longer time to live and learn than the individual unit,—and secondly because, moving in great masses, their periods of transit from one epoch of civilization to another must necessarily be more laborious and difficult. But in all epochs, in all eras, the Soul wins. The fiery leaven which is of God, works through the lump in various strange and complex forms till the whole is leavened. And those nations in which the Soul, or Spirit of the Ideal, is crushed and kept down by the iron hand of Materialism, are very soon seen to fall back in the rear of progress,—so far back indeed that we are fain to speak of them as "decaying nations," though of a truth no decay is possible to them, but only temporary retrogression, which will in

due course revert to progress again when the Soul is once more allowed to have its way. But Governments whose common law of procedure is to put this Soul or "spirit of the Ideal," in the background as a kind of myth or chimera, and who seek to settle everything pertaining to the interests of the people by what they term "practical" methods, (which often prove wholly *un*practical,) are naturally prone to forget that whatever they do, whatever they say, the busy Soul of the Nation is altogether outside and above them, fighting for itself, often desperately and piteously, and struggling to make use of its wings and rise higher and ever higher despite its hobbles of iron and feet of clay. Religion is supposed to give it this, its demanded freedom of noble flight, and the Christian religion, above all religions in the world, with its consoling teaching that out of sorrow cometh joy, and out of Death is born Life, should make for the happiness and peace of every living creature. But when the very ministers of that glorious Faith cast doubt upon it, and live their own lives in direct opposition to it,—when undevout and therefore limited scientists dissect a midge of truth in order to launch a leviathan of fallacious theory,—when there is no ONE pure and simple Church of Christ where all may meet in honest worship of His perfect Creed, but only a million Sects which blaspheme His Divine memory by their outrageous and petty quarrels one with the other,—it is no matter for surprise that a strong revulsion of feeling should set in, or that the Soul of the Nation, conceiving itself grievously wronged and neglected, should try to find some fresh path of its own heavenward,—

some way out of mere Sham—in the belief that if it obeys its own instinctive desire towards the Highest Ideal, God will not suffer it to go far astray. For the quarrels of the Churches are the second crucifixion of Christ. The apathy of the priesthood is the deliberate casting away to sin of the people. Where there is no unity, there is no force; and the divine founder of Christianity Himself has told us that a house divided against itself shall not stand.

Yet when one comes to think of it, it is the strangest thing in the world that Christians should quarrel, seeing how plain and clear are the instructions left to them for their guidance by the Master whom they profess to serve. The New Testament is easy reading. Its commands are brief and concise enough. There would seem to be no room for discussion or difference. Why should there be followers of Luther, Wesley, or any other limited human preacher or teacher, when all that is necessary is that we should be followers of Christ? The Soul of the Nation asks no more than this Gospel of Love, lovingly imparted,—it seeks but for the one firm faith in the eternal things which are its birthright,—a faith held purely, and wholly undoubted by those whose high mission is to teach it to each generation in turn,—it craves no more than that touch of heavenly sympathy which makes the whole world kin—that holy link which binds all mankind together in one strong knot of indissoluble spiritual belief in the love and justice; the Unseen Force behind Creation, which will surely, out of the verities of that same love and justice, grant us a future life wherein will be made clear to us the reason and necessity of our strange

sufferings, martyrdoms, disappointments and losses in this present mere brief episode of living. The Soul of the Nation does not in itself ask reward for its good deeds,—nor does it weakly complain if punishment be inflicted upon it for its evil ones,—but it does demand justice,—it does ask why, for no conscious fault of its own, it should be born, only to die. Were this question never to be answered, then the mathematical exactitude with which everything, small or great, is balanced in the universe would be a merely elaborate scheme of unnecessary fallacy, irrationally designed for the delusion of creatures who are not worth the trouble of deluding. No one who is sane and morally healthy can contemplate such an idea as this for a moment,—it follows therefore that Man, living as he does between two Infinities, and endowed with a brain which can spiritually consider both without reeling, must be guided by some great and illimitably wise destiny towards ends he knows not, but which he may be reverently permitted to believe are for his better progress, greater happiness and higher understanding, and that he needs, out of all things in the world, a Faith, by which his soul shall be kept strong and pure, his mind steady, and his sympathies active. No mockery of Christianity, such as that of Servian priests who have publicly blessed regicides,—no cruel tyranny, such as that of the Greek Church which dares to appeal to a God of Love while the mighty masses of the Russian people remain steeped in misery, and are, by very wretchedness, driven to crime,—no cold Conventionality of Form and Custom, such as is practised in fashionable London

"West End" churches, where society humbugs gather together to listen smirkingly to the civil cant of other society humbugs in surplices, who, passing for ministers of Christ, almost fear to preach the Gospel as it was written, lest its plain blunt truths should offend some highly-placed personage,—none of this kind of "religion" at all is of use,—but faith,—real faith—real aspiration—real uplifting to the Ideal of all things noble, all things great, wise, helpful and true. This, at the present crucial moment of time, is what the Soul of the Nation demands,—and not only the Soul of our own beloved and glorious Nation, but the Souls of all nations whatsoever on the globe. They stand up,—each in place, each on its own spiritual plane,—stern, strong and beautiful;—like the fabled statue of Memnon they face the sunrise, and at the first touch of the first ray of glory they speak. Their voices are as thunder among the spheres,—they demand what they deserve,—justice, hope, comfort, uplifting! To the mystic High Altar of the Infinite and Eternal they lift their praying hands, and to the priests of all religions they appeal. "Give us the Way, the Truth and the Life! Cease your own wranglings and petty disputations,—have done with mere human dogma concerning the matters of life and death,—let us see the MAN, Christ,—He who suffered our sorrows, and knew our need,—the Brother, the Friend, the Helper, for whom, in braver days than these, men gladly gave their lives to sword and fire and the jaws of wild beasts,—is there no manhood left now of such undaunted mettle?—is there not one who will think of US, the Nations, who hunger for the

glorious vitality of Faith, which, like the blood in our veins, keeps us warm and young and vigorous? Or must we perish in the devil-clutch of Materialism, and go down to the depths, thrust there by the very men who have been elected to hold us close to God? We demand our rights in the Divine and Eternal Love!—and these rights, born in us from the beginning, we will have, even if all present-existing human forms and fabrics of creed go down in our struggle for the one pure faith under whose holy influence we shall become stronger and wiser, and better able to understand our work and place in creation! The gates of Life shall not be shut upon us;—we will not accept the materialist's latter-day testimony that death shall be the end of all. For if there be an Eternal Good we are part of its being and share in its Eternal attributes. And we say,—we Souls of the Nations,—to all our preachers and teachers and representatives of the Divine on earth—Lift us up! Do not cast us down! Be yourselves the models of what you would have US become!—so shall we be willing and ready to learn from you,—so shall we honour, love and patiently follow you. But if you, as ministers of religion, show yourselves worse hypocrites than the very sinners whom the law condemns, then beware of us and our just vengeance! For you take from us our very life-blood, when you cheat us of the hope of Heaven!"

This is true. A Nation robbed of its faith, is like a human body robbed of its heart—it has neither pulse nor motion,—it is the mere corpse of itself lying prone in the dust of perishable waste things. And the fact that grave retribution will

follow the steps of those who assist in bringing it to this doom cannot be doubted. Such retribution has then been visited heavily on over-prosperous peoples, who, misled by special pleaders in the cause of Materialism have set God aside out of their countings as a non-proven quantity. The "non-proven" has always proved itself with crushing swiftness and authority in the fall of great powers, the shaking of great thrones, and the ruin and degradation of great names,—while very often a calamitous climax of misery and disaster has befallen an entire civilization and brought it to utter decay. Such occurrences are traceable through all history, and always appear to result from the same cause,—the crushing out of the vital principle, the spiritual starving of the Soul of a Nation. Heaven has not denied or diminished its bounteous nourishment and blessing,—for, in our own day, the wonders of Science have opened out to our view such infinite reaches of the Ideal as should double and treble our perception of the glories yet to be unfolded to us when we have "shuffled off this mortal coil"—while at the same time, nothing in all our changing phases of progress has yet occurred to alter the simple and noble teaching of Christ, or to make such instruction otherwise than sane, pure and helpful for every man, woman and child ever born. Indeed, it would seem with the marvellous new penetration we have gained into the secrets of the earth, air and light, that the Infinite Creator is approaching His creature even more nearly, with fresh pledges of help and promise such as His Messenger brought in the words: "Fear not, little flock,—it is your

Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." And to the Soul of the Nation that "Kingdom" is everything. In that kingdom it hopes to find all it has loved and lost, all it has striven for and failed to win, all that it has prayed for, wept for, worked for. Yet to-day between that aspiring Soul and its immortal Inheritance stand two deadly enemies,—a contentious Churchdom and a capitalized Press,—the one hypocrite, the other materialist. And the satirical demand "Do we Believe?" is but an echo of Pilate's question "What is truth?" —a question immediately followed by Truth's crucifixion. Nevertheless the Soul of the Nation—our nation, our empire—is becoming aware of its enemies. It is instinctively conscious of threatening evil, and is on the alert to save Itself if others will not save it. But its way out of the labyrinth of difficulty will probably be neither through Church nor Press,—nor will it be aided by "revival" meetings or Salvationist assemblies. Its path will be cloven straight,—not crookedly; for the British Nation, above all other nations in the world, does most easily sicken of priestly Sham and subsidized Journalism. And the sane, strong Soul of it—that Soul which in its native intrinsic virtue, is devoutly God-fearing, pure and true, will find means to shake off its pressing foes and stand free. For priestcraft and dogma are like prison chains fastened upon the progressive spirit of humanity, and they have nothing in common with the simple teaching of Christ, which is the only real Christianity.

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