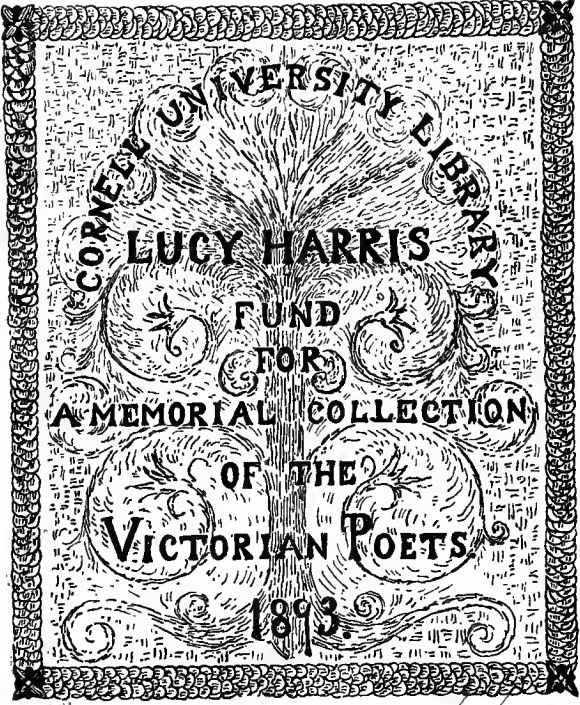


NOTES FROM LIFE  
—  
THE STATESMAN

*SIR HENRY TAYLOR*





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THE WORKS OF  
*SIR HENRY TAYLOR.*

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VOL. IV.  
NOTES FROM LIFE  
THE STATESMAN.



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## PREFACE.

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IN republishing the two volumes of my works in prose, entitled respectively "Notes from Life" and "The Statesman," I have reversed the order of date in which they were first published. "The Statesman" was published in 1836, the "Notes from Life" in 1847. In the preface to the latter, I observed that both were comprehended in the same design: that, namely, of presenting in the form of maxims and reflections the immediate results of an attentive observation of life—of official life in the one work, of life at large in the other. In this republication I have thought it best to begin with the work of larger range.

In the years which have elapsed since 1847 I have continued the practice of taking Notes.

From first to last they are now more than six hundred in number, and many of those taken since 1847 are embodied in the present editions.

One result of the original design is unavoidable—that some, though I think but a few, of the Notes have had their source in conditions of life and society no longer existing unchanged. In the course of time, if my essays should have anything to do with the course of time, the changes in society will no doubt be more numerous and more material. At present it is, I think, in the essay entitled “The Ways of the Rich and Great,” much of which was written in 1832, that the relevancy to a past time needs chiefly to be borne in mind; and even in that essay it is perhaps only in a few particulars that modifications in the state of society have rendered the remarks upon it, to any appreciable extent, inapposite.

Throughout the essays the effect of mixing up the Notes from latter with the Notes from former life, is that occasionally a wrong inference may chance to be drawn as to persons or occasions not distinctly designated; but with the exceptions I speak of in the essay on “The Ways of the Rich

and Great," questions of one date or another are of no account worth mentioning.

Of the six hundred Notes, some few were originally written in verse, and make their present appearance in that form for the first time. Others which have been published before are marked as quotations, with references to the plays or poems in which they are to be found.

There are objections to changing the title under which a book was originally published ; but the title of " The Statesman " was not well chosen. The experience which gave birth to the book was confined within the doors of an office, and had comparatively little to say to the statesman's larger sphere. It often happens that there is no page of a book so difficult to write as the title-page.



NOTES FROM LIFE.

Oftentimes he would make it his prayer that he should not be accounted as an hypocrite by reason that his life sorted not with his teaching; insisting that there is a duality in unity in the most of us, and that to a writer it hath still been permitted (not for his own behoof, since what true profit is there to a man in seeming that he is not?) to put his better mind in his books.



To  
THE EARL OF ABERDEEN, K.T.,

THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED,

WITH

GREAT RESPECT AND REGARD,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

*London, 1847.*



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# NOTES FROM LIFE.



## OF MONEY.

THE philosophy which affects to teach us a contempt of money does not run very deep ; for, indeed, it ought to be still more clear to the philosopher than it is to ordinary men, that there are few things in the world of greater importance. And so manifold are the bearings of money upon the lives and characters of mankind, that an insight which should search out the life of a man in his pecuniary relations would penetrate into almost every cranny of his nature. He who knows, like St. Paul, both how to spare and how to abound, has a great knowledge : for if we take account of all the virtues with which money is mixed up,—honesty, justice, generosity, charity, frugality, forethought, self-sacrifice,—and of their correlative vices, it is a knowledge which goes near to cover the length and breadth of humanity : and a right measure and manner in getting, saving, spending, giving, taking,

lending, borrowing, and bequeathing, would almost argue a perfect man.

First:—As to the *getting* of money. This involves dangers which do not belong to the mere possession of it. “Blessed is the rich that is found without blemish, and hath not gone after gold,” says the Son of Sirach; and again,—“He that loveth gold shall not be justified, and he that followeth corruption shall have enough thereof.”\* Yet industry must take an interest in its own fruits; and God has appointed that the mass of mankind shall be moved by this interest, and have their daily labour sweetened by it; and there may be a blessing even upon the going after gold, if it be not with an inordinate appetite—if the gold be not loved for its own sake, and if the manner of it be without blemish. But the danger arises out of the tendency of the human mind to forget the end in the means, and the difficulty of going after gold for the love of the benefits which it may confer without going after it also for the mere love of getting it and keeping it, which is “following corruption.” It behoves him who is getting money, therefore, even more than him who has it by inheritance, to bear in mind what are the uses of money, and what are the proportions and proprieties to be observed in saving, giving, and spending: for rectitude in the management of money consists in the symmetry of these three.

\* Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 5.

Sudden and enormous gains almost always disturb the balance: for a man can scarcely change his scale suddenly, and yet hold his proportions; and hence proceeds one of the many evils of highly speculative commerce, with its abrupt vicissitudes of fortune. The man who engages in it can scarcely have any fixed and regulated manner of dealing with his net income; he knows not how much he ought to save, how much he may permit himself to spend, how much he can afford to give: whilst, even if he could know, the extreme excitements of fear and hope to which he lies open occupy his mind too much for him to give many thoughts to such matters. And if what is called bold commercial enterprise be a thing to be rejoiced in as promoting the physical well-being of mankind, and thereby, perhaps, in the train of consequences, their moral interests, it is only through that Providence by which good is brought out of evil. And the actors in such enterprises, when, as is mostly the case, they are merely "going after gold," and not considering either the physical or moral results, are, in their own minds and hearts, "following corruption," and are likely to "have enough thereof."

A moderated and governed course in the getting of money is the more difficult, because this is, of all pursuits, that in which a man meets with the greatest pressure of competition. So many are putting their hearts into this work, that he who keeps his out of it is not unlikely to fare ill in the strife. And for this reason it were well

for a man, not perhaps altogether to abate his desire of gain (though this should be done if it be excessive), but more assiduously still to direct his desires beyond, and purify the desire of gain by associating with it the desire to accomplish some scheme of beneficent expenditure. And let no man imagine that the mere investment for reproduction, though economists may justly regard it as beneficial to mankind, will react upon his own heart for good.

George Herbert is a good counsellor on this head of money-getting :—

“Yet in thy thriving still misdoubt some evil ;  
 Lest gaining gain on thee, and make thee dim  
 To all things else. Wealth is the Conjuror’s Devil,  
 Whom when he thinks he hath, the Devil hath him.  
 Gold thou may’st safely touch ; but if it stick  
 Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick.”\*

Secondly:—As to the *saving* of money. The saving, like the getting, should be intelligent of a purpose beyond: it should not be saving for saving’s sake, but for the sake of some worthy object to be accomplished by the money saved. And especially we are to guard against that accumulative instinct or passion which is ready to take possession of all collectors. There is a saying that if you keep a thing seven years, you will find it turn to account. So keep it rather than *throw* it away, but give it away rather than so keep it.

\* ‘The Church Porch.’



Some very small portion of a man's income may perhaps be justifiably saved to make provision against undefined and unforeseen contingencies, and also to assure himself that he *can* save. But in the case of most men there will be a sufficiency of distinct and definable ends, whether certain or contingent, which will not only justify, but enjoin, the laying by of a proportion of their income. A young man may very well lay by money to enable him to be more free in the choice of a wife. A middle-aged man may lay it by in order that his old age may have fewer labours and cares or more comforts. A father may lay it by for his children. But in all these cases, if the end be not kept steadily in view from first to last, and the means kept no more than proportionate and subordinate, there is the risk that the saver may become a miser. The young may grow old without taking a wife, and save still when he no longer thinks of marrying; or he may think that what he has saved may entitle him to a rich wife, rather than enable him to choose. The middle-aged man may reach old age with no disposition to increase his comforts and every disposition to increase his hoard. And finally, the father, though *his* motive for saving is the most natural and universal, and in general the most warrantable of all, may yet be betrayed, by the very largeness of the allowance which the world makes in such cases, into avaricious errors. His case, as being the most common and that in which men are least on their guard, deserves to be the more closely considered.

The prudent parent is less likely to be corrupted into a covetous parent, if he be saving for several children, than if it be for one only child, or for an eldest son: for avarice projects itself more readily in the singular number than in the plural; and saving for a provision is always to be distinguished from saving for aggrandisement, which is no other than a form of avarice. Saving for an only child or eldest son may be defended when the father has means beyond the devisable patrimony, and when that devisable patrimony is insufficient for the station to be inherited along with it. But if the patrimony be insufficient, and the father have *no* extrinsic means, he must not make it more insufficient in *his* lifetime, in order that it may be less insufficient in his son's: he is not to be niggardly in order that his son may be liberal. He may indeed retrench in matters connected with the keeping up of appearances—that is, he may ostensibly retire from his station for a time or for life; but he must not, whilst keeping up the appearances of his station, fall short in matters of bounty and liberality.

In saving for younger children, the parent has to consider what is a competency; and if he be wise and can count upon an average share of health and abilities in his younger sons, he will not relieve them from the necessity of earning the main part of their livelihood; for unless a man's property be large enough to find him an occupation in the management of it and in the discharge of the duties incident to it (which generally

speaking can only be the case of the eldest son), it will be essential to his happiness that he should have to work for his bread. And it is on this fact that the custom of succession according to primogeniture is to be defended; for if any one is sacrificed by this custom, it is rather the eldest than the younger sons; the eldest being too often pampered into self-love,—the most wretched inheritance of all,—the younger being trained in self-sacrifice, fortified in self-reliance, and through industry and progress leading a wiser, a better, a more generous, and a happier life.

How much to save for a *daughter* is another question; and since a woman's life for the most part turns upon her marriage, it is her matrimonial prospects which are principally to be regarded. Let not her wealth be too tempting: an heiress has a large assortment of suitors, and yet an ill choice: and do not, if you can help it, let her poverty be an obstruction; for prudent men make good husbands, and in many cases a man cannot marry with prudence where there is not the fair facility of a moderate fortune. I have heard, indeed, of a father who stinted his daughters' dowries on purpose that poor men might not be able to marry them; whence he inferred that rich men would. He might be mistaken in his inference; for though rich men can *afford* to marry poor maids, yet men are not found to wish less for money because they want it less, and in the making of marriages it is generally seen that "wealth will after kind." Even if he were not mistaken, however, the calculation

was but a sordid one at the best ; and considering how many requisites must be combined to make a good husband and a happy marriage, the father is likely to impose a cruel limitation of choice who needlessly adds wealth to the number of essentials. Even the marriage which is poor through an improvident choice is less likely to end ill than that which is rich through a constrained choice.

There is yet another domestic object which may be a fair ground for saving out of a patrimony. One of the incidents of the law and custom of primogeniture to which our natural feelings are the least easily reconciled is the effect of it upon the wife and mother when she passes into widowhood. She is deposed from her station and deprived of her affluence at the moment of her greatest domestic calamity, and her own child is the person to whom they are transferred. It may be that the cares, duties, and responsibilities of a large property and a high proprietary station are not suitable to a widow in the decline of life : but this is not left for her to determine, and very frequently the still less acceptable cares of a straitened income and a total change in her mode of life are fixed upon her. The force of custom has brought the feelings of mankind into more accordance than one would have thought possible with so unnatural an arrangement ; but the husband needs not to be charged with parsimony who should save money with a view to mitigate the future contrast between his wife's position and his widow's.

Thirdly :—As to the *spending* of money.

The art of living easily is to pitch your scale of living one degree below your means. Comfort and enjoyment are more dependent upon easiness in the detail of expenditure than upon one degree's difference in the scale : and, what is of far more importance, the mind is less infested with questions of money.

Guard against false associations of pleasure with expenditure,—the notion that because pleasure can be purchased with money, therefore money cannot be spent without enjoyment. What a thing costs a man is no true measure of what it is worth to him ; and yet how often is his appreciation governed by no other standard, as if there were a pleasure in expenditure *per se*.

Let yourself feel a want before you provide against it. You are more assured that it is a real want ; and it is worth while to feel it a little, in order to feel the relief from it.

When you are undecided as to which of two courses you would like best, choose the cheapest. This rule will not only save money, but save also a good deal of trifling indecision.

Too much leisure leads to expense ; because when a man is in want of objects, it occurs to him that they are to be had for money ; and he invents expenditures in order to pass the time.

A thoroughly conscientious mode of regulating expenditure implies much care and trouble in resisting

imposition, detecting fraud, preventing waste, and doing what in you lies to guard the honesty of your stewards, servants, and tradesmen, by not leading them into temptation but delivering them from evil. A man who should be justly sensible of the duties involved in expenditure and determined to discharge them, would find the burthen of them heavy; and instead of having a pleasure in expense, he would probably desire as much as might be to avoid the trouble of it. We sometimes hear rich men charged with parsimony because they look minutely to differences of cost; but if they are spending their money in a right spirit, the question they have to consider is, not whether the sum is of importance to themselves, but whether it is right or wrong that it should be given and taken. If then the acquisition of great wealth involve many cares and troubles, not few are those which should attend the due dispensing and managing thereof, as well as the execution of the various trusts belonging to the station into which great wealth will lift a man:—

“For now know I in veray sothfastnesse  
That in gret lordship, if I me wel avise,  
Ther is gret servitude in sondry wise.”\*

Young men, instead of undertaking the disagreeable office of checking accounts, are often inclined to lay out money in the purchase of bows and smiles, which

\* Chaucer, ‘Clerke’s Tale,’ Pars 5<sup>a</sup>.

they mistake for respect. It is only the right and just payment that commands the sort of respect which is worth having; and the obsequious extortioner, well understanding the weakness on which he practises, will often repay himself for his own servility, not only in cash, but also in secret contempt for his dupe. These and other blandishments of the world are easily to be had for money, and when obtained they are as much worse than worthless as a harlot's love is worse than none. In the earlier stages of the prodigal's career, his self-indulgence will not perhaps be more unconscientious than his indulgence for others who are equally undeserving, and he will rejoice in the popularity which commonly attends this manner of life. It is in the latter stages, and when the harlot is an old harlot, that the account will be balanced.

There are forms of extravagance in which weaknesses equally fatal are to be found in combination with faculties and powers of a very high order. Conspicuous examples may be quoted in the persons of Lord Bacon and Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter Scott's example, though not so much in the past as Lord Bacon's, may now be treated as historical. He had costly tastes and fancies; along with these he had a toleration for what was wrong in others which bordered upon moral indifference. His costly tastes led him into trading speculations; his moral indifference delivered him into the hands of men from whom a just moral judgment might

have kept him apart: and the result was his ruin in body, mind, and estate; or rather in estate, body, and mind; for in that order the ruin proceeded. He had so large a heart, a spirit of enjoyment so genial, and such a lively imagination, that he needed a large soul to arm and invest them. But this was wanting till adversity brought it forth; and then he redeemed his errors at the cost of his life.

Whether in the exceptional or in the ordinary cases, there is this to be said for prodigality,—that it is a less incurable vice than its opposite. Avarice, being the vice of a strong, narrow nature, shows its strength by its steadfastness. Cases are not uncommon of prodigal men becoming prudent, but I have known only one of a parsimonious man becoming liberal. Indeed, a liberality in money dealings which is not lavish or weakly facile, is one of the rarest of golden means; and whilst the coaxings and caresses of the world take easy effect upon a spendthrift, the fear of its dislike and contempt will fail to take effect upon a niggard; for amongst the lesser vices, there is none which runs more resolutely counter to reason and calculation. It is in vain to tell the niggard that after the necessaries and comforts of life had been secured, money can do nothing for him but in so far as it operates favourably on men's feelings,—that if he wears broadcloth and his wife wears silk, it is so to operate and for no other end,—that on the other hand illiberality as to money is visited with an



odium even beyond its deserts,—that it overclouds the virtues of a man and strips a woman of her charm,—that it blights the genial and friendly sympathies which should make life a flowery path, surrounding its victim with a swarm of small resentments, small dissatisfactions, small disgusts, worse, perhaps, in their effect upon his happiness and his disposition, than what would result from some rare and occasional iniquity of deeper dye. He may be told all this, and even verily believe it, and yet be driven, as if by the force of an evil instinct or appetite, into narrow dealings.

And if, as an eminent theologian and statesman once observed to me, the maxim that honesty is the best policy never yet made an honest man, it is not less true that a sense of the mistake and stupidity of illiberality in money dealings never yet made a liberal man. Reformation in such matters is to be wrought by something else than reason.

Money would, I think, be better dealt with if men were more generally open in regard to their pecuniary position. Of course, there are divers circumstances under which they cannot be expected to be open; but there is a prevailing closeness even when there is no intelligible motive for it. And the prevalence of this disposition leads to a deference for it in public sentiment which is more than its due. Public measures, such as an income-tax or a compulsory registration of mortgages, are objected to as *inquisitorial*, and this is admitted by

Governments and Legislatures to be a legitimate objection, even when it is not allowed to prevail. But is not the inquisition into the state of men's affairs, and the exposition of them also, for the most part more beneficial to them than injurious, however little they may like it? The motives by which men are induced to desire that they may be supposed richer or poorer than they are, cannot often be said to be very worthy motives, even when not dishonourable. So far as they proceed from a desire to take undue advantages through a fallacious credit on the one hand, or an escape from the duties and obligations of wealth on the other, they are anything but worthy; and even when less distinctly discreditable, they are not often deserving of respect. The more ordinary motives are connected with what is called "keeping up appearances," and these, though not severely censurable, are more or less vain and mean. Perhaps few things would put an end to more mischievous aims and efforts, or more false and frivolous shows, than publicity given to the state of men's pecuniary affairs. How often would it save them from themselves? But in this country no Government can afford to meet popular objections to a measure by showing that they are based upon popular frailties, or to tell us of the disagreeable things that are good for us.

Fourthly :—As to *giving and taking*. All giving is not generous; and the gift of a spendthrift is seldom given in

generosity ; for prodigality is, equally with avarice, a selfish vice : nor can there be a more spurious view of generosity than that which has been often taken by sentimental comedians and novelists, when they have represented it in combination with recklessness and waste. He who gives only what he would as readily throw away, gives without generosity ; for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice. Waste, on the contrary, comes always by self-indulgence ; and the weakness and softness in which it begins will not prevent the hard-heartedness to which all selfishness tends at last. The mother of Rosalba,

“ In many a vigil of her last sick-bed,  
 Bid her beware of spendthrifts, as of men  
 That seeming in their youth not worse than light,  
 Would end not so, but with the season change ;  
 For Time, she said, which makes the serious soft,  
 Turns lightness into hardness.” \*

When you give, therefore, take to yourself no credit for generosity, unless you deny yourself something in order that you *may* give. Frugality and generosity are near akin.

I have known a man who was never rich, and was indeed in a fair way to be ruined, make a present of several hundred pounds, under what he probably conceived to be an impulse of generous friendship ; but if that man had been called upon to get up an hour earlier

\* ‘The Virgin Widow,’ Act ii, Scene 1.

in the morning to serve his friend, I do not believe that he would have done it. The fact was, that he had no real value for money, no real care for consequences which were not to be immediate: in parting with some hundreds of pounds he flattered his self-love with a show of self-sacrifice; in parting with an hour's folding of the hands to sleep, the self-sacrifice would have been real, and the show of it not very magnificent.

Again, do not take too much credit even for your self-denial, unless it be cheerfully and genially undergone. Do not dispense your bounties only because you know it to be your duty and are afraid to leave it undone; for this is one of those duties which should be done more in the spirit of love than in that of fear. I have known persons who have lived frugally and spent a large income almost entirely in acts of charity and bounty, and yet with all this they had not the open hand. When the act did not define itself as a charitable duty, the spirit of the God-beloved giver was wanting, and they failed in all those little genial liberalities towards friends, relatives, and dependents, which tend to cultivate the sympathies and kindnesses of our nature quite as much as charity to the poor or munificence in the contributions to public objects. A valuable and useful gift may be given to us with so many unimportant guards and reservations that we feel defrauded of our gratitude. It is well to make the desire to do our duty in the way of benevolence, and whatever other good qualities we may possess, as winning and as

catching as we can ; for an unattractive excellence is a great prejudice to virtue.

The kindness from which a gift proceeds will appear in the choice as well as in the cost of it. I have known a couple who married on 400*l.* a-year receive two carriages as wedding gifts, they being unable of course to keep one. The donors had been thinking rather of what would do credit to themselves, than of what would be serviceable and acceptable.

When gifts proceed from public bodies, communities, or high functionaries, in the way of testimonials, and are to do honour to the party receiving them, they should, if possible, assume a shape in which they will be seen without being shown.

We should take only from those to whom, in the converse of circumstances, we would gladly give. But there is often as much generosity in accepting gifts as there can be in bestowing them,—the generosity of a nature which stands too strong in its humility to fear humiliation, which knows its own independence, and is glad to be grateful.

And this is a fact which is sadly lost sight of in some of the charitable tricks and practices of the present times. It is not an uncommon thing amongst some persons, with peculiar notions of doing things delicately, for contributions to be conveyed to some decayed gentlewoman under various pretences which are meant to disguise, more or less transparently, the fact that she receives money in

charity. Some wretched products of her pencil, which would not command one penny in the market, are privately sold for five shillings apiece, and the proceeds are paid to her as if she had earned them; or a few deplorable verses are stitched together and disposed of in the same manner. It is surely impossible to take a more unworthy view of what should be the character and spirit of a gentlewoman than that which this sort of proceeding implies. If a gentlewoman be in want, she should say so with openness, dignity, and truth, and accept in the manner that becomes a gentlewoman, in all lowliness but without the slightest humiliation or shame, whatever money she has occasion for and others are willing to bestow. The relations between her and them will in that case admit of respect on the one side and gratitude on the other. But where false and juggling pretences are resorted to, no worthy or honest feeling can have place. Delicacy is a strong thing; and whether in giving or taking, let us always maintain the maxim that what is most sound and true is most delicate.

There are some other ways of the world, in this matter of charity, which proceed, I think, upon false principles and feelings,—charity dinners, charity balls, charity bazaars, and so forth; devices (not even *once* blessed) for getting rid of distress without calling out any compassionate feeling in those who give or any grateful feeling in those who receive. God sends misery and misfortune into the world for a purpose; they are to be a discipline

for His creatures who endure, and also for His creatures who behold them. In *those* they are to give occasion for patience, resignation, the spiritual hopes and aspirations which spring from pain when there comes no earthly relief, or the love and gratitude which earthly ministrations of relief are powerful to promote. In *these* they are to give occasion for pity, self-sacrifice, and devout and dutiful thought, subduing—for the moment at least—the light, vain, and pleasure-loving motions of our nature. If distress be sent into the world for these ends, is it well that it should be shuffled out of the world without any of these ends being accomplished ; or made the occasion of furthering ends in some measure opposite to these ; that it should be danced away at a ball, or feasted away at a dinner, or dissipated at a bazaar ? I ask the question ; but I can hardly give it the answer I should wish to give. No doubt in our present stage of social progress useful objects are promoted by these means which could not be otherwise accomplished ; and perhaps we must wait to condemn them till bounty and beneficence, now largely advancing from year to year, shall have reached a point at which meaner instrumentalities can be better spared.

Another modern mode is to raise a subscription by shillings or pennies,—fixing the contribution at so low a sum that nobody can care whether they give it or not, and collecting it in the casual intercourse of society. This is a less vitiated mode than the others, being of a

more negative character : but if the others are corrupted charity, this is no better than careless charity.

Lastly, there is a rule in giving which is often overlooked by those whose generosity is not sufficiently thoughtful and severe. Generosity comes to be perverted from its uses when it ministers to selfishness in others ; and it should be our care to give all needful support to our neighbour in his self-denial, rather than to bait a trap for his self-indulgence ; in short, to give him pleasure only when it will do him good, not when sacrifices on our part are the correlatives of abuses on his ; for he who pampers the selfishness of another, does that other a moral injury which cannot be compensated by any amount of gratification imparted to him :

“ Give thou to no man, if thou wish him well,  
 What he may not in honour's interest take ;  
 Else shalt thou but befriend his faults, allied  
 Against his better with his baser self.” \*

“ Give and take and sanctify thy soul,” says the author of Ecclesiasticus ; and the taking should sanctify the soul of him who takes as well as the giving the soul of the giver. I have myself found it more easy to be grateful for justice without generosity than for generosity in an unjust person.

Amongst the questionable acts which are done from generous motives is the not uncommon one of a son and heir in tail paying the debts of a prodigal father

\* ‘The Virgin Widow,’ Act i. Scene 1.



deceased, out of property which the father had no right to appropriate. There may be instances in which such an act would be worthy of all praise; but perhaps the cases are not few in which the effect is purely pernicious, enabling a spendthrift to squander another's inheritance in addition to his own; for the frequency of the practice leads money-lenders and others to calculate on the chances.

The motive of the son is the pious and commendable one of shielding a parent's memory from disgrace. But how far is this end accomplished? The selfishness which is the ground of disgrace is the same, whether it be the heir or the creditor that suffers by it. The heir may suffer in silence, and the sting of personal damage may make the creditor cry out; but in every just judgment the shame and dishonour attaching to the memory of the dead man should be measured by what he did when he was alive, and not by the silence or outcry ensuing; and it is hardly a high view of moral assuagement which can regard with much complacency the mere stifling of reproaches and hushing up of a parent's memory. In many cases, therefore, the weak and careless, or interested and usurious creditor, should be left to bear his loss when his debtor dies insolvent. Still our philosophy is not to put Nature out of office; and if the prodigality of the parent have been merely one of the infirmities of "a frail good man," and if the conduct of the creditor have not been grossly culpable, natural

feeling should take its course, and the blessing will be upon Shem and Japhet rather than upon Ham.

It is quite possible, and perhaps not unusual, for a person who is generous in his gifts to be, nevertheless, not altogether liberal in his dealings. We are more assured of credit and thanks for our generosity than for our liberality. "Bounty is wronged interpreted as due;"\* and if bounty may suffer this wrong, much more may liberality. Of course, the generosity which cares for credit and cares for thanks is not unmixed; but it may still deserve the name.

Fifthly :—As to *lending* and *borrowing*.

Never lend money to a friend unless you are satisfied that he does wisely and well in borrowing it. Borrowing is one of the most ordinary ways in which weak men sacrifice the future to the present, and thence is it that the gratitude for a loan is so proverbially evanescent; for the future, becoming present in its turn, will not be well pleased with those who have assisted in doing it an injury. By conspiring with your friend to defraud his future self, you naturally incur his future displeasure. Take to heart, therefore, the admonition of the ancient courtier :—

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;  
For loan oft loseth both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry." †

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\* Ben Jonson.

† Shakspeare.

To withstand solicitations for loans is often a great trial of firmness; the more especially as the pleas and pretexts alleged are generally made plausible at the expense of truth; for nothing breaks down a man's truthfulness more surely than pecuniary embarrassment:—

“An unthrift was a liar from all time;  
Never was debtor that was not deceiver.”\*

The refusal which is at once the most safe from vacillation, and perhaps as little apt to give offence as any, is the point-blank refusal, without reasons assigned. Acquiescence is more easily given in the decisions of a strong will, than in reasons, which weak men, under the bias of self-love, will always imagine themselves competent to controvert.

Some men will lend money to a friend, in order, as it were, to purchase a right of remonstrance: but the right so purchased is worth nothing. You may buy the man's ears, but not his heart or his understanding.

I have never known a debtor or a prodigal who was not, in his own estimation, an injured man; and I have generally found that those who had not suffered by them were disposed to side with them; for it is the weak who make the outcry, and it is by the outcry that the world is wont to judge. They who lend money to spendthrifts should be prepared, therefore, to suffer in their reputation as well as in their purse. Let us learn from the

\* ‘The Virgin Widow,’ Act iii. Scene 1.

Son of Sirach :—“ Many, when a thing was lent them, reckoned it to be found, and put them to trouble that helped them. Till he hath received he will kiss a man’s hand ; and for his neighbour’s money he will speak submissly ; but when he should repay, he will prolong the time, and return words of grief, and complain of the time. If he prevail, he shall hardly receive the half, and he will count as if he had found it ; if not, he hath deprived him of his money, and he hath gotten him an enemy without cause : he payeth him with cursings and railings, and for honour he will pay him disgrace.”

It is, looking to consequences, almost a duty, not only to keep out of debt, but so to live as to feel easy in regard to money. For poverty is full of excuses and inabilities to do right.

It is a common reproach with which mankind assails mankind, that those who fall into poverty are forsaken by their friends :—

“ Ay, quoth Jacques,  
Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens ;  
’Tis just the fashion : wherefore do you look  
Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there ? ” \*

Pity is not intended by Nature to be a permanent pain. It is intended to prompt measures of relief and then to pass away. It is more available, therefore, for an emergency than for a succession of emergencies, and it is for the most part by successive steps that men go down into

\* ‘ As You Like It,’ Act ii. Scene 1.

poverty. Pity might, however, be more persevering if, along with what is to be pitied, there were not something to be condemned; and I believe it will very rarely be found that a person in a fair condition of life is allowed to sink unassisted into extreme indigence without some serious fault and offence: and the person having so sunk, it will be found to be still more rarely the case that the pressure of poverty is not too strong for his character. It is when the character has given way that poverty is deserted: for compassion and affection, divorced from respect, lose the main element of their strength and permanency.

The ordinary course of things, then, is as follows:—*A*, becoming embarrassed, through some (perhaps venial) imprudence, is kindly assisted by his friends, *B*, *C*, and *D*; who, however, do not altogether approve his conduct, but think it would be ungenerous in them, under the protection of the favours they are conferring, to assail him with reproaches. So far all goes smoothly between *A* on the one hand, and *B*, *C*, *D*, on the other. But *A*, having, by the loans he has received, staved off any immediate consequences of his imprudence, is under a rather stronger temptation than before to forego the severe self-denial which would set him right again. He has now broken the ice in the matter of asking favours; he has incurred whatever humiliation belongs to it; and having begged once, it costs him comparatively little to beg again. This process of begging and borrowing goes

on therefore, becoming continually more frequent and less efficacious; and as the borrower grows less and less scrupulous, he nourishes his pride (the ordinary refuge of those who lose their independence) and resents every repulse as an insult. *B*, *C*, and *D* then discover that they are not to be thanked for what they have lent, but rather reproached for not lending more and more; whereupon they withdraw their friendship; and those who ignorantly look on, or perhaps hear the story of *A*, whilst *B*, *C*, and *D* are silent out of consideration for him, make remarks on inconstancy in friendship and the manner in which men are forsaken in their adversity and distress.

The desertion by friends, however well merited, leads the embarrassed man to consider himself as a castaway, and throw himself into still more reckless and shameless courses; and on the part of men in this condition there is sometimes seen a perfect infatuation of extravagance which seems to proceed from the delusions of a disordered mind and a sort of fascination in ruin. Such men come to have a repugnance to spare expense, because it brings the feeling of their difficulties home to them; and a relief in profuseness, because it seems for the moment to renounce the very notion of embarrassment. The end may be short of the gallows (for in our days the gallows has fallen out of favour), but it will scarcely be short of a punishment worse than death; for men will not tolerate in its necessary consequences that to which they are

very indulgent in its inchoation; and the “unfortunate debtor,” who was cockered with compassion whilst he was in that stage of his existence, is regarded with just indignation and abhorrence when he has passed into that of the desperate outcast: though it may be as much in the course of nature that the one stage should follow the other, as that a tadpole, if he lives, should grow to be a frog.

Creditors have always been an obnoxious people, and in divers times and countries the laws which have awarded imprisonment for insolvent debt have shared in their unpopularity. But when we trace debt in its consequences, and look to all the social evils which have their root in it, and when we consider that in moral as well as in physical therapeutics the principle of withstanding commencements is all-important, we may well, I think, bring ourselves to believe that insolvent debt should be regarded as presumably culpable, and, unless proved to be otherwise, should fall within the visitations of penal law.

There remains only to be considered,

Sixthly:—The subject of *bequeathing*: and some topics which might have fallen under this head have been anticipated in treating of motives for saving.

To make a will in one way or another is of course the duty of every person whose heir-at-law is not the proper inheritor of all he possesses: and unless where there is

some just cause for setting them aside, expectations generated by the customs of the world are sufficient to establish a moral right to inherit and to impose a corresponding obligation to bequeath. For custom may be presumed, in the absence of any reasons to the contrary, to have grown out of some natural fitness; and at all events it will have brought about an amount of adaptation which is often sufficient, as regards individual cases, to make a fitness where there was none. Unless in exceptional instances, therefore, in which special circumstances are of an overruling force, the disappointment of expectations growing out of custom is not to be inflicted without some strong and solid reasons for believing that the custom needs to be reformed. If there be such reasons, by all means let the custom be disregarded, all expectations to the contrary notwithstanding:—

“ What custom wills, in all things should we do't,  
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,  
And mountainous error be too highly heap'd  
For truth to overpeer.”\*

But the presumption should be always held to be in favour of custom, and he who departs from it without the plea of special circumstances should be able to find in himself a competency to correct the errors of mankind.

If it be not well for the natural or customary heirs that they should be disappointed, neither is it good for those

\* ‘*Coriolanus*,’ Act ii. Scene 3.



to whom an inheritance is diverted that wealth should come upon them by surprise. Sudden and unexpected accessions of wealth seldom promote the happiness of those to whom they accrue ; and they are for the most part morally injurious ; especially when they accrue by undue deprivation of another.

But some part of the property of most people, and a large part, or even the whole, of the property of some people, may not be the subject of just or natural expectations on the part of customary heirs ; and in respect of such property there is a great liberty of judgment on the part of the testator, though it is to be a grave and responsible, not a capricious liberty. The testator has to consider to whom the property will bring a real increase of enjoyment without increase of temptation ; and in whose hands it is likely most to promote the happiness of others. In general the rule of judgment should be to avoid lifting people out of one station into another ; and to aim at making such moderate additions to moderate fortunes in careful hands as may not disturb the proportion of property to station,—or, still better, may rectify any disproportion, and enable those who are living with a difficult frugality to live with a free frugality.

This rule is not, I fear, very generally regarded ; for mere rectitude, and the observance of measures and proportions, does not much lay hold of the minds of men. On the contrary, there is a general disposition to add to anything which affects the imagination by its magnitude ;

and there is also in some people a sort of gloating over great wealth, which infects them with a propensity to feed a bloated fortune. Jacques took note of this when he saw the deer that was weeping in "the needless stream :"—

"Thou mak'st a testament  
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more  
To that which had too much."\*

Thus it is that in the most solemn acts which men have to perform in the management of their money—in those too from which selfish ends seem most removed—they will often appear to be as little sensible of moral motives and righteous responsibilities as in any other transactions; and even a *testator jamjam moriturus* will dictate his will with a sort of posthumous cupidity, and seem to desire that his worldliness should live after him.

\* 'As You Like It,' Act ii. Scene I.

## OF HUMILITY AND INDEPENDENCE.



I PROPOSE to treat of these jointly, because I regard them as inseparably connected in life. We shall find, I think, on looking below the surface, that Humility is the true mother and nurse of Independence; and that Pride, which is so often supposed to stand to her in that relation, is, in reality, the stepmother, by whom is wrought—*novercalibus odiis*—the very destruction and ruin of Independence.

For pride has a perpetual reference to the estimation in which we are holden by others; fear of opinion is of the essence of it; and with this fear upon us it is impossible that we should be independent. The proud man is of all men the most vulnerable; and as there is nothing that rankles and festers more than wounded pride, he has much cause for fear. Pride, therefore—whether active or passive—whether it goes forth to claim the deference of mankind, or secludes itself from the danger of their disrespect—has always much at stake, and leads a life of caution and solicitude. Humility, on the contrary, has

no personal objects, and leads its life in "the service which is perfect freedom."

An uneasy, jealous, or rebellious feeling in regard to ranks and degrees, argues this want of independence through defect of humility. It is the feeling of a man who makes too much account of such things. A begrudging of rank and station, and refusal of such deference as the customs of the world have conceded to them, will generally be found to proceed from the man who secretly overvalues them, and who, if himself in possession of them, would stretch his pretensions too far. For plebeian pride and aristocratic pride issue from one and the same source in human nature. An illiberal self-love is at the bottom of both.

When low-born men of genius, like Burns the poet, maintain the superiority of intrinsic worth to adventitious distinction, we can readily go along with them so far; but when they reject the claims of social rank and condition in a spirit of defiance and resentment, as if suffering a personal injury, we may very well question whether they have not missed of the independence at which they aimed: for had their independence been genuine, they would have felt that all they possessed which was valuable was inalienable; and having nothing to lose by the social superiority of the better born, they would have made them welcome to it, as being perhaps a not inequitable compensation for the comparatively small share bestowed on them of intellectual gifts and abilities.

If equality be what these men of independence would contend for, it can only be had (if at all) by the balance of what is adventitious : for natural equality there is none. If personal merit be what they regard, this, at least, will not found any claim for intellectual endowments to be preferred to accidents of station. There is no more of personal merit in a great intellect than in a great estate. It is the use which is made of the one and of the other which should found the claim to respect ; and the man who has it at heart to make the best use he can of either, will not be much occupied with them as a means of commanding respect. Thus it is that respect is commonly least due, as well as least willingly accorded, where it is arrogated most, and that independence is hardly possessed where it is much insisted on. "The proud man," says St. Jerome, "(who is the poor man), braggeth outwardly, but beggeth inwardly." The humble man, who thinks little of his independence, is the man who is strong in it ; and he who is not solicitous of respect will commonly meet with as much as he has occasion for. "Who calls?" says the old shepherd in 'As You Like It ;' "Your betters," is the insolent answer : and what is the shepherd's rejoinder? "Else are they very wretched." By what retort, reprisal, or repartee could it have been made half so manifest that the insult had lighted upon armour of proof? Such is the invincible independence of humility.

The declaration of our Saviour, that the meek shall

inherit the earth, may be understood, I think, as verified in the very nature and attributes of meekness. The *dross* of the earth the meek do *not* inherit; the *damnosa hæreditas* of the earth's pomps and vanities descends to others; but all the true enjoyments, the wisdom, love, peace, and independence, which earth can bestow, are assured to the meek as in their meekness inherent. "'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus." It depends on our own hearts to cast off the bondage of pride with all its chains and sores, and by meekness to possess the earth. For this possession comes not by observation and saying "Lo here! or, Lo there!"\* but as the Kingdom of God is within us, so also is the inheritance of the Earth:—

"How much that Genius boasts as hers,  
 And fancies hers alone,  
 On you, Meek Spirits, Faith confers!  
 The proud have further gone,  
 Perhaps, through life's deep maze, but you  
 Alone possess the labyrinth's clue.

"To you the costliest spoils of thought,  
 Wisdom, unclaim'd, yields up;  
 To you the far-sought pearl is brought,  
 And melted in your cup;  
 To you her nard and myrrh she brings,  
 Like orient gifts to infant kings.

"The single eye alone can see  
 All truths around us thrown,  
 In their eternal unity;  
 The humble ear alone  
 Has room to hold and time to prize  
 The sweetness of life's harmonies." †

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\* Luke xvii. 21.

† Aubrey De Vere.

If distinctions of rank, order, and degree were of no other use in the world, they might be desired for the exercise which they give to a generous humility on the part of those who have them and of those who have them not. The inequality of relation should cultivate this virtue on both sides; those who have the superiority being disposed to prize it at no more than its worth; those who have it not, being glad to recognise superiority in others, even in this its least substantial form:—

“Cloth of gold, be not too nice,  
 Though thou be match'd with cloth of frieze;  
 Cloth of frieze, be not too bold,  
 Though thou be match'd with cloth of gold.”\*

Here are two humilities enjoined; that which in a superior forgets superiority—that which in an inferior remembers inferiority: and neither could have place without difference of rank and degree.

When the social distinctions indicate power and a governing authority, the relations between the parties are still more pregnant with occasions for the exercise of humility. From humility there will result, not only on the one side a generous care and consideration in the use of power, but likewise, on the other, what may be called a generous submission. For though the world may be more aware of generosity shown in the exercise of power, there is a generosity also in the spirit of obedience, when it is cordial, willing, and free; and this is the case only when the nature is humble.

\* Old saw.

It is indeed chiefly in our intercourse with equals and superiors that our humility is put to the proof. When the "*Servus Servorum*" at Rome washes, according to annual usage, the feet of some poor pilgrims, the ceremony, if it be held to typify humility, should at the same time be understood to be typical of the easiest of all humilities. If the same personage were to hold the stirrup of an emperor, the proceeding would be typical of another degree of humility,—and one to which the Potentates of the Earth could not bear witness in his predecessors. Many people are gentle and forbearing with those placed under them, but proud and quarrelsome in their dealings with those above them. Where humility is wanting, there may be much submission without generosity, or, on the other hand, much resistance without an independent spirit. The disposition to submit to authority unduly, and where the interests of others or our own are unjustly injured, will never arise out of humility; it will always arise out of those worldly anxieties from which the humble heart is exempt. The disposition to resist authority from personal feelings, where no duty dictates the resistance, will never proceed from a genuine spirit of independence; for the heart is not independent which is engaged in a struggle for personal objects. And whether submitting or resisting, humility and independence will still be found to go together; but they will for the most part be found to be favoured by submission: for the pride of the human heart, which is commonly



called up by resistance even when not undue, is in like manner abated by submission, even when carried too far ; and wherever pride is abated, the heart is raised and purified and made free. Elevation, therefore, is chiefly to be found in submission—"Govern them and lift them up."

Humility, like most other virtues, has its credit a good deal shaken by the number of counterfeits that are abroad. Amongst the false humilities by which the world is most flattered and beguiled, is that of the professor in this kind who shrinks from all censure and reprobation of what is evil, under cover of the text, "Judge not, lest ye be judged ;" as if it were the intent of that text, not to warn us against rash, presumptuous, and uncharitable judgments, but absolutely to forbid our taking account of the distinction between right and wrong. "It is not for us to judge our brother," says the humilitarian of this way of thinking ; "we know not how he may have been tempted ; perhaps he was born with stronger passions than other people ; it may have been that he was ill brought up ; peradventure he was thrown amongst evil associates ; we ourselves, had we been placed in the same circumstances, might have been in like manner led astray." Such are the false charities of a false and popular humility. If we are to excuse all the moral evil that we can account for, and abstain from judging all of which we can suppose that there is some adequate explanation, where are we to stop in our absolutions ? What-

ever villainy exists in the world is compounded of what is inborn and what comes by circumstance ; there is nothing so base or detestable but it is the consequence of some adequate cause ; and if we are to make allowances for all but causeless wickedness, there is an end of condemnation.

The man of true humility, on the contrary, will not spare the vices and errors of his fellow-creatures, any more than he would his own ; he will exercise manfully, and without fear or favour, those judicial functions which God has committed in some greater or less degree to every member of the human community ; but he will come to the task, on serious occasions, not lightly or unawed, but praying to have “a right judgment in all things ;” and whilst exercising that judgment in no spirit of compromise or evasion, he will feel that to judge his brother is a duty and not a privilege ; and he will judge him in sorrow, humbled by the contemplation of that fallen nature of which he is himself part and parcel.

There is not necessarily a want of humility, or of sincerity, in maintaining a standard of conduct to which we ourselves fail to conform. God forbid that men’s standards should not be above their reach ! Perhaps, however, the false charities of a false humility are for the most part limited in their range to those sins of a man’s fellow-creatures which he sees reflected in himself.

There is a charity,—fallacious, I will call it, rather than false—which is not to be severely censured, and

which, however, it would be well to avoid; and this is the too charitable leniency with which we regard the faults of our friends. Fallacious estimates are not the surest foundation for friendship; and that friendship is the soundest in which the affection or admiration is for the man as seen in his solid self, and not as seen in a vision.

There is a current and a natural opinion that a man has no right to censure in others a fault with which he is himself chargeable. But even this limitation is founded, I think, upon the same erroneous notion, of moral censure being an honourable privilege instead of a responsible function, a franchise instead of a due. No faults are better known and understood by us than those whereof we have ourselves been guilty; none, surely, should be so personally obnoxious to us as those by which we have ourselves been defiled and degraded: and may we not, therefore, be expected to be quick in perceiving them, and to regard them with a peculiar bitterness, rather than to overlook them in others? I would answer, assuredly yes; but always with this proviso—that to bitterness of censure should be added confession and humiliation and the bitterness of personal shame and contrition. Without this the censure is not warrantable, because it is not founded upon a genuine moral sense; it is not, indeed, sincere: for though the offence may be worthy of all disgust and abhorrence, that abhorrence and disgust cannot be really

felt by those who have committed the like offence themselves without shame or repentance.

Besides the false humility under cover of which we desert the duty of censuring our fellow-creatures, there are others by which we evade or pervert that of censuring ourselves. The most common of the spurious humilities of this kind is that by which a general language of self-disparagement is substituted for a distinct discernment and specific acknowledgment of our real faults. The humble individual of this class will declare himself to be very incontestably a miserable sinner; but at the same time there is no particular fault or error that can be imputed to him from which he will not find himself to be happily exempt. Each item is severally denied; and the acknowledgment of general sinfulness turns out to have been an unmeaning abstraction—a sum total of ciphers. It is not thus that the Devil makes up his accounts.

Another way is to confess faults from which we are tolerably free, being perhaps chargeable with no larger a share of them than is common to humanity, whilst we pass over the sins which are more peculiarly and abundantly our own. Real humility will not teach us any undue severity, but *truthfulness* in self-judgment. “My son, glorify thy soul in meekness, and give it honour according to the dignity thereof.”\* For undue self-abasement and self-distrust will impair the strength and independence of the mind, which, if accustomed to have

\* Ecclesiasticus x. 28.

a just satisfaction with itself where it may, will the better bear to probe itself, and will lay itself open with the more fortitude to intimations of its weakness on points in which it stands truly in need of correction. No humility is thoroughly sound which is not thoroughly truthful. The man who brings misdirected or inflated accusations against himself, does so in a false humility, and will probably be found to indemnify himself on one side or another. Either he takes a pride in his supposed humility; or, escaping in his self-condemnations from the darker into the lighter shades of his life and nature, he plays at hide-and-seek with his conscience.

And true humility, being a wise virtue, will deal more in self-examination and secret contrition than in confession. For confession is often a mere luxury of the conscience,—used as the epicures of ancient Rome would use an emetic and a warm bath before they sat down to a feast. It is also often a very snare to the maker of it, and a delusion practised on the party to whom it is made. For, first, the faults may be such as words will not adequately explain: secondly, the plea of “guilty” shakes judgment in her seat: thirdly, the indulgence shown to confession might be better bestowed on the shame which conceals; for this tends to correction, whereas confession will many times stand instead of penitence to the wrong-doer; and sometimes even a sorrowful penitence stands in the place of amendment, and is washed away in its own tears.

There is a frivolous practice of confession, much used in certain classes of society, by which young ladies or others, in the earlier moments of a friendship, take out a licence to talk of themselves. In the confessionals of the ball-room, much superfluity of naughtiness is mutually disclosed by persons who might have been better employed in dancing than in confessing. This is hardly worth notice; yet it points to an infirmity against which it may be well to be on our guard; and when the occasion is sufficiently serious, we should take care that our confessions are free from any egoistical taint.

But if deliberate confession in one kind or another may do more harm than good, there is in some persons a natural and involuntary openness which may be of a less questionable value, being at once a warning to others and some sort of safeguard to themselves.

Of all false humilities the most false is to be found in that meeting of extremes wherein humility is corrupted into pride. John Wesley, when he was desirous to fortify his followers against ridicule, taught them to court it. "God forbid," said he, "that we should not be the laughing-stock of mankind!" It is through spiritual pride, however, and not in humility that any man will desire to be a laughing-stock. Such a man, cherishing his unhappy œdema, and, like Joanna Southcote, fancying it to be some God within him, may seem at first sight to have attained to an independence of mankind; but the

appearance is fallacious : it will be found that in so far as his humility was corrupted, his independence was undermined ; and whilst courting the ridicule of the world, he is in reality courting the admiration and applause of his party or sect, or fearing their rebuke. This is the dependence into which he has fallen, and there is probably no slavery of the heart which is comparable to that of sectarian pride. Moreover, Mr. Wesley's followers doubtless deemed that the laughers were in danger of hell-fire. Where then was their charity when they desired to be laughed at by all mankind ? Or if (without desiring it) they deemed mankind, themselves only excepted, to be in so reprobate a state that the religious must needs be a laughing-stock,—was this their humility ? I wish to speak of Mr. Wesley with respect, not to say reverence : but in this instance I think that his appeal was made to a temper of mind in his followers which was not purely Christian. It is not the meek who will throw out this sort of challenge and defiance ; and it is pride and not humility which we shall find to lie at the bottom of any such ostentatious self-abasement—

For Pride,

Which is the Devil's toasting-fork, doth toast  
Him brownest that his whiteness vaunteth most.

## OF CHOICE IN MARRIAGE.



“WHAT do you think of marriage?” says the Duchess of Malfy in Webster’s play, and Antonio answers—

“I take it as those that deny purgatory;  
| It locally contains or heaven or hell;  
There is no third place in it.”

When I was young and inexperienced in wives, I did not take the same view of marriage which Antonio took. I used to say that there were two kinds of marriages, with either of which a man might be content; the one “the incorporate existence marriage,” the other “the pleasant additament marriage.” For I thought that if a man could not command a marriage by which all interests would be deepened, all objects exalted, rewards and forfeitures doubled and far more than doubled, and all the comparatives of life turned into superlatives, then there remained nevertheless a very agreeable kind of resource,—a marriage, that is, in which one might live one’s own substantive life, with the additional embellishment of some graceful, simple, gay, easy-hearted creature,



who would lie light upon the surface of one's being, be at hand whenever solitude and serious pursuits had become irksome, and never be in the way when she was not wanted. Visions these are; merely dreams of our Epicurean youth. There is no such wife, and marriage is very much what Antonio took it to be.

And marriage being thus the highest stake on this side the grave, it seems strange that men should be so hasty in the choice of a wife as they sometimes are; for if we look about us at those marriages in which men and women have chosen for themselves, we shall find that, even where there has been no absolute passion to expedite the business, the choice has not always been preceded by much deliberation. Perhaps it is owing to that very fact of the decision being so critical, that it is often a little hurried; for, when great interests are depending, we deliberate with an anxiety to avoid error which presently becomes too painful to be endured, and perhaps, also, too disturbing to be successful; and it is at some crisis of their fortunes that men in all times have been disposed to commit them to Providence, under various forms of reliance, some religious, others superstitious. We are most sensible of the fallibility of human judgment in those matters in which it is most essential to judge well; and to the irreligious man, fate, destiny, chance, sortilege, the stars—anything seems more trustworthy; whilst he who is not irreligious assures himself that what is done in faith will be justified in the fruits, be

they sweet or bitter. The maid who “was married one morning as she went into the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit” \* may have regarded her marriage as part and lot of a dispensation in which all things were working together for good to her.

Men who know not in what to put trust will often fall into the fatal error of supposing that some of the graver consequences of marriage are to be escaped by concubinage,—a supposition from which, if there be no better monitor at hand, even the wisdom of this world might withhold them. Unless they be utterly heartless and worthless, they will find that the looser tie is not the lighter. Mistresses, if they have any hold on the affections, are generally more exacting than wives, and with reason ; for there will naturally be the most assertion of claims where there is the least ground for confidence. The claims strengthen with time, whilst the qualities for which mistresses are commonly chosen, and on which they depend for their charm, are proverbially perishable. Beauty and the vivacities of youth fall away as soon from the concubine as if she were a wife ; domestic cares and jealousies will accrue as readily in the one case as in the other ; and unless generosity be out of the question, and a man have so “corrupted his compassions” as to have deliberately determined to keep a woman’s affections until they should involve the cares naturally belonging to the affections and, then to cast them off, there is no one of the burthens

\* ‘ Winter’s Tale.’

vexations, dues and responsibilities incident to marriage, which will not be felt with tenfold force in concubinage. Such are the miscalculations of selfishness. A man thinks that he has hung a trinket round his neck, and behold ! it is a millstone.

Whilst one man will be hurried into a marriage from the very painfulness of perplexity, another will live and die a bachelor out of mere indecision. The latter case is the more rare, and requires a peculiar serenity of temper and strength of irresolution. But it can occur. And the cases occur very frequently in which a man misses, through indecision, the opportunity of making the marriage he would have liked best, and then, resolving to be indecisive no more, takes a wrong decision. So that, having regard to the various sources from which error proceeds in such matters, it may perhaps be reasonably doubted whether a passion, with all its impetuosities and illusions, affords, comparatively speaking, an ill guidance ; and whether those who have surrendered to it might not have been as much misled had they proposed to themselves the task of making a calm and judicious choice.

And indeed the seasonable time for the exercise of prudence is not so much in choosing a wife or a husband, as in choosing with whom you will so associate as to risk the engendering of a passion. Even in this choice the prudence should not be cold-blooded ; for a cold-blooded choice of associates is likely to lead to a cold-blooded

marriage. With the leanings and leaps of the heart in the new acquaintanceships of the young, there should be just so much prudence presiding as will turn them away from what there is reasonable ground for believing to be false, selfish, weak, or vicious. There should be thus much and no more. If the taste and fancy are resisted upon grounds less substantial than these, they are resisted by what is less worthy to prevail than they; for the taste and fancy are by no means of small account—they are indeed of all but paramount importance—in human life and intercourse. The taste lies deep in our nature, feeding the roots of every genial outgrowth.

But if the taste be in truth a matter of such import and ascendancy in our life, it follows that we are deeply responsible for the formation of it. It is, like everything else in us, partly of Nature's fashioning, partly of our own; and though it is to rest upon the foundation of our natural dispositions, it is to be built, not like a baby-house, at our pleasure, but according to the laws and model of the great Architect, like a temple. If there can be little that is genial or cordial in our life, married or unmarried, unless the taste be indulged, for that very reason it behoves us so to raise and purify the taste as to be enabled to give way to it in safety and innocence; not certainly with a total abandonment or an absolute affiancement—nothing short of perfection in taste could justify that—but with a trust proportioned to the degree of purity and elevation which has been attained. Accord-

ing to this measure our habitual propensities will be towards what is good ; whilst the habit of guarding and correcting the taste will prevail to some extent even over its more impassioned movements ; and if we are carried away by our fancy, we shall yet know whither we are going, and give some guidance as well as take some.

Wealth and worldly considerations have a good deal to do with the choice made in most marriages ; and though the taste which is under these influences will not be supposed to be very high, yet, if it cannot be elevated, better that a man should take the lower course to which it points, than aim at what is above him. If his mind be habitually involved in worldly interests and pursuits, he has no right to suppose that by stepping aside from them on a single occasion, even though it be the most important of all occasions, he can place himself in a different order of beings, or bring himself into harmony with what is high and free. What he has to do is to emancipate his mind if he can ; but if not, to marry according to the conditions of his slavery. For if he marries from a mere impulse of his higher mind, whilst he is still in habitual subjection to the lower, the impulse will pass away, whilst the habit stands fast, and the man will find that he has introduced a discord into his life, or rather that he has composed it in the wrong key. The man who marries for money has one advantage over those who marry for other considerations : he can know

what he gets ; if he can feed upon husks and draff, it is competent to him to see that his trough is filled.

But if marrying *for* money is to be justified only in the case of those unhappy persons who are fit for nothing better, it does not follow that marrying *without* money is to be justified in others,—marrying, that is, without the possession or the fair prospect of a competency suited to their condition in life. What is to constitute such a competency depends in a great measure on the prudence, independence, and strength in self-denial of the parties. Those who resolve to marry on very small means, against the wishes of their relatives and friends, should always consider that they are setting up a claim to an extraordinary share of these excellent virtues ; and they should not expect their claim to be readily acknowledged unless it be founded, not merely on good intentions, but on actual savings, on ascertained facts of frugality and habits of self-sacrifice. Without such habits, they may intend and profess what they please as to independence and self-reliance : the result will be that they have indulged their unworldly inclinations at the expense of others.

Love is said to delight in contrasts, and Nature may have some purposes to fulfil in so ordering it. In the matter of stature, having a leaning towards a certain average, she may have provided against extremes of stature in the issue of marriages by inspiring the tall with a preference for the short, and *vice versâ*. In the matter of

sense I think it is otherwise. To a man of sense, the want of sense will tend to alienate. In regard to gaiety and gravity, no doubt a grave, and especially a melancholy man, will find a gay and happy nature in a girl especially attractive. But this may be misleading if it leads to marriage. For there are few things that need sympathy and companionship more than happiness.

Rank and station have an influence which, though not very high or worthy, is to be regarded, I think, as somewhat less bare and poor than motives which are merely mercenary. There is something in differences of rank and degree which affects the imagination, as everything does which is unfamiliar; and an imaginative person is perhaps more apt to fall in love with what is either above him or below him in station than with what is on a dead level with him. This, however natural, should be looked upon as a misdirection of the fancy; for any extreme inequality of station will commonly lead to sore trials in marriage.

Beauty, in itself and of itself, has, I believe, less power in determining matrimonial choice than at first sight it might seem natural that it should have. The charm of mere physical and corporeal beauty is perhaps too open and immediate to involve consequences; its first effect is too strong in proportion to its further effects: for our imagination wishes to feel that it has something to come to; and there is a charm more insidiously winning in that which turns to beauty as you advance, than in that which

declares itself as beauty from the first. In some faces there is a mystery of beauty which, by perplexing and disturbing the minds of men, exercises a more subtle and irresistible power.

Lord Bacon has said that "there is no excellent beauty without some strangeness in the proportion ;" from which I infer that the beauty which had individuality was alone excellent in his eyes ; and I believe this to be so far prevalent amongst mankind that, whilst the name of beauty is given to perfection of symmetry, the power of beauty is felt in a slight deviation from it—just sufficient to individualize without impairing. It is this peculiarity, this "some strangeness," which lays hold of the imagination.

But even when such a hold has been taken, the first feelings are those of admiration rather than love, and there must be something *in* the beauty indicating something *besides* the beauty, in order that the admiration may pass into love. If other forces are behind, admiration is an excellent herald and harbinger of love ; if not, admiration will not of itself constitute love ; indeed, where the passion of love has attained to its full force, admiration will sometimes be almost lost and absorbed : "She loved too deeply to admire," said one lady writing of another some thirty years ago.

There are two sorts of love well discriminated by Beaumont and Fletcher, of which, without distrusting either, the more simple may be better suited to the



beginning of married life, the more composite to married life in its progress :

“ You talk of Perithon’s and Theseus’ love ;  
 Theirs has more ground, is more maturely seasoned,  
 More buckled with strong judgment ; and their needs  
 One of another may be said to water  
 Their intertangled roots of love ; but I  
 And she (I sighed and spoke of) were things innocent,  
*Loved for we did*, and like the elements  
 That know not what nor why, yet do effect  
 Rare issues by their operance, our souls  
 Did so to one another.” \*

It is commonly said that beauty, howsoever enchanting before marriage, becomes a matter of indifference after. But if the beauty be of that quality which not only attracts admiration, but helps to deepen it into love, I am not one of those who think that what charmed the lover is forthwith to be lost upon the husband. It is doubtless a question of kind. There may be a beauty, eminent in its kind, which, though gifted

With winning ways and pliant grace  
 And pleasing, falsifying face,

is but “the perfume and suppliance of a minute ;” the clouds in the coldest of winter evenings are sometimes as soft-looking and as warmly tinted as those of a summer sky ; but there exists also a species and quality of beauty, the effect whereof (as I conceive) it would not be possible for daily familiarity to deaden, and the power whereof

\* ‘Two Noble Kinsmen.’

may be expected to last as long as the beauty itself lasts, and perhaps much longer.

“The hidden traynes I know, and secret snares of love,

How soone a loke will prynte a thoughte that never may remove—”

says Surrey; and it is, in truth, “a look,” and what a look reveals, which makes the permanent impression; and even when there is no question of absolute love, we are wont to recall the absent whom we admire in such wise as they appeared to us at some particular moment when the look may have happened to give a fuller account of the nature than at other times, or a more poetical version of it.

“She hath a face looks like a story;

The story of the heavens looks very like her—”\*

And it is the story which the looks have told us which remains with us and which we remember or read again, even when the looks are no longer before our eyes or when they speak less plainly.

“Yet can I not hyde me in no dark place,

So followeth me remembrance of that face.” †

Pictures and statues wrought by the more spiritual masters of art do not satiate the sense; and if in that beauty which is of art's creation, when the art is of the highest order, there is this cleaving and abiding power, we are not to doubt that Nature, which creates the art, is competent to create, without the intervention of the art,

\* Beaumont and Fletcher's ‘Elder Brother,’ Act iii. Scene 3.

† Sir Thomas Wyatt.

a beauty expressed in flesh and blood, that may be constantly lived with and daily dwelt upon, yet be found to be not less inexhaustible in its charm. Other objects will intervene, no doubt, where beauty is present to our daily life; a man cannot be consciously and continually occupied with such impressions; insusceptible *moods* will intervene also, and the perceptions will from time to time be overclouded: this will be the case in regard to works of art, and even in regard to those natural and universal sources from which the sense of beauty in man is nourished as with its daily food; nor can it be otherwise in regard to human beauty: but when this beauty is pure and spiritual, I see no reason to suppose that it will be a less permanent source than those others; and I will not consent to believe that daily familiarity with it will make it of no effect, any more than that the flowers will cease to please because they hang over our doors, or the stars because they shine nightly.

And even if the beauty be not pure and spiritual, it may be spiritualized and purified by the love which looks upon it, so that the result shall be the same:

“For they which love indeed look otherwise,  
 With pure regard and spotless true intent  
 Drawing out of the object of their eyes  
 A more refined form which they present  
 Unto their mind, void of all blemishment.”\*

The exception to be taken to beauty as a marriage portion (if it be beauty of the highest order) is not there-

\* Spencer's ‘Hymn in Honour of Beauty.’

fore that it can become otherwise than precious whilst it lasts, but rather that, as it is precious, so is it perishable ; and that, let it be valued as it may, it must be accounted at the best but a melancholy possession :

For human beauty is a sight  
To sadden rather than delight ;  
Being the prelude of a lay  
Whose burthen is decay.

And if it be our fortune to encounter in flesh and blood a beauty which seems to revive for us the realities from which *Rafaello* and *Perugino* painted, we are to consider whether to possess such beauty in marriage and see it subjected to the changes and chances of this mortal life, would not bring upon us the same sort of feeling with which we should contemplate a *Madonna* or a *St. Cecilia* hanging exposed to the weather and losing some tenth part of its form and colouring with each successive winter.

Simplicity—an express simplicity—in looks, has, I think, more power to prolong their youthfulness, than either brightness or bloom. That is a conservation which takes effect in the eyes of all beholders. There is another which is domestic and specific. Slow and gradual changes do not take effect equally with other changes. Some persons continue to see in the face they have lived with for ten years, or twenty or thirty, the same face they saw when they met it first ; the insensible graduation of change being to them almost as conservative as if the face had been embalmed : And I have

sometimes been reminded of a strange occurrence which came to my knowledge many years ago. A mine had fallen in, thirty or forty years before, upon a young man employed in it. Lately some new mining operations which had been undertaken reached the spot, and the body was disinterred and brought up. It had been preserved from decay by some antiseptic quality of the earth in which it was buried, and appeared like a fresh corpse. The neighbours crowded round it; but no one recognised it till an old woman rushed through the crowd and saw in it the lover of her youth. And thus came together age in life and youth in death.

I have said that, considering the many misguidances to which a deliberative judgment is exposed in the matter of marriage, there may often be less risk of error in a choice which is impassioned. But I ought perhaps to have explained that by a passion I do not mean—what young ladies sometimes mistake for it—a mere imaginative sentiment, dream, or illusion. Some imaginative sentiments, dreams, or illusions, not only do not constitute a passion, but may render the person who indulges them incapable of conceiving one; bringing out a strong fancy perhaps, but a weak and wasted heart. This is well understood by worldly mothers, who will rather promote than discourage a rapid succession of such sentiments, resting upon the maxim that there is safety in numbers. In destitution there is security from arrest, in nakedness there is security from a rending

of garments, and in this beggary of the heart there is security from a passion.

But if the heart have been trained in the way that it should go, the passion to which it will lie open will be something very different from a warm illusion or a sentimental dream, though very possibly including these, and having begun in them. For true love is not, I think, that isolated and indivisible unity which it might be supposed to be from the way in which it is sometimes spoken of. It is mixed and manifold according to the abundance of the being, and in a large nature becomes in its progress a highly composite passion; commonly, no doubt, having its source in admiration and imaginative sentiment, but, as it rolls on, involving divers tributaries, swollen by accessory passions, feelings, and affections,—pity, gratitude, generosity, loyalty, fidelity, anxiety, fear, and devotion,—and deepened by the embankments of duty and justice—foreign to the subject as these last may seem to some. In short, the whole nature and conscience, being worked upon by this passion, react upon it and become interfused and blended with it; not by an absorption of all elements into one, but by a development of each into each: and when, therefore, I affirm that passion, err though it may, will be often less misleading than the dispassionate judgment, I do but aver that the entire nature—reason, conscience, and affections, interpenetrating and triune,—that this totality of the nature, raised, vivified, and enlarged by love, is less likely to take an

erroneous direction than a part of the nature standing aloof and dictating to the other parts.

I say not, however, that the risk is small in either case or under any guidance. Far from it. And the preference to be given to passion as a guide will depend upon the natural capabilities, and the maturity and cultivation of the moral, spiritual, and intellectual mind. If there be much of this for the passion to call out, it will be an exalted and enlightened passion, and may see its way. If there be little, it will be a blind passion. Whence it follows that passion is not to be taken for a guide in extreme youth, in the rawness of the moral and spiritual elements and the greenness of the judgment. And as it is in these days that a first passion will most frequently take place, it will generally be found, I believe, that a second may be better trusted :

“Time teaches us that oft One higher  
Unasked a happier lot bestows  
Than if each blighted dream desire  
Had blossomed as the rose.” \*

Nor is it altogether foreign to Nature, or to some natures, that something remaining from an old and disappointed love should keep its place along with a new and growing one, any more than that on the same bush a faded rose should be shedding its leaves by the side of one that is blossoming. Nor will the blossom be the worse for it. So long as life is in us, no love that has once possessed us should be wholly left behind.

\* Sir F. Doyle.

If, however, I maintain that passion, in one season or another of our soul's progress, is to have a voice of much force and potency in the direction of the judgment, and will enlighten it on some points more than it may be-darken it on others, this is not because I imagine that it can realise its illusions or establish its empire in marriage. Passion is of course designed by nature to be transitory, —a paroxysm, not a state. And then the question arises which has been so often agitated, whether the affection which succeeds marriage is in all cases much influenced—and if influenced, how influenced—by the nature of the feeling which preceded? Whether a passion which has transmigrated into an affection carries with it into the affection any elements which could not exist in an affection otherwise originating? When it begins with passion, there must needs be a period of collapse and regurgitation, or at least of subsidence. Whether, therefore, is the affection the weaker for never having known the high tide, or the stronger for not having felt the reflux? This temporary flooding of the affections, does it devastate as regards durable results, or does it enrich?

I think that the predominance, amounting almost to universality, of the law of Nature which places us once in our lives at least under the dominion of this passion, would afford of itself a strong presumption that some beneficial result is to be brought about by it. And if it be admitted (as without any offence to Calvin I hope it well may) that the better part of most human beings is



the larger part, it will follow that this temporary expansion and outburst of the whole of the being will bring a greater accession of good activities than of bad ; and as the first cry of the infant is necessary to bring the lungs into play, so the first love of the adult may, through a transitory disturbance, be designed to impart a healthy action to the moral and spiritual nature. The better the tree, the better of course will be the fruits ; neither the rains of spring nor the glow of summer will make grapes grow upon brambles ; but whatever the fruits may be, the yield will be larger after every seasonable operation of Nature has been undergone. With the few in whom envy, jealousy, suspicion, pride, and self-love are predominant, there may be an aggravation of these evil dispositions or of some of them ; but to them (and God be praised they are the many !) with whom humility, generosity, the love of God, and the love of God's creatures, though partly latent perhaps, is powerfully inherent, the passion of love will bring with it an enlargement and a deepening and strengthening of these better elements, such as no other visitation of merely natural influences, however favourably received and dutifully cherished, could avail to produce. And when the passion has passed away, the enlargement of the nature will remain ; and as the better and more abounding human being will make the better and more abounding husband or wife, so will the marriage which has been preceded by a passion be a better marriage—other things alike—than that which has not ;—more exalted, more genial, more affluent in affections.

If the passion have ended, not in a marriage but in a disappointment, the nature, if it have strength to bear the pressure, will be more ennobled and purified by that than by success. Of the uses of adversity which are sweet, none are sweeter than those which grow out of disappointed love ; nor is there any greater mistake in contemplating the issues of life, than to suppose that baffled endeavours and disappointed hopes bear no fruits, because they do not bear those particular fruits which were sought and sighed for :—

“ The tree  
Sucks kindlier nurture from a soil enrich’d  
By its own fallen leaves ; and man is made,  
In heart and spirit, from deciduous hopes  
And things that seem to perish.” \*

Indeed, the power and spiritual efficacy of love can hardly be realised to its full extent without either disappointment, or at least reverses, vicissitudes, and doubts ; and of the fact which Shakspeare observes, that

“ The course of true love never did run smooth,”

perhaps this explanation may be given,—that roughnesses are needful in order to make the love true ; and marriages that follow upon trouble, trial, and vicissitude, will be more likely to be conservative of the love by which they have been achieved, than those which are merely the crown or coronal of a triumphal career in courtship :

“ The flowers in sunshine gather’d soonest fade.”

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\* ‘Ernesto.’

Once on my way home from the house of a lady more celebrated than any one else of her day for beauty and genius, I versified a question and answer :

I lightly said, "Come, tell me in my ear,  
Who are the friends you call the 'very dear?'"  
She paused, and answered when I asked again,—  
"The friends that more than others cause me pain."

After all, if the secrets of betrothals and refusals were to be known, we should probably be surprised to find how many are the result of accident, or of something not unlike it; and how many issues are determined by the mood of a moment. A bad night, a headache, the wind in the north-east, and the offer is refused. Reverse these conditions and it might have been accepted. A lover, therefore, who has thoughtlessly made his proposal in the north-east wind should repeat it when the wind has changed. This seems like a jest, but there is a monitory hint behind it.

Courtships are sometimes the least smooth where there is on one side the most passion. A man who is quite competent to what is called "flirtation" under ordinary circumstances, will find himself disqualified for it if deeply in love. And yet it may be by those sort of advances that he would have the best chance of working his way. Thus his passion, too serious to be sentimental and too reserved to be understood, bursts at length into a declaration by surprise, when he has *not* worked his way. Whether he be or be not successful in the ultimate issue, there will be an intermediate course of true love which does not run smooth.

Amongst the obstructions which the course of love has commonly to encounter, one which is specified by Shakspeare is the opposition of parents ; and it is often one of the most perplexing problems in human life to determine to what length parental opposition should proceed in such cases. A moderate opposition can seldom do harm, unless there be positive perversity in the parties opposed, so that opposition shall be in itself a provocative to folly. Such perversity apart, a moderate opposition will suffice to set aside a weak love, whilst it will tend to consolidate a strong one ; and it will thus act favourably in either case, so far as regards that most essential element in all such matters,—the weakness or strength of the affection. In respect of an opposition beyond this, it seems hardly possible to generalise, the qualities of the persons and the specialties of the cases being so all-important. In *extreme* youth, obedience should be the rule of the child. But so soon as the child shall have attained to a fair maturity of judgment, there is a moral responsibility for the just exercise of that judgment which must not be overlaid by an exaggerated notion of filial duty. Of the members of a family it is for the benefit of all that each should act upon each with some degree, though with very different degrees, of controlling influences. The sons and daughters, when children no longer, are to demean themselves towards the parents with humility, deference, and a desire to conform, but not with an absolute subjection of the judgment and the will. On the question of choice in marriage, as

on other questions in which both child and parent are personally concerned, if the child presumptuously conceive that his judgment is mature when it is not mature, or that it is worthy to be weighed with his parents' when it is not worthy, he is culpable of course ; being chargeable, not with mere error of judgment, but with the fault of presumption. On the other hand, if in all humility of heart and desire to be dutiful, he shall nevertheless clearly perceive, or think he perceives, that his judgment is the juster, and is guided by higher, purer, and more righteous views of life, it behoves him, after much patience and the neglect of no endeavour to bring about a coincidence of judgment, to resist his parents' judgment and give effect to that which he conceives to be better ; and this for his parents' sake as well as for his own. We all need resistance to our errors on every side. " Woe unto us when all men shall speak well of us ! " and woe unto us, also, when all men shall give way to us ! It may be a sacred duty on the part of a child to give a helpful resistance to a parent, when the parent is the more erring of the two ; and the want of such resistance, especially on the part of daughters (for they are more prone than sons to misconceive their duties of this kind or to fail in firmness), has often betrayed a parent into fatal errors, followed by lifelong remorse. Women, in a state of exaltation from excited feelings, imagining, because duty often requires self-sacrifice, that when they are sacrificing themselves they must needs be doing their duty, will often be capable of

taking a resolution, when they are not capable of undergoing the consequences with fortitude. For it is one sort of strength that is required for an act of heroism ; another, and a much rarer sort, which is available for a life of endurance. Probably most people could quote instances within their own knowledge in which the daughter has obeyed, and then, losing her health, and with it perhaps her temper and her resignation, has died of what is called a broken heart ; thus, as it were, heaping coals of fire upon the parents' head.

But if an unreasonable opposition to a daughter's choice be not to prevail, I think that, on the other hand, the parents, if their views of marriage be pure from worldliness, are justified in using a good deal of management—not more than they very often do use, but more than they are wont to avow or than society is wont to countenance—with a view to putting their daughters in the way of such marriages as they can approve. It is the way of the world to give such management an ill name,—probably because it is most used by those who abuse it to worldly purposes ; and I have heard a mother pique herself on never having taken a single step to get her daughters married,—which appeared to me to have been a dereliction of one of the most essential duties of a parent. If the mother be wholly passive, either the daughters must take steps and use management for themselves (which is not desirable), or the happiness and the most important interests of their lives, moral and

spiritual, must be the sport of chance and take a course purely fortuitous ; and in many situations, where unsought opportunities of choice do not abound, the result may be not improbably such a love and marriage as the mother and every one else contemplates with astonishment. Some such astonishment I recollect to have expressed on an occasion of the kind to an illustrious poet and philosopher,\* whose reply I have always borne in mind when other such cases have come under my observation :—"We have no reason to be surprised unless we knew what may have been the young lady's opportunities. If Miranda had not fallen in with Ferdinand, she would have been in love with Caliban."

But management, if it is to be recommended, must be good management, and not the management by which young ladies are hurried from ball-room to ball-room, so that a hundred prelibations may give one chance to be swallowed. A very few ball-rooms will afford the means of introduction and selection of acquaintances ; and the intercourse which, by imparting a real knowledge of the dispositions, will give the best facilities of choice, will be that which is withdrawn, by one remove and another, from gay metropolitan assemblies—first, to intercourse in country places ; secondly, to domestic society. Our present manners admit, perhaps, too much freedom of intercourse in public, too little in private. The light familiarity of festive meetings is carried far enough, further

\* Wordsworth.

than tends to *attach*; but the graver intimacy is wanting. Milton complained that in his time choice in marriage was difficult, because there was not "that freedom of access, granted or presumed, as may suffice to a perfect discerning till too late."\* In our age the freedom of access is sufficient; but the access is, for the most part, at times and places where nothing can be discerned but the features of a restless and fluttering life. A dog may sometimes be seen in chase of a swallow; *his* quest is scarcely more hopeless than the endeavour of a man to attain to some more than outward knowledge of a girl in the highways of London society. And I remember to have heard it said by a man † who lived in those highways for the greater part of a life of more than ninety years, that it did not signify much whom a man married, for next morning he found that it was somebody else. And if Milton could say, "Who knows not that the bashful muteness of a virgin may oftentimes hide all the unliveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation?" we, on the other hand, who cannot reasonably complain of the bashful muteness of the virgins, may be, no doubt, in our own way perplexed in the attempt to discover what is the life that lies beneath those dancing and glancing outsides of which we see so much. But the difficulty of managing well in this respect depends less on our manners in regard to the intercourse between girls and men, than on the general mode of living, which, in

\* 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,' ch. 3. † Samuel Rogers.



some sections of society (not in all), tends to separate domestic from social life, and to subjugate the former to the latter.

It may be observed, I think, that women of high intellectual endowments and much dignity of deportment have the greatest difficulty in marrying, and stand most in need of a mother's help. And this, not because they are themselves fastidious (for they are often as little so as any), but because men are not humble enough to wish to have their superiors for their wives.

In the "Temple de Gnide," of Montesquieu, Aristée carries his humility far enough for such a wish; and the humility of love was never more gracefully expressed,—*"elle m'aime tant, qu'elle me feroit presque croire que je suis digne de son amour."* But such humility is rare; and pride, though mostly mastered by love when brought into close conflict, will commonly, in such cases, close up the approaches so as to keep love at a distance.

Yet in some respects it is better, perhaps, that superiority of nature should be on the wife's side. For an inferior wife must work through the nature of her husband, and deteriorate his nature in order to carry her ends. He carries his by authority, and, passing clear of his wife's nature, may leave it where it was.

Great wealth in a woman is not an advantage for making a match. It tends to hold aloof both the proud and the humble, leaving the unhappy live-bait to be snapped at by the hardy and the greedy. And, well

knowing this, an heiress may be sometimes a little too much upon her guard. And then there are the difficulties of choice arising out of abundance :—

“ Such wealth as hers  
 Makes a maid whimsical and hard to please :  
 She that can have her will, be what it may,  
 Is much to seek to settle what it shall be.” \*

And for one reason or another great heiresses seem generally doomed to a life of celibacy.

The manner of rejection employed by a lady who has a troublesome amount of such business to transact, may sometimes be such as, if noised abroad, will be more generally deterrent than perhaps she herself would desire. Many years ago, a gentleman, who had just returned from Cheltenham, told me that when there he had called upon a young friend of his, and finding him much depressed in spirits, had made some inquiries, which were answered thus : “ Well, as you are a great friend of mine, I will tell you everything. I certainly thought that Miss D. had shown me a great deal of kindness last season ; indeed, I think I am entitled to say that her notice of me was very flattering ; so much so that I was led to write her a letter this morning containing an offer of marriage ; and after I had been waiting several hours for an answer, a verbal one was brought by a footman, saying, ‘ Miss D. was very sorry, but she couldn’t.’ ” I did not know the lady myself, and I have forgotten, if I ever knew, whether or

\* ‘ Philip Van Artevelde,’ Act i. Scene I.

not any future aspirant was equally enterprising and more successful; but I took a note of what was told me as indicating the spirit in which offers are regarded by heiresses, and a manner of dealing with them which may help to explain the fact that great heiresses so often live and die unmarried. And thus, if the wealthy father of an only daughter could be gifted with a knowledge of what parental care and kindness really is, it is my assured belief that he would disinherit her. If he leaves her his wealth, probably the best thing for her to do will be to marry the most respectable person she can find of the class of men who marry for money. An heiress remaining unmarried is a prey to all manner of extortion and imposition, and, with the best intentions, is apt to become, through ill-administered expenditure and misdirected bounty, a corruption to her neighbourhood and a curse to the poor; or, if experience shall make her wary, she will lead a life of resistance and suspicion, to the injury of her own mind and nature.

In the case, therefore, of either high endowments or great wealth in a daughter, the care of a parent is peculiarly needed to multiply her opportunities of making a good choice in marriage; and in no case can such care be properly pretermitted.

When the mother takes no pains, the marriage of the daughter, even if not in itself ineligible, is likely to be unduly deferred. For the age at which marriages are to be contracted is a very material consideration, Aris-

tole was of opinion that the bridegroom should be thirty-seven years of age and the bride eighteen; alleging physical reasons which I venture to think exceedingly inconclusive. Eighteen for the bride is the least to be objected to, and would yet be rather early in this climate. A girl of that age may be not absolutely unprepared for marriage, but she has hardly had time for that longing and yearning affection which is to be her best security after. Sir Thomas More, in accounting for Jane Shore's infidelity to her husband, observes that "forasmuche as they wer coupled ere she wer wel ripe, she not very fervently loved for whom she never longed." But whether or not the girl be to be considered ripe at eighteen, I know no good reason, moral or physical, why the man should withhold himself till seven and thirty, and many excellent reasons against it. Some few years of seniority on the part of the man, I do conceive to be desirable; and on this, as well as on other grounds, the woman should marry young; for if the woman were to be past her first youth and the man to be some years older, it follows that the man would remain longer unmarried than it is good for him to be alone. On the point of seniority, let us listen to the Duke and Viola—

*“Duke. . . . Let still the woman take  
An older than herself; so wears she to him,  
So sways she level in her husband's heart.  
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves  
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,*

More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn  
Than women's are.

*Viola.* I think it well, my lord.

*Duke.* Then let thy love be younger than thyself,  
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent :  
For women are as roses, whose fair flower,  
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour."\*

The woman should marry, therefore, rather before than after that culminating period of personal charm, which, varying much in different individuals, is but a short period in any, and occurs in early youth in almost all. She should marry between twenty and thirty years of age, but nearer the former than the latter period. Now the man at such an age would probably be too light for the man's part in marriage ; and the more so when marrying a wife equally young. For when two very young people are joined together in matrimony, it is as if one sweet-pea should be put as a prop to another. The man, therefore, may be considered most marriageable when he is nearer thirty than twenty, or perhaps when he is a little beyond thirty. If his marriage be deferred much longer, there is some danger of his becoming hardened in celibacy. In the case of a serious and thoughtful man, it need not be deferred so long ; for in such a case a remark made in a letter of Lord Bacon's will probably be verified—that a man finds himself seven years older the day after his marriage.

In these times men are disposed, I think, to be rather too tardy than too precipitate in marrying. Worldly

\* 'Twelfth Night,' Act ii. Scene 4.

prudence is strong in us now, even to a vice; and a competency, or what is estimated to be a competency, is not attainable at a very early age. A circle of friends and relatives commonly resent, as an injury to themselves, a poor marriage contracted at an early age; and not without reason, if the virtues of the parties contracting it are not such as to justify it. But that will be prudence in a prudent man which is imprudence in another; and one thing is certain, that the prudence which postpones marriage is excessive to a vice when it involves other vices, and presents temptations less likely to be resisted than those to which a poor marriage lies open.

There are other motives and circumstances besides those connected with prudence, which, in the case of men, militate against early marriages. If their first passion (as it happens with most first passions) have issued in a disappointment, and if they have passed through their disappointment without being betrayed, by the heart's abhorrence of its vacuum, into some immediate marriage of the *pis-aller* kind, resorted to for mere purposes of repose, or by the excitement of grief into some new excitement of instant love, they will probably find that a first seizure of the kind guarantees them for a certain number of years against a second. In the mean time, the many interests, aspirations, and alacrities of youth, its keen pursuits and its fresh friendships, fill up the measure of life, and make the single heart sufficient to itself. It is when these things have

partly passed away, and life has lost something of its original brightness, that men begin to feel an insufficiency and a want. I have known it to be remarked by a Roman Catholic priest, as the result of much observation of life amongst his brethren, that the pressure of their vow of celibacy was felt most severely towards forty years of age.

If a man have fairly passed that period without marrying or attempting marriage, then, I think, or very soon after, he may conclude that there is no better fortune in store for him, and dispose himself finally for the life . celibate.

“Till age, refrain not ; but if old, refrain—”

says one of the shrewdest of the unpoetical poets.\* And this abstinence from marriage on the part of old men is to be enjoined, not only on their own account, but on account of the offspring to which such marriages may give birth. The sort of age in youth and the weakness of constitution which is observable in the offspring of old men, involves national as well as individual evil, because it tends to degeneracy of the race ; and amongst the Romans, who were careful of their breed, there was a law, the *Lex Pappia*, which forbade the marriage of a man of more than sixty years of age with a woman of less than fifty. Furthermore, if the old man have male issue, there will generally be the evils to the son of an ill-tended minority and a premature independence.

\* Crabbe.

The marriages of old men to young women are, for the most part, as objectionable in their motives as in their results ; and the mistake of such marriages is generally as great as the moral misfeasance. There is no greater error of age than to suppose that it can recover the enjoyment of youth by possessing itself of what youth only can enjoy ; and age will never appear so unlovely as when it is seen with such an ill-sorted accompaniment :—

“ A chaplet of forced flowers on Winter’s brow  
Seems not less inharmonious to me  
Than the untimely snow on the green leaf.” \*

For the young women who make such marriages there is sometimes more to be said than for the old men. When the motives are mercenary there is nothing to be said for them ; and but little when the case is one of weak consent to the mercenary baseness of parents, or when they sacrifice themselves (as they will sometimes allege) in a rich alliance for the relief of a large family of destitute brothers and sisters. These are but beggarly considerations, and might be equally pled in defence of a less disguised prostitution. But a case will sometimes occur in which a young woman is dazzled by great achievements or renown ; and what is heroical or illustrious may inspire a feeling which, distinct though it be from that which youth inspires in youth, is yet not unimaginary, and may suffice to sanctify the marriage vow. And there is another case, not certainly to be

\* ‘The Virgin Widow,’ Act iii. Scene 4.



altogether vindicated and yet not to be visited with much harshness of censure, in which a woman who has had her heart broken, seeks, in this sort of marriage, such an asylum as, had she been a Roman Catholic, she might have found in a convent.

Marriages of the old with the old are rare, and are thought by some people to be ridiculous. They do not, however, fall within the purview of the *Lex Pappia*, or of any other prohibition that I am acquainted with, and I hardly know why they should be so unfrequent as they are. Solitude is ill suited to old age, and the course of circumstances tends too often to leave the old in solitude. Cases must be continually occurring in which it would be for the comfort and happiness of old friends of different sexes to live together; and if they cannot do so conveniently or creditably without being married, I know not why they should be laughed at for marrying. It must be, no doubt, a totally different connection from that which is formed in earlier life; and it is one which might be, perhaps, more fitly ratified by a civil contract than by a religious ceremony; but the lawful rights of a wife are necessary to the female friend, in order that she may be regarded with due respect by her husband's relatives and by the world, and in order that she may have authority in her household: and if the marriage be ascribed to this reasonable motive, instead of supposing any which would be unreasonable and ridiculous, it may be regarded, I think, as a wise and commendable species of arrangement.

## OF WISDOM.



WISDOM is not the same with understanding, talents, capacity, ability, sagacity, sense, or prudence—not the same with any one of these; neither will all these together make it up. It is that exercise of the reason into which the heart enters—a structure of the understanding rising out of the moral and spiritual nature.

It is for this cause that a high order of wisdom—that is, a highly intellectual wisdom—is still more rare than a high order of genius. When they reach the very highest order they are one; for each includes the other, and intellectual greatness is matched with moral strength. But they hardly ever reach so high, inasmuch as great intellect, according to the ways of Providence, almost always brings along with it great infirmities—or, at least, infirmities which appear great owing to the scale of operation; and it is certainly exposed to unusual temptations; for, as power and pre-eminence lie before it, so ambition attends it, which, whilst it determines the will

and strengthens the activities, inevitably weakens the moral fabric.

Wisdom is corrupted by ambition, even when the quality of the ambition is intellectual. For ambition, even of this quality, is but a form of self-love, which, seeking gratification in the consciousness of intellectual power, is too much delighted with the exercise to have a single and paramount regard to the end; and it is not according to wisdom that the end—that is, the moral and spiritual consequences—should suffer derogation in favour of the intellectual means. God is love, and God is light; whence it results that love is light; and it is only by following the effluence of that light that intellectual power issues into wisdom. The intellectual power which loses that light and issues into intellectual pride is out of the way of wisdom, and will not attain even to intellectual greatness. For though many arts, gifts, and attainments may co-exist in much force with intellectual pride, an open greatness cannot; and of all the correspondencies between the moral and intellectual nature, there is none more direct and immediate than that of humility with capaciousness. If pride of intellect be indulged, it will mark out to a man conscious of great talents the circle of his own intellectual experiences as the only one in which he can keenly recognise and appreciate the intellectual universe; and there is no order of intellectual men which stands in a more strict limitation than that of the man who cannot conceive

what he does not contain. Such men will oftentimes dazzle the world, and exercise in their day and generation much influence on the many whose range is no wider than theirs, and whose force is less ; but the want of spiritual and imaginative wisdom will stop them there ; and the understandings from which mankind will seek a permanent and authentic guidance will be those which have been exalted by love and enlarged by humility.

If wisdom be defeated by ambition and self-love when these are occupied with the mere inward consciousness of intellectual power, still more is it so, when they are eager to obtain recognition and admiration of it from without. Men who are accustomed to write or speak for effect may write or speak what is wise from time to time, because they may be capable of thinking and intellectually adopting what is wise : but they will not be wise men ; because the love of God, the love of man, and the love of truth not having the mastery with them, the growth and structure of their minds must needs be perverted if not stunted. Thence it is that so many men are observed to speak wisely and yet act foolishly ; they are not deficient in their understandings, but the wisdom of the heart is wanting to their ends and objects, and to those feelings which have the direction of their acts. And if they do speak wisely, it is not because they are wise ; for the permanent shape and organisation of the mind

proceeds from what we feel and do, and not from what we speak, write, or think. There is a great volume of truth in the admonition which teaches us that the spirit of obedience is to prepare the way, action to come next, and that knowledge is not precedent to these, but consequent: "Do the will of My Father which is in heaven, and thou shalt know of the doctrine."

In youth intellectual pride will often revolt from truths that are commonplace. Wisdom will insist upon giving them whatever place and precedency may be their due.

Those who are much conversant with intellectual men will observe, I think, that the peculiar action of self-love by which their minds are most frequently warped from wisdom is that which belongs to a pride and pleasure taken in the exercise of the argumentative faculty; whence it arises that that faculty is enabled to assert a predominance over its betters. Wisdom is not in love with logicians. She seeks rather those whose understandings, being less under the temptations of logical power, are likely to be more honestly exercised.

"For when a man hath over gret a wit,  
Full oft him happeth to misusen it."\*

Men whose intellect, when pressed in argument, can penetrate crannies and crevices which the light of day can *not* penetrate, are in more danger of dishonest courses than those which live in the light; more in danger also

\* Chaucer.

of unconscious perversion, even in their solitary and substantive contemplations,—of being misguided even when seeking the truth. With them the elements of a question which will make effect in argument—those which are, so far as they go, demonstrative—will be rated above their value; and those which are matter of proportion and degree, not palpable, ponderable, or easily or shortly producible in words, or which are matters of moral estimation and optional opinion, will go for less than they are worth; first, because they are not available to insure the victory or grace the triumph of a disputant; secondly, because they do not quicken the sense of intellectual power.

The need is the greater to be on our guard against pride and self-love in argumentation, inasmuch as it is more mortifying to be defeated when we are in the wrong than when in the right. And if we know ourselves to be in the right, few things will unsettle our adversary's convictions so much as showing him that we perceive the full force and scope of his arguments, without either acquiescing in them or caring to confute them; whereas he is animated and encouraged by an eager but necessarily partial confutation. And in some cases a wise man will be silenced by argumentation, only because he knows that the question should be determined by considerations which lie beyond the reach of argumentative exhibition. Indeed, in all but purely scientific questions, arguments are not to be submitted to by the

judgment as first in command; rather they are to be used as auxiliaries and pioneers; the judgment should profit by them to the extent of the services they can render, but after their work is done it should come to its conclusions upon its own free survey. I have seldom known a man with great powers of argumentation abundantly indulged, who could attain to an habitually just judgment. In our courts of law, where advocacy and debate are most in use, ability, sagacity, and intellectual power flourish and abound, whilst wisdom is said to have been disbarred. In our houses of parliament the case is somewhat otherwise; the silent members, and those who take but little part in the debate, and indeed the country at large, which may be said to listen, exercise some subduing influence over the spirit of argumentation, and the responsibility for results restrains it; so that here its predominance is much less than in the courts of law; yet even in the houses of parliament, wisdom has been supposed to have less to say to the proceedings than a certain species of courage.

Ambition and self-love will commonly derange that proportion between the active and passive understanding which is essential to wisdom, and will lead a man to value thoughts and opinions less according to their worth and truth than according as they are his own or another's. Some preference a man may reasonably accord to what is the growth of his own mind apart from its absolute value, on the ground of its specific usefulness to himself;

for what is native to the soil will thrive better and bear more fruit than what has been transplanted : but on the other hand, if a man would enlarge the scope, and diversify the kinds, of his thoughts and contemplations, he should not think too much to apprehend nor talk too much to listen. He should cherish the thoughts of his own begetting with a loving care and a temperate discipline—they are the *family* of his mind and its chief reliance—but he should give a hospitable reception to guests and to travellers with stories of far countries, and the family should not be suffered to crowd the doors.

But the doors may be otherwise crowded to the prejudice of wisdom. A powerful and capacious memory, well used, is an excellent instrument. But if much wisdom may result from the best use of it, it is not without some wisdom that the best use of it can be brought about. It was said of the most popular prose writer of my time by some one, that so wonderful was his memory, it seemed almost impossible for him to forget anything ; to which Sydney Smith gracefully and graciously replied, “Except an injury.” So far, good. But other limitations are to be desired. A memory which is more catholic than select does not give their proper priority of place to those occupants of the mind which are the servants of wisdom and truth. Memory is a capricious faculty at the best. Any one who shall have recorded daily what he saw or suffered, or thought or did, and should take up the record after fifty years, would



find the small things he has remembered and the great things he has forgotten to be strange and fantastic in their collocation. For the fabric of memory is of two textures—the one mechanical and automatic, resembling the sort of memory of the body which enables us to swim or to skate after fifty years of desuetude; the other a memory which takes account of thoughts and emotions and mental experiences; and both are subject to some arbitrary and unintelligible law, so that were we allowed to empty our coffers at any one moment, and spread the treasures of memory before us, some would be found to be counters and some to be coins, and the coins would be of every degree of value, from the highest to the lowest. What is conducive to wisdom is that the coins should not be hidden away under the counters.

Some minds, owing to a natural redundance of activity and excess of velocity and fertility, cannot be sufficiently passive to be wise. A capability to take a thousand views of a subject is hard to be reconciled with directness and singleness of judgment; and he who can find a great deal to say for any view will not often go the straight road to the one view that is right. If subtlety be added to exuberance, the judgment is still more endangered:—

“Tell Wit how oft she wrangles  
In tickel points of niceness,  
Tell Wisdom she entangles  
Herself in over-wiseness.”\*

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\* Sir Walter Raleigh.

Of excesses in subtlety the metaphysical is the most frequent, especially with the young, and principally with those of the young with whom spiritual truths have not taken root in spiritual instincts. Isaac Comnenus is a little impatient of such reasoners :—

“Reasons ! there’s nought in life so plentiful ;  
They are the most besetting snares of men  
Who ought to act by instinct, did they but know  
How much their nature, if not tampered with,  
Their prostituted reason would transcend.”

This is to be taken as said with the looseness and liberty permitted to dogmatisms of the drama. Nor is it without a poetical license that Cowper speaks of the metaphysicians as—

“Letting down buckets into empty wells  
And growing old in drawing nothing up.”

In reality, a root and branch denunciation of metaphysical science defeats its own object. It is only by some mastery gained over the science that the limits of its value can be ascertained.

But whatever danger may grow out of a love of subtlety, if the love of subtlety be not connected with a love of self there is good hope for wisdom. Nature presents us with various walks of intellectual life, and such a selection may be made as shall render a disproportion of the active to the passive intellect less misleading. Speculative wisdom will suffer less by excess of thinking than practical wisdom. There are fields to

be fought in which a wide range is more essential than an unerring aim. In some regions we are to cultivate the surface; in others, to sink the shaft. No one intellect can be equally available for opposite avocations, and where there is no interference of self-love wisdom will be attained through a wise choice of work. One eminent man of our times has said of another, that "science was his forte and omniscience his foible." But that instance was not an extreme one. Cases have occurred in which wisdom has suffered total overthrow; the greatest intellect and the greatest folly have been known to meet; and the universalist who handles everything and embraces nothing, has been seen to pass into a pursuer of the mere vanities and frivolities of intellectual display.

Self-love, however, is not in all its forms and degrees at variance with wisdom. It is nearly connected with self-observation, and wisdom has a vested interest in both;—in such a temperate action of the one as shall bring about an impartial, but not an imperfect, exercise of the other. In some men self-love will produce too much closeness in speaking of themselves; in others, too much abundance. Egoism in soliloquy is not always least in those who *never* speak of themselves aloud; for with the weak abstinence is easier than moderation. It is moderation, and not abstinence, which comes in aid of wisdom. For if, through a sensitive self-love, a man will not speak of himself to his friends, his friends will catch the infection of his fears, and the silent egoist will lose

that important cultivation of wisdom which is to be found in a friendly freedom of intercourse on the questions of conduct in which, the conduct being his own, he is the most deeply interested.

But if intellectual ambition be not inordinate, nor the ways of self-love bedarkening, there is yet another enemy which may lie in wait for wisdom ; to wit, a great capacity of enjoyment. This generally accompanies genius, and is, perhaps, the greatest of all trials to the moral and spiritual heart. It was a trial too severe even for Solomon,

“ whose heart, though large,  
Beguiled by fair Idolatresses fell  
To idols foul.”\*

The temptation by which such a man is assailed consists in imagining that he has within himself, and by virtue of his temperament, sources of joy altogether independent of conduct and circumstances. It is true that he has these sources on this unconditional tenure for a time ; and it is owing to this very truth that his futurity is in danger,—not in respect of wisdom only, but also in respect of happiness. And if we look to recorded examples, we shall find that a great capacity of enjoyment does not infrequently bring about the destruction of enjoyment in its own ulterior consequences, having uprooted wisdom by the way.

A man of genius, so gifted—or, let us rather say, so tempted—lives, until the consummation approaches, as if

\* ‘Paradise Lost.’

he possessed some elixir or phylactery, reckless of consequences, because his happiness, being so inward to his nature, seems to be inherent and indefeasible. Wisdom is not wanted. The intellect, perhaps, amidst the abundance of its joys, rejoices in wise contemplations; but wisdom is not adopted and domesticated in the mind, owing to the fearlessness of the heart. For wisdom will have no hold on the heart in which joy is not tempered by fear. The fear of the Lord, we know, is the beginning of it; and some hallowing and chastening influences of fear will always go along with it. Fear, indeed, is the mother of foresight; spiritual fear, of a foresight that reaches beyond the grave; temporal fear, of a foresight that falls short; but without fear there is neither the one foresight nor the other; and as pain has been truly said to be the deepest thing in our nature,\* so is it fear that will bring the depths of our nature within our knowledge:—

“What sees rejoicing genius in the Earth?  
 A thousand meadows with a thousand herds  
 Freshly luxuriant in a Mayday dawn;  
 A thousand ships that caracole and prance  
 With freights of gold upon a sunny sea:  
 A thousand gardens gladden'd by all flowers,  
 That on the air breathe out an odorous beauty.”

Genius may see all this and rejoice; but it will not exalt itself into wisdom, unless it see also the meadow in the

\* By Arthur Hallam.

livid hues of winter, the ship under bare poles, and the flower when the beauty of the fashion of it perishes.

“ He that his joys would keep  
Must weep ;  
And in the brine of tears  
And fears  
Must pickle them. That powder will preserve.”\*

It is true, however, that the cases are rare and exceptional in which this dangerous capacity of enjoyment is an unbroken habit, so as to bring a steady and continuous pressure upon the moral mind. A great capacity of *suffering* belongs to genius also ; and it has been observed that an alternation of joyfulness and dejection is quite as characteristic of the man of genius as intensity in either kind. Doubtless these alternations will greatly enlarge his knowledge both of Man and of the universe. The many moods of his own mind will give him a penetrating and experienced insight into many minds ; and he will contemplate the universe and all that goes on in it from many points of view. Moreover, it is by reaction from the extreme of one state that the mind receives the most powerful impulse towards another—in resilience that it has its plenary force. But though these alternations of excess do thus enlarge and enrich the understanding and minister to wisdom so far forth, they must yet, by the shocks they occasion to the moral will, do injury on the whole to that composite edifice, built up of the moral and rational mind, in which Wisdom has her dwelling. The

\* Hervie, ‘The Synagogue,’ 47.

injury is not so great as in the other case : better are winter and summer for the mind than the torrid zone—feasts and fasts than a perpetual plenty ; but either way the temperament of genius is hardly ever favourable to wisdom ; that is, the highest order of genius, or that which includes wisdom, is of all things the most rare.

On the other hand, wisdom without genius (a far more precious gift than genius without wisdom) is, by God's blessing upon the humble and loving heart, though not as often met with as "the ordinary of Nature's sale-work," yet not altogether rare ; for the desire to be right will go a great way towards wisdom. Intellectual guidance is the less needed where there is little to lead astray—where humility lets the heart loose to the impulsive movements of love. That we can be wise by impulse will seem a paradox to some ; but it is a part of that true doctrine which traces wisdom to the moral as well as the intellectual mind, and more surely to the former than to the latter—one of those truths which is recognised when we look into our nature through the clearness of a poetic spirit :—

“ Moments there are in life—alas, how few !—  
 When, casting cold prudential doubts aside,  
 We take a generous impulse for our guide,  
 And, following promptly what the heart thinks best,  
 Commit to Providence the rest ;  
 Sure that no after-reckoning will arise  
 Of shame or sorrow, for the heart is wise.  
 And happy they who thus in faith obey

Their better nature : err sometimes they may,  
And some sad thoughts lie heavy in the breast  
Such as by hope deceived are left behind ;  
But like a shadow these will pass away  
From the pure sunshine of the peaceful mind." \*

The doctrine of wisdom by impulse is no doubt liable to be much misused and misapplied. The right to rest upon such a creed accrues only to those who have so trained their nature as to be entitled to trust it. It is the impulse of the *habitual* heart which the judgment may fairly follow upon occasion—of the heart which, being habitually humble and loving, has been framed by love to wisdom. Some such fashioning love will always effect ; for love can scarcely exist without solicitude ; solicitude brings thoughtfulness ; and it is in a thoughtful love that the wisdom of the heart consists. The impulse of such a heart will take its shape and guidance from the very mould in which it is cast, without any application of the reason express ; and the most inadvertent motion of a wise heart will for the most part be wisely directed ; providentially, let us rather say ; for Providence has no more eminent seat than in the wisdom of the heart.

Wisdom by impulse, then, is to be trusted in by those only who have habitually used their reason to the full extent of its powers in forming the heart and cultivating the judgment, whilst, owing to its constitutional deficiency, or to its peculiarity (for the reason may be unserviceable from other causes than deficiency), they are conscious

\* Southey's 'Oliver Newman.'



that their judgment is likely to be rather perplexed than cleared by much thinking on questions on which they are called upon to act or decide. Those in whom the meditative faculty is peculiarly strong will often find themselves in this predicament; witness Christopher Hervie's complaint:

“One while I think; and then I am in pain  
To think how to unthink that thought again.”\*

And they whose deliberative judgment is weak and indelicate from a natural debility of the reason, may act from impulse, and, even though the consequences be evil, may be held to be wise according to their kind. For the course they took may have been the wisest for *them*, being founded upon a just measurement of the insufficiencies of their understanding. And those who can take this just measurement, and, holding their opinions with due diffidence, yet act in love and faith and without fear, may be wise of heart, though erring in judgment; and though not gifted with intellectual wisdom, may yet be deemed to have as much understanding as innocence stands in need of.

Upon this, however, the question will arise, whether errors of the judgment are, as such, absolutely void of offence; and whether he who has committed them may look back upon them, whatever may have been their consequences, without any compunctious visitings. An eminent statesman is said to have averred, that when he

\* ‘The Synagogue, 41.’

was conscious of having taken a decision with all due care and consideration, to the best of his judgment and with the best intentions, he never looked back to it with a moment's regret, though the result might prove it to have been wholly erroneous. This is a frame of mind highly conducive to civil courage, and therefore not without its advantages in political life. But it is not equally conducive to wisdom. Nor, perhaps, in this unqualified form, is it to be altogether vindicated in morals. At all events, so much regret might be felt, if no more, as would suffice to awaken some self-questionings, not merely as to the specific moral rectitude accompanying or proximately preceding the particular act, but as to that general and life-long training of the heart to wisdom which gives the best assurance of specific results, and of which, therefore, specific failures should suggest the deficiency. Some shortcomings of this kind there must of course be in all human beings, and they should be at all times aware of it; but it is in the order of Nature that this consciousness should be quickened from time to time by the contemplation of evil consequences arising from specific errors of judgment, however innocent in themselves; which contemplation, accompanied with a natural regret, constitutes what may be called a repentance of the understanding—not easily to be escaped by a plain man, nor properly to be repudiated by a philosopher.

Yet when the consequences of an error of judgment are irremediable, how often are those who would animad-

vert upon it met with the admonition to "let the past be past:" as if the past had no relations with the future; and as if the experience of our errors of judgment, and the inquisition into their sources, did not, by its very painfulness, effect the deepest cultivation of the understanding,—that cultivation whereby what is irremediable is itself converted into a remedy.

God having created man with an interpenetration of mind and body, it cannot but follow that in some though in a subordinate degree the health and soundness of the one is dependent on the health and soundness of the other. It is the part of wisdom, for its own sake, to take heed for the body's health. And I have had occasion to observe that an exhortation to this effect may be as much needed by strong men as by others. For the abuses of strength are worse than weakness, and much health is sometimes sooner lost than a little.

"Never disregard pain," Mr. Wordsworth said to me in my youth; "it is Nature's admonition." Whether in youth or in age, the injunction was in my case altogether superfluous; for if other monitors have been unheeded, pain could always count upon receiving all due attention; and of course the attention bestowed upon petty pains may be too much as well as too little: but when they are pains of a kind to lead the way to further evils, they are not to be disregarded out of a mere pride of endurance; nor, on the other hand, out of a fear of being afraid; and Mr. Wordsworth's advice should be taken to heart.

The main scope and design of this disquisition having been to inculcate that wisdom is still more essentially a moral and spiritual than it is an intellectual attribute; that genius can mount to wisdom only by Jacob's ladder; and that knowledge can only be digested into wisdom by an application of the heart,—I cannot better close it than with that declaration of the nature of wisdom which is delivered in the 28th chapter of the Book of Job:—

“Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

“Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

“Destruction and Death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

“God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof.

“For He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole Heaven;

“To make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure.

“When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

“Then did He see it, and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

“And unto Man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

## CHILDREN.

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FROM the complaints which everybody brings against everybody in the matter of the management of children, one might be led to suppose that such a thing as good management of them did not exist amongst mankind. And no doubt this is so far true, that on a subject on which so many and such various kinds of errors may be committed, the best management can be but very imperfect, and those who are complained of should be willing to listen, in the assurance that real errors there are, and for the chance of those being the errors that are hit upon and pointed out.

But remonstrance and admonition, whether listened to or not, seem in general to be of as little avail on these questions as theories and doctrines; and from the uselessness of all these, and from the fact that thoughtful and cultivated people are seen, not unfrequently, to err as much as others, it may be inferred that the most essential qualifications for training a child well are not

of a nature to be communicated by books or lectures on education. They are, 1st, The desire to be right in the matter; 2nd, Sense; 3rd, Kindness; and 4th, Firmness.

Where these are wanting, the wisest admonitions in the world will be of no other use than to relieve the mind of the person who throws them away.

Theories, however, seem to have more power to pervert the natural understanding, in this case, than they have to enlighten it. The doctrine of an eminent writer (of a generation now nearly gone), that a child should be invariably reasoned into obedience, had, in its day, more of a misleading efficacy than might have been thought possible; and many a parent was induced to believe that a child should be taught to give its obedience, not because it *was* obedience, but only because the thing ordered was reasonable; the little casuists and controversialists being expected to see the reason of things as readily in real life as in the dialogues between Tutor and Charles. The common sense of mankind has now made an end of this doctrine, and it is known now, as it was before the transit of that eminent person, that obedience—prompt and implicit, though with reason shown where the case admits of it—is the first thing to be taught to a child, and that he can have no peace for his soul without it.

The notion of setting up the reason to be the sole pivot of humanity from the cradle forwards belongs to a generation of fallacies which have returned to the dust

from which they came ; but it included one error in theories of education which will be found to belong to many that are still extant : the error of assuming that the parent is to be perfect. Under the reasoning regimen, what was to happen when the parent's reasons were bad? And in like manner, with respect to many less unnatural systems which are recommended as if they were of universal applicability, the question may be asked, Will most parents be competent to give effect to them? And, bearing in mind the not inconsiderable number of mankind who labour under imperfections of the understanding or other disqualifying defects, I believe we shall find that a few strong instincts and a few plain rules are all that can be appealed to for general guidance in the management of children.

That first and foremost rule of exacting obedience is so far from being subject to the condition of showing reasons, that sometimes, good intentions and affectionate feelings being the same, a stupid parent with a strong will, will train a child better than a parent of a reasonable mind, tainted by infirmity of purpose. For, as "obedience is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams," so it may be that an authority which is absolute by virtue of its own inherent strength is better than one which is shaken by a reference to ends and purposes and by reasonable doubts as to whether they are the best and most useful. Nor will a parent's perversity occasion the child half so much uneasiness

in the one case, as the child will suffer from those perversities of its own which will spring up in the other.

To enforce prompt obedience our most efficacious instrument is a clear and determinate *manner*; because with children, at least, this is the most significant expression of an authoritative will. But it is an instrument which those only can employ who are authoritative by temperament; for an assumed manner, or one which is not true to the temperament, will be of no avail. Those parents who are not gifted with this temperament and this manner must needs, if they do their duty, have recourse to punishments; of which, in the case of most children, those are best which are sharp and soon over. And let not the parents think that by a just and necessary amount of punishment they run any risk of impairing the child's affections. The risk is far greater of impairing them by indulgence. A spoilt child seldom loves its mother; at least, with the same measure of love as if it were unspoilt. And there is in human nature an essential though somewhat mysterious connection of love with fear, which, though chiefly recognised in the relations between man and God, may possibly exist also in the relations between child and parent.

Love in either relation is deepened, it may be, by some degree—not oppressive or too disturbing—some slight degree of fear: and the very truth of the text that “perfect love casteth out fear,” would seem to show that fear must be there before the love is made perfect.



Therefore the parent who shrinks from inflicting just and proper punishments upon a child may deprive that child, not only of the rest to be found in duty and obedience, but also of the blessings of a deeper love.

There is another way, not much adverted to by blind parents, in which children are injured by undue indulgence. It prevents them from benefiting by the general tendency of mankind to have kind and friendly feelings towards children. Such feelings are checked and abated when it is seen that children are unduly favoured by their parents. And when the rights and comforts of others are sacrificed for their sake, instead of being objects for the protection and good offices of all around them, they become odious in the same manner as princes' favourites do, and their parents' sins are visited upon them.

Then the repugnance which people feel towards the objects of unjust partiality provokes them to exaggerate the demerits of the children,—not probably to the face of the parents; but in a way to go round to them,—whereupon the parents come in with some show of reason as protectors of injured innocence, and fortify themselves in their own delusions by detecting injustice in the views of others. It is not the nature of mankind to be unjust to children; and where parents find this injustice to prevail, they should look for the source of it in their children or in themselves.

Indeed it is the nature of mankind to be only too kind to children and to take too much notice of them;

and this is a reason for not throwing them too much in the way of strangers and casual visitors. When the visitors are intelligent, and the parents are not the sort of people to whom flattery is acceptable, the children may be no worse for meeting the visitors, though they should never be sent for to be *shown*. But when the parents are known to have open ears for the praises of their children, there are hardly any strangers so careful and conscientious as not to say what is expected of them, and very many will carry their blandishments to an extreme of grossness and falseness. A considerate visitor will observe the conduct of a judicious parent towards a child, and be guided by it; but the instances are far more frequent in which the folly of injudicious parents is unscrupulously abetted by the levity of other people; and the only consolation for a rational bystander is that the children may have more sense than their flatterers and more discernment than their parents, and be unflattered and ill-pleased (as will sometimes happen) by these coarse attempts at adulation. In these remarks I refer of course to children, not babies. As long as children are young enough to be in the nurse's arms, they are a fair mark for all manner of flatteries, which, if they mean nothing, are to be excused inasmuch as they do nothing. There is an old proverb which says that "many a child is kissed for the nurse's sake;" and if it be in the nurse's arms there is no harm done.

It is selfishness on the part of parents which gives

rise to undue indulgence of children,—the selfishness of sacrificing those for whom they care less to those for whom they care more ; and the selfishness of the parent for the child will naturally produce selfishness of the child for himself. A spoilt child is seldom generous. And selfishness is induced in a child not only by too much indulgence, but even by too much attention. It will be most for a child's happiness and well-being, both present and to come, that he should feel himself, in respect to comforts and enjoyments, the most insignificant person in the house. In that case he will have his own resources, which will be more available to him than any which perpetual attention can minister ; he will be subject to fewer discontents (discontent, like aspiration, is natural to youth) ; and his affections will be more cultivated by the occasional tokens of kindness which a contented child will naturally receive in sufficient abundance, than they would be by continual endeavours to make him happy.

And if continual attention to making him happy will not produce happiness, neither will continual attention to making him good produce goodness. For if the child feels that there is some one incessantly occupied with his happiness and goodness, he will come to be incessantly occupied with himself. Something must be left in a spirit of faith and hope to Nature and God's providence. Parents are the instruments, but they are not to be all in all. Room must be left for some liberty of action, for many an untended impulse, for self-reliance, for tempta-

tions and trials, with their natural results of victory with self-respect, or defeat with remorse. By such treatment the child's moral nature, being amply exercised, will be seasonably strengthened; and when he comes into the world as a man, he will come with a man's weapons of defence; whereas if the child be constantly watched and kept out of harm's way, he will come into the world a moral weakling. I was once present when an old mother, who had brought up a large family of children with eminent success, was asked by a young one what she would recommend in the case of some children who were too anxiously educated, and her reply was—"I think, my dear, a little wholesome neglect."

For similar reasons it may be well that children should not be hedged in with any great number of rules and regulations. Such as are necessary to be established, they should be required implicitly to observe. But there should be none that are superfluous. It is only in rich families, where there is a plentiful attendance of governesses and nurses, that many rules can be enforced; and I believe that the constant attentions of governesses and nurses is one of the greatest moral disadvantages to which the children of the rich are exposed.

I have heard a multiplicity of petty regulations defended on the ground that it was a constant exercise of the child's sense of right and wrong. But will a child be really the better for always thinking about whether he does right or wrong; that is, always thinking about him-

self? Were it not well that, for hours together, no question of right or wrong should arise in his path? or at least none that demands from him more than a half-mechanical attention? For the conscience of a child may easily be worn out, both by too much pressure and by over-stimulation. I have known a child to have a conscience of such extraordinary and premature sensibility that at seven years of age she would be made ill by remorse for a small fault. She was brought up by persons of excellent understanding, with infinite care and affection, and yet by the time she was twenty years of age she had next to no conscience and a rather hard heart. A person who had some experience of precocious consciences once observed to me, in respect to those children who are said to be too good and too clever to live, that it was very desirable they should not.

These views are not, of course, to be pushed too far. A child's conscience should always have that sufficiency of exercise which due discipline and the occasions of life will not fail to supply, without factitious duties or needless rules. And with respect to the treatment of the conscience on the point of sensibility, natural constitutions are so diverse that it is difficult to speak generally; but though I would not have it much stimulated or unintermittingly worked upon—though I would avoid to intimidate or intenerate the conscience—I do not agree with those who think that the appeals to it should be invariably made with a judicial calmness, and that all

punishments should be inflicted dispassionately. Moral disapprobation on the part of parents towards children (as indeed on the part of men towards men throughout all relations of life) should not operate mechanically, bringing with it, like a calculating machine, a proportionate evil to be suffered as a consequence of every evil act. It should operate according to its own human nature, as a matter of emotion, not only bringing an evil to be suffered, but a moral sentiment to be recognised and taken to heart—a passion which should strike upon the moral sense.

According to the nature of the child and of the fault, the emotion should be sometimes more of sorrow than of anger, sometimes more of anger than of sorrow. But it were better for the child's conscience that there should be some errors of emotion, than that punishments should be cold and dry. A parent should "be angry and sin not;" that is, the anger should be a just and moral anger, and grave and governed; but at the same time it should be the real anger of flesh and blood, and not the mere *vis motrix* of an instrument of discipline. In this way the moral sentiments of the parent, if they be virtuous, generous and just, will be imparted to the child: for it is a truth never to be lost sight of in the treatment of our children, that their characters are formed, not by what we do, think, or teach, but by what we feel and by what we are.

Anger has authority; and if it be the duly governed

anger I have described, it may be allowed to perform its part in the case of a parent who is wanting in other authority. But these cases are few ; for those who have little authority over others, will generally be found to have less over themselves.

With boys, the authority of the schoolmaster takes the place of parental authority. Is it well that a similar substitution should be resorted to in the case of girls? Not, I think, in any ordinary case. With them it is better to cultivate the relations of domestic life, and tolerate any ordinary admixture of evils and imperfections, than to throw those relations to a distance ; and at home their social relations also will, for the most part, be better cultivated than they can be at a school. Variety in social relations is required for their cultivation, and other variety than the school life can afford. The masculine element should not be excluded, as in that life it must be. In the latter stages of girlhood a good deal of care may be needed to regulate the relations between girls and men ; but a separation not natural to humanity is not to be approved as a substitution for a sound system of companionship. A healthy appetite with wholesome food is better than a hungry appetite fancy-fed.

I once knew a delightful girl who, in the absence of her parents in foreign parts, was sent to school in the neighbourhood of London. Any one who has lived in that neighbourhood must have encountered almost every day walking processions of young ladies with their

schoolmistress at their head taking them out for air and exercise. One day my delightful friend (she became in her after life a social and in some measure a literary celebrity) was coupled with a companion who exclaimed, "Here we go, like Noah's beasts out of the ark;" to which my friend replied, "No; I wish we did; *they* went male and female." And in truth Noah's beasts are a better precedent to be adopted in providing social arrangements for our daughters in their early life, than the segregation provided for them in a girls' school.

But when I speak of varied society as good for girls, I would by no means be understood to mean the London life of balls and parties into which many parents have thrown their children in these latter days. Social dissipation in childhood brings about the extinction of its natural pleasures and enjoyments as well as of much besides.

With respect to the intellectual cultivation of children, it is very important that the body, mind, and moral sense of the child should proceed in their growth proportionately and *pari passu*:—

"For nature, crescent, does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk; but as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal."\*

*As this temple waxes let it be; not before this temple*

\* 'Hamlet.'



waxes. Whichsoever of these constituents of the human being, the body, the intellect, and the moral sense, shall shoot forth prematurely and in advance of the others, will run a great risk of being nipped and blighted. The intellectual is, of the three—in these times at least—that which is most liable to premature development. The evil consequences of such development have been very generally perceived, and many maxims are afloat against over-education; but the ambition of parents is commonly too strong for their wisdom and prudence, and the over-education proceeds, the maxims notwithstanding. And schools and colleges and all tutors and teachers being governed by the same spirit, it is difficult for a wise parent to give effect to wise views, even when he heartily desires it. One rule, however, it is in his own hands to carry out, and this is, if he talk much to his children, not to talk too often intellectually. The intellectual talk of adults is apt, not only to stimulate the child's intellect to efforts beyond its strength, but also to overlay many intellectual tastes which have their natural place in childhood and which it is good for every mind to have passed through. It is best for a child that he should admire cordially what he does admire: but if the intellectual tastes and criticisms of the adult mind are brought to bear upon him, he will try to admire what he cannot and fail to admire what he might.

On the other hand, I would not be understood to recommend the sort of jocular nonsense which some

intellectual parents will have recourse to in order to place their conversation on a level with a child's understanding; nor do I observe that children are fond of it, or at all flattered by it, but rather the contrary. For it is a mistake to suppose that any joke is good enough for a child. Intelligent children, if not absolutely fastidious as to jokes (which certainly most children are as to taste and manners), will not however accept as complacently as might be wished the mere good-natured disposition to make them merry, nor can they respond in the manner that is sometimes expected from them to every well-meant effort of heavy gambolling and forced facetiousness. Whatever is most simple and natural is most pleasing to a child; and if the parent be not naturally light and gay, he had better be grave with his children, only avoiding to be deep or subtle in discourse.

But however parents may demean themselves, it is not desirable that they and their children should be always together. Children and young people—and I should say even adults—are not the better in their understandings for an exclusive association with their superiors in intellect. Such association should be occasional, not constant. The inferior mind so associated may possibly not be of a nature to be over-excited and over-wrought; it may be safe from those evils through defect of spontaneous force and activity: but in that case another evil arises; it is led to adopt its opinions instead of thinking them, and finds a short cut to posts to which it would be

better that it should fight its way. In the case of a young man who has been brought up in the constant society of a parent greatly superior to himself, it will generally be found that he has come by his opinions, not (as is best in youth) partly through deference to authority, partly through conflict with equals, and partly by spontaneous impulse, but almost entirely by adoption, as if they were certified facts. And this leaves the mind unenlarged and the judgment unexercised.

There is a class of opinions, however—those connected with the moral and spiritual nature—which are to be inculcated on a different principle from those which concern merely the cultivation of the intellect. For these are opinions which are not to be valued merely *as* opinions, but on account of the feelings and affections which are to be incorporated with them. Great as is the importance of true religious doctrine—which is, as it were, the body of religion—it is nevertheless an importance subsidiary and derivative ; it is derived from the efficacy of true religious doctrine to cherish and protect the growth of genuine religious feeling, which is the soul of religion. The opinions are the organic structure ; the feelings are the vital principle. It is for the sake of the feelings that the organization is so important ; and I think, therefore, that religious truths, or what the parent believes to be religious truths, should be presented to children through the conveyance of the feelings for implicit adoption, and not as matters to be wrought out

in the understanding. For the primary object, which is to fix the feeling, will be in some measure frustrated—the feeling will be in some measure abated or supplanted—if more thought be called up than the feeling of its own mere motion will naturally generate.

But if the religious beliefs of a child be not founded in his reason, what, it may be asked, will become of them when the credulous simplicity of childhood shall be at an end, and the thinking faculty shall have set itself to work? I answer that, whether his beliefs have been founded in reason, or whether they have been founded in love, receiving from reason merely a collateral support, it is probable that if the child be of an active and inquisitive understanding, the beliefs will, at one period or another within childhood or succeeding it, sustain some shock and trial. But those who have taken much note of human nature will have observed, I think, that the reason is the weakest part of it (God forbid that it should not!), and that the most reasonable opinions are seldom held with much tenacity unless when they have been adopted in the same way as that in which prejudices are adopted; that is, when they have been borne in upon the understanding by the feelings. Whilst I think, therefore, that love is that constituent of faith whereof a child's nature is most capable, I also believe it to be that groundwork of faith on which all nature must rest, if it have any resting-place at all; and love, therefore, inspiring the reason, but not reduced to the reason, must be so imparted to the child

as to animate the growing and changing forms of doctrine throughout the several stages of childhood; and when childhood shall have been left behind, it is this, and nothing else, that can be relied upon to withstand the rashness of a youthful intellect, flushed by its first discoveries. The struggle will be great at this season in proportion to the largeness of the nature and the force of the elements at work; and if a strong understanding should be too suddenly expanded, it is probable that there will be some disruption of the material fabric of doctrine in which the spiritual feeling has hitherto had its abode. But if the principle of love have been cherished and made strong from the first, the broken forms of doctrine will reunite, and love, with whatever strivings and wrestlings, will find an organic faith in which to set up its rest and secure itself from accidents of the intellect, as well as from whatsoever the world can do against it. And in most cases (though not in all unhappily) the faith will be the more strongly founded for the conflict in which it has been engaged. It was by Eros and Eris, by Love and Strife, that Order was brought out of Chaos.

“I can just remember,” says a theologian of the last century, “when the women first taught me to say my prayers, I used to have the idea of a venerable old man, of a composed benign countenance, with his own hair, clad in a morning gown of a grave-coloured flowered damask, sitting in an elbow chair.”\* And he proceeds

\* ‘Lights of Nature and Gospel Blended,’ ch. iii. s. 1.

to say that, in looking back to these beginnings, he is in no way disturbed at the grossness of his infant theology. The image thus shaped by the imagination of the child was in truth merely one example of the various forms and conceptions, fitted to divers states and seasons and orders and degrees of the religious mind, whether infant or adult, which represent the several approximations such minds, or minds at such seasons, can respectively make to the completeness of faith. These imperfect ideas should be held to be reconciled and comprehended in that completeness, not rejected by it; and the nearest approximation which the greatest of human minds can accomplish is surely to be regarded as much nearer to the imperfection of an infantine notion than to the fulness of truth. The gown of flowered damask and the elbow chair may disappear; the anthropomorphism of childhood may give place to the divine incarnation of the Second Person in after years; and we may come to conceive of the Deity as Milton did when his epithets were most abstract:—

“So spake the SOVRAN PRESENCE.”

But after all, these are but different grades of imperfection in the forms of doctrinal faith; and if there be a devouter love on the part of the child for what is pictured in his imagination as a venerable old man, than in the philosophic poet for the “Sovran Presence,” the child’s faith has more of the efficacy of religious truth in it than the poet’s and philosopher’s. What we have to take care of.

in the religious training of a child is, that the love shall be indestructible and permanent; so that in all the transmutations of doctrine which after years may bring, from the palpable picturings of Tucker's infant imagination to the "Three Incomprehensibles" of St. Athanasius, he may preserve the same religious heart; and whatever other knowledge or supposed knowledge shall supervene, may still "know that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord, and that there is nothing sweeter than to take heed unto the commandments of the Lord." \*

I have said that discontent is, like aspiration, natural to youth. "Discontent" is a hard word. I would rather say sadness. "How is our cousin Anna?" asks Alexius Comnenus, and Isaac answers:—

"Well, quite well:  
The natural infirmities of youth,  
Sadness and softness, hopefulness, wistfulness,  
All pangs for which we do not see good cause,  
We'll take no count of." †

But Wulfstan, on the other hand, has something less trenchant to say of what he calls—

"This nature of humanity  
Which both ways doth redound, rejoicing now  
With soarings of the soul, anon brought low.

"This soul of man," he says,—

This soul of man, this elemental crisis,  
Completed, should present the universe  
Abounding in all kinds; and unto all

\* Ecclesiasticus xxiii. 27.

† 'Isaac Comnenus,' Act iii., Sc. 8.

One law is common,—that their act and reach  
 Stretched to the farthest is resilient ever,  
 And in resilience hath its plenary force.

The richest mirth, the richest sadness too,  
 Stands from a groundwork of its opposite.” \*

And from poetry let us pass to painting; and, making our way into the Pallavicini Palace, look once and again at the Aurora of Guido. Anacreon Moore looked at it, as he tells us in his diary,† but with a less Anacreontic appreciation than I should have expected. “It is full of poetry and fancy,” he says, “but pleases me less than works in which there is sentiment or passion. The only head here into which there is this sort of feeling thrown, is perhaps rather a defect, as one does not know what can be the cause of its expression. It is a head with the eyes upturned, in the way so frequent with Guido; and unless it be meant as admiration of the glory around (which is, however, not at all the sort of expression it conveys to me) it is difficult to say what feeling it can have in common with the gay light group that encircles it.” I think the meaning may be divined though Moore missed it. The head is looking back as well as up. May it not mean that even the Morning of Life itself is not all joy and hope and aspiration, but has some longings after what is left behind, some tender regrets,—a looking back as well as a rushing on?

\* ‘Edwin the Fair,’ Act iii., Scene 4.

† 28th October, 1819. Lord Russell’s ‘Memoirs of Moore,’ vol. iii. pp. 50-1.



## THE LIFE POETIC.

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LET it not be too contemplative for action, nor too active to afford room and space for contemplation. The tendency of our times is to bring every man of eminent abilities into great outward activity, and thereby perhaps in some cases to dam up and divert to the turning of this mill or that, the stream which should have flowed unbroken "*in omne volubilis ævum,*" and made itself a mirror to nature. But it may happen to a man of genius, conscious of this tendency of the age, to throw himself too much into the opposite extreme. His leanings should be towards retirement, no doubt; but he should indulge them, though largely, yet still with a measured freedom, not a total abandonment.

"Fountain-heads and pathless groves,  
Places which pale passion loves" \*—

should be, without question, his favourite haunts: but he is not to forget that for the cultivation of the highest

\* Fletcher.

order of poetry it is necessary that he should be conversant with life and nature at large, and

“ Know all qualities with a learned spirit  
Of human dealings ”\* —

that his poetry should spring out of his life, and that his life should abound in duties as well as in contemplations.

There is a saying often repeated that human nature is the same in all ages and nations. If there is truth in this, it is not less true that human nature is diverse in all ages and nations ; and to recognise and represent the diversity in the sameness, is the task to be executed by poetic, and especially by dramatic art. The poet should be widely as well as keenly observant ; and though self-observant, not too much so.

For that poetic vision which is the vision of the introverted eye alone has but a narrow scope : and observation comes of action, and most of that action which is the most responsible. And if it be true that “ a man’s mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit above in an high tower,”† it is also true that that man will hear most of all who hearkens to his own mind and to the seven watchmen besides ; whilst what he hears will turn to knowledge, and will be fixed, amplified, and defined, in proportion as there are deeds and consequences to follow, and sweet or bitter fruits. He is but a child in knowledge, however versed

\* Shakspeare.

† Ecclesiasticus xxxvii. 14.

in meditation, who has not had to act, to suffer, and to teach, as well as to inquire and to learn. If a meditative man be used to be taken about a city in a carriage or led about it by a friend, it will be long before he knows his way in it; but not so if he have to go about in it by himself, still less if he have to lead another.

The processes of the poetical mind in its highest, which is its philosophic exercise, may be described as, 1st, Observation of facts; 2nd, Generalization from facts observed; 3rd, Rejection into the concrete, but with improvements from the fancy, of the general conclusions obtained.

If, then, a poet would entitle himself to take the highest rank in his art,—to be numbered, that is, amongst the “poets *sage*,”—he should be, to a moderate extent, mixed up with the affairs of life. His mind should be not a vessel only, but a vat. His wisdom should be a tried and stirring wisdom. His speculations should emanate from facts and events, and his poetry should have its roots in the common earth.

But it is difficult to say how this conversancy with men and affairs is to be attempted in these times, without losing hold of the contemplative life altogether, and becoming involved in the inordinate activities of the age. If a profession be adopted, there is hardly any which leaves a moderate degree of leisure except to men of inferior abilities. Men of eminent abilities, embarked in a profession, are placed under obligations of exertion

which they cannot escape. In trade, strenuous efforts are enforced upon a man by the pressure of competition ; and trading occupations are perhaps in other respects unsuited to a poet. Political life is not open to him unless circumstances be favourable ; and to a man who is alert and excitable (as a poet must be supposed to be) it will prove too violent a diversion from poetic pursuits ; and this, not from the nature of the business only, but because it commonly leads a man of quick sympathies (which again must be supposed in the poet's case) into a good deal of social dissipation. "If life," says Cowley—

"If life should a well-order'd poem be,  
 (In which he only hits the white  
 Who joins true profit with the best delight,)  
 The more heroic strain let others take,  
 Mine the Pindaric way I'll make :  
 The matter shall be grave, the numbers loose and free."

This liberty of life cannot, I think, in these days—and in the case of a man of eminent abilities—be secured, if a man be confined to any of the established ruts in which life is made to run.

If, then, neither professional, commercial, nor political life will sort well with the life poetic, there remains little besides casual employments and the duties which accrue in every station to supply a poet with the quota of action required for his purposes. These, however, may suffice, if they be sedulously pursued. The poor are always with us, and their affairs fall fitly into the hands of educated men who have no professional avocations. Let the poet

be a man of fortune, and the duties of a landlord are incumbent upon him, whilst those of a magistrate lie before him, with the whole field of county business. If he be not a proprietor, yet one place he must occupy—that of a parishioner, with parochial functions; and the vestry will present, to an observant eye, as instructive an exponent of human nature, with pretty nearly the same variety of features, as the Lords spiritual and temporal with Her Majesty's faithful Commons in Parliament assembled. Nor is the business of a parish to be regarded as unworthy the diligent attention of a man of genius. It is not impossible that, from time to time, it may require the same species of ability as the business of an empire and exercise the same faculties in its adjustment; for the amount of prudence and sagacity needful for the successful transaction of business depends comparatively little on the scale of operation. Sometimes, indeed, the larger the scale the easier the task.

Furthermore, a man of judgment and ability will find, as he advances in life, that the duties of friendship and relationship will multiply upon him more than upon men of inferior capacity, if only he be found willing to discharge them. And if he shall attain to eminence as a poet, that, like every other species of eminence, will bring with it no inconsiderable demands upon his activity. To these may be added—if they should fall in his way—casual and temporary employments in the public service, taking care, however, not to let that service fix itself upon

him and suck the blood out of his poetic veins. Milton had employments of this nature ; and before he should hold himself equipped for his great enterprise in poetry, he deemed it indispensable that to "industrious and select reading" should be added "steady observation" and "insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs." \* Dante, Spenser, and Cowley had such employments also ; and many others might be named, were they worthy to be named after these.

But if a poet shall fail to find any field for external activity which would admit also of leisure and retirement, or if he shall have an invincible repugnance to an outward life (which may not unnaturally be his predicament), then it behoves him the more to place his life under a well-devised discipline, in order that it may be, if not externally active, yet orderly and sedulous. For by how much a man shall reserve himself to a contemplative life, by so much will he need a more constant and watchful self-regulation in the conduct of it ; and by so much, also, will the task of self-regulation be difficult and severe. The regimen of external circumstance and of obligations contracted to others is an aid which only a strong man can dispense with in the ordering of his days and hours ; and moreover, if the course of the hours is to be governed wholly from within and *pro re natâ* as it were, there will be some danger of self-government being accompanied by too much of self-occupation.

\* 'Reason of Church Government,' Book 2nd.

Nor is it to be forgotten that the man who lies under no external obligation (none that is apparent and palpable) to occupy himself in one way or another, will become a prey to many demands for small services, attentions, and civilities, such as will neither exercise his faculties, add to his knowledge, nor leave him to his thoughts. The prosecution of a contemplative life is not an answer to any of these demands ; for though the man who is in the pursuit of an active calling is not expected to give up his guineas for the sake of affording some trifling gratification to some friend or acquaintance or stranger, yet the man who has renounced the active calling and the guineas in order that he may possess his soul in peace, is constantly expected to give up his meditations, and no one counts it for a sacrifice. Meditation, it is thought can always be done some other day. Thus it is that, in the bustling crowds of this present world, a meditative man finds himself, however passively disposed, in a position of oppugnancy to those around him, and must struggle in order to stand still.

But even if a poet devoted wholly to retirement should be able to seclude himself from petty and unprofitable interruptions, he would still be the better for methodizing his life by some severity of self-restraint. Meditation is a wild business when there is nothing else to be done. An excitable mind will wander and waste itself if it be unenclosed ; and nothing needs to be intermitted more than the exercise of the imaginative faculties.

I have heard a man of ardent religious feelings declare that his devotions were more lively and spiritual after a day of business than in a day consecrated to devotional exercises; and in like manner it may happen with a poet that there shall be more freshness and vigour in the contemplations which spring up after compression than in those which are the predetermined occupation of the day. I remember to have heard a certain person found fault with for having written verses, and the objection taken was "that he could have helped it." If a poet shall have enough to do in other ways, he will be able to help writing such verses as might better have been spared.

Next to conversancy with life and affairs, a poet should cultivate a conversancy with external nature. The cultivation, indeed, will come of itself, if his life be led where nature is favourably presented to him; and not where it is soiled and obscured, as in the smoky parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, or built out, as in great cities. If, however, circumstances should oblige him to live in a city, occasional visits to the country may still do much for him—in some cases, perhaps, even as much as constant residence. The loss of continual intercourse with Nature is, no doubt, a great loss to those who have an overflowing love and a never-failing admiration of her; which are, indeed, supreme amongst poetical gifts: but on the other hand, if there be some shortcomings in this kind, the benefits of continual residence



will bear a less proportion to those of occasional intercourse. What we see rarely is seen with an access of enjoyment which quickens observation and brightens recollection; and if the susceptibilities need to be stimulated, the stimulation will redound more from what is fresh than from what is familiar.

The entire seclusion which I deprecate for a poet and the partial seclusion which I desire, have been severally described—the one by a true poet whose premature death (I think in the first half of this century) may have deprived us of more than we know, for as far as I am aware his poetry, little read in his life, has been hardly at all read since; the other by a poet of unrivalled celebrity. John of Salisbury, in the tragedy of ‘Thomas à Becket,’ by George Darley, takes his leave of Woodstock thus :—

“Farewell, sweet Woodstock bowers, blissful shades,  
 Thro’ whose dim walks so pleasantly perplex  
 Oft have I wandered, shadow-like myself!  
 Where with the finer spirits of the place  
 Communing, I have felt the bonds of earth  
 Fall gradual from about me, and it seemed  
 Leave me at length mere soul, that purest state  
 Which Man’s last hope aspires. Farewell, ye lawns,  
 Ye silent meadows green, whose golden flowers  
 Breathe up rich vapour as floats o’er the fields  
 Of sun-fed asphodel. Ye willowy streams,  
 By whose wild banks my thoughts and I have strayed;  
 Ye verdurous alleys, down whose tuftless sward  
 My foot has met no mossy obstacle  
 To wake me from my dream, while, brow to book,  
 I walked oblivious of all else, yea letting  
 The insensible hours steal from me,—fare ye well!”

And thus bidding farewell to total seclusion, let us come to the more propitious semi-seclusion which Mr. Tennyson has described as he only could :—

“ Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
 Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love ;  
 News from the humming city comes to it  
 In sound of funeral or of marriage bells ;  
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
 The windy clanging of the minster clock ;  
 Although between it and the garden lies  
 A league of grass, washed by a slow broad stream,  
 That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge,  
 Crown'd with the minster-towers.” \*

It must be acknowledged, however, that the greatest English poets of past times did undoubtedly live much in London ; and of those, he who excelled most in the treatment of external nature composed his best descriptions from the images retained in his imagination when the knowledge of nature was at one entrance quite shut out.

In our times the greatest poets have lived in the country ; but indeed they had good reasons for doing so, independently of intercourse with nature. For the social life of cities is much changed from what it was two hundred years ago. Nor is the life elsewhere what it was. I lived at one time on the banks of the Thames ;

\* ‘ The Gardener’s Daughter.’

and of what I saw from my windows, the object that pleased me most was the barge. It seemed the only creature left in the world which could not be hurried. In London, in the present times, an eminent man is beset with a multiplicity of social enjoyments and excitements, the very waste-pipes of genial sensibility; and the poet's imagination, instead of forming a fund to be continually deepened and widened by influx from secret sources, is diffused and spread abroad and speedily dried up. Such, at least, is the case with those eminent men who are lively in discourse or cordial and courteous in demeanour. Others, perhaps, invested with an adequate unpopularity, may be in little danger. "Me, though blind," says a poet who seems not to have perceived the perils of social popularity till they had passed by him,—

" Me, though blind,  
 God's mercy spared, from social snares with ease  
 Saved by that gracious gift, inaptitude to please."

But social repulsiveness has its evils too, when fully brought out in a metropolitan life: the garb of hedgehog skins, though a coat of proof, may be turned outside in, and not worn with the equanimity with which that sort of garment is said to have been worn by the Saint. Whether, therefore, the poet be socially unacceptable, or be courted, flattered, and caressed, but most in the latter case, London, in these times, is not the place in which his faculties will be most favourably developed.

And a due appreciation of the temptations to which

a poet is exposed by popular admiration and the courtings and wooings of social life, may lead us to juster views than are, I think, generally entertained, of the ways in which genius and art are to be cherished by nations and governments. There is much complaint made by the admirers of arts and literature, that their professors are not sufficiently advanced and honoured by the State and by mankind. In my estimation they are honoured more than is good either for themselves or for their calling. Good for mankind it may be to admire whatever is admirable in genius or art; but as to the poet himself, a very moderate extent of favourable acceptance in his own times is all that can be beneficial to him either as a man or as an artist. He is by temperament but too excitable; with him the *vita umbratilis* is essential to repose and self-possession; and it is from repose and self-possession,—

“ Deep self-possession, an intense repose ” \*—

that all genuine emanations of poetic genius proceed. To the poet, solitude itself is an excitement, into which none that is adventitious should intrude: the voices which come to him in solitude should not be mixed with acclamations from without; and the voices which proceed from him should not be confounded by the amiable intrusion of their own echoes; apt, when quickly reverberated, to be too intently listened for.

\* Coleridge.

It is true that he must have some more or less conscious anticipation of sympathy to come ; he must feel that his voice will not be as the voice of one crying in the desert, but that his just thoughts, his glorious visions, his passions, and “ the high reason of his fancies,” will, in their due time of maturity and after so many revolutions of the seasons as are needful for the ripening of such results, reach the hearts of multitudes, and find an echo in the ages that are unborn. But these anticipations of what is distant are not of a nature to agitate or disturb the mind in its self-communion. They serve to animate his lighter efforts, and they support him in his severer labours and more strenuous studies ; but they do not dissipate or distract the mind. It is far otherwise in respect to contemporaneous and immediate admiration ; and I doubt whether any high endeavour of poetic art ever has been or ever will be promoted by the stimulation of popular applause.

Still less would poetic art be advanced by rewards in the shape of civil honours and distinctions ; and the proposals which have been made for so rewarding it betray, when they are examined, the inconsistency of the views on which they are founded. It would probably be admitted by their authors that poetic art should not be accounted in any respect inferior to military or political art. Yet has any one entertained the notion of assigning to the greatest poet of an age civil honours and distinc-

tions tantamount to those which are assigned to the greatest soldier or politician? The creation of a Duke of Rydal, with an appanage of 10,000*l.* a year, is not the sort of measure which has been suggested, and probably there is no one who would not acknowledge it to be absurd. Yet it could be hardly more absurd than the assignment to our greatest poets of titular distinctions which, being the highest that are proposed as a reward of poetic genius, are yet amongst the lowest that would be considered worthy the acceptance of a meritorious general officer or a serviceable county member. The truth is that civil honours and titular distinctions are altogether unfit for great poets; who, being but two or three in a century, are to be distinguished by the rarity of their kind.

With regard to pensions, were they intended merely as honorary rewards, they would be open to the same objections. If they were supposed to have reference to the dignity of the calling, such pensions as are given to Lord Chancellors and Ambassadors should pitch the scale, rather than such as are given to Clerks and Collectors of Customs. But they are assigned upon different principles, and their sufficiency is to be brought to another test. In treating of the life which a poet ought to lead, I have left out of the account one material question,—whether it be such a life as it is likely that he will be able to lead. And as there is no reason to suppose him one of the few who are born to a competency, the renun-

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ciation which I have recommended of all professional and commercial pursuits and also of all public employments except such as are casual and temporary, may well suggest the inquiry in what manner he is to be maintained? Not, certainly, on the profits of poetry; for unless he apply himself merely to please and pamper, and not to elevate or instruct, his poetry will do little indeed towards procuring him a subsistence; it will probably not even yield him such a return as would suffice to support a labouring man for one month out of the twelve. This has been the case with the greatest poets, if not during the whole, at least during the greater part of their lives; and even when their poetry has attained to what may be called popularity, it is still a popularity which extends only to the cultivated, as distinguished from the merely educated classes, and, with rare exceptions, does not bring with it any very profitable sale.

If poetry, then, be unavailable, will the poet be enabled to subsist by the aid of prose? This will probably be his best resource; but even prose will fail to return a profit, unless it be written for the market. Having been almost the only resource of one who was at once an eminent poet and in general literature the most distinguished writer of his age, Mr. Southey, his example may be fairly adduced as showing what can be made of it under the most favourable circumstances. By a small pension and the office of laureate (yielding together about £200 per annum) he was enabled to insure his life so as

to make a moderate posthumous provision for his family ; and it remained for him to support himself and them, so long as he should live, by his writings. With unrivalled industry, infinite stores of knowledge, extraordinary talents, a delightful style, and the devotion of about one-half of his time to writing what should be marketable rather than what he would have desired to write, he defrayed the cost of that frugal and homely way of life which he deemed to be the happiest and the best. So far it may be said that all was well ; and certainly never was man more contented with a humble lot than he. But at sixty years of age he had never yet had one year's income in advance ; and when, between sixty and seventy, his powers of writing failed, had it not been for the timely grant of an additional pension,\* his means of subsistence would have failed too. It was owing to this grant alone that the last years of a life of such literary industry as was the wonder of his time were not harassed by pecuniary difficulties ; and at his death the melancholy spectacle was presented, of enormous preparations thrown away, one great labour of his life half-finished, and other lofty designs which had been cherished in his heart of hearts from youth to age, either merely inchoate or altogether unattempted.

We mourn over the lost books of Tacitus and Pliny, and rake in the ruins of Herculaneum to recover them ; but £300 a year—had it been given in

\* Through the care of Lord Aberdeen and Sir R. Peel.



time—might have realized for us works over the loss of which our posterity may perhaps mourn as much or more !

“ Things incomplete, and purposes betray'd  
 Make sadder transits o'er Truth's mystic glass  
 Than noblest objects utterly decay'd.”\*

If one moiety of Mr. Southey's time—applied to procure, by marketable literature, the means of subsistence—is found to leave such miserable results as these, it may easily be imagined what fortune would attend the efforts in marketable prose (always assuming them, of course, to be good and worthy and not the mere supplianee of the literary toy-shop) of a man of like poetical gifts, but not endowed with the same grace and facility in composition, the same unwearied industry and almost unexampled productiveness.

Pensions to poets, then, in such cases—and, indeed, pensions to all writers, poetical or other, in the higher and graver, and therefore less popular and lucrative walks of literature—may be deemed, I think, though not appropriate as honours or rewards, yet desirable as providing a subsistence which may not be attainable in other ways without great injury to the interests of literature. The provision should be suited to the retired and homely way of life by which the true dignity of a poet will be best sustained, and in which his genius will have its least

\* Wordsworth.

obstructed development; but it should be a provision calculated—if prudently managed—to make his life, in its pecuniary elements, easy and untroubled. I say, “if prudently managed,” because, as to the wants of a spendthrift poet, or of one who is incompetent to the management of his affairs, they are wants which it is hard to measure and impossible to supply.

If the pensions now given to men of letters, to scientific men, and to artists, be of such amount as would enable them, living frugally, to give all or most of their time, with an easy mind, to those arts and pursuits by which they may best consult the great and perdurable interests committed by Providence to their charge, then the amount is sufficient, though it be but little; and the fact which is so often brought forward, that it is less than the ordinary emoluments of trades, professions, or the humbler walks of the public service, is not material to the case. If the pensions, on the other hand, be of less amount than will effect this purpose, then I think that the just ground on which the grant of such pensions is to be rested,—that is, the true interests of men of genius themselves, and, through them, the interests of literature and art,—requires that they should be advanced in amount so far as may be sufficient for this purpose, and no further.

It is not only to secure to him the undisturbed possession of his time, and the undiverted direction of his endeavours, that it is expedient to make some sufficient

pecuniary provision for a poet: such a provision is important also as a safeguard to his character and conduct; for few indeed are the men whose character and conduct are unimpaired by pecuniary difficulties; and though wise men will hardly be involved in such difficulties, let their need be what it may, and though none but a wise man can be a great poet, yet the wisdom of the wisest may be weak in action; it may be infirm of purpose; through emotions or abstractions it may be accessible to one inroad or another; and though I am far from claiming any peculiar indulgence for the infirmities of men of genius—on the contrary, in my mind nothing can be more erroneous than to extend indulgence to moral aberrations precisely in those cases in which, operating to the corruption of the greatest gifts, they are the most malign and pernicious—yet for this very reason, whilst refusing them any indult or absolution, I would claim for men of genius all needful protection; more perhaps than ought to be needful; in order that no danger that can be avoided may attend the great national and universal interests involved in their life and character. For never let this truth depart from the minds of poets or of those who would cherish and protect them, that the poet and the man are one and indivisible; that as the life and character is, so is the poetry; that the poetry is the fruit of the whole moral, spiritual, intellectual, and practical being; and howsoever, in the imperfection of humanity, fulfilments may have fallen short of

aspirations, and the lives of some illustrious poets may have seemed to be at odds with greatness and purity, yet in so far as the life has faltered in wisdom and virtue, failing thereby to be the nurse of high and pure imaginations, the poet, we may be sure, has been shorn of his beams; and whatsoever splendour may remain to him, even though to our otherwise bedarkened eyes wandering in a terrestrial dimness it may seem to be consummate and the very "offspring of Heaven first-born," yet it is a reduced splendour and a merely abortive offspring as compared with what it might have been, and with what it is in the bounty of God to create, by the conjunction of the like gifts of high reason, ardent imagination, efflorescence of fancy and intrepidity of impulse, with a heart subdued to Him and a pure and unspotted life. Out of the heart are the issues of life, and out of the life are the issues of poetry.

And the greatest of those poets whose lives, though perhaps less blemished in reality than evil report would have them to be, are certainly not free from reproach, have seen and acknowledged this, and have known what they have lost. If the little that has come down to us concerning Shakspeare includes somewhat against him, we know also from himself how it was by himself regarded; and what is to the present purpose, we know that he imputed the evil courses into which he was betrayed to the way of life forced upon him by the want of a competency:—

“Oh, for my sake do thou with Fortune chide,  
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,  
 That did not better for my life provide  
 Than public means which public manners breeds.  
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,  
 And almost thence my nature is subdued  
 To that it works in, like the dyer’s hand.” \*

And we know further, that when he had attained to a competency (would that it had been earlier !) he followed that way of life no longer.

We have now plotted out for the poet a life which is to be homely and retired, but easy as regards pecuniary circumstances,—orderly, dutiful, observant, and if mainly contemplative, yet not inactive :—

“Mechanick soul, thou must not only do  
 With Martha, but with Mary ponder too.  
 Happy the house where these two sisters vary,  
 But most when Martha’s reconciled to Mary.”

So says Quarles : And if he would have Martha seek the embraces of Mary, so would I have Mary seek those of Martha.

But there is more to be said. As his life of contemplation is to be varied by practical activity upon occasion, so should his solitude be varied by occasional companionship. In youth his companions will probably be chosen very much for the sake of their intellectual powers and acquirements ; and whilst we are young we are most open to cultivation from such companionship. Afterwards, truth and kindness come to be,

\* 111th Sonnet.

if not all in all, yet at least of all qualities the most essential; and to one who, learning from books what books can teach, would desire to make more direct inquisition into the secrets of human nature, it is far less important that companionship should be intellectual than that it should be confidential.

The poet, being himself frank and unreserved (as I think poets for the most part will be found to be), should beget frankness and unreserve on the part of his companions, who should come to him for advice and sympathy in all the emergencies of life. "I have got into this or that dilemma or difficulty; what am I to do?" "I have fallen in love with this or that young lady; what will become of me?" "I have been ill-used and betrayed; shall I forgive it or shall I resent it?" The poet's companions making hasty resort to him under such circumstances, the inmost thoughts of their hearts disclosed by the passion of the time, whilst a friendly or perhaps even an impassioned interest is excited in the heart of the poet, the result will be a living knowledge, and a judgment, by as much as it is responsibly and affectionately exercised, by so much the more deeply cultivated. This is the companionship which, being indeed essential to any one who would bring out his better nature and fulfil his duties as a man, is eminently essential to a poet.

There is another companionship to be considered,—that of books. And one question connected with this companionship is the question of plagiarism. I have

heard one poet complain of another for having imitated him ; and had I been appealed to, the opinion I should have ventured to express would have been that imitation and plagiarism were to be regarded in the interest of poetry, not of poets ; or only of poets in so far as the two interests are identical. Milton plagiarized largely, and not from the Greeks and Romans or the Italians only, but also from his own early contemporaries or immediate predecessors in his own language,—from Fletcher, Marlowe, Burton, and others. It might have been better to acknowledge what he owed to them ; but in those days it was not customary to append notes to a volume of poetry, or for men to look upon poetry as property. I should not have wished him to abstain from the plagiarisms. The poetry of those from whom he borrowed will probably be forgotten long before his is forgotten, and thus some of their happiest conceptions will be embalmed when the body of their works is no longer aboveground.

The reading by which Milton proposed to prepare himself to write poetry was, as appears by a passage to which I have already referred, "*select* reading." In these times I think that a poet should feed chiefly (not of course exclusively) on the literature of the seventeenth century. The diction and the movement of that literature, both in verse and in what Dryden calls "that other harmony," are, in my apprehension, far more fitted than the literature which has followed it to be used for the

training of the mind to poetry. There was no writing public nor reading populace in that age. The age was the worse for that, but the written style of the age was the better. The writers were few and intellectual; and they addressed themselves to learned, or at least to studious and diligent readers. The structure of their language is in itself an evidence that they counted upon another frame of mind and a different pace and speed in reading from that which can alone be looked to by the writers of these days.

Their books were not written to be snatched up, run through, talked over, and forgotten; and their diction, therefore, was not such as lent wings to haste and impatience, making everything so clear that he who ran or flew might read. Rather it was so constructed as to detain the reader over what was pregnant and profound, and compel him to that brooding and prolific posture of the mind, by which, if he had wings, they might help him to some more genial and profitable employment than that of running like an ostrich through a desert. And hence those characteristics of diction by which these writers are made more fit than those who have followed them to train the ear and utterance of a poet. For if we look at the long-suspended sentences of those days, with all their convolutions and intertextures—the many parts waiting for the ultimate wholeness—we shall perceive that without distinctive movement and rhythmical significance of a very high order it would be impossible



that they could be sustained in any sort of clearness. One of these writers' sentences is often in itself a work of art, having its strophes and antistrophes, its winding changes and recalls, by which the reader, though conscious of plural voices and running divisions of thought, is not however permitted to dissociate them from their mutual concert and dependency, but required, on the contrary, to give them entrance into his mind, opening it wide enough for the purpose, as one compacted and harmonious fabric.

Sentences thus elaborately constructed, and complex though musical, are not easy to a remiss reader, but they are clear and delightful to an intent reader. Sentences, on the other hand, such as are demanded in these times by the reading commonalty and written by those who aspire to be their representatives in the republic of letters, lie under little obligation to address themselves to the *ear* of the mind. Sense is to be taken in by so little at a time, that it matters not greatly what sound goes with it; or at all events one movement and one tune, which all the world understands, is as much as our sentence can make room for or our reader will take time for; and as matter and style will ever react upon each other, I fear there is a tendency in our popular writers to stop short of that sort of matter to which brief bright sentences are not appropriate and all-sufficient. However this be, the finer melodies of language will always be found in those compositions which deal with many considerations at once—

some principal, some subordinate, some exceptional, some gradational, some oppugnant; and deal with them compositely, by blending whilst they distinguish. And so much am I persuaded of the connection between true intellectual harmony of language and this kind of composition, that I would rather seek for it in an Act of Parliament—if any arduous matter of legislation be in hand—than in the productions of our popular writers, however lively and forcible. An Act of Parliament, in such subject-matter, is studiously written and expects to be diligently read, and it generally comprises compositions of the multiplex character which has been described. It is a kind of writing, therefore, to which some species of rhythmical movement is indispensable, as any one will find who attempts to draft a difficult and comprehensive enactment with the omission of all the words which speak to the ear only and are superfluous to the sense.\*

Lord Brougham said of Sir Charles Wetherall that he drove a substantive and four with two adverbs for outriders. This might be said of Lord Brougham himself. Nor is it necessarily a fault. But it becomes a fault when the sense is not supported by the sound. What is required of such language is what was attributed by a certain scholar to a certain princess:—

“She ever moves as if she moved to music.”†

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\* Even the language of law can sometimes be other than dry. In the Dutch law inheritance by ascent is called “*Luctuosa hereditas*.”

† ‘Edwin the Fair,’ Act ii., Scene 3.

Am I presumptuous in my disparagement of our modern manner of writing? It may be adapted to its age and its purposes; which purposes, as bearing directly upon living multitudes, have a vastness and momentousness of their own. It may be adapted also to an age in which if a book were to be written which a man should read and having read should live with ever after, it would probably be obtained by most men from a circulating library, to be forthwith read and returned. For circulating libraries are now, unfortunately, the substitute for home libraries, not as formerly in respect of light literature only, but in respect of grave literature also.

All that it concerns me to aver is, that the purpose which our modern manner of writing will *not* answer is that of training the ear of a poet to rhythmical melodies. And how little it lends itself to any high order of poetical purposes may be judged by the dreary results of every attempt which is made to apply it to purposes of a cognate character—to prayers, for example, and spiritual exercises. Compare our modern compositions of this kind with the language of the liturgy—a language which, though for the most part short and ejaculatory and not demanding to be rhythmic in order to be understood, partakes, nevertheless, in the highest degree, of the musical expressiveness which pervaded the compositions of the time. Listen to it in all its varieties of strain and cadence, sudden or sustained—now holding on in assured strength, now sinking in a soft contrition, and anon soaring in the joy-

fulness of faith—confession, absolution, exultation, each to its appropriate music, and these again contrasted with the steady statements of the Creeds ;—let us listen, I say, to this language, which is one effusion of celestial harmonies, and compare with it the flat and uninspired tones and flagging movements of those compounds of petition and exhortation (from their length and multifariousness peculiarly demanding rhythmic support) which are to be found in modern collections of prayers for the use of families. I think the comparison will constrain us to acknowledge that short sentences in long succession, however clear in construction and correct in grammar, if they have no rhythmic impulse—though they may very well deliver themselves of what the writer thinks and means—will fail to bear in upon the mind any adequate impression of what he *feels*—his hopes and fears, his joy, his gratitude, his compunction, his anguish and tribulation ; or indeed any assurance that he had not merely framed a document of piety, in which he had carefully set down whatever was most proper to be said on the mornings and evenings of each day. These compositions have been, by an illustrious soldier, designated “fancy prayers,” and this epithet may be suitable to them in so far as they make no account of authority and prescription ; but neither to the fancy nor to the imagination do they appeal through any utterance which can charm the ear.

I come back, then, to the position that a poet should

make companions chiefly of those writers who have written in the confidence that their books would be learned and inwardly digested, and whose language was framed for patient and erudite ears and an attitude of the mind like that in which St. Paul listened to Gamaliel, *sitting at his feet*. And I think that he should rather avoid any habitual resort to books, however delightful in their kind, such as are written in these times and for these times, to catch the fugacious or stimulate the sluggish reader ; books such as may be read in the captiousness of haste by a lawyer with an appointment to keep and a watch on the table, or in an inapprehensive weariness by a country gentleman after a day of field sports.

Moreover, by this abstinence and by a conversancy with elder models in the matter of diction, the poet will be enabled to employ as his own, by the habit which is a second nature, that slightly archaistic colouring of language, which, being removed from what is colloquial and familiar, at the same time that it has no incongruity or unnatural strangeness, is, I think, in these times at least (as by Spenser and others it was deemed to be formerly also), the best costume in which poetry can be clothed, combining what is common to other ages with what is characteristic of his own. Spenser, it may be admitted, went too far in this. Ben Jonson said of him that "in affecting the Ancients he writ no language ;" and at all events the poet should be choice and chary in the use of

archaisms ; by no means detaining or reviving old forms of speech, which, being intrinsically bad, are in a way to be worthily forgotten. The wells of English were not altogether undefiled in any age ; \* and they who aspire to be what poets ought to be, the conservators of language, will proceed, not by obstructing the expurgation of their mother tongue,—a process which, as well as its corruption, is continually on foot,—but by remanding to their more derivative significations words which are beginning to go astray, and by observing with a keener insight the latent metaphorical fitness or unfitness by which all language is pervaded.

Nor is it to be supposed that the true poet will betray his trust in the conservation of his country's tongue, through any latitude popularly permitted to him for convenience of rhyme or rhythm. For whatever may be meant by those who speak of *poetical license*, that phrase would mislead us much, were we to suppose that the language of poetry is not required to be precise for the most part, and beyond all other language apt and discriminative. And though this peculiar aptitude will escape many of the poet's readers (if he have many), and much of it will not be recognised at once

\* How it came that the designation of Chaucer's language as "the well of English undefiled" should have obtained a universal currency, I am unable to divine. His language is a jumble. It resulted from a confluence of languages which had not yet blended themselves into the one language in which they were thereafter to flow.

even by the more skilful few, yet in this, as in other matters of art, it is what can be fully appreciated only by continual study, that will lay the strongest foundations of fame. The "hæc placuit semel" should be, to the poet, of infinitely less account than the "hæc decies repetita placebit:" nor is he worthy of the name of a poet who would not rather be read ten times by one reader than once by ten.

When that great man of whom I have already made mention speaks of his life as led in his library and with his books, those to which he adverts as his never-failing friends are the books of other times; and a poet's feelings as to this companionship could not be more expressively conveyed than in the verses in which he has given them utterance:—

“My days among the dead are past,  
 Around me I behold  
 Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
 The mighty minds of old;  
 My never-failing friends are they,  
 With whom I converse day by day.

“With them I take delight in weal,  
 And seek relief in woe;  
 And while I understand and feel  
 How much to them I owe,  
 My cheeks have often been bedew'd  
 With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

“My thoughts are with the dead: with them  
 I live in long-past years;  
 Their virtues love, their faults condemn,  
 Partake their hopes and fears;

And from their lessons seek and find  
Instruction with an humble mind.

“ My hopes are with the dead. Anon  
My place with them will be ;  
And I with them shall travel on  
Through all eternity ;  
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,  
That will not perish in the dust.”

With regard to the habitual reading of books in foreign languages, whether living languages or other, I, being but very imperfectly acquainted with any but my own, am not competent to say what would be the effect of it upon a poet's diction and numbers ; but this subject is one which would deserve to be investigated by some duly qualified critic. Milton, I think, though he greatly enriched his store of poetical images and materials by his conversancy with Latin, Greek, and Italian books, did yet suffer injury on the other hand in the perverting of his diction to the Latin ; his numbers, however (for numbers are less than diction accessible to foreign influence), remaining unwarped and eminently his country's and his own. Dante had little or no indigenious literature to assist him in the moulding of his verse, being himself the founder of the Italian as a literate language ; and he rebukes, with some severity of disdain, those who were “*tam obscenæ rationis*” as to magnify the language of their native country above every other. “For myself,” he says, “whose country is the world, being native to that as the fish to the



sea, though I drank the waters of the Arno before I had a tooth in my head, and have so loved Florence as, by reason of my love, to undergo an unjust banishment, yet have I holden my judgment subject to my reason rather than to my senses; and as to Florence, whence I am sprung, regard it though I may as the place in the world most pleasant to me, yet when I revolve the works of the poets and other writers by whom the world has been described in all its particulars from pole to pole, I am strong and absolute in the opinion, derived from other evidence than that of the senses, that there are regions and cities more delightful and noble than those of Tuscany, and languages better both for their use and their charm than the Latian.\*

\* "Nam quicumque tam obscenæ rationis est ut locum suæ nationis deliciosissimum credat esse sub sole, huic etiam præ cunctis proprium vulgare licebit, id est maternam locutionem, præponere : . . . . Nos autem, cui mundus est patria velut piscibus æquor, quamquam Sarnum biberimus ante dentes, et Florentiam adeo diligamus ut, quia dileximus, exilium patiamur injuste, ratione magis quam sensu spatulas nostri iudicii podiamus : et quamvis ad voluptatem nostram, sive nostræ sensualitatis quietem, in terris amœnior locus quam Florentia non existat, revolventes et poetarum, et aliorum scriptorum volumina, quibus mundus universaliter et membratim describitur, ratiocinantesque in nobis situationes varias mundi locorum et eorum habitudinem ad utrumque polum et circulum æquatorem, multas esse perpendimus firmiterque censemus, et magis nobiles et magis deliciosas et regiones et urbes, quam Thusciam et Florentiam, unde sum oriundus et civis, et plerasque nationes et gentes delectabiliori atque utiliori sermone uti, quam Latinos."—*De Vulgari Eloquentia*, 1-6. I extract the passage, because in translating I have abridged it.

It would be matter of much interest to know from competent critics how far the operation of these sentiments is to be traced in the fabric of Dante's verse, he having had, as it were, to build it up from the ground; or how far the native genius of the language has ruled supreme. If Milton, however, have accepted foreign aid, and perhaps Dante also, yet Shakspeare is a signal example of the all-sufficiency of national resources; having, with the "small Latin and less Greek," which Ben Jonson says was all he possessed, so large and various a vocabulary it hardly seems possible that any extent of erudition could have bettered it, and a structure of language so flexible and multiform that it could not have been more so had there been twenty tributary tongues to form it and feed it.

And when I advert to the blank verse written by Shakspeare and the other Elizabethans, with its infinite varieties of movement and expression, I cannot help asking, what has become of it? With the beginning of this century there was a revival of lyrical verse in its animated forms, and at the summons sounded in 'Christabel' and in the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' rhymed poetry was at once released from the bonds of a dull regularity—almost, I may say, the bonds of death—to which it had been consigned for a century and a half before. But for blank verse there has been hitherto\* no such resurrection. Milton's is the one and only inspired utterance

\* *i.e.*, till 1847, when this work was published.

in that kind which has been heard in the reign of the deaf and dumb which has succeeded to that of the Elizabethans. His indeed is unequalled in its grandeur, and any one who should hear it for the first time with a full sense of its power and range might be expected to feel as Sir John Dolbein felt when on first hearing Handel's "Messiah" he exclaimed,—“I thought I should have gone out of the body.” But if it is doubtful whether any one *can* have a full sense of Milton's verse with all its melodies and meanings on a first reading, it is also doubtful whether many people in these days give it a second; it is moreover so much of a type apart that it has had still less effect, if less be possible, than that of the Elizabethans upon our current versification, and for the last 200 years our blank verse has seemed to be utterly unconscious of the existence of any form of it more animated or expressive than itself. Once or twice perhaps it may have turned in its sleep and wakened up for a moment, but only to fall back and be as lifeless as ever.

Can anything be done for it? Could schools and colleges do anything? They devote themselves to teach the dead languages, and is not this one? My belief is that it is one which could be successfully taught by recitation, were competent teachers forthcoming. But when we find the writers of blank verse so insensible to its melodies and the meaning of its melodies, we can hardly suppose that its readers are less so; and probably most of those who read our Elizabethan

blank verse could give but little effect to it in utterance. This, however, would be but a difficulty of the first step. For once let a competent teacher be found, and of the many who would learn, some would learn to teach.

Having deviated thus far into criticism, I will allow myself a few words more which relate to the art, and not to the life, of a poet. My own poetry being chiefly that of the drama, I have been led to consider in the light of practice the once much-vexed question of the Unities, and I have something to say upon them. That it is important to preserve the unities of time and place in the drama may now, I think, be regarded as an obsolete doctrine. But what *is* important is that the deviations from the one should correspond to the deviations from the other. Change of place produces on the mind of readers the effect of lapse of time, and it is contrary to art that events simultaneous or closely consecutive in point of time should follow each other in places far apart, or that events distant as to the interval of time should follow each other without shifting the *locus in quo*. I would further observe that too frequent change of place may produce jolts in the action, and should occur only at periods when, by great vivacity in the onward movement and much clearness of drift, the reader is brought into such a state of mobility as makes him ready to yield himself to rapid changes and sudden turns. The vessel will not answer the helm sharply, unless she have much weigh upon her.

So much of digression. And now, having considered, if not sufficiently yet at sufficient length, after what manner a poet is to live, it may be well, before I conclude, to inquire at what period of his life he should deem himself to be prepared for the exercise of his vocation on a large scale. And from the nature of some of the preparations which have been treated of as indispensable, it will plainly appear that this period will not arrive in early youth. For if contemplation, action, conversancy with life and affairs, varied duties, much solitude in its turn, with observation of Nature, and reading select and severe if not extensive, be, as I have deemed them to be, essential requisites for the writing of poetry in its higher and graver kinds, some not inconsiderable tract of matured life must have been travelled through before these fruits can have been gathered. And with this hypothesis our literary history and biography will be found to accord. Milton, at twenty-three years of age, thought that he ripened slowly; and when he supposed himself less happy in that respect than others, doubtless it was because his own deficiencies were better known to him than theirs:—

“How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!  
My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom sheweth.  
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth  
That I towards manhood am arrived so near;  
And inward ripeness doth much less appear  
Than some more timely happy spirits indueth.”

Even in his twenty-ninth year he regarded his poetical efforts (and, comparing himself with himself, perhaps we may say with reason) as a plucking of the "berries harsh and crude." But the history of poetry at large would show, I think, that Milton's poetical faculties were not of slower growth than those of other poets of the high and intellectual orders; and that at all events the period of the culmination of such poets is in middle life. And with regard to exceptional cases—instances of high achievement at other periods—whilst a few may be cited as belonging to the periods short of middle life, more illustrious examples still will be found belonging to periods beyond it. Pope wrote verses with singular grace and dexterity in his early youth: but, on the other hand, Dryden, when he produced the 'Alexander's Feast,' was in his sixty-seventh year. Boethius must have been about the same age when he composed his greatest work, finding that those visits of the Muse which had been the glory of his youth, were not less the consolation of his latter days:—

"Gloria fœlicis olim viridisque juventæ  
Solantur mœsti nunc mea fata senis."

Goethe may be quoted as an authority as well as an example. When the poet, in the Prologue to the Faust, sighs after his lost youth, his friend reproves him, and whilst admitting that youth is propitious to divers other ends and exercises, declares that for the purposes of poetry the elder is the better man:—

“The cunning hand of art to fling  
 With spirit o’er the accustom’d string ;  
 To seem to wander, yet to bend  
 Each motion to the harmonious end :  
 Such is the task our ripen’d age imposes,  
 Which makes our day more glorious ere it closes.”\*

Nor is it only the poetry of the highest intellectual order which is better written after youth than in youth. The poetry of emotion also will suffer from immaturity. The youthful poet will occupy himself too exclusively with the pathetic element. The *preference* of one element may of course be unobjectionable, but not the exclusion of others. And perhaps there are not many examples of poems, other than very short ones, in which a great poet has delivered himself over to sadness and dejection that knows no rebound. The shepherd, when he has mourned Lycidas long enough, escapes from the theme with, if I may venture to say so, even too nimble an action,—something in the nature of a jerk :—

“ At length he *twitched* his mantle blue—  
 To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

And the cloud of remorse and guilty fear in Macbeth finds a loophole, not indeed by the breaking in of any temporal gleam, but through a sense of the Finite :—

“ Come what come may,  
 Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.”

If we look at the Prophets and Sybils of Michael

\* Lord F. Egerton’s translation.

Angelo, we shall perceive that the Prophets, as seeing face to face, are always cheerful, the Sybils, as seeing "through a glass darkly," always sad—diversely sad,—the Erythrean with a despondent, the Cnmœan with a stern, the Delphic with a soaring sadness. A Poet, in his degree, should be *both* Prophet *and* Sybil.

Even for amorous poetry there is a richer vein than that of youth's temperament and a more attractive art than youth can attain to. Let the masters of erotic verse be mustered, and it will appear, I think, that few or none of them wrote consummately in early youth, whilst the best of them gave utterance to their best strains long after they had sung their "*Vixi Puellis.*" The sense of proportion, which is required equally in the lighter as in the graver kinds of poetry, is naturally imperfect in youth, through undue ardour in particulars; and no very young poet will be content to sacrifice special felicities to general effect. Nor can there well exist at an early period of life that rare and peculiar balance of all the faculties, which, even more perhaps than a peculiar force in any, constitutes a great poet:—the balance of reason with imagination, passion with self-possession, abundance with reserve, and inventive conception with executive ability.

On the whole, therefore, it is not desirable that a poet should prosecute any great enterprise in early youth; nor is it likely that his lighter efforts will be worth much. Nevertheless it is the period for practice and exercise;



and a poet must and will write much verse in youth, and he will be much the better for it; nor will he write it with the purpose of throwing it away. If he be affected with the usual impatience of an ardent temperament in early life, it will perhaps be best for him to publish; for till he have rid himself of this impatience, he will not go to work with an ambition sufficiently long-sighted and a steady preference of ulterior to early results. And publication, if unsuccessful (as the juvenile publications of great poets are almost sure to be), is a sedative of much virtue and efficacy in such cases. "Be not ambitious of an early fame," says Landor, "for such is apt to shrivel and drop under the tree." Early success puts an end to severe study and strenuous endeavour; whereas early failure in those in whom there is genuine poetic genius and what commonly accompanies it—

"Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse—"\*

acts as a sort of narcotic stimulant, allaying impatience, but quickening the deeper mind.

The outset of a poet's life, and the conduct of it "*nel mezzo del cammin*"—the season in which his poetry is sown and reaped—are most important to the interests of the art and of mankind. The manner in which it shall be drawn to a close may be supposed to be important chiefly to the poet himself: yet it is not altogether so; and a few words may not be wasted in speaking of that

\* Wordsworth.

latter autumn of a poet's life which succeeds his harvest-home. With poets whose life reaches its threescore years and ten this will be a period of some years' duration. For the fact that by some great poets some short poetical efforts have been hazarded in old age with eminent success, should not certainly lead to the conclusion that an old man should occupy himself in adding to the bulk of his poetical works (especially if already voluminous), when he can no longer hope to enhance their rateable and specific value. It is important to every poet to keep his works within compass, both for the avoidance of a present glut, and in order that Time may find them portable. Let him take leave of his art whilst he is still able to bid it a graceful farewell :—

“My lute, awake, performe the last  
 Labour that thou and I shall wast :  
 And ende that I have now begunne ;  
 And when this song is sung and past,  
 My lute, be styll, for I have done.”\*

Moreover, the intensities of life should be allowed to come to their natural close some steps short of the grave ; and passionate writing should not be extended over this period, even if the imagination have not ceased to be impassioned. There are other ways, at once congenial with the poetic life and consentaneous with its decline, in which the activities that remain may be gently exercised, when the passion has been laid to rest. The

\* Wyat.

long education of a poet's life (for as long as he lives he should learn) will have enabled him to detect, at the end of it, many faults in his writings which he knew not of before ; and there will be many faults, also, of which he *was* cognisant, but which, in the eagerness of his productive years, he had not found leisure or inclination to amend. In his old age, as long as the judgment and the executive power over details shall be unimpaired,—as long as the *hand* shall not have lost its cunning,—the work of correction may be carried on to completeness, and the poet's house be put in order. Some caution will be requisite. Age is prone to fastidiousness ; and if the poet can no longer go along with the ardours of his younger years, he should take care lest he quench them with too cold a touch. Age, too, is vacillating ; and if he have lost his clearness and decisiveness of choice, he should not deal with any delinquencies of his younger verse except those which are flagrant ; and in all his corrections, indeed, the presumption should be in favour of the first draft ; this should have the benefit of the doubt if there be one ; otherwise the works may be the worse for the last hand. But, subject to these conditions, there seems to be no employment better suited to the old age of a poet than that of purifying and making less perishable that which he trusts may be the earthly representative of his immortal part. For such purpose and in so far forth, he may permit himself, even at a period when “the last infirmity” should be on its last legs, to be

occupied with himself and his fame. But when his own works are as he would wish to leave them, nothing of that which is peculiar to him as a poet, and not common to him as a man, will so well become his latter days, as to look beyond himself and have regard to the future fortunes of his art involved in the rising generation of poets. It should be his desire and his joy to cherish the lights by which his own shall be succeeded and perhaps outshone. The personal influence of an old poet upon a young one—youth and age being harmonised by the sympathies of the art—may do what no writings can, to mould those spirits by which, hereafter, many are to be moulded; and as the reflex of a glorious sunset will sometimes tinge the *eastern* sky, the declining poet may communicate to those who are to come after him, not guidance only, but the very colours of his genius, the temper of his moral mind, and the inspiration of his hopes and promises. That done, or ceasing to be practicable through efflux of light, it will only remain for the poet to wait in patience and peace,

“ While night  
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.”\*

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\* ‘Paradise Lost.’

## THE WAYS OF THE RICH AND GREAT.



[The greater part of this essay, now first appended to the foregoing, was written more than forty years ago, and much of it which relates to the then existing state of society is no doubt inapplicable to that now existing: *how* much I know not; as it is many years since I have had the requisite opportunities of observation. I do not suppress the essay on that ground; for the generations of 1878 may think that they know enough about themselves, and may not be indisposed to read what was thought and said of generations of which personally they have known nothing.]

THERE is a great and grievous complaint in some quarters that the Rich are too rich and that their riches are continually increasing, whilst from other quarters the complaint is that those who thus complain have as great a desire for riches as if they saw no harm in them. A few years ago a writer of great sagacity and knowledge of the world represented England to be a country in which poverty is contemptible. Such an account of things tends to propagate the sentiment it proclaims; because in all countries there are many who are prepared to go with the stream. But it is not a true account. There are large numbers of Englishmen,

though not, perhaps, of the particular section of society which fell more directly under the observation of that writer, by whom poverty is not despised, unless resulting from indolence or misconduct, and by whom riches are not respected, unless well won or well spent.

Riches, however, in all countries and in all times, have conferred some sort of power and authority: "The poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.' We may believe it," says South, "upon Solomon's word, who was rich as well as wise, and therefore knew the force of both; and probably, had it not been for his riches, the Queen of Sheba would never have come so far only to have heard his wisdom." This is quite possible; and it is true enough that riches obtain a little too much of worship from some classes, whilst they are regarded with jealousy by others. "I love my good and rich brother," is a sentence said to occur amongst the examples in a Dutch grammar: and "I hate my good and rich brother" might have been coupled with it. For whilst there is much love in some, there will be as much envy in others. And in the present state of society it were well if all classes could be led to consider justly, and if none would permit themselves to consider ungenerously, the manner in which riches are expended, and the general demeanour of the Rich and the Great.

Although the Rich are a small minority of the people, there is no reason why their happiness and enjoyments should not be cared for; and there is in

human nature so much of a disposition to sympathise with happiness and prosperity, that their enjoyment of their wealth will not be unpopular, if it be not seen to be selfish or absurd. But it is desirable both for the sake of the Rich and Great, and for the sake of the sentiments with which the other classes may regard them, that what is expended for enjoyment should really contribute to enjoyment; and also that it should not be more than duly proportioned to what is expended for the benefit of others.

The expenditure of the Rich and Great in matters of mere appearance is often objected to; and it is true that by far the greatest portion of their expenditure is more for show than for any other species of luxury. But this is not to be indiscriminately denounced; and those by whom it should be so dealt with, even though they were the poorest of the poor, would probably be found to be, in their practice, within the condemnation of their own principle.

Some years ago, I had occasion to visit the room of a hodman who had fallen from a ladder and broken a limb, and whose daughter had been sent into the streets to beg. It was as miserable an apartment as any two human beings could be kept alive in; but there was a fireplace, and on the chimney-piece there were two coloured earthenware ornaments, of the value perhaps of a halfpenny each.

The plea of "supporting the station to which Pro.

vidence has called us" is not unmeaning, though it be often much abused; and when it is not abused, the common sense of the people will generally recognise it sufficiently to make matters of show inoffensive. But in order to give validity to the plea, the shows should be such as have attached themselves to the station very gradually, so as to form part of the transmitted usages of society and be harmonised in men's imaginations. New inventions in the way of show, or new extensions of old expenditures in this way, are obnoxious, and should tend to derogate from the respect in which a man is held by his equals, as well as to impair his popularity; because they are evidence that he is not merely sliding into the track which is prepared for him, but deliberately turning his thoughts to ostentation. A man's expenditure for show should therefore belong either to the station to which he is born, or to that into which he has gradually passed by the natural influence of increasing riches, superior abilities, or other circumstances which make the shows incidental to the life rather than expressly devised and prepared.

Even if the show be no more than proportioned to the wealth, it will not avoid to be obnoxious if the wealth have been suddenly acquired and the transition from obscurity be abrupt. "For I," says Mr. Landor,—

"For I have shunn'd on every side  
The splash of newly mounted pride."

It is the *splash* which is offensive.



On the other hand, there are those who look up a little too much to wealth and rank and station, whether new or old; and this is not altogether good either for them or for the objects of their too worshipful regard. And then again there are many who look down upon those who so look up; and as looking down may have its excesses quite as easily as looking up, it may be well for such of us as sit in the seat of the scorner to consider whether we may not ourselves partake in some form and measure of that which we despise. For the forms and degrees of worldliness are very various; few are exempt from it in one or another form and degree; and they who are susceptible of it only in one form and degree will sometimes regard with suprême contempt those who are susceptible of it in another. The form connected with the acquisition and possession of money is the most general, because more or less of money is within most people's reach; and being the most general, it is the form in which worldliness is most generally tolerated and condoned. They who think it no more than natural and reasonable that a man should desire for no particular moral purpose a thousand a year more of income, and indeed would think him foolish and censurable should he needlessly forego it, will not the less sneer at him if he should desire to associate himself with persons of a rank and station above his own. Yet it might be difficult by any analysis to make out that the one pursuit was grounded

in any worthier qualities of human nature than the other. And perhaps the contempt which is felt for the one and not for the other, is connected quite as much with the unworthy jealousies and the pride of human nature as with a respect for social independence.

The man of all men in this century who could be the least suspected of a want of social or any other independence, the Poet of the Poor, one day when he was on a visit to London, found himself out in a frailty of this kind. He had falsely disguised from a Duchess the fact that he knew nothing about her connections or the society in which she moved. With his own singular simplicity, he mentioned the incident the next morning at a breakfast at which several persons were present who were strangers to him ; and observing that he was becoming "a regular London liar," said that he must hasten back to his abode in the country. Whilst we are amongst mankind we cannot expect to be without some rather silly sympathies along with whatever others we may possess of a higher order and a wider range ; and it is by cultivating the nobler in ourselves much more than by despising the idler in others, that we shall best fulfil the purposes of our being. And at all events there should be no difficulty in the matter if it be apparent that, whatever measure of display or other worldliness may be indulged by this man or that, other things are uppermost, and the man's heart is in his beneficence and in his business.

Amongst the superfluities which add nothing to the enjoyments of the Rich and detract from their usefulness, may not superfluous houses be numbered? A man who has many houses will oftentimes have no home; for the many objects and associations which a man gathers about him, as a shell-fish forms its shell, in a conformity with his manner of being, cannot easily be so gathered in more places than one or two. And the perplexity which will beset him from time to time, especially if there be different opinions in his family, in determining to which house to go, will more than counteract the pleasures of change; and his life will need more of forecasting.

And as to usefulness and popularity. Operations for the improvement of his neighbourhood will be interrupted or impaired by changing from house to house, and his own interest in them will be broken and imperfect. If on the other hand he leave any of his houses long unoccupied, the neighbourhood is deprived of the services which are due from a resident man of property. And moreover there is a sense of waste in seeing a house constantly and deliberately left unoccupied. It is something good, which is neither to be used and enjoyed, nor sold, nor lent, nor given—one of the most naked forms of superfluity.

If these views be just, it would follow that rich men should not wantonly embarrass themselves with many houses; and that those to whom they have accrued as unavoidable adjuncts of large estates, should, if possible

let them even for a nominal rent, or establish in them some junior members of their family.

There are objections also to an excessive extent of park, pleasure-ground, and demesne. For this tends to isolate the owner, and to place his neighbours and his duty to his neighbours at a distance from him. The physical element of distance will often make an important difference in a man's relations with his fellow-creatures. An extensive park introduces more or less of this element in the case of all a man's neighbours except his lodge-keepers; and a great extent of contiguous landed property added to this, introduces it in respect of all his neighbours except his tenants. This is no small evil. The tenantry and dependents of the Rich and Great are not the only persons with whom they should be in relations of good neighbourhood. It is perhaps equally important that they should be in such relations with the clergy and the smaller gentry around them. The attraction of cohesion by which society is to be kept together will not be brought about by an approximation of its opposite poles, but by an attraction of the nearest to the nearest throughout the social body. The distancing of country neighbours by large parks and estates is the more to be deprecated now, because railroads have recently operated in the same direction, by filling great country houses more than ever with metropolitan society.

In this case again, what is to be done when parks of this excessive extent have descended to the owners, con-

separated, perhaps, by hereditary and historical associations?—or when they could not be disparked or contracted in size without injury to the beauty of the country? Little, perhaps, to abate the specific evil; but much to compensate for it. Such parks, instead of being disparked, may be popularized. Access should never be refused to strangers; certain spaces in them should be assigned for the sports of the neighbouring peasantry; and periodical games and festivities should be celebrated in them for the benefit of the neighbours of all classes. The Aristocrat should ever bear in mind that his position has something in it of a public and national character, and that aristocratic possessions exist for popular purposes.

That portion of the expenditure of the Rich which is devoted to *luxuries of the table* may escape the observation of the Poor, and be therefore perhaps less unpopular than it ought to be. But of all excess in luxury, that of the table is the most offensive to the taste of those who would wish to see the higher classes distinguished by refinement at least, if not by simplicity of life. To do the Rich justice, the extent to which this species of expenditure is occasionally carried in these times is to be attributed less to sensuality than to ostentation; and it is to parade expenditure rather than to pamper the appetite, that some never-ending still-beginning dinners are served up. One proof out of many that costliness is chiefly aimed at, is to be found in the practice of pro-

viding esculents which are out of season. By a true and unsophisticated taste, what is out of season would be rejected as out of harmony with Nature ; and even without reference to any such principle of taste, a strawberry in March is at all events no better than a strawberry in July, though it is about a hundred times dearer ; and by our greedy anticipations and our jumbling together of the products of the seasons, we deprive ourselves of that change and variety which Nature, in her own orderly successions, would provide.

But if the motive for this sort of sumptuousness is display more than gluttony, it has, nevertheless, a pernicious tendency to promote gluttony. The sensuality is not so gross, certainly, as that of our drunken forefathers ; but having regard to the fact that dinners are late as well as long, and that in these times men's brains are taxed as well as their stomachs, the pressure on health is perhaps almost as severe. It has been observed by an eminent physician, that more pressure of that kind results from a life of steady high living than from one of occasional debauch. To long and late dinners, longer and later social entertainments of divers kinds succeed, till the sun rises upon a worn-out world. Everything in the nature of an amusement is protracted and strained, and there cannot be a greater mistake than this in the economy of enjoyment. The art of carrying off a pleasure is not to sit it out.

Perhaps the most serious of these festivities is the

breakfast or luncheon given by the parents of a bride immediately after the marriage ceremony, weighted as it commonly is with gratulatory speeches, whilst the parents and some others who approach the event in all its gravity are longing to be alone. The only orator I ever heard of who could triumph over the tediousness of such an entertainment was Lord Brougham. On one such occasion, he was to propose the health of the bridesmaids. He began,—“I know not whether it is for my youth, my beauty, or my innocence, that *I* have been selected——” and the speech which followed was worthy of the exordium.

Expense in *furniture* is perhaps as innocent as any expense can be which is not meritorious. Yet the internal garnishing and decorations of a house have nothing of the public and patriotic attributes which may be ascribed to the house itself, if it be designed as a work of architectural art, to adorn the land from age to age. The garnishings are for the more exclusive enjoyment of the owner and of those whom he may admit to his society; and they are fugitive and perishing. Therefore the very large proportionate expenditure of the Rich in these times on luxuries of furniture (designated, perhaps, by the sober and respectable name of “comforts”) is, to say the least, not to be commended. Moreover, many of these luxuries are in reality less conducive to comfort than what is cheap and common; and there are many more which impair the comfort through

the health. The air we breathe in our rooms would be lighter and fresher if there were no such things as carpets, window-curtains, bed-curtains, or valances; and the more full and heavy the draperies of a room, the less light and nimble is the air. And this effect is aggravated if the room be spacious. It is an error to suppose that rooms which are very large and lofty are more airy than others. They may be more airy than very small rooms, but they are less so (and this is well known to the asthmatic) than rooms of moderate dimensions, no corner of which is remote from the external air. Again, the love of displaying cost and magnificence in furniture is seldom accompanied, even amongst the richest of the rich, by an indifference as to whether it is spoilt or blemished: and yet solicitude on this point militates much against comfort. The sun is often shut out to save the colour of carpets and curtains, at times when Nature's sunshine might well be preferred to the best of upholstery. In short, there are a hundred ways in which luxury overreaches itself—a hundred in which penance enters into the worship of Mammon. Double windows make our rooms close; artificial waters poison our parks; high-bred and full-fed horses run away with us. And one truth the Rich would do well to keep in mind, for very comfort's sake—that comfort, like health, may be impaired by being too anxiously cared for.

Very different is the view to be taken of a Rich



man's indoor expenditure, when he is sparing of mirrors and jars and satin and velvet-pile, but lavish in objects which address themselves to the intellectual and imaginative tastes. In libraries, and works of art, pictures, sculpture, and engravings, a rich house cannot be too rich: and the house of an educated gentleman should no more be without the works of Michael Angelo or Raphael, in one form or another, than without the works of Milton and Shakspeare. And with regard to the picture galleries of the Rich, if unoccupied as apartments, should they not be always open to strangers? and if they be so occupied, should they not be open on certain days of every week? In the Palazzo Borghese at Rome, the rooms are not only always open, but they are provided with fires in cold weather, with seats, catalogues, and tubes to look through; so that the stranger feels himself to be a guest, and the guest of a gentleman, and is sensible, not only of the mere liberality of the owner, but of his attentions, courtesy, and good breeding:

As to the free access to libraries and the free loan of books, those who lend books no doubt run some risk of losing them. There is nothing which borrowers take so little care to return. Yet the value of a book is only realised in proportion as it is read. A book which is never read is of absolutely no value. Therefore, though many books are said to be lost by lending them, more are lost indeed by leaving them on the

shelf. And for the personal and particular loss to the owner, he loses more than he need, if he allows himself to be cheated of his liberality by the occasional thoughtlessness or thanklessness of those whom he gratifies. That old scholar and gentleman who, after his name written in Latin in the blank page of his books, wrote "*et amicorum ejus*," had a better possession than that of a library. But the Rich might guard their possessions in books by keeping a librarian; who would not cost so much (alas!) as an under butler or a groom of the chambers.

Amongst the most important of the relations in which the Rich and Great stand to their fellow-creatures, are their relations with their servants and their relations with their tradesmen.

Under the former head, there may be, perhaps, little to find fault with on the score of mere manner and outward demeanour. To use servants with harshness, or to be wanting in that species of consideration for them which consists in a certain mildness and amenity of manner, would ruffle and deform that smooth surface of things which it is agreeable to the taste of people in high life to see around them. Nor do they, perhaps, interfere with the comforts of their dependents by any undue or onerous exactions of service; for their establishments, being for the most part calculated for show, are more numerous than is required for use, and are therefore necessarily underworked, except, perhaps, in

the case of some poor drudges at the bottom, who slink up and down the back stairs unseen, and whose comfort, therefore, may not always engage the attention of a family of this class ; and even these will not be oppressed with their labours, unless when some impoverished people of fashion may find it necessary to dock the tails of their establishments in order to keep the more prominent portions entire.

Nevertheless the exceptions which may be taken against the life of the Rich and Great, as affecting the class of servants, are of a grave description. Late hours and habits of dissipation in the heads of a family make it almost impossible, especially in London, to exercise that wholesome household discipline which is requisite to secure the well-being of a servant. The usages of high life require that the servants of these people should be numerous ; their number unavoidably makes them idle ; idleness makes them debauched ; debauchery renders them often necessitous ; the affluence or the prodigality, the indolence or indulgence or indifference of their masters, affords them every facility for being dishonest ; and beginning with the more venial kinds of peculation, their conscience has an opportunity of making an easy descent through the various gradations of larceny, till the misdemeanant passes into the felon. In the mean time, the master, taking no blame to himself, nor considering that servants are, to no inconsiderable extent, what their masters make them,—that they are the creatures, at

least, of those circumstances which their masters throw around them, and *might* be moulded in the generality of cases, with a fair prospect of successful results, by the will and conduct of the master—passes over, with an indolent and epicurean censure, the lighter delinquencies which he may happen to detect, laughs perhaps at his own laxity, and, when at length alarmed, discharges the culprit without a character, and relieves himself, at the expense of he knows not whom, by making of a corrupted menial a desperate outcast. Hospitals, workhouses, and prisons swarm with the broken-down servants of the Rich; and the numbers of them that live to be old is said to be small relatively to other classes.

If it be urged that a man cannot be expected to change his mode of life for the sake of his servants, it must be answered that a mode of life which hazards the perdition of several of his fellow-creatures *ought* to be changed, and cannot be persevered in without blame. But if no such sacrifice were consented to, there remain means by which the evil might be mitigated.

A reduction in the number of servants would be one great means of promoting their well-being, and would involve no real sacrifice of comfort or even of luxury. The way to be well served is to keep few servants; and the keeping of superfluous servants is one of the many ways in which luxury is self-destroyed. Some little time ago, a lady who kept nine men-servants, after several vain attempts to get some coals for her fire, received from

her butler the explanation that none of the footmen would bring them up, because "the odd man" had forgotten to fill the scuttles; the odd man on such establishments being the drudge who is hired to do the work of the house. Thus it is that the multiplying of means will often defeat the end; work is seldom well done except by those who have enough to do; the idleness of one hour spreads itself rapidly over the rest of the day; and servants whose numbers are calculated for show become unavailable for use.

And again, even good servants conduce less to comfort on many occasions than is often supposed. Is it not frequently most for your comfort to serve yourself? How much easier to get yourself something, than to wait doing nothing till it is gotten for you. For impatience is prevented or abated by instrumental activity. "A watched pot is long in boiling," says the proverb: but go into the garden, gather some dry sticks, put them under the pot and blow the bellows, and you will not have felt it long. And a rich man, though aware of this, may not be able to help himself; for his household being formed upon the system of everything being done for him, the system becomes too strong for him, and he will not be permitted to *do*, though often compelled to wait. A widowed countess, a chief ornament of society in her day, being left with means which were small relatively to her rank, said, with a wisdom which was as much her own as the wit for which she was celebrated, that had it not been for

having to make both ends meet, she would not have known what to do with herself.

But in recommending that the numbers of servants should be so reduced as to give them full work, let this be understood to mean full work in working hours only, always taking care that there be fair time allowed for relaxation—time, in the case of those who will so use it, for reading and self-cultivation—and occasional time for the maintenance of those original domestic affections which, in the circumstances in which servants are placed, are so apt to be supplanted.

Another way in which the characters of servants in high life might be improved, would be by seeing their masters a little more scrupulous than some of the more fashionable amongst them are wont to be, in matters of truth and honesty. The adherence to honesty on the part of the masters might be exemplary; whereas their actual measure of honesty would perhaps be indicated with sufficient indulgence, if they were described (in the qualified language which Hamlet applies to himself) to be “indifferent honest.” Fashionable people are unscrupulous smugglers and purchasers of smuggled goods; and there is a currency of untruth in daily use amongst them for purposes of convenience, which proceeds to a much bolder extent than the form of well-understood falsehood by which the middle classes also, not perhaps without some occasional violation of their more tender consciences, excuse themselves from receiving a guest,

—bolder, not only as regards conventional phrases or professions which are accepted as meaning little more than the wish to be civil, but in respect also of words and ways in conversation which cannot by any "*lex et norma loquendi*" be translated into truth. I have known ladies who, without any motive of self-interest or real dishonesty of the mind, would lie in a light, pleasant, fearless, shameless way, which did not perhaps deceive those with whom they associated on familiar terms, inasmuch as they made no secret of being indifferent to truth, or indeed incapable of speaking it; and as Othello described himself to be "an honourable murderer," so these persons might have claimed to pass for honest liars. But the effect of such an example upon servants and others who are not skilled in taking distinctions, may have been much the same as if they had been cunningly and meanly mendacious, and cheats as well as liars.

But there is a worse evil in the manners of this country in regard to servants. It is rarely that they are considered in any other light than as mechanical instruments. It unfortunately belongs very little to our national character to feel what the common brotherhood of humanity requires of us in a relation with our fellow-creatures, which, however unequal, is so close as that of master and servant. We are not accustomed to be sensible that it is any part of our duty to enter into their feelings, to understand their dispositions, to acquire their confidence, to cultivate their sympathies

and our own upon some common ground which kindness might always discover, and to communicate with them habitually and unreservedly upon the topics which touch upon that ground. This deficiency would perhaps be more observable in the middle classes than in the highest—who seem generally to treat their inferiors with less reserve—but that in the latter the scale of establishment often removes the greater part of a man's servants from personal communication with him. Whether most prevalent in the fashionable or in the unfashionable classes, it is an evil which, in the growing disunion of the several grades of society, is now more than ever, and for more reasons than one, to be regretted.

What is wanted in these and some other relations of social life, is not friendship, perhaps, except in rare cases, but friendliness. A dog's love and a cat's love for man may be taken as typifying two kinds of human love. The dog's is individualized and concentrated; the cat's, when freed from fear, is genial, but diffusive. It is well when a man and a master can show himself to be capable of both.

The operation of the habits of the Rich and Great upon the class of *tradesmen* (and here, again, reference should be made more especially to those amongst the Rich and Great who form what are called the fashionable circles),—the operation of *their* habits of life upon tradesmen is perhaps a subject of greater moral and political importance than either party is aware of. Many people



of fashion are improvident; and even when not so in the long run, it seems to be the pride of many to be wantonly and perversely disorderly in the conduct of their pecuniary transactions. The result of this to themselves is not here the point in question,—although there are few things which in their effects are more certain to pervade the entire moral structure of the mind than habits of order and punctuality, especially in money matters. But what are the consequences to the tradesman with whom they deal? In proportion to the delays which the tradesman has had to contend with in procuring payment of the account, is the degree of laxity with which he may expect to be favoured in the examination of the items; especially if he have not omitted the usual means of corrupting the fidelity of servants. The accuracy of a bill of old date is not in general very ascertainable, and it would seem to be but an ungracious return for the accommodation which the creditor has afforded, if the debtor were to institute a very strict inquisition into the minutiae of his claims. These considerations concur with the habitual carelessness and indolence of people of fashion, as inducements to them to lead their tradesmen into temptation; and the result is such a demoralisation of the whole class, that it is rare indeed to meet with a tradesman accustomed to be employed by people of fashion, whose accounts, if closely scrutinised, would not betray a want of probity and fair dealing. The tradesman's want of

probity, again, will second the customer's want of care; and he will often, from dishonest motives, pertinaciously resist sending in a bill of short date; well knowing in what cases he can rely upon an ultimate payment in full, of an account "of which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary."

Moreover, people of fashion, though (with occasional coarse exceptions) very *civil-spoken* to their tradesmen, are accustomed to show in their conduct an utter disregard of what amount of trouble, inconvenience, and vexation of spirit they may occasion, either by irregularity in paying their bills, by requiring incessant attendance, or by a thousand fanciful humours, changes of purpose, and fastidious objections. Possibly, indeed, they are very little aware of the amount of it; so inconsiderate are they of everything which is not made to dance before their eyes, or to appeal to their sensibilities through their senses. Their tradesmen, and the workmen whom their tradesmen employ, are compelled, those by the competition they encounter in their business, these by the necessities of their situation in life, to submit to all the hardships and disquietudes which it is possible for fashionable caprice to impose, without showing any sign of disturbance or discontent; and because there is no outcry made, nor any pantomime exhibited, the fashionable customer may possibly conceive that he dispenses nothing but satisfaction among all with whom he deals. He rests assured,

moreover, that if he gives more trouble and inconvenience than others, *he pays for it*; the charges of the tradesmen of fashionable people being excessively high. Here, however, there is a distinction to be taken. There is no doubt that all the fantastical plagues and preposterous caprices which the spirit of fashion can engender, will be submitted to for money; but he who supposes that the outward submission will be accompanied by no inward feelings of resentment or contempt, either is wholly ignorant of human nature or grossly abuses his better judgment. Between customer and tradesman the balance is adjusted: between man and man there is an account which money will not settle. It is not indeed to be desired that any class of men should be possessed with such a spirit of venal servility as to be really insensible to the folly and oppression which enters into the exactions of fashionable caprice; or that, however compelled to be obsequious in manner, they should altogether lose their perception of what is due to common sense and common consideration for others. If such be the actual result in some instances, then is that consequence still more to be regretted than the other.

Moreover, if the master-tradesmen are willing to sell themselves into this slavery, the consequences to the much more numerous classes of those whom they employ remains to be taken into account. These, at least, are not paid for the hardships which ensue to them. Many is the milliner's apprentice whom every London season

sends to her grave because the dresses of fine ladies must be completed with a degree of celerity which nothing but night labour can accomplish. To the question "When must it be done?" "Immediately," is the readiest answer; though it is an answer which would perhaps be less inconsiderately and indiscriminately given, if it were known how many young creatures have come to a premature death in consequence of it, and how many hearts have been hardened by the oppression which it necessitates. Nor does the evil stop there. The dressmakers' apprentices in a great city have another alternative; and it is quite as much to escape from the intolerable labours which are imposed upon them in the London season as from any sexual frailty, that such multitudes of them adopt a vocation which affords some immediate relief, while it insures a doubly fatal termination of their career. The temptations by which these girls are beset might be deemed all-sufficient, without the compulsion by which they are thus, as it were, driven out into the streets. Upon them, "the fatal gift of beauty,"

Like to the asp at that Egyptian's breast,

has been more lavishly bestowed than upon any other class—perhaps not excepting even the aristocracy. They are many of them, probably, the spurious offspring of aristocratical fathers, and inherit beauty for the same reason as the legitimate daughters of aristocrats, because the wealth of these persons enables them to select the

most beautiful women either for wives or for concubines. Nor are they wanting in the grace and simplicity of manner which distinguish the aristocracy; whilst constant manual occupation produces in them more vacuity of mind than even that which dissipation causes in their sisters of the superior class. They are thus possessed of exterior attractions which will at any moment place them in a condition of comparative affluence, and keep them in it so long as those attractions last—a period beyond which their portion of thought and foresight can scarcely be expected to extend; whilst, on the other hand, they have before them a most bitter and arduous servitude, constant confinement, probably a severe task-mistress (whose mind is harassed and exacerbated by the exigent and thoughtless demands of her employers), and a destruction of health and bloom which the alternative course of life can scarcely make more certain or more speedy. Goethe was well aware how much light he threw upon the seduction of Margaret, when he made her let fall a hint of discontent at domestic hardships:—

“Our humble household is but small  
 And I, alas! must look to all.  
 We have no maid, and I may scarce avail  
 To wake so early and to sleep so late;  
 And then my mother is in each detail  
 So accurate.” \*

If people of fashion knew at what cost some of their imaginary wants are gratified, it is possible that they

\* ‘Faust,’ Lord F. L. Gower’s translation.

might be disposed to forego the gratification : it is possible, also, that they might not. On the one hand, they are not wanting in benevolence to the young and beautiful ; the juster charge against them being that their benevolence extends no farther. On the other hand, unless there be a visual perception of the youth and beauty which is to suffer, or in some way a distinct image of it presented, dissipation will not allow them a moment for the feelings which reflection might suggest :

Than vanity there's nothing harder hearted ;  
For thoughtless of all sufferings unseen,  
Of all save those which touch upon the round  
Of the day's palpable doings, the vain man,  
And oftener still the volatile woman vain,  
Is busiest at heart with restless cares,  
Poor pains and paltry joys, that make within  
Petty yet turbulent vicissitude.\*

If it be against people of fashion mainly that these charges lie, there is another and a heavier charge, which lies against the aristocratic classes generally ; and not against them only, but also against no inconsiderable portion of the classes next below them. Many, if not most, of the mothers of these classes are in the habit of refusing to suckle their children, even when perfectly able

\* Since this was written (in 1832) much has been done by legislation to relieve milliners' apprentices and others from the pressure of work by night. The value of all such legislation depends, of course, upon the executory provisions. Generally speaking, if the law invests some one with a pecuniary interest in its execution, it takes effect. If not, not.

to do so, and of bribing the mothers of the poor to abandon their duty to their own infants, in order to perform the function thus devolved. A denunciation of this practice was delivered some years ago by an eminent person in the House of Lords, which it were well if he would repeat every session till the country shall be cleansed from so foul an offence. It may be stated, on the highest medical authority, that out of every five infants of wet-nurses thus deserted, four perish. They are delivered over to women who take no interest in them, to be brought up by hand—a species of nurture peculiarly requiring a mother's care and the aids and appliances of wealth ; they die miserably of starvation or neglect, and their death is to be laid at the door, not so much of their own mothers whose poverty consents, as of those who corrupt the maternal instincts of the poor, and betray them into a cruelty which nothing but ignorance and poverty can palliate. The injunction “Thou shalt not seethe the kid in its mother's milk,” pointed to a lesser sin than this.

Erasmus held her to be scarcely half a mother who refused to suckle the child that was born to her. He accounted the offence against nature as little less than that of the desertion and exposure of an infant ; and he asks her, when the child began to speak, with what face could she hear him call *her* mother, who had neglected to perform for him that most maternal office. In our times the lady's child may not suffer, but the child of the nurse is

much more certainly sacrificed ; and thus it is that one unnatural mother makes another that is more unnatural still.\*

Listen to Jeremiah : “ Even the sea-monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones : the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.”†

But besides those who are able, but not willing, to suckle their infants, there are many who profess to be willing, but not able. Do they diligently try ? or do they satisfy their consciences with the easy assurances of nurses, attendants, or friends, who are willing to say what they desire to hear ? If they *be* unable, does not their inability grow out of a luxurious and unwholesome mode of life, which there is no necessity that they should adopt ? and why should the children of the Poor be defrauded of their mother’s milk, to supply deficiencies wilfully created by the indolence and luxury of the Rich ? Occasional cases there are, no doubt, in which the inability to suckle is

\* “ Alioqui cum infans jam fari meditabitur, ac blandâ balbutie te mammam vocabit, quâ fronte hoc audies ab eo, cui mammam negâris, et ad conductitiam mammam relegâris, perinde quasi capræ aut ovi subjectisses ? Ubi jam erit fandi potens, quid si te pro matre vocet semi-matrem ? Virgam expedies, opinor. Atqui vix semi-mater est, quæ recusat alere, quod peperit . . . Et in tales fœminas mihi competere Græcorum videtur etymologia, qui μήτηρ dici putant à μή τηρεῖν, hoc est, à non servando. Nam prorsus conductitiam nutricem infantulo adhuc à matre tepenti adsciscere, genus est expositionis.”—Erasmî, ‘ Colloq. Puerpera.’

† Lamentations iv. 3.



both real and inevitable; and if these cases cannot be met by the employment of such wet-nurses as have already lost their children through natural causes, the wet-nurse should bring her own child with her; and with the sufficient supervision which wealth and maternal vigilance might supply on the part of the rich mother, to guard against maternal partiality on the part of the wet-nurse, a fair and equal share of natural nurture should be secured to the one child and the other; what is wanting to each being made up by the best artificial substitute.

Amongst the incidental evils of the system of wet-nursing, one is that unmarried mothers are most frequently employed, and not unfrequently preferred, for this purpose; and being pampered as well as highly paid, a countenance and encouragement is afforded to vice, and women of tainted character are mixed up with the rich man's household. On the other hand, if the wet-nurse be married, it is almost invariably (and for physical reasons) made a condition that during the period for which she is hired she shall not see her husband; and he and her elder children are exposed to the temptations and evils consequent on such a disruption of domestic ties.

The charge of deserting the mother's function in the suckling of infants lies, as has been said, against other classes, as well as against the Rich and Great; but the practice is more universal amongst the Rich and Great; it is politically more important that they should rescue themselves from the reproach of it; their example is of

more account ; nor is there any person in the realm, however high in station, who, on the very ground of that rank and pre-eminence, should not be the foremost to withstand this crying corruption of the humanities of domestic life.

When such accusations as these are brought against the wealthier classes, it ought by no means to be forgotten that such things are exceptional, not characteristic ; and that there is amongst those classes in these times an activity in charitable works, and a bounty and beneficence, such as probably has never been witnessed in the world before. All classes have been rapidly improving in the last five and twenty years. Increase of crime does not prove the contrary, even of the lowest class ; it only proves an increased activity of the bad elements as well as of the good ; it may show that bad men are worse—it does not show that fewer men are not bad, or that good men are not far more than proportionately better. But if other classes have improved (the commercial least, perhaps, owing to over-stimulated love of gain), there can be little question that the highest classes have stepped the farthest in advance. Ask our bishops who are the best of the clergy, and will they not answer, the middle-aged and the young, rather than the old or the elderly ? Amongst the country gentlemen not advanced in years, how few are there now who think that they have nothing else to do in life but to make the most of their property and their game. The charity of the Rich is often, indeed,

misdirected and mischievous ; their liberality sometimes runs ahead of their personal activity as almoners ; their judgment still more often halts behind their personal activity. But as long as it is the spirit of love and duty which is active in them, they must be doing good, if not to others, at least to themselves ; and in spite of all the errors of injudicious zeal, they will do well upon the whole, and they will be continually learning to do better.

The system of visiting the Poor at their houses has been much found fault with for its obtrusiveness. It is very certain that the somewhat unsocial character and manners of the English, both rich and poor, does put difficulties in the way of it. It is not all sorts of ladies and gentlemen who can carry it out with success ; and now that so much is done by organisation and the division of labour, it would seem desirable that charitable persons should consider what are their personal aptitudes, and employ themselves accordingly in this or other departments of charitable ministration. Even in that of visiting, there are many varieties. Where there is grievous sickness or other emergency, zeal and care will compensate for dryness of manner. In the more ordinary intercourse of good offices, it is very important to be *pleasant* to the Poor : for services alone will not cultivate their affections ; and those who would visit them for every-day purposes of charity, should be by their nature and temperament genial, cordial, and firm.

But charity in detail to the lower orders will afford no

sufficient vent for what should be considered the due and adequate bounty of the Rich and Great—not even though it be distributed through numerous and well-chosen almoners. The Poor of the lower orders are not the only Poor; they are not always the Poor who are most to be pitied for their poverty; and it devolves upon the Rich and Great to take charge of the many cases of penury in the classes more proximate to their own, which they have the means of duly sifting and appreciating. To them also belong works of munificence—the providing and endowing of churches, schools, hospitals; and to these let them add libraries, picture-galleries, public gardens, and play-grounds, for the Poor. In order that the Poor may feel that the Rich are in sympathy with them, the Rich must take a pleasure in their pleasures, as well as pity them in their distress. When the Rich give of their abundance to those who want bread, it may be supposed to be done for very shame or under the constraint of common humanity. When they take order for the instruction and discipline of the Poor, they are conferring a species of benefit, for which, however essential, they must not expect a return in gratitude or affection. But if they bear in mind that amusement is in truth a necessary of life, that human nature cannot dispense with it, and that by the nature of men's amusements their moral characters are in a great measure determined, they will be led so to deal with the Poor as to make it manifest to them that they like to see them happy, and they will be beloved accordingly.

But if the amusements of men have so much to do in forming them, it may be well to consider what are the amusements of the Rich and Great themselves. Into these it will be found that the ambitious activity of the times has made its way. It is no longer enough for the Rich and Great to be *passively* entertained; to look on and admire does not content them; and hence the theatre has fallen out of favour. They must be where they are themselves in part performers, or they must find their amusement in the prosecution of some object and end. Society, therefore, becomes their theatre; and to the not inconsiderable number of them who constitute what are called the "fashionable circles," a particular position and reputation in society becomes an object, in the pursuit of which they find their amusement.

The effect of this upon the character is not favourable. It used to be supposed that whatsoever of effort and uneasy pretension might prevail elsewhere, in the highest walk of society, amongst those whose born rank and worldly consideration was unquestionable, where nothing further was to be attained and everything possessed was secure, the charm of confidence and quiescence would be found at last. But when into this circle, as into others, the pursuit of a personal object is introduced; into this, as into others, cares and solitudes will accompany it; and the object of success in a social career has little in it that is elevating or can help much to modify the selfishness of human

nature. Into circles, therefore, where social reputation is aimed at, rather than merely the giving and receiving of pleasure, the feelings connected with the lower kinds of rivalry and competition must be expected to intrude, disturbing, in some more or less degree, the ease and grace of aristocratic life. And accordingly fashionable society, whatever may be its charms and brilliancy, when compared with other aristocratic society is perhaps characterised by some inferiority of tone, even in its higher walks ; and in its lower by a tone which, without any desire to use hard words, can hardly be called anything else than vulgar.

It may, no doubt, be said for these circles that talents are appreciated in them ; and if talents were the one thing needful in this world, on that they might take their stand. But it is not by the possession and cultivation of talents, but by the best use and direction of them, that the aristocracy of this country is to be sustained in public estimation. Knowledge and ability which are merely made subservient to conversational effects, will do nothing for the aristocracy. We may well allow that in the casual intercourse of life, or as common acquaintances, people of fashion, in spite of occasional inferiorities and vulgarities, are the most agreeable people that are to be met with. How should it be otherwise ? That persons who have spent their lives in cultivating the arts of society should have acquired no peculiar dexterity in the exercise of them, would be as strange as that one who

had spent his life as a hackney coachman, should not know his way through the streets. Those who have been trained in the habits of society from their childhood, will generally be free from timidity, which is the most ordinary source of affectation. By those, who are free from timidity, unaffected, and possessed of an average share of intelligence, address in conversation is easily to be attained with much less practice than the habits of fashionable life afford. It is an art which, like that of the singer, the dancer, and the actor, is almost sure to be acquired, up to a certain mark, by practising with those who understand it.

At the same time, even if entertainment were the only thing to be sought, a man of sense who should seek it in this playground of conversation, would probably fall upon much that would be offensive to his taste, and not a little to which he would refuse the name of good breeding. He would find, perhaps, that sharpness and repartee were in general aimed at more than enough; and that some persons possessed of a small sort of talent and but meagrely provided with subject-matter of discourse, cultivate habitually a spirit of sarcasm and disparagement to which they do not very well understand how to give a proper direction. Quickness has justly been observed by Mr. Landor to be amongst the least of the mind's properties: "I would persuade you," says that very brilliant and remarkable writer, "that banter, pun, and quibble are the properties of light men and shallow capacities;

that genuine humour and true wit require a sound and capacious mind, which is always a grave one."\*

Conversation is, in truth, an exercise very dangerous to the understanding when practised in any large measure as an art or an amusement. To be ready to speak before he has time to think ; to say something apt and specious,—something which he may very well be *supposed* to think when he has nothing to say that he really does think ; to say what is consistent with what he has said before ; to touch topics lightly and let them go ;—these are the arts of a conversationist : of which perhaps the last is the worst, because it panders to all the others. Nothing is searched out by conversation of this kind,—nothing is heartily believed, whether by those who say it or by those who hear it. It may be easy, graceful, clever, and sparkling, and bits of knowledge may be plentifully tossed to and fro in it ; but it will be vain and unprofitable : it may cultivate a certain micacious, sandy surface of the mind, but all that lies below will be unmoved and unsunned. To say that it is vain and unprofitable is, indeed, to say too little ; for the habit of thinking with a view to conversational effects, will inevitably corrupt the understanding, which will never again be sound or sincere.

The dealings of these people with literature and art, like their dealings with society, have some tincture of personal ambition. Books are not read, pictures seen,

\* Landor's 'Imaginary Conversations,' 1st Series, vol. ii., p. 404, 2nd edition.



or music listened to, merely for the delight to be found in them or the private improvement of the mind. The Rich and Great make efforts of their own in these lines, and become candidates for public applause. This is by no means to be deprecated when the efforts made are such as to command respect as well as notice and attention. Let the works produced be admirable for their genius, or respectable for the labour and perseverance bestowed upon them or the knowledge and capacity evinced by them, and nothing can be more commendable in the Rich and Great than to produce them,—nothing more calculated to strengthen the hold of these classes upon the classes below. But the opposite consequence follows when the Rich and Great are paraded and panegyrised by a particular department of the periodical press as the authors of light and frivolous tales ; or when they are found exhibiting their indifferent accomplishments in collections of ephemeral verses or in engravings from their drawings, not unfrequently sold at bazaars on those pretexts of charity which stand so much in need of a charitable construction. Imperfect efforts in literature and art make a refined and innocent amusement for the Rich and Great, and as far as they go are cultivating : publication needs to be vindicated on other grounds.

But let amusements be as innocent as they may, and let society be as free as it may from ambition and envy, still, if the life be a life of society and a life of amusement, instead of a life of serious avocations diversified by

amusement and society, it will hardly either attain to happiness or inspire respect. And the more it is attempted to make society a pure concentration of charms and delights, the more flat will be the failure. Let us resolve that our society shall consist of none but the gay, the brilliant, and the beautiful,—that is, that we will exclude from it all attentions towards the aged, all forbearance towards the dull, all kindness towards the ungraceful and unattractive,—and we shall find that when our social duties and our social enjoyments have been thus sedulously set apart, we have let down a sieve into the well instead of a bucket. What is meant to be an unmixed pleasure will not long be available as a pleasure at all. “On n’aime guère d’être empoisonné même avec esprit de rose.”\* Nor is it in our nature to be durably very well satisfied with an end which does not come to us in the disguise either of a means or of a duty. Duty being proscribed, the want of an aim will be felt in the midst of all the enjoyments that the choicest society can afford, and what was entered upon as an innocent amusement will lose, in no long time, first its power to amuse, and next its innocence. The want of an object will be supplied, either by aiming at the advancement of this person or the depreciation of that—in which case the pursuit of social pleasure will degenerate into the indulgence of a vulgar pride and envy—or (which is worse and more likely) by merging the social pursuit in the vortex of some individual passion.

\* Pere Garasse.

It is upon the blank weariness of an objectless life that these amorous seizures are most apt to supervene; and the seat which pleasure has usurped from duty will be easily abdicated in favour of passion and guilt. Such is the ancient and modern history of what is called a life of pleasure, with some variations of the particulars from century to century, but with little difference in the result. When Berkeley cast up, under distinct articles of credit and debt, the account of pleasure and pain of a fine lady and a fashionable gentleman of the last century, he mentions some items which may now be omitted, but he also supposed the omission of some which are now to be placed in the head and front of the balance-sheet:—

“We will set down,” he says, “in the life of your fine lady, rich clothes, dice, cordials, scandal, late hours, against vapours, distaste, remorse, losses at play, and the terrible distress of ill-spent age increasing every day: Suppose no cruel accident of jealousy—no madness or infamy of love; yet at the foot of the account you shall find that empty, giddy, gaudy, fluttering thing, not half so happy as a butterfly or a grasshopper on a summer’s day. And for a rake, or man of pleasure, the reckoning will be much the same, if you place listlessness, ignorance, rottenness, loathing, craving, quarrelling, and such qualities or accomplishments over against his little circle of fleeting amusements.”\*

Drinking is not now one of the vices of men of

\* Alciphron, Dial. 2.

fashion, nor amongst women is gaming so prevalent as it once was; and as to quarrelling, there has been a marked improvement in the second quarter of this century;—an improvement which has been partly the cause, and partly perhaps the consequence, of dispensing with the duel. As society advances in the cultivation of higher attributes, physical courage, which is a rather ordinary attribute of Englishmen, and perhaps of mankind generally, takes a humbler place amongst the objects of admiration, and therefore amongst those of vanity and display. Moral and intellectual qualities are relatively more valued, and it is in the nature of man that they should stand in some sort of antagonism to mere animal courage, or what is called “pluck.” For the intellectual and especially the intellectually imaginative mind is commonly connected with a tender nervous organization, and there is no stupidity like the stupidity of “pluck.” In a low condition of humanity a low value is set upon life, and it is risked with a reckless bravery. In a high condition of humanity a high value is set upon life, and men are willing to risk it because it is their duty, and because other objects are valued more highly still. By eliminating the duel, the vanity of human nature became less powerful to promote discord, and society has become less quarrelsome than it was in Berkeley’s century and in one generation of our own. And the language it permits itself to employ has not become, as might be supposed, more unguarded because there is less to beware of, but quite the

contrary. When we read the debates in the House of Commons of last century, we find such epithets and such adjectives in common use as would make our present Speaker's hair stand on end in spite of his wig. A certain person coming one day out of the Athenæum Club, overheard the reply of a too importunate beggar, who swept the crossing in Pall Mall, to a too impatient gentleman of whom he begged: "Go along, you nasty dirty rascal," said the gentleman; "Come, sir, none of your Parliamentary language," replied the beggar. And had it been in the last century, the beggar's retort would have been aptly expressed.

But are we to "suppose" of our own times, as Berkeley does of his (no doubt in a somewhat ambiguous sense), that there is "no madness or infamy of love"? That cannot indeed be supposed of any society in any times; but what is most offensive in our times and in fashionable society is, that there is a *discriminating* laxity. It is impossible to deny that the frailties of persons who, by means of their wealth, can surround themselves with a surpassing degree of splendour, meet with an extraordinary quantum of indulgence. Absolutions and dispensations of a certain kind are bought and sold; and of two women taken in adultery, the one of whom riots in a profusion of riches and is lavish of costly entertainments, whilst the other enjoys no more than an ordinary share of affluence, fashionable infallibility will issue, to the one its indult and to the other its anathema. Many who

contemplate at a safe distance the ways of the great world, will feel the injustice and baseness of the *distinction*, even more sensibly than the immorality, pernicious though it be, of the looser proceeding. An indiscriminate indulgence might pass for an amiable weakness or an excess of charity. But if it be through a charitable spirit that the great and sumptuous sinners are admitted into society, what shall we call that spirit by which the more obscure or indigent are expelled? Society acts either in the one case with the cruelty of a tyrant or in the other with the vileness of a parasite. It is true that if the paramount interests of morality did not require that the rule of expulsion should be universal, there are some unfortunate and penitent creatures who might be very fit objects for a charitable exception; but these are precisely they who would have no desire to profit by it: on them society has no longer any boon to bestow; for they know that their place is in retirement and that it is there they must seek their consolation and set up their rest. It is not by the humble, the pardonable, and the contrite, that admittance or restoration to society is sought, after one of these forfeitures; it is only by the callous, the daring, and obtrusive—and it is they who succeed.

Such are the unfavourable features of society amongst the Rich and Great; and were they to pervade aristocratic life at large, instead of being, as they are, incidental merely to this set or that circle, it would not be easy for the aristocracy to hold their ground in the country. The

sets and circles in question are, no doubt, from political and domestic connection, necessarily mixed up with better aristocratic society; and as the show and pretension which belongs to them obtrudes them more upon the world, they bring upon that better aristocratic society a measure of disgrace which is far beyond its deserts. For let us clear away this clever, showy, frivolous outside of the aristocracy, and there will be found beneath it a substance as different from what might be expected as the old oak which is sometimes discovered beneath a coat of whitewash. And not only do the more favourable features prevail with the larger portion of the aristocracy, but they prevail most with the younger portion, and are therefore more full of hope and promise. The circle of the idle and the dissolute is a narrowing circle. The circle of the grave and religious, the active and instructed, is a widening circle. That one improvement which is the source of all others—improvement in education—is reaching the higher classes at last, though by slow degrees and with difficulty; for pedantic prejudice is of all prejudice the most obstinate. The improvement at present tends perhaps more to ambition and attainment than to the elevation of the mind; but more than one example has shown that this is not an inevitable inferiority of schools and colleges; and a higher order of schoolmasters will, in time, effect by personal influence what mere tuition is utterly inadequate to accomplish.

The better training of our aristocratic youth at

schools and colleges is followed by better conditions of life in its outset and progress. It is expected of almost every young man that he should embark in some career, if not professional, then political; and a political career, even to those who do not hold office, is a much more serious thing than it used to be. The days of *dilettante* politicians are well-nigh past. A member of Parliament can no longer subsist upon a stock of great principles and an occasional fine speech. Public business consists now of dry detail in enormous masses; and he who is called upon to deal with it, is constrained to take upon himself some moderate share, at least, of the infinite drudgery by which the masses are broken down. This is a wholesome element in the lives of our aristocratic youth; and if they shall aspire to a prominent position in political life, they must undergo an amount of labour in itself enough to entitle to respect the man who, not being in want of bread, shall submit to it from an impulse of no unworthy ambition.

Besides the discipline of hard labour, there is another to which a man in a prominent public station must submit himself,—the discipline of obloquy and public reproach. There is no discipline by which strength is more tried, none by which it is more cultivated and confirmed, if the trial be borne with temper, fortitude, and self-reliance, and with a disregard of all ends which are not public as well as personal. It is in the strength of silence that such trials are often best encountered: for



silence has a marvellous force and efficacy in rebutting slanders; being felt to be, what it almost always is amongst those who hold a conspicuous position, the attribute of a clear conscience and of self-respect. Above all, let persons in a high station beware of defending themselves in the press, or responding to the challenges of those who have the command of it. They will lose more in pleading to that jurisdiction, than they could possibly gain by a favourable issue, even if a favourable issue were to be expected. But there is no such thing as a favourable issue in such an encounter. A controversy *with* the press *in* the press, is the controversy of a fly with a spider.

The good repute of the Rich and Great, as of others, is endangered much more by not attending to just reproaches, than by disregarding those which are unjust. Not, therefore, by descending into the arena and hustling those by whom they are hustled—not by writing and reclaiming when babblers and scribblers assail them, let the aristocracy approve themselves—not by jealous assertions or angry appeals, but by silence and works. Let those of them who regard themselves as elected and ordained to act from a vantage-ground for the good of their country and their kind, demean themselves accordingly, using those transmitted weapons which are tempered by time, though the handling of them be by circumstance,—or, far better, those which make no account of time, but are sent with their

perennial aptitudes direct from the armoury above—the breast-plate of righteousness, the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith. By charity, by munificence, by laborious usefulness, by a studious and not merely Epicurean cultivation of literature and the arts, by that dignity which sees not itself; by a maintenance of their Order as a national institution, for patriotic purposes, not for individual aggrandisement; and, lastly, by standing apart, both in social life and in political, from that portion of their Order, however distinguished by rank or wealth or useless and pernicious talents, whose follies or vices, or selfishness or pride, tend to bring the whole into contempt;—by holding on in this high and constant course, the aristocracy of this intellectual country, which was once, and after a sleepy century is now again, a pre-eminently intellectual aristocracy, will fulfil its appointed purposes, giving a support, not to be dispensed with, to that social fabric of which it may well be accounted the key-stone; and sustaining, peradventure, for so long as the good of mankind may require it to be sustained, that strength by which England is enabled at this instant time\* to look out from the shelter which the winds and waves of a thousand years have scooped out for her, and see in safety the disastrous wrecks strewn about on every side, through the pride of aristocracies in times past and the present madness of the nations.

\* 1849.

THE STATESMAN.

“ Interest enim imprimis honoris literarum, ut homines isti pragmatici sciant eruditionem haudquaquam aviculæ, qualis est alauda, similem esse, quæ in sublime ferri, et cantillando se oblectari solet, at nihil aliud: quinimo ex accipitris potius genere esse, ut qui in alto volare, ac subinde, cum visum fuerit, descendere et prædam rapere novit.”—*De Augustis*, lib. viii.

TO

JAMES STEPHEN,

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

AS TO THE MAN WITHIN THE AUTHOR'S KNOWLEDGE

IN WHOM THE ACTIVE AND CONTEMPLATIVE

FACULTIES MOST STRONGLY MEET,

ARE INSCRIBED

THESE DISQUISITIONS

CONCERNING THE ATTRIBUTES OF

A STATESMAN.

*London, 1836.*



## PREFACE.



AMONGST the writers on Government whose works my limited opportunities of study have enabled me to examine, I have not met with any who have treated systematically of *Administrative* Government as it ought to be exercised in a free State. Authors in abundance, from Aristotle to Hobbes, have written out theories of civil society; and it is not to be questioned that their writings must have had momentous political consequences, if it were only through the exercise and direction which they gave to men's thoughts. But these consequences, whatever they may have been, were so indirectly brought about, that he who would examine wherein they have been injurious and wherein beneficial, seems to lose himself amidst the general materials and results of the intellectual universe. And whilst the structure of communities and the nature of political powers and institu-

tions were thus extensively investigated, the art of *exercising* political functions, which might seem to be no unimportant part of political science, has occupied hardly any place in the speculations of its professors.

It is not necessary, I admit, that the structural and functional divisions of the science should be treated by the same writers and in the same works ; and perhaps it is not to be expected that a concurrence of competency to treat both should often take place in one individual. Yet I cannot but think that the one branch of knowledge would have been carried farther, if some portion of the attention of its teachers had been spared to the other. Some of the most eminent of them, as it appears to me (regarding them not certainly without high respect for their intellectual endowments), have wanted that habitual reference to the *end* in their political problems, which an attention to ministerial operations would naturally have induced ; and by aiming too much at scientific analysis in matters of government, have removed the mind of their disciples back from the field of practical wisdom, and rather tend to involve it in definitions and distinctions, than to clear it from any difficulties, or to solve those questions concerning things in combined existence, which have so little to do with the primary origination of things. I would take this exception to them even as



regards their investigations into the nature of political rights and of bodies politic; whereinto, as it appears to me, they have carried the common error of their minds,—that, namely, of exalting primary elements into considerations of primary importance. Matters of modification, things incidental or collateral, have so much more considerable a part in every polity than things essential, that to resolve it into its elements is not so great a help as these writers seem to suppose, towards the understanding of it as it acts and exists, or the discovery of its destiny. So of the essential passions of human nature, which, considered in their relations with civil institutions, are treated of in the same manner by the authors I speak of,—exercising, so far as their political disquisitions are concerned, rather their reasoning than their judging faculties; perhaps I might even venture to say of some of them, exercising the former faculties almost to the exclusion of the latter. Thus it is that the course of things, except in so far as it is reached by remote and circuitous influences, has commonly passed these philosophers on the right hand and on the left.

Of a very different kind of doctors in this art are the writers upon political affairs who have been practised in them. “*Ipsos tamen politicos multo felicius de rebus politicis scripsisse, quam philosophos, dubitari non*

potest," is the admission of Spinoza ; who saw clearly, though he was not, I think, very successful in avoiding, the dangers of treating politics metaphysically. Bacon, Machiavelli, and Burke are signal illustrations of the truth of Spinoza's remark. These sages did not attempt to navigate the river at its source : they saw the wisdom of having nothing more than a *reference*, pervasive, certainly, but not binding, to elemental philosophy in political affairs ; they brought to the consideration of them minds which, at the same time that they were braced by scientific discipline, were capable of being loosened sufficiently for the grasping of practical results ; and they felt themselves free to come to clear conclusions on matters which refuse demonstration.

But although the works of these three politicians, to whose names that of Tacitus is, as far as I know, the only one which could be properly associated, contain numerous civil precepts applicable to the administration as well as to the constitution of governments, they leave still unattempted the formation of any coherent body of administrative doctrine. Moreover, the maxims of the elder of them at least are suggested by the circumstances of States nearly or wholly despotic, or of Oligarchies, and by a range of political business far less complex and multifarious than the condition of society

in these times presents. And even as to what was applicable in the seventeenth century, the greatest of these authorities, in the book (the 8th of the "De Augustis") which brought the most copious increase that has ever been made to this kind of knowledge, sets down at the same time a large note of deficiency.

I should be much indeed misunderstood, if, in pointing to this want in our literature, I were supposed to advance, on the part of the volume thus introduced, the slightest pretension to supply it. Amongst the dreams of juvenile presumption, it had, I acknowledge, at one time entered into my fancy, that if life should be long continued to me and leisure should by any happy accident accrue upon it, I might, in the course of years, undertake such an enterprise. When this vision lost some of its original brightness, I still conceived that I might be enabled to blot from Lord Bacon's note of "Deficients" so much of the doctrine "De Negotiis" as belongs to the division which he has entitled "De occasionibus sparsis." But the colours of this exhalation also faded in due season; and when the scheme came to be chilled and condensed, the contents of the following volume were the only result that, for the present at least, I could hope to realise. Concerning the nature of these contents I have little to add to the

tabular enumeration prefixed to the volume, except that the topics which I have treated are such as experience, rather than inventive meditation, has suggested to me. The engagements which have deprived me of literary leisure and a knowledge of books, have, on the other hand, afforded me an extensive and diversified conversancy with business ; and I hope, therefore, that I may claim from my readers some indulgence for the little learning and for the desultoriness of these disquisitions, in consideration of the value which they may be disposed to attach to comments derived from practical observation.

*London, May, 1836.*

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# THE STATESMAN.



## CHAPTER I.

### CONCERNING THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH DESTINED FOR A CIVIL CAREER.

“NEITHER is it to be passed over in silence, that this dedicating of colleges and societies only to the use of professory learning hath not only been an enemy to the growth of sciences, but hath redounded likewise to the prejudice of states and governments : for hence it commonly falls out that princes, when they would make choice of ministers fit for the affairs of state, finde about them such a marveilous solitude of able men ; because there is no education collegiate designed to this end, where such as are framed and fitted by nature thereto, might give themselves chiefly to histories, modern languages, books and discourses of policy, that so they might come more able and better furnished to service of state.”—‘*Advancement of Learning,*’ book i. For the tuition thus wanting in collegiate establishments (a defect which Lord Bacon’s

notice has done nothing to cure), some succedaneum might be found in the due direction of private education to this end, by parents who design their sons for political life. At the age of sixteen, or thereabouts, the general education of the boy should be for the most part completed; and whether or not it be completed, at that age or but little later the specific should begin.

History, which is first in Lord Bacon's enumeration, is still considered to be the fittest study for statesmen. An extensive knowledge of history will doubtless be of great advantage if other knowledge be not precluded by it; but, as regards the public business of these times, it may be questioned whether this branch be not disproportionately esteemed in comparison with others. A knowledge of particular epochs, connected with peculiarity and revolution in the state of societies, and especially with modern revolutions, is chiefly valuable and indispensable. And all histories in which the lives and actions of men are represented in minute detail will furnish knowledge of human nature and food for reflection. But *summary* histories, such as those of Hume and Gibbon, though not to be altogether dispensed with, should hardly be read in abundance. They are useful as giving a frame-work of general knowledge into which particular knowledge may be fitted. But as to other uses, they commonly do but charge the memory with a sequence of events, leaving no lively impressions or portraitures, and consequently teaching little. They treat, in ninety-

nine pages out of a hundred, of what is common, not distinctive—common to all mankind, or to large classes—common to all ages, or at least to long tracts of time ; and we gather little more from the names and events of five centuries than what was conveyed to us by those of one. For it is from individuals that we learn ; and even the political character of an age will be best taught when it is thrown into the life and character of an individual. Thus, for example, Lord Strafford's despatches and the Clarendon State-papers will be studied with more profit to a statesman than any history of the reign of Charles I. ; and it is the materials for histories, rather than histories themselves, which, being judiciously selected, should be presented to the perusal of the pupil.

But, of course, some measure of general and superficial knowledge—superficial because general—should be acquired, if it were only to enable the statesman to escape the charge of general ignorance which men, perhaps more generally ignorant themselves, but armed with a specific knowledge, may otherwise be led to advance. Granville Sharpe, the colleague of Wilberforce and Stephen\* in their warfare against slavery, brought a charge of this kind against Fox. He was a man of infinite simplicity and always full of some enthusiastic view or pursuit. At a time when he was in communication with Fox (then in office) about the slave-trade, he

\* The father of Sir James and grandfather of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen.

was big with the idea that he had discovered in Buonaparte the right interpretation of the prophecy of the Little Horn in Daniel. One day he was coming away from an interview with Fox, to whom he had poured forth his proofs, and meeting Stephen's son (from whom I heard the story), he expressed his astonishment at the ignorance of those by whom the affairs of the country are carried on: "Would you believe it, sir! He did not so much as *know* what the Little Horn *was!*"

There are, however, severer studies than the historical, or even the Biblical, which are, to say the least, as necessary, and which are more likely to be neglected. A general knowledge of the laws of the land and of international law, of foreign systems of jurisprudence, and especially a knowledge of the prominent defects of the system at home, should be diligently inculcated; and political economy should be taught with equal care, not less for the indispensable knowledge which it conveys than as a wholesome exercise for the reasoning faculty—employed in this science less loosely than in ethics or history, less abstractedly than in mathematics.

In the further progress of the pupil, it will be well that he should be brought more closely to matters of business, and taught the application of his knowledge. With this view, public documents, which have been printed for Parliament or otherwise, may be made use of. Let a question be selected which has been inquired into by a committee of either House of Parliament; let the

minutes of evidence taken before the committee be laid before the pupil without their report; and let him be required to report upon that evidence himself, exhibiting—1st. The material facts of the case as drawn from the evidence; 2nd. The various views and opinions which have been or might be adopted upon the matter; 3rd. The conclusions of his own judgment, with his reasons; 4th. If he concludes for legislation, a draft of the law by which he would execute his purposes; 5th. A draft of the speech with which he would introduce his proposed law to the notice of the legislature. If the inquiry relate to executive matters rather than legislative, as in the case of any investigation made into the propriety of the dismissal of a public servant, his task will be to state the facts, to point out circumstances of extenuation or aggravation, and to deliver his opinion of the conduct and deserts of all parties concerned.

Concurrently with these exercises, the pupil should be encouraged to frequent juvenile debating societies. If the practice of public speaking be not begun in youth, it will be a matter of serious difficulty afterwards; and failure will then be more disheartening, humiliating, and hurtful. Moreover, it may be observed that they who have to surmount the nervous embarrassments by which a novice in public speaking is beset, commonly do so by lashing themselves into an excess of fervour and vehemence: vehemence is almost always mistaken for irascibility; and thus the novice, whilst disguising trepi-

dation, is supposed to be betraying ill temper; and has fixed upon him the reputation, which is of all others the most disadvantageous to a statesman at the commencement of his career—that of being hot-headed and overbearing.

Of debating societies those should be chosen for the pupil from which political topics are excluded; for if he were to take a part in political debates, he would be betrayed into a premature adoption and declaration of political sentiments; than which nothing will be more injurious to his character and fortunes in after life.

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## CHAPTER II.

### OF THE AGE AT WHICH OFFICIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY LIFE SHOULD COMMENCE.

WHEN the student shall have attained to four and twenty years of age, more or less, the sooner he is in office the better; for it is there only that some essential processes of his education can be set on foot, and it is in youth only that they can be favourably effected. An early exercise of authority is, in the case of most men, necessary to give a capacity for taking decisions. It may be thought, perhaps, that whether he be a member of the Government or in active opposition to the Government, he is still acquiring experience and practice in affairs.

But a long experience of the latter kind, by habituating a man, not to taking decisions, but to taking objections,—to finding difficulties, and not resources,—is apt to be fatal to his effectiveness as a statesman in the exercise of power. Men thus practised, and otherwise unpractised, become timid from foreseeing all that can be urged against any measure they might adopt, and not feeling fertile in expedients. There may be a converse disadvantage in men entering upon office without having been practised in opposition; but prudence is much more easily learnt than decisiveness: the former may be taught at any age, the latter only to the young.

Also the drudgery of an office should be encountered early, whilst the energy of youth is at its height and can be driven through anything by the spur of novelty. Nor let any man suppose that he can come to be an adept in statesmanship without having been at some period of his life a thorough-going drudge. Drudgery is not less necessary to teach patience and give a power over details to the statesman himself, than to enable him to understand the powers and measure the patience of those who are drudges in his service. And as “trifles make the sum of human things,” so details make the substance of public affairs.

Further, at his first entrance into office he will have much to learn from those below him, and the younger he is the less he will feel the incongruities of receiving instruction from those whom it is his office to direct.

With respect to Parliament, it was a remark of the late Mr. Wilberforce, that men seldom succeeded in the House of Commons who had not entered it before thirty years of age. In order to apprehend the humours of so mixed a body, and to be in some sort of harmony with it, the quick impressibility of youth is required and its powers of ready adaptation. It is by partly yielding to such humours that a statesman partly also governs them; and he who has not been trained to the requisite pliancy will hardly possess himself of the plastic faculty which is its counterpart. If a man have the property of thus conforming himself without having been trained to it in youth, it will generally be found to be in him rather an infirmity than a power; for when a man has it by nature, and not by a guiding force put upon nature, it will be commonly accompanied by some want of constancy of mind and tenacity of purpose.

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### CHAPTER III.

A STATESMAN'S MOST PREGNANT FUNCTION LIES IN THE CHOICE AND USE OF INSTRUMENTS.

THE most important qualification of one who is high in the service of the State is his fitness for acting *through others*; since the importance of his operations vicariously



effected ought, if he knows how to make use of his power, to predominate greatly over the importance which can attach to any man's direct and individual activity. The discovery and use of instruments implies, indeed, activity as well as judgment, because it implies that judgment which only activity in affairs can give. But it is a snare into which active statesmen are apt to fall, to lose, in the importance which they attach to the immediate and direct effects of their activity, the sense of that much greater importance which they might impart to it if they applied themselves to make their powers operate through the most effective and the widest instrumentality. The vanity of a statesman is more flattered in the contemplation of what he does than of what he causes to be done; although any man whose civil station is high ought to know that his causative *might* be, beyond all calculation, wider than his active sphere, and more important.

Therefore no man who contemplates a public career should fail to begin early, and persist always, in cultivating the society of able men, of whatsoever classes or opinions they may be, provided only they be honest. In every walk of life it were well that such men should associate themselves together, in order that combination may give increased effect to their lives; and in some of the middle walks of life the association does to a certain degree take place; but amongst those who are destined for a civil career, or are born to such a station in life as is likely to lead them into that career, the paramount

importance of the object appears to be overlooked. Men in early life, seeking for enjoyment in society and for agreeable qualities only in their associates, their appetite for power yet unawakened or their juvenile ambition anticipating the pleasures of power without foreseeing its wants, get themselves surrounded by companions who, though not perhaps unadorned with talents, are yet fit for no purposes in life but that of pleasing. At the entrance upon a public career, and in the first stages of it, the aspirant is not seasonably apprised by circumstances that this is against him, and that in his ascent and advancement, as he comes to have more and more scope and use for instruments, hardly anything would be of so much moment to him as the number and serviceable quality of his associates, or of those with whom he has such intermediate connection as may serve for requisite knowledge. This, which early experience will not suggest, later will not teach in time (for the character of a man's associates will commonly be determined at the outset of life), and it is therefore a matter to be attempted by precept.

In associating with able men, we are to bear in mind that every man of that kind may probably indicate a vein of the material lying in the line of his connections. Blood relationship, we know, is but an uncertain index; yet it offers a sufficient probability of congenial talents to invite inquiry from the statesman who is duly eager in his search. And the chosen friends and companions of

an able man are still more likely than his born relatives to be found endowed with similar gifts.

In order to realise his knowledge of instruments (otherwise soon dissipated in the hurry of his life), a statesman would do well to keep lists, inventories, or descriptive catalogues; one of men ascertained to have certain aptitudes for business, another of probable men. He is more especially bound to keep lists of men whose services in any public capacity deservedly attract his attention in the course of business. Such services, not continuously rendered perhaps, and only casually observed, will, if not registered for reference, be either presently forgotten or not remembered at the moment when the want of the man presents itself. In short, no easy opportunity should be omitted of trying and proving men, and of recording the result. But so little is this somewhat obvious truth recognised, or such is the indifference of some statesmen to everything but what is forced upon their attention, that men have been at the head of departments of the State who might have had Bacon and Hooker in their service without knowing it.

With regard to the choice of instruments, a statesman, if he would have his judgment of men keen and discriminating, must keep it more on the watch than it is apt to be in the glare and crowd of public life. It is commonly considered that knowledge of mankind is to be obtained chiefly by experience of men and conversancy with society. Much, no doubt, is gained by this; but it is

not to be forgotten that something also is lost; for people who have been very much in contact with the world generally become somewhat callous in their perceptive faculties. The traveller who sets foot in a country for the first time, is more alive to its peculiarities, and sees more, than the denizen; and the fact will generally be found to be, that those who have above all others "a gift of genuine insight" into men's characters, are persons who, though they have seen something of the world from time to time, have lived for the most part in retirement. Men of the world understand readily what is commonly met with amongst mankind; but they either do not see what is peculiar or they are thrown out by it: and they profit little by slight traits; though slight traits, without being stretched too far, may often be improved by meditation into strong conclusions. Also, men in high station, from having less personal interest in the characters of others—being safe from them—are commonly less acute observers, and with their progressive elevation in life become, as more and more indifferent to what other men are, so more and more ignorant of them. The same principle may be traced in private life, where governesses and servants or other *dependents*, and women as being most dependent, are, in proportion to their faculties and means, the most watchful observers of character. It should be the care of a statesman to keep his curiosity alive by carrying with him into society a sense of the public wants

to which it is his duty to administer, and considering the abilities of the available men whom he meets there as the most precious portion of the public resources.

For the most part, a better choice can be made from men who have risen in life than from those who have sunk. Rising implies energy, hope, and contentment; falling, if not incapacity or inactivity, yet daintiness and dissatisfaction.

Sometimes, moreover, a man's nerves are shaken by a fall; and a cause is not well served by a nervous advocate. A story was told me by Lord Harrowby of a young lawyer pleading before Sir John Jerrold, who opened his case in a nervous and embarrassed tone; and of what befell him: "My lord, my unfortunate client—my unfortunate client, my lord—I say, my lord, my unfortunate client——" "Go on, sir," said the Judge; "so far the Court is with you."

And there is another story (told me by Sir George Lewis) which tends to show that a nervous or unpractised man should beware of aiming at rhetorical effect; at all events at the outset of his speech, and before he has found firm footing in it. At the trial of Lord Byron (not of course *the* Lord Byron, but an ancestor), Cæsar Hawkins had to give his evidence at the bar of the House of Lords, and he conceived it to be a good opportunity to make a speech; but owing to nervous agitation he spoke so low that he could not be heard as far as the Woolsack: "Touched with the feelings of compassion,"

he began :—"What is it you say, Mr. Hawkins?" said the Chancellor :—"Touched with the feelings of compassion, my lord," he began again :—"Clerk, what does Mr. Hawkins say?" "He says, my lord, 'Touched with the feelings of compassion.'" This was fatal.

In our judgment of men, we are to beware of giving any great importance to occasional acts. By acts of occasional virtue weak men endeavour to redeem themselves in their own estimation, vain men to exalt themselves in that of mankind. It may be observed that there are no men more worthless and selfish in the general tenour of their lives, than some who from time to time perform feats of generosity. Sentimental selfishness will commonly vary its indulgences in this way, and vain-glorious selfishness will break out into acts of munificence. But self-government and self-denial are not to be relied upon for any real strength except in so far as they are found to be exercised in detail. And on the other hand, *adverse* judgments of men should not be confidently formed from what is occasional. Who is there amongst us who, if he were to be judged from some single act, might not be supposed to be a man of a shameful life?

Plausibilities and pretensions are the most direct index to the defects of men. Where there is a merely negative demeanour and no assumption or aim at anything, it may be difficult to discover what is wanting and what is not. But plausibilities, when they are not so

successful as to be accredited, always betray a good deal ; and they can scarcely be long successful where they are met by diligence of observation and an ordinary share of discernment. And even with those who do not set themselves deliberately to observe and discern, there is often an intuitive sense of unsoundness, which, if they have due confidence in it, will preserve them from being misled.

The arts of plausibility would not be practised with so much assurance and so little skill and caution, if plausible men were not more deceived than deceiving : but what they pretend to be, other men pretend to take them for. For men of the world, knowing that there are few things so unpopular as penetration, take care to wear the appearance of being imposed upon ; and thus the man of plausibilities practises his art under the disadvantage of not knowing when he is detected and what shallows to keep clear of for the future. Nor will he be much the more safe, if he is himself subtle and quick-witted. Such men almost always underrate the penetration of the slow and simple.

There is, however, one way in which plausibility may be attended with no inconsiderable success ; and that is, when the practitioner contrives to make himself a little known to a great many people, and much known only to a conniving few.

The endeavour to read men in their faces should be made with much diffidence, especially in respect of:

negative inferences. Who that looked in the face of the most popular historian of this century, without other interpretation, would have hesitated to say that he was not what he was? That was an extreme example; but the cases are common enough in which Nature seems to amuse herself by sending philosophers in amongst mankind disguised as fools, or orators in the mask of mutes. Nevertheless there are some indications which may be trusted; one, I think, is that of weakness from a weak smile.

In the use of instruments the closeness or looseness of the discipline to be exercised must of course vary, not only with the nature of the man, but also and more distinctly with the nature of the work; and where the work is such that its effective depends much upon its conscientious performance, authority should be so used as in no degree to supplant the conscience, but on the contrary to support it; and the support should be given by an influential co-operation in which authority is rather felt than recognised. In such cases civil should be farthest from military and nearest to ecclesiastical discipline.

The mode in which discipline is exercised in the House of Commons by the Speaker, or at least was exercised in the time of Abbott, seems awfully mysterious. He (and I believe others also, before and since) was accustomed to threaten any mutinous member with "naming him to the House." Lord Egremont, speaking to Abbott of a case of the kind, inquired what would



have been the consequence if he *had* "named him to the House;" an inquiry to which Abbott replied, with much solemnity, "God only knows."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE GETTING AND KEEPING OF ADHERENTS.

IT is of far greater importance to a statesman to make one friend who will hold out with him for twenty years, than to find twenty followers in each year, losing as many or even a tenth part as many. For a statesman who stands upon a shifting ground of adherency requires incessantly renewed calculation to inform him where he is as to means and powers, and perpetual management at the hooking and dropping of dependencies; and he must be always sacrificing his own unity of purpose, and the strength that he might derive from it, in order to avail himself of the varying support. But the qualities which will link on a score of loose followers, are more commonly found in public life, than those which will attach one adherent; and that may be said of statesmen, which Dean Swift remarked of young ladies,—“that it would be well if fewer of them learnt to make nets and more to make cages.”

There are few things that attach adherents more than

an absolute confidence in their attachment. For the care and good feeling which is confidently anticipated will seldom fail to be accorded. In the days before railroads my daily walk took me past a coach-inn in Piccadilly, from which and to which stage-coaches were perpetually proceeding. The footway opposite to it was thronged from morning to night with porters and passengers, and coachmen and guards, hurrying to and fro. In the middle of it might generally be seen a large dog, who had laid himself down and slept. Nobody trod upon him.

A superiority, intrinsic or adventitious, which maintains itself without being arrogated or even asserted, is the first thing needful to one who would form and lead a party; and with this there should be not only friendliness, but also strength and truthfulness of character. Nothing is more clearly seen by little men than the littlenesses of great men. Of great men, even when morally great as well as great by position, few or none will be found to be absolutely without littlenesses of one kind or another. In a statesman the *kind* is important.

Of course the littlenesses are infinitely more important when the greatness is other than moral. And the preference of a man of mediocrity to one who was greatly little was, in an instance which is now historical, justified in the result. When Lord Melbourne made Lord Cottenham Chancellor in preference to Lord Brougham, Mr. Baron Alderson made a remark, heard

from every tongue at the time and which will not soon be forgotten, that he had got rid of a termagant mistress and married his housekeeper. We know now that the household fared all the better.

The business connected with patronage is mainly a business of refusal; and the manner in which it is transacted is of much importance to a statesman. Cajolery does but effect the purpose of the moment, and runs in debt to the future; whereas frank refusals, with a kindness of language measured by the just claims of the follower and the real intentions of the leader, even if they do produce an unreasonable discontent at the moment of disappointment, will lead to an enduring confidence, and occasion no continued estrangement on the part of any man whom it is desirable to attach. But "There is that for bashfulness promiseth to his friend, and maketh him his enemy for nothing."\* Excess of profession evinces weakness, and weakness never conciliates political adhesion. Willing to befriend an adherent, but prepared to do without him, is what a leader should appear to be: and this appearance is best maintained by a light cordiality of demeanour towards him, and a more careful and effective attention to his interests than he has been led by that demeanour to anticipate. Give one example of expectations exceeded, of performance outrunning profession, and hope and confidence will live upon little for the future. On the contrary,

\* Ecclesiasticus xx. 23.

after an example of performance falling short of profession, hope of the future will be kept alive by nothing but solids. Moreover, he who is profuse of professions obtains less gratitude than others, even when he fulfils them to the letter. For the professions men are not thankful, because they distrust them; for the fulfilments they are less thankful than they might be, because he appears to do what is done, merely to get out of a difficulty in which the professions have entangled him: he could not do less, it is said.

Inconsistency of tone, manner, and deportment are carefully to be avoided. The great man has adopted towards the little man a tone of friendly familiarity. The little man asks for a little favour. In the hurry of business a formal answer is given by a private secretary. The little man never forgets what he mistakes for a purposed repulse.

Every favour which is conferred upon a follower should appear to be bestowed, though willingly, yet with deliberation. For deliberation does not more lend aggravation to an act of malice, than it heightens the complexion of a service rendered. Favours which seem to be dispensed upon an impulse, with an unthinking facility, are received like the liberalities of a spendthrift, and men thank God for them.

There is one sort of adherent, not much to be prized, but still perhaps needful to be considered, whose services should be secured by succession of small acknowledg-

ments at reasonable intervals rather than by much at a time. The leech that is gorged hangs but loosely.

A statesman should know with what followers not to encumber himself, as well as how to conciliate and attach eligible adherents. He cannot, indeed, be nice or choice as to the men whom he will number amongst his political friends; but he may be careful not to encourage, on the part of some of them, that close adhesion which converts supporters into claimants. Or if it be indispensable to him to accept services which no very high-minded or creditable adherent could render, still he should be careful not to admit to personal intimacy those whom he thus employs; and he should teach them not to expect that they will be remunerated for low services with high offices. Shy and proud men (and shyness as well as pride is not infrequently to be found amongst English statesmen, little as it may seem to belong to their habits and station)—such men are more liable than any others to fall into the hands of parasites and creatures of low character. For in the intimacies which are formed by shy men, they do not choose, but are chosen. And as their shyness tends to distance men of high and delicate feelings, especially when the shyness is combined with power and results from pride, they generally fall a prey to gross and forward flatterers, whom they can despise sufficiently to be at their ease with them. Such is the pusillanimity of pride!

Even coldness of character, without pride or shyness,

will of itself tend to throw the head of a party into the closer connection with the more menial of his partisans. For the less menial will hold themselves more aloof when they do not find the relation of political superiority to come qualified and recommended to them by feelings of personal friendliness. There are more unambitious men in the world than the ambitious will easily believe ; and leaders, being themselves ambitious, should beware of assuming that valuable service is not to be obtained from men who do not come forward to render it.

It is less desirable to be surrounded and served by men of a shallow cleverness and slight character, than by men of even less talent who are of sound and stable character. A statesman will be brought into fewer difficulties and dilemmas by men of the latter class, and will be more easily excused for befriending them beyond their merits. They will be creditable to him in one way, if not in another ; and their advancement, bringing less envy upon themselves, will reflect less odium upon their patron : whereas much ill-will and contempt will commonly accompany the advancement of men whose talents have been sufficient to push them forward in life, but inadequate to command respect in the absence of other claims.

It is but an infelicitous alternative, however, to be obliged to choose from either of these classes, when important offices are to be filled ; to be compelled to turn from the flimsy man of talent, to the dull respectable

man. The latter may pass current with the world ; for in the world a man will often be reputed to be a man of sense, only because he is not a man of talent ; and in the world, too, he who is taken to be a man of sense is taken to be equal to all the functions of a statesmen ; he is supposed to be "*par negotiis*," because he is "*haud supra*." But good sense, which is an abundant provision, and not a common one, for the purposes of private life, and in public life essential as one constituent quality, does by no means of itself make up a sufficiency of endowment for conducting the affairs of a country. It is only, therefore, to the worse alternative of talent without seriousness and worth, that sense without ability is to be preferred.

But if there be in the character, not only sense and soundness, but virtue of a high order, then, however little appearance there may be of *talent*, a certain portion of *wisdom* may be relied upon almost implicitly. For the correspondencies of wisdom and goodness are manifold ; and that they will accompany each other is to be inferred, not only because men's wisdom makes them good, but also because their goodness makes them wise. Questions of right and wrong are a perpetual exercise of the faculties of those who are solicitous as to the right and wrong of what they do and see ; and a deep interest of the heart in these questions carries with it a deeper cultivation of the understanding than can be easily effected by any other excitement to intellectual

activity. Although, therefore, simple goodness does not imply every sort of wisdom, it unerringly implies some essential conditions of wisdom ; it implies a negative on folly, and an exercised judgment within such limits as Nature shall have prescribed to the capacity. And where virtue and extent of capacity are combined, there is implied the highest wisdom, being that which includes the worldly wisdom with the spiritual.

A statesman who numbers the wise and good amongst his political friends, men of sense and respectability amongst his adherents ; who demeans himself in a spirit of liberal but disengaged goodwill towards his ordinary partisans, and holds himself towards his tools in no reciprocity of that relation ; who enlists in the public service all the capable men he can find and renders them available to the extent of their capabilities, all other men's jealousies notwithstanding and any jealousy of his own out of the question ;—such a statesman has already, in the commonwealth of his own nature, given to the nobler functions the higher place ; and as a minister, therefore, he is one whom his country may be satisfied to trust and its best men be glad to serve. He, on the other hand, who sees in the party he forms only the pedestal of his own statue or the plinth of a column to be erected to his honour, may, by inferior means and lower service, accomplish his purposes, such as they are ; but he must be content with vulgar admiration, and lay out of account the respect of those who will reserve that



tribute from what is merely powerful, and render it only to what is great. "He that seeketh to be eminent amongst able men," says Lord Bacon, "hath a great task; but that is ever good for the public. But he that plots to be the only figure amongst ciphers, is the decay of a whole age."

It is important to the leader of a party that his adherents should not feel themselves to be unduly excluded from his counsels. But how far to make known to them beforehand his views and intentions in respect of hypothetical or contingent predicaments, and even, under some circumstances, of acts determining a policy, may be occasionally a critical question. I once inquired of a person who had occupied such a position whether, as I was led to infer from his practice and the practice of another, it was a necessity of the position of a first minister or the leader of an opposition, to maintain a good deal of reserve as to courses in the leader's contemplation. He answered that if I had read the life of Sir Robert Peel, I might have seen that when a similar inquiry was addressed to him, his reply was, "I wished to succeed." He said no more. But on reflection I perceived that the danger of dislocating a party or a cabinet might be greatly increased by giving more time than enough for evolving and discussing the divergent opinions of its different members. Discussion is not seldom the mother of contradiction; and the unwelcome issue, if arrested in gestation, may chance to be still-born.

## CHAPTER V.

IN THE CHOICE OF MEN HOW FAR LITERARY MERIT  
MAY BE A GUIDE.

GENERALLY speaking, serviceable talents may be inferred from literary merit in the young, not in the old, and but doubtfully in the middle-aged. The talents which are evinced in literature may be turned to the purposes of business, provided their application that way is seasonably determined; before literary objects, enjoyments, and habits of thinking have fixed themselves upon the mind. But the confirmed enthusiast in literature will not make a man of business; nor the confirmed literary voluptuary; nor perhaps he who has been long accustomed to thinking for thinking's sake. Men so accustomed, when reduced to the operations of business, will be apt to value the thought above the purpose.

Of the departments of literature, the imaginative and the philosophic are the worst schools for business, if the mind have been long and exclusively devoted to them.

To him who has long dwelt in his imagination the world will often be "a stage, and all the men and women merely players." But it happens still more frequently, when the sensitiveness which is the ordinary concomitant of a lively imagination is not counteracted, and the mind fortified by other faculties duly exercised, that of all men

and women the man of imagination is the most a player, and also that of all players he is the least expert. His fancy suggests to him a hundred parts which he would desire to play in life, no one of which possibly may be compatible with another, or easily to be reconciled with his nature and early habits. For example, it is the nature of the imaginative temperament, cultivated by the arts, to undermine the courage, and by abating strength of character to render men easily subservient,—“sequaces, cereos, et ad mandata imperii ductiles.” But, on the other hand, imagination and books suggest to him that it is a noble thing to be independent; and thus, stumbling between his temperament and his fancy, he becomes awkwardly and irresolutely contumacious. By many such incongruities the coherency and drift of the natural man is broken, he is abroad in his purposes, and unfit for business. Further, an imaginative man is apt to see, in his life, the story of his life; and is thereby led to conduct himself in life in such a manner as to make a good story of it rather than a good life, and make himself what he conceives to be interesting, rather than what will be generally acknowledged to be useful and convenient.

But there is one sort of imagination—one power of what may be called *practical* imagination—which is of great value in public life: that of tracing out distinctly and in detail a train of facts and events in a process of consequences. Some men possess it abundantly in one

range of operation and not at all in another. The Duke of Wellington possessed it in his military, but not in his political operations.

And the independent thinking of persons who have trained and habituated themselves to philosophic freedom of opinion, is also unfavourable to statesmanship; because the business of a statesman is less with truth at large than with truths commonly received. The philosopher should have a leaning *from* prescription, in order to counterbalance early prepossessions and place the mind *in equilibrio*; the statesman, on the contrary, should have a leaning towards it. Having to act always with others, through others, and upon others, and those others for the most part *vulgus hominum*, his presumptions should be in favour of such opinions as are likely to be shared by others; and the arguments should be cogent and easily understood which shall induce him to quit the beaten track of doctrine. His object should be, first to go with the world as far as it will carry him; and from that point taking his start to go farther if he can, but always as much as may be in the same direction,—that is, guided by a reference to common ways of thinking.

I speak, be it observed, of men grown old in an exclusive devotion to imaginative and philosophical literature. Fancy and abstract reflection, duly counterpoised and kept within bounds, will both of them be of use in the transaction of public business; and he can never be more than a second-rate statesman into whose

conduct of affairs philosophy and imagination do not in some degree enter.

Without imagination, indeed, there can be no just and comprehensive philosophy; and without this there can be no true wisdom in dealing with practical affairs of a wide and complex nature. The imaginative faculty is essential to the seeing of many things from one point of view, and to the bringing of many things to one conclusion. It is necessary to that fluency of the mind's operations which mainly contributes to its clearness. And finally it is necessary to bring about those manifold sympathies with various kinds of men in various conjunctures of circumstance, through which alone an active observation and living knowledge of mankind can be generated.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### OF OFFICIAL STYLE.

LITERARY men, and the young still more than the old of this class, have commonly a good deal to rescind in their style in order to adapt it to business. But the young, if they be men of sound abilities, will soon learn what is not apt and discard it; which the old will not. The leading rule is to be content to be commonplace,—a

rule which might be observed with advantage in other writings, but is distinctively applicable to these. Any point of style is to be avoided by a statesman which gives reason to suppose that he is thinking more of his credit than of his business. It belongs to high station to rest upon its advantages, and by no means to court the notice of inferiors or to be solicitous of effect. *Their* interests should engross the thoughts of the statesman, and he should appear to have no occasion for any other credit than that of duty regarding their welfare. His style therefore, though it should have the correctness and clearness which education and practice impart to the writing of a man of good understanding, should not evince any solicitous precision beyond what may be due to exactitude in the subject-matter, much less any ambition of argument for its own sake, and less still of ornament or pungency in like manner gratuitous. If he be a man of philosophic mind, philosophy will enter into his views and enlarge and enlighten them ; but it will be well that it should not ostensibly manifest itself in his writing, because he has to address himself, not to philosophers, but to ordinary men ; who are ever of the opinion (erroneous though it be) that what they recognise to be philosophy is not fit for common use. A statesman's philosophy, therefore, should be as it were foundations sunk in the ground, and should not overtly appear, except in so far as it may be made to take the form of trite and popular maxims. With respect to ornament

and figures of speech, it is to be observed that all language whatsoever carries metaphor within it, though much that is metaphorical may not be cognisably so to those who do not probe and search it and see into the sources of its meanings. The customariness of many metaphorical uses of words makes us unconscious of their metaphor; and the care of a statesman should be to avoid express metaphors (as well as express philosophy), and use only such as lie hid in common language and will not attract specific notice. Yet since much of the force and propriety of language depends upon a reference, conscious or unconscious, to its metaphorical basis, the exclusion of metaphorical invention does not negative such an exercise of imagination as shall detect the latent metaphors of language, and so deal with them as to give to the style a congruity and aptitude otherwise unattainable.

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## CHAPTER VII.

ON THE INFERENCES OF MERIT OR DEMERIT FROM POPULARITY, AND SOMETHING CONCERNING FALSE REPUTATIONS.

POPULARITY (I speak of social and personal, not political, popularity) till it be traced to its sources is no more than a slight presumption either way; but so far as it is a

ground of judgment at all, it is against a man; because the defects which ordinarily accompany it are more essential than the merits. Hardly any man obtains popularity without desiring and seeking it, or without making some sacrifices for it. It is most commonly obtained by an abuse of humility, and a large indulgence for all qualities and proceedings which are not denounced as flagitious by the society to which a man belongs. I say an abuse of humility, because humility well used consists in a constant reference to a high standard and a prostration of pride and self-love before that standard, whether it be merely ideal or whether we see it embodied in men of virtue and understanding superior to our own: and it does *not* consist in any undue and untrue self-depreciation, leading a man to postpone himself to what is worse than himself, and thereby to desert his moral station.

One of the doctrines of this popular humility is much the same with that which Machiavelli ascribes to the Romish Church in his time—the doctrine, “*come è male del male dir male.*” There is a better doctrine which teaches that men are not only the subjects, but the instruments, of God’s moral government. The judgments of the street and of the market-place, the sentences which men pronounce upon each other in the ordinary intercourse of life, constitute the most essential of all social jurisdictions, and he who would serve the great Lawgiver with fidelity must carry the sword of justice in



his mouth. A righteous humility will teach a man never to pass a censure in a spirit of exultation ; a righteous courage will teach him never to withhold it from fear of being disliked. Popularity is commonly obtained by a dereliction of the duties of censure under a pretext of humility.

There are other ways in which statesmen may obtain popularity, which are not better. Easiness of access contributes greatly to a man's popularity, and in the case of a statesman in office detracts proportionably from his utility. Accessibility is, in men so circumstanced, sometimes a mode of idleness as well as an aim at popularity ; and whether it be the one or the other, or proceed from pure good nature, or be adopted from a mistaken sense of duty, it equally involves the neglect of those functions and habits to which it is of most consequence to the public that their servant should devote himself. The statesman who is easy of access will not only squander his time ; he will commonly be found to sacrifice the distant to the near, public to individual interests, and matters of no light importance to the ill-considered smile of the moment. It is not in human nature that a statesman should not desire to satisfy the man whom he sees and who sees him, in preference to the unembodied name or idea of a man who is separated from him by lands or seas ; or that he should not prefer the interests of the man who is there, to those of the multitude which is an abstraction ; nor is it in human nature that such pre-

ference should not taint the justness of his judgments with partiality. Social popularity in a statesman, therefore (connected with easiness of access), may reasonably suggest a suspicion of some such taint, of some idle waste or injudicious employment of time, of some disregard or erroneous estimate of the relative value of topics, of using (so to speak) false weights and measures in his dealings with his duties.

Yet easiness of access will generally raise to a man a reputation the very reverse of that presumptive inference (I will call it no more) which ought to be deduced from it. He who allows himself to be interrupted every hour of the day, will be applauded for his assiduity and attention to business. Interviews, indeed, make a show of transacting business ; but (as I shall presently take occasion to explain) business is seldom really and usefully transacted otherwise than in writing. Whilst, therefore, the popular statesman, ready at all hours to receive all applicants, open to hear every side of the question with his own ears, flatters with a listening look, or imposes with a look of reserved fulness, and thus sends from his presence twenty trumpeters of his merit in a day, the questions to which this show of attention has been given, will commonly be disposed of by the obscure industry of some person who studies the papers relating to them.

The late Mr. Wilberforce may be adduced as an example of pre-eminent popularity obtained without labour

or sacrifice, though, let it be admitted, with great merit of other kinds. Mr. Southey once said of him, that if other men had the milk of human kindness he had the cream of it. This, with a winning amenity of manner, peculiar grace and fervour in conversation and an easy eloquence in public speaking, planted him the foremost of his party in the eyes of mankind, and placed his name in the title-page (as it were) of a great cause. But Mr. Zachary Macaulay was the man who rose and took pen in hand at four o'clock in the morning—who was (if I may be allowed to speak in parallels) the Dumont to his Mirabeau.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONCERNING INTERVIEWS.

To those who are not practically acquainted with business, it may appear that in the foregoing chapter I have undervalued that species of activity which consists in giving ready audience. Upon certain occasions, no doubt, interviews may have their use, and some contribution, though it will be rather ancillary than essential, may be made by them to the transaction of particular sorts of business. A statesman should make himself personally acquainted with those with whom he has dealings, so

often as he has reason to suppose that they are men of any eminent qualifications ; especially if he have the faculty of measuring men by the eye and the ear. And this is a faculty which he ought to possess and to cultivate. "Fronti nulla fides" is a maxim of only partial applicability. To trust the judgment in matters of aspect and demeanour may belong to the folly of fools ; but it is not less a part of wisdom in the wise. Statesmen, therefore, who justly attribute to themselves some sagacity of this kind, should be accessible on occasions when it can be turned to account. And some other purposes might be specified, for which interviews are preferable to communication in writing. But these are the exceptions and they are not numerous. In the great majority of affairs oral communication is either prejudicial or nugatory.

For it should be remembered that in every question there are two or more parties interested. A large portion of the questions which come before a minister, arise out of disputes and complaints on which it is his business to *adjudicate*. His functions in these cases are quasi-judicial. His office is for these purposes a Court of Justice, and ought to be a Court of Record. Every step of his procedure, and every ground upon which he rests every step, should appear upon the face of producible documents. The administration of justice in these cases cannot be aided by interlocutory argument with one party present and doors closed ; nor will circumstances often permit that all parties should have equal opportunities of

access. The public may be also a party interested, and no pleading voice claims to be heard on the part of such an abstraction as that. Again, statements are made which must unavoidably, though perhaps insensibly, produce impressions, and to which, nevertheless, the party making them is not deliberately and responsibly committed. Further, no statesman, be he as discreet as he may, will escape having ascribed to him, as the result of interviews, promises and understandings which it was not his purpose to convey; and yet in a short time he will be unable to recollect what was said with sufficient distinctness to enable him to give a confident contradiction. So much as to the evils and injustice which will often arise from interviews.

Next as to their uselessness. In the rapid succession of topics which chase each other through the mind of a minister of state, especially of one who grants many interviews, words spoken are for the most part as evanescent as those which are written on the running stream, "*Delentque pedum vestigia caudâ.*"\* But even if he should recollect what has been said for a day or two with sufficient precision to give effect to it in business, that effect must be given by writing; and to think that a minister who gives frequent audiences can himself write, and that at once and without choice of time, on many or even on a few of the questions brought before him in those audiences, is to indulge an expectation which not

\* Statius, 'Achilleis.'

one minister in fifty will be found able to fulfil. And when one man hears what is to be said concerning a case, whilst another writes what is to be written on it, not hastily is it to be believed that the one operation will have an unerring reference to the other.

Again, let it be considered in what frame of mind, from one cause or another, most of those are who seek these interviews. Suitors and claimants are the most numerous class. It may be supposed that the interests which they have, or conceive themselves to have, at stake—the importance to themselves of the objects which they have in view—would infallibly induce such parties as these at least, to take the utmost pains beforehand to make the interviews which they seek available to them. Yet most men who have been in office will have observed with how little preparation of their own minds even this class of persons do commonly present themselves to profit by the audience which they have solicited. One man is humble and ignorant of the world, has never set eyes on a minister before, and acts as if the mere admission to the presence of such a personage was all that was needful, which being accomplished he must naturally flourish ever after. Another is romantic and sanguine, his imagination is excited, and he has thought that he can do everything by some happy phrase or lively appeal, which, in the embarrassment of the critical moment, escapes his memory, or finds no place, or the wrong place, in the conversation. A third brings a letter of

introduction from some person who is great in *his* eyes but possibly inconsiderable in those of the minister ; he puts his trust in the recommendation and appears to expect that the minister should suggest to him, rather than he to the minister, what is the particular object to be accomplished for him ; he "lacks advancement," and that, he thinks, is enough said. A fourth has not made up his mind how high he shall pitch his demands ; he is afraid on the one hand to offend by presumption, on the other to lose by diffidence ; he proposes, therefore, to feel his way and be governed by what the minister shall say to him ; but the minister naturally has nothing to say to him—never having considered the matter and taking no interest in it. Thus it is that, through various misconceptions, the instances will be found in practice to be a minority in which a claimant or suitor who obtains an interview has distinctly made up his mind as to the specific thing which he will ask, propose, or state. Still less does he forecast the several means and resources, objections and difficulties, conditions and stipulations, which may happen to be topics essential to a full development and consideration of his case.

In short, it may be affirmed as a truth well founded in observation, though perhaps hardly to be credited upon assertion, that even in matters personally and seriously affecting themselves, most men will put off thinking definitely till they have to act, to write, or to speak. There is no reason why the time of a minister

should be employed in listening to the extempore crudities of men who are thus trusting themselves to the fortune of the moment.

The precepts which (resting upon these remarks) may be offered as to this matter of interviews, are the following:—

1st. A minister may not improperly allot two hours a day of two days in each week, to the purposes of such interviews as may be admitted (under the head of exceptions) to be not unprofitably granted; and of such also as, though they be otherwise unprofitable, are yet of advantage on the account of courtesy and of sparing needless unpopularity. By appointing all persons who seek interviews to come within these hours, the very fulness of the minister's antechamber will evince, to each man who comes, the absurdity of expecting to occupy much of the attention which is to be shared out to so many. Of those who wait, the exceptions or reasonable applicants for interviews should be first called in; and after these are disposed of, perhaps the minister may venture to give orders that those who are only admitted for courtesy's sake should be ushered into his presence in succession, at intervals of five minutes, so that the entrance of one shall be the signal for the other to withdraw. Care must of course be taken not to put the rule in practice indiscriminately, in cases where extra civility is of any special importance.

2nd. All applicants for interviews should be required



to send in on the day preceding that on which they are appointed to attend, a paper setting forth, as definitely as may be, the object which they seek and the facts which they have to state, with exact notes of reference to the dates of any correspondence which may have previously taken place upon the subject in question, and a *précis* of such correspondence.

3rd. A minister would do well to have placarded in his antechamber a notice in the following or some similar form:—"Owing to the many inconveniences which have arisen to the public from oral communications being misunderstood or incorrectly remembered, A. B. thinks it his duty to apprise those who may do him the honour to attend him upon business, that he will in no case hold himself, his colleagues, or his successors, bound by words spoken, unless when they shall have been subsequently reduced to writing and authenticated in that form."

4th. Lord Bacon is not afraid to tell us why the table in a council chamber should be a round table. Therefore, let no reader laugh when I say that in the audience chamber of a minister the furniture should be so arranged that the chair placed for a stranger, without being ungraciously distant from the minister, should be as near as may be to the door. Timid and embarrassed men will sit as if they were rooted to the spot, when they are conscious that they have to traverse the length of a room in their retreat. And in every case an interview

will find a more easy and pleasing termination when the door is at hand as the last words are spoken. These are not frivolous considerations where civility is the business to be transacted.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### CONCERNING THE CONSCIENCE OF A STATESMAN.

THE conscience of a statesman should be rather a strong conscience than a tender conscience. For a conscience of more tenderness than strength will be liable in public life to be perverted in two ways :—1st. By reflecting responsibilities disproportionately to their magnitude, and missing of the large responsibilities whilst it is occupied with the small. 2nd. By losing, in a too lively apprehension of the responsibilities of action, the sense of responsibility for inaction.

No doubt the most perfect conscience would be that which should have all strength in its tenderness, all tenderness in its strength ; and be equally adapted to public and private occasions. But I speak of the consciences of men as they exist with their imperfect capacities, bearing in mind the truth "*ut multæ virtutes in vitia degenerant, et quod magis est, sæpe videas eosdem affectus, pro temporum sorte, nunc virtutes esse, nunc*

vitia." \* And these dilemmas of virtue duly considered, it will be found to be better for the public interests that a statesman should have some hardihood, than much weak sensibility of conscience.

1st. As to the *mismeasurements* of a conscience tender to weakness. Take the case of a sentence of death to be executed or remitted, according to the decision to be adopted by a statesman under the direction of this kind of conscience. The responsibility as regards the criminal and the responsibility as regards the public, will each of them lie as a serious burthen on a sore back. But the former of them will, with such a conscience, have an undue preponderance. To decide erroneously that a man had better die, will appear a worse thing than to decide more erroneously that he had better live; and human guilt and misery, which are to be the consequence of the error miscalled merciful, will appear of less account than human life; though to a strong conscience and a just judgment mere human life would be of less account, human innocence and happiness of more. If the crime *have* been murder, the decision to spare the murderer will probably beget other murders. We cannot

"Give leave to rapine and to murder  
To go just so far and no further;" †

and the graver responsibility will be for the murders that are to ensue: but what is actual bears on a weak con-

\* J. Barclaii Argenis.

† Hudibras.

science with a pressure wholly disproportioned to the pressure of what is potential. Moreover, whilst this question of an individual's life or death swings backwards and forwards in the conscience of the statesman, it probably keeps off from his conscience other questions, which, though not of the same immediate and tangible character, may nevertheless involve in their consequences numerous lives and deaths, proceeding from one or other of the multiplicity of causes affecting the public welfare to which the attention of a statesman should be devoted. So difficult is it, in situations where the duties are diverse and momentous, for a very susceptible conscience to be true to itself.

2nd. As to the conscience becoming, from an exceeding tenderness as to acts and deeds, too insensible on the point of inaction or delay. It is very certain that there may be met with, in public life, a species of conscience which is all bridle and no spurs. A statesman whose conscience is of the finest texture as to everything which he does, will sometimes make no conscience of doing nothing. His conscience will be liable to become to him as a quagmire, in which the faculty of action shall stick fast at every step. And to this tendency of the conscience the worldly interests of a statesman will pander. Conscience is, in most men, an anticipation of the opinions of others; and whatever the moral responsibility may be, official responsibility is much less apt to be brought home to a statesman in

cases of error by inaction, than in the contrary cases. What men might have done is less known than what they have actually done, and the world thinks so much less of it, and with so much less definiteness and confidence of opinion, that the sins of omission are sins on the safe side as to this world's responsibilities.

Above all it is to be wished that the conscience of a statesman should be an intelligent and perspicacious conscience—not the conscience of the heart only, but the conscience of the understanding—that wheresoever the understanding should be enabled to foresee distant consequences or comprehend wide ones, there the conscience should be enabled to follow, not failing in quickness because the good or evil results in question are less palpable and perhaps less certain than in private life, are not seen with the eyes and heard with the ears, but only known through meditation and foresight. Many magnify in words the importance of public duties, but few appreciate them in feeling; and that, not so much for want of feeling, as for want of carrying it out to whatever results the understanding reaches. It is impossible that the feeling in regard to public objects should be *proportionate* to the feeling for private ones, because the human heart is not large enough; and it is too often found that when the conscience is not sustained by a sense of due proportion it gets thrown out altogether. It sometimes happens that he who would not hurt a fly will hurt a nation.

## CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THE AGE AT WHICH A STATESMAN SHOULD  
MARRY, AND WHAT MANNER OF WOMAN HE SHOULD  
TAKE TO WIFE.

LIFE without marriage and its fruits is to a statesman, as well as to men of other callings, a sad anti-climax. Let him not then, in the florid exordium of life, forget the peroration; which must fall flat indeed, if the likeness of his youth be not renewed and multiplied about him in the fruits of marriage. "When the Lord was with me, when my children were about me"—in this co-presence consists the beatitude of age: and as it is the part of a statesman to be provident and far-seeing, he should remember in the season of his youth to provide that his age shall be passed in this company. His profession throws some difficulties in his way; but so does every other; each presenting some obstacles and some facilities peculiar to itself.

Donne was of opinion that love and business could not well consort; but which will put aside the other may be more of a question than he makes it:—

"The poor, the foul, the false, Love can  
Admit, but not the busied man."

I agree that in the encounter between business and love,

one or the other will suffer ; but I hold that the odds are decidedly in favour of love : and I think therefore that the statesman will do best to marry—not indeed *in primâ lanugine*, since sobriety and perspicacity of judgment in such matters is not to be expected from a youth—but nevertheless at an early period of manhood, and if possible before or very soon after the commencement of his public career. Whilst unmarried, he will be liable, in whatever conjuncture of affairs or exigency of business, to some amorous seizure, some accident of misplaced or ill-timed love, by which his mind will be taken away from his duties. Against these casualties, which may happen to a statesman howsoever devoted to political life, marriage will be the least imperfect protection ; for business does but lay waste the approaches to the heart, whilst marriage garrisons the fortress.

And whilst love before marriage is a source of commotion, love in marriage is a pledge of peace : “ Love,” says Dante,—

“ Love (never, certes, for my worthless part,  
But of his own great heart)  
Vouchsafed to me a life so calm and sweet  
That oft I heard folk question as I went  
What such great gladness meant ;  
They spoke of it behind me in the street.”\*

Nor is it only to compose the heart and guard against the irruptions of passion, that an early marriage is to be

\* ‘ Vita Nuova,’ by D. G. Rossetti. I prefer to quote it in the translation,— so exquisitely is it rendered.

desired for a statesman. It is also needed to exercise the affections, which are in a way to be corrupted and extinguished if political life be not conjoined with domestic. Nothing can compete with the interests of political life except the attractions of a pleasant home or extreme excitements; and if the one alternative be wanting the other will be resorted to. A statesman's almost incessant engagements hardly admit, unless upon the call of passion, any other occupants of his affections than such as, being inmates of his house, fall, as it were, into the chinks of his time.

Let no man suppose that his character is strong and high enough to resist the influence of a lower character in a wife. The apparent advantages of men over women in the conjugal relation, are of an insidious tendency so far as the character is concerned, and the inequality in that particular is the reverse of what it seems. An inferior man, carrying his ends by authority, will often pass clear of his wife's character; whereas an inferior woman, to carry her objects, must work *through* the character of her husband. A statesman, knowing that his character is obvious to many poisons abroad, should choose such a wife as would invest it with a charmed life, instead of a Dejanira's robe.

A woman who *idolises* her husband, if she do not hurt his character, will at least not help it. But in most cases she will hurt it very seriously. For domestic flattery is the most dangerous of all flatteries. The wife



who praises and blames, persuades and resists, warns or exhorts upon occasion given, and carries her love through all with a strong heart and not a weak fondness,—she is the true helpmate.

Ambition being almost the vocation of a statesman, he must be expected to marry ambitiously. But if he be as wise as one of his calling should be, he will not be precluded by objects of ambition from considering other objects along with them. On the contrary, since with the young ambition is a less overruling passion than love, he will probably take a greater variety of objects into the contemplation of his choice than they who are more amorously directed. Wealth is of great importance to a statesman, because it gives independence, and (what is almost of as much consequence) the reputation of independence. Therefore, if he be not wealthy by inheritance, he should endeavour to secure wealth by marriage. Along with this, he should seek for such qualities in a wife as will tend to make his home as much as may be a place of repose, and his life within doors the reverse of that which he leads elsewhere. To this end his wife should at least have sense enough or worth enough (and where there is no absolute defect of understanding worth amounts to sense) to exempt him from trouble in the management of his children and of his private affairs, and more especially to exempt him from all possibility of debt. She should also be pleasing to his eyes and to his taste: the taste is the tyrant of the heart; love is

hardly love apart from it ; and in a life of political care and excitement, that home which is not the seat of love cannot be a place of repose ; rest for the brain and peace for the spirit being only to be had through the softening of the affections. He should look for a clear understanding, cheerfulness, and alacrity of mind, rather than gaiety or brilliancy ; and for a gentle tenderness of disposition in preference to an impassioned nature. Lively talents are too stimulating in a tired man's house ; passion is too disturbing. Nor is it necessary that a statesman's wife should have such knowledge or abilities as would enable her to be a party to his daily political interests and occupations. When a woman gives her mind that way, she becomes best acquainted with what is least respectable in politics—their personalities. It will be better for a statesman that such topics should be strangers in his house and unwelcome ; that so he may be under the less temptation to desecrate his fireside. In the society of his wife he should find that fullness of rest which only a change in the direction of his thoughts can give. A lesson to this purpose may be taken from nature. He who is in the habit of recollecting his dreams will find that the topics of the day are seldom pursued in the dreams of the night next succeeding, unless under circumstances tending to turn nature from her course ; for were it so the night would not bring that entire relief and recess which it is designed to afford : with a like design it will be expedient that the domestic intercourse

of a statesman should alternate with his business, and not mix with it.

But whilst standing apart from the details and aloof from the personalities of political life, a woman may be nevertheless very strongly imbued with principles of that height and generality in which moral, religious, and political interests meet: and to have a wife who should be imbued with such principles, and endowed with a capability of applying them upon great and fit occasions, will be of inestimable service to a statesman. For then, in addition to the cooling and refreshing of his spirit, he will have his grasp of his principles invigorated by association with a mind accustomed to view things in peace and without compromise. It is true the sentiments of the wife may be too abstract and not sufficiently modified by a reference to practicability: but the husband can more easily make any requisite deductions on this score than he can repair the ravage which his character may undergo from the want of something in the nature of a living inflexible canon wherewith to compare his own persuasions, warped in the stress and pressure of perpetual combat.

Finally, it will be well that the wife of a statesman's choice should be sound in health and of a light and easy temper; neither jealous herself nor giving cause for jealousy; neither going much abroad nor requiring her husband to be more at home than his avocations permit; fresh in her feelings and alert as to her understand-

ing; but seasonable in the demonstration of either, and willing at all times to rest contented in an intelligent repose. Her love should be—

“A love that clings not, nor is exigent,  
 Encumbers not the active purposes,  
 Nor drains their source; but proffers with free grace  
 Pleasure at pleasure touched at pleasure waived,  
 A washing of the weary traveller's feet,  
 A quenching of his thirst, a sweet repose  
 Alternate and preparative; in groves  
 Where loving much the flower that loves the shade  
 And loving much the shade that that flower loves,  
 He yet is unbewildered, unenslaved,  
 Thence starting light and pleasantly let go  
 When serious service calls.” \*

There is, no doubt, quite another kind of wife who can make herself useful in other ways,—the wife who by social influences and operations skilfully conducted can make social entertainments and allurements conducive to political purposes. If the statesman likes such a wife, let him take her and make the most of her. I forget of what personage it is that Crabbe says—

“Still he proceeded by his former rules,  
 His bait their pleasures when he fished for fools.”

It may have been a statesman: nor is it fools only, though it may be fools chiefly, that are so to be caught.

\* Edwin the Fair, Act ii. Scene 2.

## CHAPTER XI.

CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF ORDER AND THE  
MAINTENANCE OF EQUANIMITY.

By the regimen of domestic love the heart of a statesman is composed and regulated at home : for a like regulation in business he must look to the principle of order. The energy of a statesman should be as purely as possible intellectual ; it should be of that rare species which can be combined with equanimity. And to bring about this combination he must appeal from the extemporaneous exactions of circumstance, from the impulses of a perturbed and hurried life, to the principle of order. The excitement and flurry of spirits occasioned by a sense of urgency in affairs, and by too quick and versatile an apprehension of their importance,—comprehending in the feelings more matters at a time than can be entertained by the judgment,—are obviated by such an habitual reference to order as shall make it paramount to all considerations but those of the most imperious character. Calmness is of the very essence of order ; and if calmness be given, order may easily be superinduced ; and if order be given, it will almost of necessity govern or supersede casual excitements, and produce calmness. Nor is there any principle which may be more surely established in

the mind by adopting the habits which, if previously subsisting, it would teach. All that is wanted is strength of judgment to perceive the ultimate advantages of acquiring the principle, and strength of will to make the present sacrifice; and on these will follow, in due and certain succession,—first the habits, and secondly the inward principle of order.

One who should feel himself to be over-excitabile in the transaction of business, would do well to retard himself mechanically,

“And by the body’s action teach the mind”—

for the body is a handle to the mind in these as in other particulars. Thus he should never suffer himself to write in a hurried hand, but make a point of writing neatly and clearly, whatever may be his haste; which practice will of itself secure to him some degree of patience and composure. In like manner, matters of mere arrangement may sometimes be better done by himself than left to his secretary; for a man cannot methodise the subject-matter of his business, without at the same time methodising his own mind. Nor let him suppose that his time is thrown away on these light operations, but rather consider them as needful intermissions of labour; for to an active mind under high pressure there is hardly any rest by day but that which is obtained through an easy engagement of the attention in a mechanical kind of employment.

The importance to a statesman of refusing to be

hurried was recognised by Talleyrand. He had drawn up a confession of faith, which was to be sent to the Pope on the day of his death. On the day before he died he was supposed to be at the point of death, and he was asked whether the paper should be sent off. His reply was addressed to the Duchesse De Dino, who repeated it to the first Lord Ashburton, from whom I heard it: "Attendez jusqu'à demain. Toute ma vie je me suis fait une règle de ne jamais me presser et j'ai toujours été à temps."

With a view to promote through calmness orderliness,—and with higher views also, though these have respect to the man rather than exclusively to the statesman,—it were to be wished that he should set apart from business, not only a sabbatical day in each week, but if it be possible a sabbatical hour in each day. I do not here refer to his devotional exercises exclusively, but to the advantage he may derive from quitting the current of busy thoughts and cutting out for himself in each day a sort of cell for reading or meditation,—a space resembling one of those bights or incurvations in the course of a rapid stream (called by the Spaniards resting-places) where the waters seem to tarry and repose themselves for a while. This, if it were only by exercising the statesman's powers of self-government,—of intention and remission in business, of putting the mind on and taking it off,—would be a practice well paid; for it is to these powers that he must owe his exemption from the dangers

to mind, body, and business of continued nervous excitement. But to a statesman of a high order of intellect such intermissions of labour will yield a further profit; they will tend to preserve in him some remains of such philosophic or meditative faculties as may be crumbling under the shocks and pressures of public life. One who shall have been deeply imbued in his early years with the love of meditative studies, will find that in any such hour of tranquillity which he shall allow himself, the recollection of them will spring up in his mind with a light and spiritual emanation, in like manner (to resume the similitude) as a bubble of air springs from the bottom of the stayed waters—

“*Ingenii redeunt fructus, aliique labores,  
Et vitæ pars nulla perit ; quodcunque recedit  
Litibus, incumbit studiis, animusque vicissim  
Aut curam imponit populis, aut otia Musis.*” \*

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCERNING CERTAIN POINTS OF PRACTICE.

As fast as papers are received, the party who is to act upon them should examine them so far as to ascertain whether any of them relate to business which requires immediate attention, and should then separate and arrange

\* Claudian. Theod. Paneg.



them. But once so arranged, so that he knows to what subject of what urgency each paper or bundle relates, he should not again suffer himself to look at a paper or handle it, except in the purpose and with the determination to go through with it and despatch the affair. For the practice of looking at papers and handling them without disposing of them, not only wastes the time so employed, but breeds an undue impression of difficulty and trouble as connected with them; and the repetition of acts of postponement on any subject tends more and more to the subjugation of the active power in relation to it. Moreover it will be desirable to act upon a paper or bundle whilst it looks fresh; for it will become uninteresting if the eye have got accustomed to it lying aside, and absolutely repulsive if it have assumed a dusty, obsolete, and often-postponed appearance.

A man of business should accustom himself, when there is no other ground of priority, to deal first with the question of the greatest difficulty; being that which most requires to be encountered in the bloom of novelty, with the unblunted edge of conscious energy. This is a precept of which fewer examples than might be wished are to be found in practice; but it will always be most practised by the ablest men. Men, on the other hand, who feel themselves unequal to great questions, may commonly be observed to fly at the smaller ones which lie in any way within their province, and satisfy themselves that they are fulfilling their duties by disposing of all

these, until they shall *have time* to undertake the momentous and complex affairs : whereas their duty would be to devolve upon others, or even utterly neglect (if it could not be helped), the easy and less important matters, and thereby make time for the great : and they probably would do so, if they were not conscious that when they should have made the time, they would be unable to make use of it in a satisfactory manner. And the transaction of petty business to the postponement of the more momentous, satisfies the consciences of such men ; because men's conceptions of the relative importance of great objects are generally defective in proportion to their defect of ability to deal with them. The importance of objects on which men are diligently and efficaciously employed grows large in their eyes ; and they acquire no lively sense of the importance of the objects which they merely magnify in words, and pass by in the transaction of business.

Lord Bacon alleges, “*ut homines literati sint omnium minime defatigabiles, si modò res sit hujusmodi ut animum pro dignitate ejus impleat et detineat.*” If he had said men of capacity, instead of men of letters, the assertion would have been as true of all times as it was of his own age, when men of letters *were* men of capacity—that is, more exceptionally and eminently so than they have been since.

Amongst old official men the point of practice most valued is conformity to standing rules and regulations.

They are accustomed, with too much regard to their own convenience and too little to the specialties of cases, to insist upon adherence to system or precedent, called by euphemismus adherence to principle ; and so called by men who do not pretend to know the reasons for the system or precedent to which they would conform. It is no doubt an excellent thing to be guided by general rules founded upon reason ; but unless we know and bear in mind the reason upon which they are founded, it will be frequently impossible to determine justly whether the case to which the rule is applied be not one which it is the duty of the minister to take the trouble of considering separately and independently. As often as such cases occur, it will be proper to consider their special circumstances, with a view not only to dispose carefully and justly of the particular case, but also to see whether it may not help us to recast and improve the general rule. For administrative regulations, like other laws, require to be frequently revised and codified, as the experience of their operation is extended.

In high and important spheres of action, though general rules will be for the most part of great use in evading or setting aside personal questions, yet personal individualities may, from time to time, be of such moment as to make it well worth while to set aside the general rule on account of them. Persons of pre-eminent abilities when they appear, should have scope for their abilities at almost any sacrifice of system and

regularity; and such sacrifice of *money* as can be required on such occasions, is a consideration infinitely unworthy to be estimated. The government or nation which should forego the services of highly gifted men because the place and provision to be made for them would not be according to rule, is to be commended for no other regularity than that which should make hay by the almanack,—for no other thrift than that which should let the meat spoil to save the salt.

In this country, in these times, the public service is in a way to suffer more than it ought by an overstrained regard to the interests of individual public servants, sometimes properly, but sometimes also improperly, claiming consideration as what are called “vested interests.” No doubt the innocent incompetency of a public servant should not expose him to be hardly dealt with, if it can be avoided without worse injury to others. And it will seldom happen that there is any desire to deal hardly with innocent incompetency. But it will also happen that there will be a weak reluctance to do justice to the public interests in dealing with incompetency which is not altogether innocent, and even in dealing with short-comings and wrong-doings which have not the excuse of incompetency. As to the short-comings of the incompetent, it is often difficult to say how much should be excused. A conscious incompetency is sadly discouraging, and far harder is it for an incompetent public servant to do what he can, knowing it to be but

bad at the best, than for one who is competent to do even indifferently well, knowing it to be either all that can be expected, or all that can be exacted. Mere short-comings, therefore, will often be what the authority charged with the public interests at issue may be excused for excusing.

But it is otherwise with wrong-doings. And it is in the case of these that the difficulty of doing justice to the public interests is most to be deplored, and that it may be well to consider with care any policy by which it can be surmounted or circumvented. It is by those who assume to be the representatives of the public in Parliament and in the Press that the difficulty is created. And so much of the time of men in office and of the House of Commons will often be consumed in vindicating the just dismissal or other punishment of a public servant, that the person exercising authority, were he to regard only the evil of impunity in the particular instance and not the evil of the example, might be content to hold his hand on the ground that larger public interests would be sacrificed by the course of justice than by the course of condonation. But may not the course of compromise be better than either? I think that in many cases in which justice requires that a public servant should be punished by deprivation, the time of Parliament and public functionaries, and the public interests involved in it, will be best saved and served by leaving him something to lose.

In this country it may be doubted whether commercial

and financial questions are not for the most part considered with too little reference to others. Taxes are remitted, we will say, for the promotion of commerce at a time when commerce is as prosperous as it can be with safety to itself, and presently it is found to be running at express speed into speculative excesses, soon to terminate in a commercial crash. For it is according to the order of Providence that in the advancement of a people there should be some sort of proportion borne by moral to material progress; and a disturbance of this proportion; whilst it leads in the poorer classes of a community to idleness, drunkenness, and crime, leads in the commercial classes to the inebrieties of a greedy and gambling employment of their wealth. In a state of trade which stands in no need of relief, it would be well that a minister of finance should deal with a surplus revenue, if partly by remission of taxes, partly also by making more effective those of the national instrumentalities which are designed to quicken moral progress, and which have never yet been made in this country what money could make them; and chiefly the administration of penal law and the instruction of the poor.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ON OFFICIAL CRITICISM.

HE who objects to what is proposed or written in the transaction of business, unless he be prepared to vindicate inaction, should consider himself under an obligation to propose and execute something to be substituted; for every political measure is in the nature of an alternative, and is not to be pronounced good or bad except as it is better or worse than some other equally definite course of proceeding which might be adopted instead of it. Moreover the trouble of maturing an alternative is no more than a proper curb upon the indulgence of a spirit of crude criticism or a spirit of contradiction.

In our times a co-operative spirit, which is and must be in no small measure a spirit of compromise, is indispensable to the effectiveness of a statesman in office. .

Also the hand which executes a measure should belong to the head which propounds it; otherwise the hand, if an unassenting one, will carry an advantage over the head: and even if willing, it will not be fully correspondent. The vitality of a measure turns full as much upon the *punctum solvens* as upon the *punctum saliens*; and there will commonly be something infirm and halting about any measure which is devised by one man and

executed by another, or (for it amounts nearly to the same thing) any measure of which the execution is conclusively revised and corrected by another than its author. "Nel consultare e governar le cose della corona e stato di Francia," says Sansovino, "sempre intervengono in maggior parte i Prelati; e gli altri signori non se ne curano, perche sanno che le essecutione hanno ad esser fatte da loro." For wise men have always perceived that the execution of political measures is in reality the essence of them, and that the course of things will almost inevitably run counter to the separation of the operative function from the deliberative.

These objections, however, lie only against *authoritative* criticism; and that which is merely suggestive, to be taken *quantum valeat* or at will rejected by the author of the measure or the document, may be of great advantage; especially if that author be neither pertinacious nor diffident, but prepared to weigh his own judgment against his critic's in an even balance with a steady hand. It follows that official criticism is chiefly valuable when exercised by the inferior functionary upon the work of the superior, who will be enabled to weigh the comment undisturbed by deference for the authority of the commentator.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## ON THE ARTS OF RISING.

[In the preface to the first edition of my 'Notes from Life,' I observed that the sub-sarcastic sense in which some portions of 'The Statesman' had been written had not been very well understood, and what was meant for an exposure of some of the world's ways had been mistaken for a recommendation of them. No doubt some reviews and criticisms were then in my thoughts, though I do not now remember what they were. But since it appears that such mistakes could be made (though *how* they could I can scarcely comprehend), it may be worth while to mention that some of the arts adverted to in the following chapter are not such as I would willingly be understood to approve.]

IT is not exactly the same arts that are adapted to the different stages of a man's ascent. Climbing the bole of the tree a man clings with all his arms and legs and lays hold of every knob and sliver. When he mounts amongst the branches, it should be with a more easy alacrity. A man will often be apt at the one operation, yet awkward at the other. Nor is it, indeed, common to meet with a man of such a character as can be carried from a low condition of life through successive ascents, with an aptitude for every condition into which he passes; and thus it is that men who rise well will often stand infirmly. But for want of due consideration being given to the nature of men and circumstances, it is a usual thing to hear, not only regret but surprise expressed,

when a man who has attained an elevated position in life exhibits in that position those very defects of character through which he is there. The humbleness, subserviency, and pliancy which were indispensable to his advancement, incapacitate him for command ; and the integrity which he could at length afford to maintain—which might be even profitable to him—it is not in nature that he should resume. Therefore the man who forces a way to power is commonly more fit for it in some respects than the man who finds a way. But this quality of man being rare, the case seldom occurs unless under circumstances of political commotion and subversion.

The arts of rising, properly so called, have commonly some mixture of baseness—more or less according as the aid from natural endowments is less or more.

In the earlier stages of a man's career he will find it his interest, if it be consonant with his character—(for nothing, be it observed, can be for a man's interest in the long run which is not founded upon his character),—I say if it fall in with his nature and dispositions, it will answer to his interests, to have a speaking acquaintance with large numbers of people of all classes and parties. A general acquaintance of this kind can be kept lightly in hand at no great cost of time or trouble. By taking care that it shall cover a due proportion of men of obscure and middle station, the discredit of courting the great may be partly escaped ; and he who has a speaking acquaintance with a thousand individuals will hardly find

himself in any circumstances in which he cannot make some use of somebody. Out of the multitude of the obscure some will emerge to distinction; the relations with this man or that may be drawn closer as circumstances suggest; and acquaintances which could not be *made* at particular conjunctures without imputations of interested motives, may be *improved* at such moments with much less inconvenience. It is always to be borne in mind that as in commerce large fortunes are most commonly made by dealing in articles for which the poor (that is, the multitude) are customers, so in this traffic with society a man should take into account, not the rich and the great only, but the many.

When a man shall have mounted to a higher level of fortune, he will doubtless find the numerousness of his acquaintance in obscure life to be more troublesome than useful. But if he have taken proper care not to lavish himself in wanton intimacies, and whilst multiplying his *potential* friendships as much as possible, not to cultivate them into actual friendships oftener than his occasions required, he will find the burthen of his superfluous acquaintance lie hardly so heavy upon him in any circumstances as to make it worth his while to throw it off. In his more exalted station bows and smiles will be abundantly sufficient for those with whom bows and smiles had at all times constituted the warp and woof of his connection. From those with whom his intercourse has gone further he may probably be enabled to earn a dis-

pensation for the future by doing them some substantial service which costs him nothing. And with regard to any still closer alliances in which he may be entangled with obscure and unserviceable men, he will do well to single out some individual from time to time, in whose behalf he should make some great and well-known exertion as a tribute to friendship. This will enable him to spare trouble in other instances, and yet avoid being charged generally with the pride of a *parvenu*.

To return to the earlier state of the aspirant. Whilst he has his way to make in the world he should not be afraid of incurring obligations towards men in power; still less should he be afraid of avowing those which he does incur. On the contrary, he should be more ready to imagine a benefit when there is none, than to disavow or to extenuate (as men will sometimes do through the mistakes of an unintelligent pride) any real service. He should indeed be prodigal of thanks to everybody who can be implicated in a benefit conferred on him; for thanks are as commonly the seed of a future benefit as the fruit of one foregoing. He should be careful of insisting much on *claims*; for patrons become least alert to bestow those favours which are most expected, even though the expectation have some colour of a ground of justice to go upon; they are apt to lose the sense of pleasure in doing that which is presented to them in the light of a duty; and the notion of occasioning an agreeable surprise and creating unanticipated happiness,

will oftentimes induce a patron to grant that which he would not yield to a well-founded pretension. A suitor should therefore elect one ground or the other: if the claim of right and justice be not strong enough to compel recognition, he should rest wholly upon the hope of favour,—throwing into his suit only so much of the character of a just claim as may enable his patron to make head against other just claims that conflict with it.

One who would thrive by seeking favours from the great, should never trouble them for small ones. A minister can probably make a man's fortune with as little trouble as it gives him to write a note or to bear in mind some petty request. He will therefore be fretted by applications for which there is no strong motive to be urged; or if he does what is asked with complacency, he will, however, measure the favour by *his* standard of trouble, and consider (with equal complacency) that he is as much quits with his client as if he had made his fortune. I have known men spring a numerous pack of influential friends upon a minister, to obtain some trifle which might almost have been had by asking for, and then plume themselves upon the extreme tenuity of the service which they wanted to be done to them. A man who acts thus will be less easily excused than one who is extravagant in his demands. The minister naturally says, "If he wanted next to nothing, why have I had to read twenty letters of recommendation?"

Amongst the arts of rising it is needless to say that

few are more important than that of holding fast by the skirts of a party. Tergiversation, indeed, is much more frequently justifiable in political morals, than advisable as a matter of personal prudence. To take an example from English history:—A., a Whig and a personal friend of an aristocratical Whig leader, B., joined the government of a Tory prime minister, C. In the circumstances of the time there was little or no real difference in political sentiment between the Tories and the aristocratical Whigs, and A. acted as he did with the full approbation and even at the earnest entreaty of his friend B., who intimated to C. that he would consider A.'s admission to C.'s cabinet as tantamount to his own, and A. as his representative in the government. Nevertheless, when the Tories lost office and B. with the Whigs succeeded them, A. shared precisely the same fate as would have attended any other renegade from his party. He was thrown out of public life, and could not act either with the Whigs or against them. He had forfeited the rights of hostility,—at all times half the fortune of a politician. The rule which I would deduce from this example is, that a statesman will do wisely for himself to walk by the broad lines of party distinction, and not imagine that the specialties of a case will exonerate him from the obligations of an adherent. It may be that, under particular circumstances, not only the entreaties of his friends and partisans, but even the interests of his party, shall recommend to him to take office without

them ; but he will not be the less on that account cast out from amongst them. A public man's career is affected by what is broad, manifest, and universally understood, and not by circumstantial justifications.

## CHAPTER XV.

### ON QUARRELLING.

THAT man would have been by disposition well adapted for statesmanship, of whom it was said that

“ The universal stock of the world's injury  
Would be too poor to find a quarrel for him ” \*—

adding, however, the condition—unless he wants one. For a statesman should be by nature and temper the most unquarrelsome of men, and when he finds it necessary or expedient to quarrel, should do it, though with a stout heart, yet with a cool head. There is no such test of a man's superiority of character as in the well-conducting of an unavoidable quarrel ; and to be engaged in no quarrels but those that are unavoidable or indispensable, though it be not the *experimentum crucis* which

\* ‘ A Fair Quarrel,’ by Middleton and Rowley.

the other test is, affords however an evidence of some excellent qualities.

I have known a man in high office who was precipitate in quarrelling when he had doubts of being in the right, but dreadfully deliberate when he had none. In the latter case there was no end to his investigations and enquiries and precautions, lest he might do his opponent some injustice. He would not gulp the matter then, but would sip and suck and search the flavour of it. This sort of quarrelling was no more to be commended in victory than in defeat. But there can be no question that in public life the policy of quarrelling should be much, if not wholly, governed by the prospect of success. Be sure that you can knock him down, or do not touch him. On this a hint may be taken from the precepts of political charity commended to our attention by Castiglione. If an enemy be drowning, he tells us, and the water is up to his waist, pluck him out; if up to his chin, plunge him in. Perhaps the precept will seem most at home in its native tongue:—“Quando il nemico è nell’acqua insino alla cintura se gli deve porger la mano e levarlo dal pericolo; ma quando v’è insino al mento, mettergli il piede in sul capo e sommergerlo tosto.”\*

A fierce or violent adversary will often be best baffled by coolly and quietly getting out of his way. Many years ago (it was when Exeter Change was a menagerie);

\* ‘Cortegiano,’ lib. iii.



the then Lord Besborough told a friend of mine that he had met a tiger in the Strand. "And what did you do?" "I called a coach."

Those who shall study the career of the most successful Irish demagogue of this, or indeed of any other century, will learn, I think, that his success was promoted by a steady adherence to two rules: 1st, Never to go out of his way to assail or to wound, whilst whatever stood in his way was wounded to the death: 2nd, To be heedless of injury, except for the practical uses of resenting it; and ready to forget it on overtures of reconciliation, provided the ends and purposes of resentment had been accomplished. It is not to demagogues only that these rules might be a source of success.

Idle and frivolous duels are especially to be avoided, because they bring a man into contempt. In the public opinion of these days a presumption of vanity and folly lies against the challenger in a case of duel, and he is charged with the burthen of proving the contrary; nor will he be enabled to clear himself in the judgment of that portion of mankind whose respect is of importance to a statesman, unless his proceedings shall have been marked by the strength of moderation and the dignity of forbearance. He should be able to make it appear that he has yielded to an inevitable necessity, and that every step which he took was taken in a spirit of good sense.

Moreover, in cases which do not proceed to the extremity of fighting a duel, a man should be enabled to

show something more than merely that he has put his antagonist in the wrong, and that he has not on his own part committed any distinct and definable error. There is a sort of man who goes through the world in a succession of quarrels, always able to make out that he is in the right, although he never ceases to put other men in the wrong. The least that can be said of such a person is that he has an unhappy aptitude for eliciting whatever evil there may be in the natures with which he comes in contact: and a man who is sure to cause injuries to be done to him wherever he goes, is almost as great an evil and inconvenience as if he were himself the wrong-doer.

A statesman should have a disposition the reverse of all this, so that he may sun out all the good in men's natures, and not only not quarrel without just cause, but make it as unlikely as may be that just cause will be given him.

Nevertheless his lot is cast amongst a contentious people, and it is not to be denied that he will find it convenient from time to time to show himself capable of provocation. When Dr. Whewell rose to be Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, a party in the University who were opposed to him met to consider what should be done; and Dean Peacock, who was at the head of it, expressed his views: "He is very magnanimous—he bears no resentments—he must be firmly but temperately *resisted*." This shows what may come of a magnanimity

that takes no account of consequences. What the statesman has to do is, to be good-tempered and complacent in the main, just and discreet in his choice of excepted cases. His personal attacks should hardly ever be made but by way of reprisals; they should be grounded in policy, and they should be indebted for spirit and effect to the anger of the imagination rather than to that of the heart. The "torva voluptas" of an indignation conjured up in the fancy will answer every useful purpose of invective, be more governable than the impulses of an irascible temper, and less likely to abuse an occasional and fitting indulgence into an emancipation from general control.

But if due resentment is not to be dispensed with up to a certain point, he should learn from the Irish demagogue and beware of entertaining it after its practical uses are at an end: In many cases, indeed, victory will be turned to the best account by one who values it chiefly as placing him in a position to make, or readily receive, overtures of peace and reconciliation. "È necessario," says Machiavel, "o non offendere mai alcuno, o fare l' offese ad un tratto, e dipoi rassicurare gli huomini, e dare loro cagioni di quietare e fermare l' animo."\* In the therapeutics of statesmanship the enmity of an assailant should be looked upon as a peccant humour, which is to be cured, first by a blister and then by a salve.

Perhaps the most intolerable form of accusation is

\* 'Discorsi sopra Tito Livio.'

that which assumes the garb of forgiveness. "Where I am clear," says one of Beaumont Fletcher's *dramatis personæ*—

" Where I am clear,  
I will not take forgiveness of the Gods,  
Much less of you."

With regard to hostility evinced towards a statesman behind his back and which comes privately to his knowledge, his best course will be to leave it unnoticed and not to allow his knowledge of it to transpire. To punish men for such acts of enmity as these, will hardly save you from others of the like kind, because the acts are done in reliance upon the mischief not breaking out. By divulging your knowledge of the offence done to you, you make an established mutual hostility out of that which may probably have been nothing more than a random stroke of volatile ill-will. I derive this observation from Lord Bacon, who adds, "Si comparari posset speculum aliquod magicum in quo odia, et quæcunque contra nos ullibi commoventur, intueri possemus, melius nobis foret si protinus projiceretur." But there is a case to be excepted; for it may happen that it would be convenient to us, on other grounds, to be able to deal with the party offending as an enemy; and then we may proclaim his private offence as a justification.

Hardly any case can happen in which it will be advisable for a person placed in a high station to quarrel on the account of his *dignity*; and least of all should he

quarrel on this score with an inferior. A dignity which has to be contended for is not worth a quarrel; for it is of the essence of real dignity to be self-sustained, and no man's dignity can be asserted without being impaired. Nor is it always wise to risk a quarrel in support of a man's due and lawful authority. A story of the Duke of Wellington was told me, on the authority of Lord Fitzroy Somerset, which points to the policy of silence on the part of a person in authority, when reproof might result in an inconvenient disturbance of his relations with his inferiors. It was (if I recollect right) on the retreat from Burgos that the Duke gave orders over-night for one portion of his army to pass a river by a bridge and another by a ford some miles further up. At daybreak he rode off to the ford to superintend the operation of crossing. But no troops were there and none came. He was much disturbed, and thought he had lost his army. What had happened was that the generals of division had met, and finding that rain had fallen in the night, had taken it upon themselves to countermand the Duke's orders and send the whole army across by the bridge, thereby placing the rear in a predicament of much peril. The Duke met Lord Fitzroy soon after, and told him what had been done. Lord Fitzroy, greatly surprised at the conduct of the generals of division, asked, "Well, sir; and what did you say?" The Duke made answer, "Oh, by God, it was too serious: I said nothing."

There is a converse case—that of the man not *in* authority but *under* authority, in which the policy of silence is to be commended, and it is significantly set forth in a fable quoted by Selden: “Wise men say nothing in dangerous time. The lion, you know, called the sheep to ask him if his breath smelt; she said, Aye; he bit off her head for a fool: He called the wolf and asked him; he said, No; he tore him in pieces for a flatterer: At last he called the fox and asked him; truly he had got a cold and could not smell.”

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### ON THE ETHICS OF POLITICS.

THE rules of political morality seem to be less ascertained and agreed upon in general opinion than any other branch of philosophy which applies itself directly to the life of man; and this is owing perhaps to their being in their nature less determinate; for though the *first* principles of this, as of all other morality, are plain and definite, the derivative principles, and their application in practice, are not so.

Some moralists would have the principles of private life carried whole into politics, in all their distinctness and strictness. Some, on the other hand, might have

been worshippers in the Temple at Acro-Corinth, which was dedicated to Necessity and Violence.

The result of this division of opinion is, that public men who adopt the more rigid creed, finding the carrying of it into practice to be equivalent to a repudiation of public life, are set at variance with themselves—their conduct jarring with their principles—and get their consciences broken down in an unavailing struggle: whilst they who deny the applicability to political life of the principles of private morality, are often unable to find footing upon any principle whatever.

The violation in political transactions of any precept of private morals, is denounced by popular moralists as “a doing of evil that good may come of it.” It is far indeed from my thoughts to dissent from the maxim that evil is not to be done in order that good may come of it. But for the purpose of ascertaining the bearing of the maxim upon civil affairs, it is necessary to examine what may be the exact meaning intended by it. I am not, I trust, infected with the juvenile philosophy which would reject popular maxims of this kind without examining whether their error be not the want of scholastic accuracy in the terms more than the want of reason for their basis. And the maxim in question stands upon still higher grounds; for it appears to have been popular even before the Christian era, and the sanction of St. Paul was given incidentally to the substance of it. I inquire, therefore, what that substance is? To the terms a logician would

probably at first sight take this exception : that whereas nothing can be good or evil but as good or evil may come of it (the consequence of every act determining its quality), so you cannot do evil that good may come of it, unless by a mistake of what will be the consequence of what you do. But it is evident that something more is implied by the maxim, than a mere warning against mistaking evil for good. The exception, therefore, would be just against the terms ; but when the sense is duly expressed it is found to contain a well-known principle of ethics. The acts which we do are truly good or evil, not only according to the immediate and obvious consequences, but also according to those which are remote and involved. Morality can only be maintained by the submission of individual judgments to general rules. The evil consequences *involved* in a departure from any such rule in any case, will always overbalance the *ostensible* good consequences ; so that on the whole it is truly an act of evil consequence, or a doing of evil. The maxim means then, "Do not for the sake of certain good consequences, though they be perhaps the only ones directly perceivable, an act which, as being a departure from a general rule of morality, must be evil upon the balance of consequences."

Let us take this principle thus understood, and see whether it be equally applicable to private and to political life.

The law of truth stands first in the code of private



morality. Suppose this law adopted absolutely by statesmen acting in this country and in this age as members of a government. Not one in ten of the measures taken by the cabinet can win the sincere assent of every member of that cabinet. The opinions of fifteen or twenty individuals can never be uniformly concurrent. The law of truth would require the dissentient members not to express assent. Under this law, when the Speaker of the House of Commons bids those who are of this opinion to say "Aye" and those who are of the contrary opinion to say "No," the dissentient members of the cabinet must say "No" accordingly. But if every such diversity of opinion is to be publicly declared, it is manifestly not in the nature of things, as society is at present constituted, that a plural government should exist. To this the moralist answers,—Ask not whether it can exist or no, but maintain truth and the immutable principles of right and wrong, and trusting to them dare all consequences. I reply, If they *be* immutable principles of right and wrong, trust to them of course; but that is itself the question at issue.

I recur, therefore, to the primary test of right and wrong, namely, the balance of all the consequences, near and distant, obvious and involved; and I estimate the consequences of relaxing the law of truth in private life to show a vast balance of evil; and the consequence of relaxing that law in public life to show a serious array of evil certainly, but I hesitate to say a balance, because

I feel myself unable to calculate the magnitude of the moral evils and the extent of the destruction of moral principles which would ensue either by a dissolution of the general frame of society or by the secession of scrupulous men from the government and the consequent delivery of it into the hands of the unscrupulous. If indeed the cause of truth at large were to be sacrificed by taking a distinction between the obligations of truth in private and in political affairs, then I should have no hesitation whatever: because the cause of truth at large and of civil society are one and indivisible: but it appears to me, on the contrary, that the cause of truth at large is sacrificed, not by taking the distinction, but by confounding the distinction. For when a member of a government, advocating a particular measure which he does not sincerely approve, is believed by himself, or by others, to be committing the same violation of the principle of truth as if he were telling a falsehood in private life, then indeed he himself incurs the guilt of such a falsehood and the corruption of conscience attending it, and the cause of truth suffers by his example and his impunity. But if, on the other hand, he advocates what he does not approve with a clear conscience, and stands, *quâ* statesman, in his own apprehension and in that of others, under a well-understood absolution from speaking the truth in particular cases, then there is in reality no more violation of the principle of truth at large than there is of his own conscience. For falsehood ceases to

be falsehood when it is understood on all hands that the truth is not expected to be spoken. The criminal at the bar who pleads "Not guilty" to his indictment, is not charged with lying though his plea be ever so untrue. Forensic advocacy is conducted upon a similar understanding: and it may demand a doubt whether they who extend the jurisdiction of a principle to cases which must in the nature of things refuse its jurisdiction, do not in reality act in derogation and not in support of its authority; seeing that the authority of all law (whether of the moral or civil code) is weakened, when that is promulgated as law which must of necessity be generally disobeyed.

In fact if assent declared to particular measures which he does not approve, be a falsehood on the part of a member of a government introducing those measures, then no government has ever been formed, any one member of which has been other than a liar. It is certain, then, that great discredit is done to the cause of truth, either, on the one hand, by the uniform or general invasion of it by men all of whom have an eminent position in life and some a high moral reputation; or, on the other hand, by calling that a principle of truth which they uniformly or generally invade.

The real difficulty lies (as I conceive) in discriminating the cases of exemption; in the delimitation of those bounds within which a statesman's dispensation should be confined. To treat of these would require

a volume. A statesman is engaged, certainly, in a field of action which is one of great danger to truthfulness and sincerity. His conscience walks, too like the ghost of a conscience, in darkness or twilight. But his moral nature will not be the better if he be taught to think that the form of falsehood is the same with the spirit, and that when he shall have done what, being a statesman in office he cannot but do, he has no longer any moral truthfulness to sustain or to lose.

Again, the moral principle of private life which forbids one man to despoil another of his property, is outraged in the last degree when one man holds another in slavery. Carry it therefore in all its absoluteness into political life, and you require a statesman to do what he can, under any circumstances whatever, to procure immediate freedom for any parties who may be holden in slavery in the dominion of the State which he serves. Yet take the case of negro slaves in the British dominions in the condition of barbarism in which they were thirty years ago, and we find the purest of men and strictest of moralists falling short of the conclusion. In private life the magnitude of the good which results from maintaining the principle inviolate far overbalances any specific evil which may possibly attend an adherence to it in a particular case. But in political affairs it may happen that the specific evil is the greater of the two, even in looking to the longest train of consequences that can be said to be within the horizon of human foresight. For to set

a generation of savages free in a civilised community would be merely to maintain one moral principle inviolate at the expense of divers other moral principles.

Upon the whole, therefore, I come to the conclusion that the cause of public morality will be best served by moralists permitting to statesmen, what statesmen must necessarily take and exercise—a free judgment namely, though a most responsible one, in the weighing of specific against general evil, and in the perception of perfect or imperfect analogies between public and private transactions, in respect of the moral rules by which they are to be governed. The standard of morality to be held forth by moralists to statesmen is sufficiently elevated when it is raised to the level of practicable virtue: such standards to be influential must be above common opinion certainly, but not remotely above it; for if above it, yet near, they draw up common opinion; but if they be far off in their altitude they have no attractive influence.

By some readers it may perhaps be questioned whether, in a work the scheme of which admits no amplitude of discussion, I ought to have treated at all, since I must of necessity treat shortly, so high and grave a subject as that of political morality. I have done so, supported by the assurance that there is amongst the writers and thinkers of this country such an effective oppugnancy to all false doctrine on moral themes, that even should I have fallen into error, the putting forth of such error will tend to bring truth into a more vital

activity. Yet this assurance notwithstanding, I may almost say that I have written what I have written with a trembling hand.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### ON CONSISTENCY IN A STATESMAN.

THE credit which is commonly attached to consistency in a statesman, belongs to it, not so much for being a merit in itself (which it may or may not be) as for being a presumptive evidence of another merit—the merit of political probity. Considering the temptations under which politicians are placed of changing their opinions, or rather their professions of opinion, from motives of self-interest, the world will not give them credit for motives of honest conviction, unless when the change shall be to their manifest loss and disadvantage. And if the judgments of the world were to go otherwise, no doubt these temptations would be yielded to much more frequently than they are. Therefore when a statesman sees fit to change an opinion which he has publicly professed, whether the change be right or wrong, it is required for the general guarding and sustaining of political honesty, that he should suffer for it, either in

political character, or (what would generally be the more eligible alternative for him in the long run) in immediate and apparent personal interests.

In this country and in these times, the questions of political consistency which arise are exceedingly complicated and perplexing, and the snares with which a statesman's integrity is beset are many in proportion, and very inveigling. For popular assent having become an essential condition of the practicability of measures, an assumption of that assent being attainable to any measure becomes part and lot of the opinion about it; inasmuch as the opinion, if it had not reference to practicability, would be a mere Utopian speculation. If popular assent, then, be unexpectedly refused, it would seem no impeachment of a statesman's integrity or even consistency, that he should change his course; since it is not the previous opinion that is changed, but one of the essential elements of the case upon which the previous opinion had been formed. But it will be asked, perhaps, whether a statesman should suffer himself to be so far the agent of public opinion as whilst in office he must be, when the assents and dissents of public opinion do not square with his judgment. The answer is, I apprehend, that those assents and dissents are a part of the subject-matter with which his judgment is to deal, and that supposing them to be unalterable by any course which he might pursue, all that he has to do is to conform his judgment to the case inclusive of them, and

to make the nearest approximation which they will permit to the course which apart from them he would think it expedient to pursue. He should steer by the compass, but he must lie with the wind.

If, however, he can throw upon the opinions he disapproves any effective discredit or discountenance by quitting office, it may become his duty to do so. And the like duty may devolve upon him if, owing to the misjudgments of mankind, his political reputation and the public interests involved in it are likely to be sacrificed by his continuing in office.

Men brought early into public life will sometimes propound opinions in a way to furnish the magazines of their enemies with heavy charges of inconsistency in future. A young man will sometimes adopt opinions for the purpose of making speeches and playing a part ; and when he plays his part only with the intellectual ardour of a disputant, though he commits himself a good deal, he may perhaps find an escape from the difficulties of a change of opinion at a future time ; but when he goes further and declaims with a moral earnestness and solemnity as one who is in it head and heart, then he cannot change his side of the question, unmoved by any change in the aspect of the question itself, without incurring the reproach of corrupt motives or of a volatile understanding. In a considerable proportion of tergiversations, if not in the majority of them, the insincerity, if the truth were known, would be found to have been



as much in the previous opinion as in that which supplants it. It is a rare thing perhaps at any age, certainly in youth and with a cultivated and argumentative mind, to have strong and conclusive opinions, though it is a common thing to express opinions strongly ; and young and oratorical men will often enounce as intimate convictions, and with great zeal and fervour, opinions which are in reality as lightly holden by them as they have been prematurely formed. . In after life this insincerity is visited upon them ; for they are accused of a less venial insincerity when the light opinion is seriously and conscientiously changed.

Some statesmen will express themselves strongly, upon loose consideration, against a course of conduct which they do not think it for their interest to adopt at the moment ; but afterwards perhaps they find it eligible, whereupon, looking at the matter more closely, they find it justifiable ; and then in adopting it they stand self-condemned without reason. Thus a man will sometimes say, when he does not much expect office to be offered to him, that he should think himself the greatest vagabond in the universe if he were to accept it, saying so without any adequate grounds for the opinion. And when the offer comes, he accepts it perhaps without any real impropriety, but with discredit redounding to him from his previous imprudences of speech. There are cases enough of this kind occurring from time to time, to suggest to a discreet statesman the precept of not

indulging in hypothetical denunciations of particular lines of conduct, unless when there is some practical purpose to be answered by it.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ON SECRECY.

WHOM a statesman trusts at all he should trust largely, not to say unboundedly ; and he should avow his trust to the world. In nine cases out of ten of betrayed confidence in affairs of State, vanity is the traitor. When a man comes into possession of some chance secrets now and then—some one or two—he is tempted to parade them to this friend or that. But when he is known to be trusted with all manner of secrets, his vanity is interested, not to show them, but to show that he can keep them. And his fidelity of heart is also better secured.

A secret may be sometimes best kept by keeping the secret of its being a secret. It is not many years since a State secret of the greatest importance was printed without being divulged, merely by sending it to the press like any other matter, and trusting to the mechanical habits of the persons employed. They printed it piecemeal in ignorance of what it was about.

The only secrecy which is worthy of trust in matters of State—and indeed the same may be said of secrecy in

private friendship—is that which not merely observes an *enjoined* silence, but which maintains a considerate and judicious reticence in matters in which silence is perceived to be expedient, though it have *not* been enjoined. Faithfulness to public interests and to official and to friendly confidence, demands a careful exercise of the judgment as to what shall be spoken and what not, on many occasions when there is no question of obedience to express injunctions of secrecy. And indeed, in dealing with a confidential officer or friend, a statesman would do well to avoid any frequency of injunction on this head on particular occasions, because it tends to impair, on the part of such officer or friend, that general watchfulness which is produced in a man who feels that he is thrown upon his own judgment and caution.

Secrecy will hardly be perfectly preserved unless by one who makes it a rule to avoid the whole of a subject of which he has to retain a part. To flesh your friend's curiosity and then endeavour to leave him with a *hinc usque*, is exposing your faculty of reticence to an unnecessary trial.

The most difficult of all subjects to be kept secret are such as will furnish fair occasion for a jest; and a statesman should regulate his confidence accordingly; being especially sparing of it in regard to such matters, and where he must needs impart them, taking care not to imp their wings by any jest of his own imparted along with them.

Shy and unready men are great betrayers of secrets ; for there are few wants more urgent for the moment than the want of something to say. Such men may stand in need of the assurance given in Ecclesiasticus,—“ If thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee : and be bold, it will not burst thee.” \*

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### ON AMBITION.

WHERE there are large powers with little ambition (which will happen sometimes though seldom) nature may be said to have fallen short of her purposes ; for she has given the machinery without the *vis motrix*. Hardly anything will bring a man's mind into full activity if ambition be wanting ; but where it is least forthcoming as a substantive and waking passion, there are various indirect adjuncts of other passions whereby it may be quickened. Love may be a provocative, if advancement in life be a facility to the courtship. Philanthropy leads to it ; for who can do good to mankind without power ? Timidity is driven to it ; for, as Mucianus said, “ *Confugiendum est ad imperium.*” † Friendship suggests it ; for a man gratifies his friends when he advances himself.

\* xix. 10.

† Tacitus, Hist., ii. 76.

And generally all objects which a man has at heart, however much apart from self-interest, are in some degree connected with the pushing of his fortunes.

Whatsoever things are supplements of ambition in case of defect, are aggravations in case of excess; which is the more common case. Excess of ambition arises, sometimes from a lively imagination confounding the future with the present, or a weakness of mind sacrificing the future to the present; and less frequently from deliberate miscalculation as to the sources of permanent happiness. Few men deliberately conclude with themselves that happiness in life is to be best promoted by accomplishing the objects of ambition; and their better judgment notwithstanding, most men will make their election of those objects. Do they not then desire to be happy? An answer which should negative this desire would seem to be almost a contradiction in terms; and the true answer is, that in such cases the thing desired and elected *is* for the *immediate* happiness of the party, and is contrary only to his happiness in the long run. A young man of a weak body and a nervous temperament shall be eager to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, although he be deliberately convinced in his judgment that Parliamentary labours and a life of political vicissitude will destroy his health and with it his happiness. For the seat in Parliament is an advancement in life, and that is always pleasant when it takes place, although the enjoyment soon passes off, and

nothing but a constant succession of advancements could keep it up. It is thus that for the pleasure of the *transition* (which is a real pleasure so long as it lasts) we sacrifice the *state*.

The world will commonly end by making men that which it thinks them. If a man could be satisfied that the world was convinced that he was indifferent to the objects of ambition, then he might more easily be actually indifferent to them; but as the world must always be understood to assume that a man is aiming at such objects, the non-attainment of them seems to place him in a position of defeat. This is more distinctly the case when a man has made a first step towards the acquisition; and the circumstance that with every succeeding step a man more and more convicts himself of ambitious aims in the eyes of the world, thereby staking more of manifest discomfiture upon the issues, may have some share in explaining the growing nature of the passion.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### CONCERNING RANK AS A QUALIFICATION FOR HIGH OFFICE.

It may be thought that the function would carry the rank. If this were so, still social and extrinsic rank would be desirable, as coming in aid of official. But it is not so

always. For it often happens that some functions of statesmanship are performed by one who has neither social nor much of official rank. The evil of this is that parties who transact business with him do not feel the value of his time, and a considerable part of the public property invested in his labour is lost.

Such a person, through the want of better titles, will commonly obtain that of a "Jack in office;" and *his* insolence and presumption will be contrasted with the natural courtesy of a man of high rank and station. The truth is, however, that the one, being scrupulously approached and charily occupied, can afford to be courteous; whereas, if the other were to be equally so, it must be at the cost, not only of his personal convenience, but of his duty and essential utility as a public servant. No suitors tread timorously in *his* approaches; none sit upon thorns in his presence, pricked by the consciousness that they are stealing the golden minutes. He is understood to be active and influential in the transaction of business, and every stranger, therefore, who has anything to solicit, knocks hardily at his door, not reflecting that his influence and activity depend upon his shutting himself up and applying himself uninterruptedly to his business. His remedy is to be cold, dry, or harsh,—not for his personal relief, but in order that he may be allowed to do his duty to the public. His reward is to be called a "Jack in office;" and the common remark is repeated, "How unassuming are the high-born, the high-bred, the

men of rank, the men of station—how insolent are the under-strappers !”

Further, adventitious rank goes well with office, in respect that it tends to smooth over an inherent disparity the wrong way, when it occurs (as it must and will occasionally) between those in command and those under command. To see reason overruled,—

“ And strength by limping sway disabled,  
And art made tongue-tied by authority— ”\*

will doubtless be disagreeable, let it be warranted as it may ; but it will be less odious when done by a prince or a duke, than when it is the act of a man raised from a lower rank in society to a high official station. Were it possible that preferment should always go by merit, other elevation might be better dispensed with ; but looking at life and human nature as they exist and to the influence which established orders and degrees of society obtain over the imaginations of men, it may be said that that influence is well applied when it helps to render less obnoxious an inevitable official subjection of the superior intellect. That is no insignificant part of the philosophy of government which calls in aid the imaginations of men in order to subjugate the will and understanding ; and so long as man shall continue to be an imaginative being, it will be expedient that those who are to enjoy pre-eminence or to exercise power, should

\* Shakspeare's Sonnets, 66.



be invested with some ideal influence which may serve to clothe the nakedness of authority. Nor is it to be supposed that an injustice is done to intellect so often as it is postponed to other attributes: on the contrary, that justice which deals in equal dispensations would bid the man of great intellectual gifts to be content with the superiority he has from nature, and leave other superiorities to those who are worse provided: and it is justice to the public, and not to him, which demands his preferment.

Moreover, if intellect were not to divide with other advantages the deference of mankind, it may be doubted whether the domination of the strong in understanding over the weak would not become oppressive; for we see every day that talents are easily divorced from wisdom and charity; and when this separation takes place, there is no pride which is more ungracious, none more aggressive, than the pride of intellect.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### ON DECISIVENESS.

THERE are divers kinds of decisiveness: there is that of temperament, and that of reason; and there is that which is compounded of both: and this last is the best for a

statesman. The tendency of the reasoning and contemplative faculty is to suggest more doubts than conclusions, and to comprehend in its dealings with a subject more considerations than the human mind is adequate to bring to a clear issue. Temperament is wanted, therefore, to abbreviate the operations of reason and close up the distances; thereby enabling the mind, where many things are doubtful, to seize decisively those which are least so, and hold by them as conclusions. On the other hand, the tendency of a temperament energetically decisive, is to overleap some of the preliminary and collateral investigations which might, with proper patience, be available to certainty of conclusion; and the strength of a reasoning faculty trained to scrupulous habits is required to balance this tendency.

Moreover, to make a perfect statesman it is necessary that these antagonist dispositions should be so far under command that they may be curbed or indulged in different degrees at different stages in the consideration of a question. If the subject be large and complex, the state natural to a comprehensive mind at the first approach to it, is a state of some confusion and perplexity; and this is the best state to begin with: for he whose mind is not seasonably inconclusive and cannot bear with a reasonable term of suspense, will either get wrong, or get right more tardily by means of after-thought and correction. To hold the judgment free upon specific points in a question until the mind have taken a general estimate

of the proportions and relations of its several parts and have become somewhat familiarised to the hypothetical aspects of it, is the indecisiveness of reason and wisdom. This is the *couchant* attitude of the mind, which best prepares it to secure its prey; or (to transfer the metaphor) it is the wheeling survey which precedes the stoop. But when the time comes to stoop or to pounce, the energy ought to be in proportion to the previous abstinence. Thus the stages in the consideration and decision of a question, as in adopting and pursuing a course of action, ought to be marked by more of patience and circumspection at the beginning, more of energy towards the end. "Prima Argo committenda sunt; extrema Briareo." Some statesmen have been known to reverse this maxim.

Indecisiveness will be *ceteris paribus* most pernicious in affairs which require secrecy;—1st. Because the greatest aid to secrecy is celerity; 2nd. Because the undecided man, seeking after various counsel, necessarily multiplies confidences.

The pretext for indecisiveness is commonly mature deliberation: but in reality indecisive men occupy themselves less in deliberation than others; for to him who fears to decide, deliberation (which has a foretaste of that fear) soon becomes intolerably irksome, and the mind escapes from the anxiety of it into alien themes. Or if that seems too open a dereliction of its task, it gives itself to inventing reasons of postponement; and the

man who has confirmed habits of indecisiveness will come in time to look upon postponement as the first object in all cases ; and wherever it seems to be practicable, will bend all his faculties to accomplish it. With the same eagerness with which others seize opportunities of action, will these men seize upon pretexts for foregoing them ; not having before their eyes the censure pronounced by the philosopher of Malmesbury, who says, “ After men have been in deliberation till the time of action approach, if it be not then manifest what is best to be done, ’tis a sign the difference of motives the one way and the other is not great : therefore not to resolve then, is to lose the occasion by weighing of trifles ; which is pusillanimity.” \*

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## CHAPTER XXII.

CONCERNING REFORM OF THE EXECUTIVE, AND THE  
CONSTITUTION OF AN OFFICE OR ESTABLISHMENT  
FOR TRANSACTING THE BUSINESS OF A MINISTER.

IN this country an establishment of this kind is commonly formed as follows :—1st. There are one or more political and Parliamentary officers subordinate to the minister,

\* ‘ Leviathan,’ part i. chap. ii.

who come and go with their principals or with the government to which they belong, but have not seats in the Cabinet. They go by the name of Under-Secretaries of State in the three \* Secretaries of State's offices, Vice-President of the Board of Trade, Secretaries and junior Lords or junior Commissioners at the Board of Treasury, the Board of Admiralty, and the Board of Control.† 2nd. There is an officer of similar rank, who is not in Parliament and holds his office by a more permanent tenure, without reference to changes of ministry. 3rd. There is the minister's private secretary, who of course comes and goes with his principal, whether the change extends to the government or not. 4th. There are some twenty clerks more or less, also permanent, divided into three or four grades of subordination.

As any essential reform of the executive government must consist in a reform of these establishments, I will endeavour to explain what seems to be the theory of them, what are their merits in practice, and what are the means of amending them.

The system seems to assume that a minister who is charged with a particular branch of business besides his share in the general direction of affairs in the Cabinet, will require for that branch of business one person or more to assist him in transactions of a political and Parlia-

\* Now (in 1878) five.

† Now (in 1878) supplanted by the Secretary of State for India and his Council.

mentary character, and another to aid him with that knowledge and experience connected with his particular charge which can only be obtained by continuous service in one department of the State ; and that he will also require a private secretary to write his complimentary notes and take care of his confidential papers, and a score of clerks to transact matters of routine and make copies and entries of despatches.—The theory is correct in assuming that these several things are necessary to be done ; but it is exceedingly fallacious in its estimate of relative quantities, and in its omissions.

A statesman who takes a part in consultations in the Cabinet, or debates in a legislative assembly, or in both, ought to be relieved from all business which is not accessory to the performance of his duties as councillor and legislator. For those duties, if amply and energetically performed, must, by their nature if not by their magnitude, go far to incapacitate any but very extraordinary individuals for performing others. The excitement of oral discussion with able colleagues upon deeply interesting and often personal topics, and still more the excitement of public debate, can rarely be combined with patient application to dry documentary business within the walls of an office. If the one class of business be transacted, in the duties of research and preparation with fidelity, and in those of execution with ardour, the other class will be almost inevitably neglected. It is true that no accurate demarcation can be made between Parliamentary

and Cabinet business on the one hand, and office business on the other ; and a good deal of acquaintance with the latter will be necessary to give the general knowledge required for the former. It is also true that, in order to answer the claims of our Constitution, the statesman who is dependent for his place upon a majority in the House of Commons, must be responsible for everything ; and in order to bear this responsibility he must be conversant with all the more important business transacted under his authority. This conversancy I would be understood, therefore, to include in the business accessory to the discharge of a minister's duties in the Cabinet and in Parliament ; the exemption which I require for him being of that actual execution of his office business which is not indispensable to a competent degree of conversancy with it.

The minister being thus relieved during the whole year, and his Parliamentary assistant during the session of Parliament, it remains to inquire how the office business (setting aside the mere routine and mechanical part) is to be done without their help. The theory says, by one permanent and experienced officer.\* Whether we admit that the theory speaks the truth, depends upon the view which we take of what the duties are, and of the manner in which they ought to be executed.

Descriptive and authenticated estimates of such duties are manifestly impossible to be given : but let some considerations be deemed worthy to be well weighed.

\* Now (in 1878) by more than one.

The far greater proportion of the duties which are performed in the office of a minister are and must be performed under no effective responsibility. Where politics and parties are not affected by the matter in question, and so long as there is no flagrant neglect or glaring injustice to individuals which a party can take hold of, the responsibility to Parliament is merely nominal, or falls otherwise only through casualty, caprice, and a misemployment of the time due from Parliament to legislative affairs. Thus the business of the office may be reduced within a very manageable compass without creating public scandal. By evading decisions wherever they can be evaded ; by shifting them on other departments or authorities where by any possibility they can be shifted ; by giving decisions upon superficial examinations,—categorically, so as not to expose the superficiality in propounding the reasons ; by deferring questions till, as Lord Bacon says, “they resolve of themselves ;” by undertaking nothing for the public good which the public voice does not call for ; by conciliating loud and energetic individuals at the expense of such public interests as are dumb or do not attract attention ; by sacrificing everywhere what is feeble and obscure to what is influential and cognisable ;—by such means and shifts as these the single functionary granted by the theory may reduce his business within his powers, and perhaps obtain for himself the most valuable of all reputations in this line of life, that of “a safe man :”



and if his business, even thus reduced, strains, as it well may, his powers and his industry to the utmost, then (whatever may be said of the theory) the man may be without reproach—without other reproach at least than that which belongs to men placing themselves in a way to have their understandings abused and debased, their sense of justice corrupted, their public spirit and appreciation of public objects undermined.

Turning (I would almost say revolting) from this to another view of what these duties are and of the manner in which they ought to be performed, I would in the first place earnestly insist upon this: that in all cases concerning points of conduct and quarrels of subordinate officers, in all cases of individual claims upon the public and public claims upon individuals,—in short in all cases (and such commonly constitute the bulk of a minister's unpolitical business) wherein the minister is called upon to deliver a quasi-judicial decision,—he should on no consideration permit himself to pronounce such decision unaccompanied by a detailed statement of all the material facts and reasons upon which his judgment proceeds. I know well the inconvenience of this course; I know that authority is most imposing without reason alleged; I know that the reasons will rarely satisfy, and will sometimes tend to irritate, the losing party, who would be better content to think himself overborne than convicted; I am aware that the minister may be sometimes by this course inevitably drawn into protracted

argumentation with parties whose whole time and understanding is devoted to getting advantages over him : and with a full appreciation of these difficulties I am still of opinion that for the sake of justice they ought to be encountered and dealt with. One who delivers awards from which there is no appeal, for which no one can call him to account (and such, as has been said, is practically a minister's exemption), if he do not subject himself to this discipline, if he do not render himself amenable to confutation, will inevitably contract careless and precipitate habits of judgment ; and the case which is not to be openly expounded will seldom be searchingly investigated. In various cases also which concern public measures, as well as those which are questions of justice, ample written and recorded discussion is desirable. Few questions are well considered till they are largely written about ; and the minds and judgments of great functionaries transacting business *inter parietes* labour under a deficiency of bold checks from oppugnant minds.

Again, in the view of those duties to which I would point, let this be included,—that the department of the highest authority in the State should always be ready to take the lion's share of responsibility and labour, where the importance of the affair invites it. Where there is hazard and difficulty, the inclination on the part of the superior authority should be that of the stronger nature, rather to assume than to devolve. For it is in this harmony between official power and natural strength that the State is justified.

Further, it is one business to do what must be done, another to devise what ought to be done. It is in the spirit of the British government, as hitherto existing, to transact only the former business ; and the reform which it requires is to enlarge that spirit so as to include the latter. Of and from amongst those measures which are forced upon him, to choose that which will bring him the most credit with the least trouble and risk, has hitherto been the sole care of a statesman in office ; and as a statesman's official establishment has been heretofore constituted, it is care enough for any man. Every day, every hour, has its exigencies, its immediate demands ; and he who has hardly time to eat his meals, cannot be expected to occupy himself in devising good for mankind. "I am," says Mr. Landor's statesman, "a waiter at a tavern where every hour is dinner-time, and pick a bone upon a silver dish." The current compulsory business he gets through as he may ; some is undone, some is ill done ; but at least to get it done is an object which he proposes to himself. But as to the inventive and suggestive portions of a statesman's functions, he would think himself a Utopian dreamer if he undertook them in any large measure otherwise than through a re-constitution and reform of his establishment.

And what then is the field for these inventive and self-suggested operations ; and if practicable, would they be less important than those which are called for by the obstreperous voices of to-day and to-morrow ?

I am aware that under popular institutions there are many measures of exceeding advantage to the people, which it would be in vain for a minister to project until the people, or an influential portion of the people, should become apprised of the advantage and ask for it; many which can only be carried by overcoming resistance; much resistance only to be overcome with the support of popular opinion and general solicitude for the object. And looking no further, it might seem that what is not immediately called for by the public voice was not within the sphere of practical dealing. But I am also aware that, in the incalculable extent and multifarious nature of the public interests which lie open to the operations of a statesman in this country, one whose faculties should be adequate would find (in every month that he should devote to the search) measures of great value and magnitude which time and thought only were wanting to render practicable. He would find them—not certainly by shutting himself up in his closet and inventing what had not been thought of before—but by holding himself on the alert, by listening with all his ears (and he should have many ears abroad in the world) for the suggestions of circumstance, by catching the first moment of public complaint against real evil, encouraging it and turning it to account, by devising how to throw valuable measures that do not excite popular interest into one boat with those that do, by knowing (as a statesman who is competent to operations on a large scale may know) how to

carry a measure by enlargement such as shall merge specific objections that would be insurmountable in general ones that can be met; in short by a thousand means and projects lying in the region between absolute spontaneous invention on the one hand and mere slavish adoption on the other,—such means and projects as will suggest themselves to one who meditates the good of mankind “sagacious of his quarry from afar,” but not to a minister whose whole soul is and must be in the “notices of motions” and the order-book of the House of Commons, and who has no one behind to prompt him to other enterprise,—no closet or office-statesman for him to fall back upon as upon an inner mind.

This then is the great evil and want—that there is not within the pale of our government any adequately numerous body of efficient statesmen, some to be more externally active and answer the demands of the day, others to be somewhat more retired and meditative in order that they may take thought for the morrow. How great the evil of this want is, it may require peculiar opportunities of observation fully to understand and feel; but one who with competent knowledge should consider well the number and magnitude of those measures which are postponed for years or totally pretermitted, not for want of practicability but for want of time and thought; one who should proceed with such knowledge to consider the great means and appliances of wisdom which lie scattered through this intellectual country,—squandered

upon individual purposes, not for want of applicability to national ones, but for want of being brought together and directed ; one who, surveying these things with a heart capable of a people's joys and sorrows, their happy virtue or miserable guilt on these things dependent, should duly estimate the abundant means unemployed, the exalted ends unaccomplished, could not choose, I think, but say within himself that there must be something fatally amiss in the very idea of statesmanship on which our system of administration is based ; or that there must be some mortal apathy at what should be the very centre and seat of life in a country—that the golden bowl must be broken at the fountain and the wheel broken at the cistern.

How this state of things is to be amended it may be hard to teach, at least to minds which are fluttering in the perpetual agitation of current politics, or to those which have stiffened in established customs. But to a free and balanced understanding I would freely say, that whatever other things be necessary (and they are many) it is in the first place indispensable to a reform of the executive government of this country, that every minister of State charged with a particular department of public business should be provided with four or six permanent under-secretaries instead of one,\*—that all of those four

\* In the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which when this was written there was but one such officer, there are now (in 1878) four.

or six should be efficient closet-statesmen, and two of them at the least be endowed, in addition to their practical abilities, with some gifts of philosophy and speculation well cultivated, disciplined, and prepared for use.

Yet such is the prevalent insensibility to that which constitutes the real treasure and resources of the country—its serviceable and statesmanlike minds—and so far are men in power from searching the country through for such minds, or men in Parliament from promoting or permitting the search, that I hardly know if that minister has existed in the present generation, who, if such a mind were casually presented to him, would not forego the use of it rather than hazard a debate in the House of Commons upon an additional item in his estimates.

Till the government of the country shall become a nucleus at which the best wisdom in the country contained shall be perpetually forming itself in deposit, it will be, except as regards the shuffling of power from hand to hand and class to class, little better than a government of fetches, shifts, and hand-to-mouth expedients. Till a wise and constant instrumentality at work upon administrative measures (distinguished as they might be from measures of political parties) shall be understood to be essential to the government of a country, that country can be considered to enjoy nothing more than the embryo of a government,—a means towards producing, through changes in its own structure and constitution and in the political elements acting upon

it, something worthy to be called a government at some future time. For governing a country is a very different thing from upholding a government. "Alia res sceptrum, alia plectrum."

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### FURTHER RESPECTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINISTER—PRIVATE SECRETARIES—CLERKS.

IT seems to be almost universally allowed that in the choice of his private secretary a statesman may be guided mainly by considerations of personal intimacy, family connection, and the predilections of his wife and daughters. Yet is this an indulgence which a statesman who should thoughtfully consider his own interest would pause ere he permitted himself to accept; an indulgence which a statesman who should consider the interests of his country and appreciate in his heart the high duties to which he was called, would reject at once as violating the spirit of his vocation. That spirit which, binding up his country's welfare with his own, might inspire in the most selfish of human beings a generous impulse, in the most generous a pardonable if not commendable feeling of self-interest,—that spirit, I say, imperiously requires



that he should surround himself on all sides with able and judicious men, whereby at every turn he may find himself met by prudent counsel and efficient aid. A word of warning in his ear at the moment of decision, a stroke of work done for him in a season of pressure, may affect the public service the weal of individuals, the cause of justice, his own character and credit, in a way which could not but come home to his conscience if he should sufficiently enlarge his understanding to perceive the consequences of his acts, to trace them truly, and to paint them in their just colours upon the moral sense.

A minister's private secretary has the care and management, under his principal's direction, of all affairs relating to the disposal of offices and employments. It has been said already that a statesman's most pregnant function lies here. Discretion, knowledge of mankind, public spirit, a spirit of justice, ears shut against private solicitation, ought to be regarded as essential qualifications, but not as the sole requisites for the office of private secretary; for along with these there should be as much of general ability as can be commanded. And it should never be forgotten that one of the most important benefits which a statesman can render to his country is to make one service the cradle of another, and to place in such situations as these, and generally in all offices belonging to the establishment where his own business is transacted under his own eye, young men of promise, who may be bred up in them to the business of statesmanship, and

thereby feed the State with a succession of experienced men competent to its highest employments.

Bearing this in mind, let us proceed to examine his establishment of clerks. The points to be treated of in respect to them are—1st. Their functions; 2nd. Their selection and nomination; 3rd. Their remuneration; 4th. Their promotion.

I. As to their functions, they are of two kinds, intellectual and mechanical; and it were reasonable, therefore, that they should be divided into two classes—those who are fit for the one sort of employment, and those who are competent to the other only. I have heard it said indeed not unfrequently, that a young man should be employed in copying for some time at first, in order that he may learn his business; but if that business is to be intellectual I cannot think that this is the way really to teach it. If a man should apply himself diligently to mechanical labour, that will never lead him into the path of intellectual exertion. If he revolt from mechanical labour (as may be expected of a highly educated man of good abilities) and yet find that that is the only task assigned to him, he will lapse into idleness. I conceive, therefore, that the man who is ever to be employed in the transaction of a statesman's business, should be chosen for his aptitude to that employment, and should be put to it at once, in a somewhat inferior grade at first, but so as to exempt him from any considerable amount of purely mechanical labour.

With respect to the manner in which this labour should be procured to be done, there may be a small separate class of salaried clerks for the despatch of such part of it as requires secrecy, whose views and prospects should be confined to their own sphere. But it will be found that the great bulk of the copying business of the office will be always executed most efficiently and cheaply by the piece or job,—paying persons in the rank of life of law-stationers and their hired writers at the rate of so much per folio, instead of employing salaried clerks ;—the hired writers to be, however, for better assurance of respectability and good conduct, permanently attached to the establishment.\* In the despatch of business, so far as copying is concerned, there is as much difference between this system and the other, as between a sick stomach and a hungry one. Upon the system of salaries, every person who is employed as a copyist is desirous to do as little as he can ; upon the other there is a daily appetite and eagerness for work : upon the one system, when copying is wanted, it is not easy, whatever be the emergency, to get any persons set to work upon it but those to whose share of business it properly belongs ; upon the other there is a strong body of competitors for employment susceptible of an immediate and unreluctant direction upon any work which may be urgently required. The machine is self-acting in a great measure, and those whose minds ought to be free are spared the

\* A reform of this kind has now (in 1878) been effected in some, if not all, the offices of the Secretaries of State.

cares and vexations of perpetually guarding against delays of copyists, parrying their excuses, and exercising a sort of control which can hardly be exercised with success by persons of a certain class in life over each other. I speak from experience in both kinds, when I say that copying work will be done by the piece for a third of the money which it costs when committed to salaried clerks and with five times the speed; and I would observe, also, that the want of smoothness and celerity in this part of the operations of a statesman's official establishment constitutes a most important defect,—a defect much more important than it might at first appear. Measures upon which the fate of individuals or the material interests of communities may be said in some sort to depend, will sometimes be obstructed, neglected, and delayed, owing to this defect; and men in authority are often (to the credit of their personal dispositions) so averse to giving trouble to those about them or to the appearance of throwing away trouble which has been given, that measures and alterations of measures, in cases in which the sort of trouble in question ought to weigh no more than as the dust of the balance, sometimes turn upon the want of easy action in this part of the system of an office.

The copying part of the business being thus disposed of, it would remain to estimate what number of *minds* (in addition to those of the minister and his under-secretaries) would be equal to the transaction of affairs in the office; and of so many men, or perhaps rather more than so

many, its establishment of clerks should consist. I say rather more, because some allowance must be made upon any system of selection that could be devised, for failures and bad appointments.

II. And this brings me to the second head, concerning the selection and nomination of the clerks. With regard to the class for confidential copying who are never to rise above that employment, the qualifications to be required are obvious; they must write a good hand and be discreet and trustworthy. With regard to the other class, one reason for putting at once to intellectual employment men who are ever to be so employed, is that if they are only to rise to that employment after a lapse of years, they will never be chosen with much reference to their fitness for it. A man never will be chosen in any given year on account of qualifications which are to lie dormant for ten or five or even for two years succeeding. Everything in this world is done with reference to immediate effects, or at least without reference to any very distant ones.

Of the various modes by which fit clerks of the intellectual class may be found and chosen and the appointments guarded, there are two which can be reduced to rule and system: 1st, Examination; 2nd, Probation. At the Treasury within the last two years\* a system of examination has been adopted. Upon the occurrence of a vacancy amongst the clerkships, three competing candidates are admitted to examination simultaneously;

\* *i.e.*, two years preceding 1836, when this was first published.

each is shut up separately with a bundle of papers to act upon; the performances are compared each with each, and the best performer is selected.\* At the Colonial Office for several years past no clerk has been appointed without passing through a twelvemonth's probation, at the end of which the probationer is pronounced to be either fit or unfit for admission on the establishment. Each of these rules is good, but the advantages of both should be conjoined, and even when conjoined should not be relied upon to the neglect of other means of success. Probation should not be relied upon to the omission of examination, nor examination to the omission of the most sedulous care in the choice of the candidates who shall be admitted to compete and be examined. To require that the candidates shall be three or more simultaneously for one vacancy is a good device, because justice to individuals being unhappily a much stronger motive with most men than justice to the State, a greater security is taken against undue indulgence on the part of the examining authority when the result of indulging one individual is an injury done to other individuals, than when the result would be only an injury done to the public service. It would be well that not only the

\* Now (in 1878) a system of open competition in examinations has been in operation for many years, and a question has recently arisen whether a system of competition amongst nominees ought not to be preferred in some departments of the State. The system which I advocate is one of competition between patrons as well as between their nominees. See Appendix.

competitors on the examination should be three for one probationary appointment, but that the probationers should also be three competing for one established and confirmed appointment. In the case of the probationers in truth, the need is still greater than in that of the original candidates to have the public claims backed up against private interests by other and conflicting private interests. Good nature and kindness towards those with whom they come in personal contact, at the expense of public interests, that is of those whom they never see, is the besetting sin of public men ; and when once a man shall have been admitted within the doors of an office, upon however probationary a footing, and associated with those who are to judge him, men, even if they are desirous to be impartial, will be diffident of their own judgment in condemning him, and feel less difficulty about recommending him ; though the interests they would injure in the former case may be ever so disproportionate to those which they endanger in the latter.

After all is done that rule and system can do to secure the best selection, the less systematic means may not be the least important ; and these must depend upon the care, judgment, and zeal of the patron, in availing himself of all the casual knowledge which circumstances may throw in his way, and of all that which diligence well directed can obtain. Queen Elizabeth required all heads of colleges at Oxford and Cambridge to make an

annual report to her of youths under their supervision who should appear to be fitted for the service of the State ; and it was well said, by one of that extraordinary constellation of dramatists of her day before whom almost any statesmen but hers would hide their diminished heads—

“The world is not contracted in a man  
With more proportion and expression  
Than in her court her kingdom.” \*

The masters of the great schools, as well as the heads of colleges, might be valuable sources of information ; and in our days there are many other sources. Our periodical literature furnishes one great index. Debating clubs are another field where talent is paraded. The more general commixture of society affords ready facilities for obtaining a knowledge of any individual out of large classes and associations of educated men, if he be at all distinguished for ability.—And so much concerning selection.

III. The *remuneration* of public servants employed in the business of a statesman may be of three kinds ;—that is to say, by the wages of credit and consequence ; by the wages of hope and expectation ; and by money wages. I will speak of the last first.

It is often said that in order to get efficient service good pay must be offered. But this is not true as applied to first appointments of young men. On the contrary,

\* ‘Bussy d’Ambois,’ by Chapman.



it will often happen that the largeness of the temptation, by bringing into activity the most powerful interests through which abuses of patronage are engendered, will lead to the appointment of a worse man than would have been obtained by a smaller offer.\* On the other hand, though men of promise are to be *had* cheap, whilst they are young and their value is little known to themselves or others, they cannot, when this is no longer their condition, be *kept* for a small consideration, or at least kept contented. But a reasonable degree of contentment is of essential importance where the understanding is the workman. There is no position so strong as that of a man who stands upon his head; and if he be not *induced* to the activity of just thinking and clear reasoning, he will hardly be *coerced* to it. Upon the whole, therefore, I would say that what is most conducive to good appointments in the first instance, and thenceforward to deriving benefit from them, is to offer a small remuneration to the beginner, with successive expectancies proportioned to the merits which he shall manifest, and of such increasing amount as shall be calculated to keep easy, through the progressive wants of single and married life, the mind of a prudent man. Upon such a system, if unfit men belonging to influential families shall make good an entrance into the service, they will be more easily got

\* Abuses of patronage being now (in 1878) prevented by the system of competition in examination, good pay will bring the better men.

rid of; since, finding that they have got but little in hand and have but little more to look to, they will hardly be desirous to continue in a career in which they must expect to see their competitors shoot ahead of them.

With respect to the wages of credit and consequence, they will generally flow of themselves in a due proportion. A man of good abilities cannot be employed in the business of a minister without in some degree sharing his power. They are wages of great price and efficacy at the outset; but their value is impaired with their freshness; and by the time that they begin to fall flat in the imagination it will be necessary that more durable inducements should be substituted. And of all inducements the most invigorating—far beyond either money wages or the wages of credit and consequence—are the wages of hope and expectation; which may be fitly treated of under the head of Promotion, being the fourth and last of the points which I have proposed to consider in this chapter concerning clerks.

IV. The system of every service which requires energy and ability to be devoted to it, should be so contrived that a meritorious man may find some advancement accrue to him at least once in every ten years. It is in the nature of most men, and especially of men of lively understandings, not to be well pleased if they find themselves at the end of any decade of their lives exactly in the same position which they occupied at the beginning. In sundry of their natural advantages men

suffer a sensible decline with every lapse of ten years, and they look for an advance in fortunes to indemnify them for the backslidings of nature. It is not indeed by the contemplation of any worldly advantages that we can competently meet or set aside the mournfulness of the text that Man abideth never in one stay. Yet is it not the less the part of a genuine and religious philosophy, to consider man as created in the purpose that he should be animated by worldly wants still progressive,—a creature not on this side the grave to be disconnected from the creation of which he is a part, and requiring present fruitions and *paulo-post*-future expectancies to support and console him, as an addition and supplement to that hope which extends over the infinite future, but is flecked and obscured to all men by the intervention of worldly circumstance. And more especially are these accessories to contentment requisite for men engaged in public affairs; because they whose eyes are accessible to the reflex of a thousand encircling objects, and who are even required by their duty to keep their eyes open to all around, cannot be expected to see more exalted objects in their brightness, as those may who look as it were from the bottom of a well. Active and intelligent men therefore will, by the common ordinances of nature, become discontented and gather some rust upon the edge of their serviceable quality, if, whilst they find themselves going with large steps down the vale of years, they do not fancy themselves to be at the same time making proportionate

approximations to some summit of fortune which they shall have proposed to themselves to attain. Once in ten years is full seldom for an active man to find himself progressive.

The claims to promotion are twofold:—1st. Merit; 2nd. Length of service. And the difficulties to be considered are those which arise when these claims clash; that is, when the most meritorious officer is not he who has served the longest. I do not speak here of the copyists or mechanical class of clerks, but of those who, by whatever name they may be called, are or should be, in effect, a species of indoor statesmen. And having regard to the large public interests and the deep individual concerns with which they deal, it may be stated broadly as a general rule, that merit, or in other words industrious ability, should be the one essential consideration to be regarded in their promotion. But the question then arises—Will the judge of merit be always incorruptible and infallible? and if not, how are injustice, favouritism, and abusive promotion to be guarded against? The answer, as I conceive, is, that there can be no perfect protection against these evils; that the principle (like most other principles) resolves itself into a matter of degree; and that the protection will be adequate in the main, if the rule of preferment by merit, as against seniority, be applied only where there is a *marked* distinction of merit. For there are divers securities, each of which may be more or less leant upon,

and the aggregate of which will afford in the main all but a certain reliance, where the distinction of merit is marked. If motives of favouritism be at work, the most able and useful officer will at all events have a fair chance of being the favourite. But if he labour under some defect (as unsightliness, ill manners, etc.), which, without impairing his public utility, tends to throw him out of favour, he will nevertheless have that hold upon the self-interest of his principal which he wants upon his goodwill. Further, of this intellectual order of men there will hardly ever be ten brought together of whom one will not have a *generally acknowledged* superiority to the rest. Even the vanities of men make them just as umpires; and he who cannot pretend to postpone nine others to himself, will not consent to postpone himself to any but the best of the nine. It will be found, then, that a man's reputation amongst his fellows in an office will seldom fail to be according to his deserts, and that where the superiority is marked, the award of common repute will be both just and decisive; and being so, it will rarely happen that the patron will be induced by any motive of favouritism to brave the reproach of disregarding it. In short, it is in the nature of industrious ability, acting through various methods and upon various motives, to vindicate its own claims under any system in which those claims are recognised; and the system which shall conform to this natural tendency, and be so framed as to legitimate the rising of what is buoyant, will be found to work the best.

There is, however, a certain moderating hand to be applied even in the preferment of merit. Except in urgent and peculiar cases, in cases of extreme necessity on the part of the service, or extraordinary endowments—and character also—on that of the individual, preferment should proceed, as Lord Bacon teaches, “per gradus, non per saltus.”\* For besides the ordinary evils attendant upon sudden elevations, it should be observed that the hope, and not the fact, of advancement is the spur to industry; and that by a large dispensation of reward at once, which cannot be followed by like rewards in future, the patron sinks his capital and forestalls that revenue of reward which should furnish him with resources of inducement through successive years. Gratitude is a sentiment which respects the future; and the secret of keeping it alive in the hearts of public servants and preserving their alacrity unimpaired, is—

“To give us bits of kindness, lest we faint,  
But no abundance; that we ever want  
And still are begging.” †

Moreover, if a man be advanced largely at once, there will not only be little room left for his further promotion,

\* The remarks of Lord Bacon upon this topic are in the explication of the 18th Parable in the book ‘De Negotiis,’ which is the 8th book of the ‘De Augmentis.’ In that explication Machiavel is referred to (by a mistake of memory as I conceive) for a precept which is not, I think, to be found in his works, but which is fully set forth in the 15th and 21st of the ‘Hypomneses Politicæ’ of Guicciardini.

† Green’s ‘Tu quoque.’

but that little room will seem less when measured upon the scale to which his ambition will now expand itself; for he who has once advanced by a stride will not be content to advance afterwards by steps. Public servants, therefore, like racehorses, should be well fed with reward, but not to fatness.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### CONCERNING PRECIS-WRITERS, AND PROCESSES OF BUSINESS.

THE office of *précis*-writer sometimes is borne upon the establishment of a minister, sometimes is not.

It may be said of a *précis*, as Lord Bacon said of an index, that it is "useful chiefly to the maker thereof." A *précis*, properly so called, is an abridgment and nothing else; and he who has to act upon a long series of documents will hardly be able to master their contents without making an abridgment of them for himself. But it is only a smatterer in business who will think it of much more than a preliminary assistance to him to have such an abridgment made for him by another.

There may be made, indeed, a species of abridgment which may be loosely called a *précis*, but which is, in fact, a great deal more than that. An abridgment

which shall retain everything that is relevant and reject what is not ; which shall arrange the facts and elements of a case in their proper sequence, throwing them out in prominent relief or reducing them with a light touch, according to the proportions of their significance, and thereby leading necessarily to the conclusions which a just judgment would suggest,—such an abridgment is indeed useful, for it transacts the business from beginning to end ; but he who makes it must have the hand of a master, and should be called a statesman and not a *précis*-writer. Call him what you will, the man who estimates the relevancy and significancy of the respective facts of a case does in reality form a judgment upon it ; and a statement which conveys the facts in the spirit of that judgment, conveys the judgment itself.

He who has the statement of a question after this manner will, generally speaking, have the decision of it ; for the superior functionary will seldom (unless moved by jealousy or presumption) consider himself competent to take the decision out of the hands of the man who has made an elaborate and judicious investigation into the facts.

The process should be much the same whether a man's task be to prepare *himself* for coming to a decision on a case, or to prepare another. In either case he should write out the whole of the facts and inferences on which he is to found his conclusions ; and he will find it most convenient to begin with a naked narrative of



facts and dates, resolutely reserving all inferences and comments till the narrative statement shall be completed. This is important to him, not for the sake of clearness only in viewing and conveying the case, but also to guard against warps of his judgment, arising from a premature exercise of it. It is indeed impossible but that the judgment should be exercised as the statement of fact is proceeded with. But what a man writes, he fixes to a certain degree, and will not see occasion to unfix so readily as he ought when the further facts open upon him. Moreover, in cases of quarrel and dispute, which are the great majority of cases submitted for decision to a civil functionary, to elucidate the matter in the precedent stages of it by your own knowledge of what occurred in the subsequent, is not to convey that clear idea of the rise and progress of the case and of the merits of the parties, which would result from keeping the reader, as you advance, in the same state of information in which the parties concerned were at the several stages of their proceedings. The merits of the parties generally depend much upon their state of information when they acted, and to obscure the view of this state of information is to confuse the question of their merits.

With respect to doubtful facts (which are in themselves matter of opinion), it will be best, in long and complicated cases, that they should form a second division of the narrative, in which the evidence for and against them should be stated and weighed, and the

uncertainties as much as possible cleared away. In a third division it will be convenient to draw the inferences which should result from the undisputed or ascertained facts; in a fourth, the inferences as modified by the uncertainties; and in a fifth, which may be the final division, may be set forth the measures proper to be taken upon a survey of the entire case.

It may be thought that this separation of inference from fact, which compels of course a cursory resumption of facts to accompany the inferences, will lead to redundancy and repetition. But the fear of such repetition as this proceeds upon a mistaken notion of what sort of enlargement is really burdensome. The great maxim to hold by is, that nothing is to be avoided which makes *easy reading* of a voluminous and complicated case. There would be no harm in reading the facts of such a case twice over, even if they were twice stated at large; and such light and rapid resumptions of them as shall be required for the drawing of inferences, will be found to be anything but redundant. And it may be observed generally of the style and method to be employed in such statements, that freedom and easy copiousness is better than a conciseness forced upon the style beyond what would result from the natural vigour of the writer's understanding. The object of conciseness in such matters is not to spare words, but to spare intellectual labour. We are not to grudge, therefore, such interstitial and transitional matter as may promote an easy connec-

tion of parts and an elastic separation of them, and keep the reader's mind upon springs as it were.

In purely argumentative statements, or in the argumentative divisions of mixed statements, and especially in argumentative speeches, it is essential that the issue to be proved should be distinctly announced in the beginning, in order that the tenour and drift that way of everything that is said may be the better apprehended; and it is also useful, when the chain of argument is long, to give a forecast of the principal bearings and junctures, whereby the attention will be more easily secured and pertinently directed throughout the more closely consecutive detail and each proposition of the series will be clenched in the memory by its foreknown relevancy to what is to follow. These are well-known rules, which it were superfluous to cite, except for the instruction of the young. But examples may be occasionally observed (though perhaps less in this country than elsewhere) of juvenile orators who will keep the secret of the end they aim at, until they shall have led their hearers through the long chain of its antecedents, in order that they may produce a sort of surprise by forcing a sudden acknowledgment of what had not been foreseen. The disadvantage of this method is that it puzzles and provokes the hearer through the sequence, and confounds him in the conclusion: the only advantage is an overcharged impression of the orator's ingenuity, on the part of those who may have attended to him sufficiently to have been

convinced. It is a method by which the business of the argument is sacrificed to a puerile ostentation in the conduct of it,—the ease and satisfaction of the auditors to the vanity of the arguer.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE METHODS BY WHICH A STATESMAN CAN UPON OCCASION GET HIS WORK DONE OUT OF DOORS.

THESE methods are chiefly two : by special commissions, and by committees of either of the Houses of Parliament.

The advantages of the latter method are that a number of members of Parliament are brought acquainted with the question which the committee is charged to inquire into. But with this is connected the disadvantage of diverse opinions arising amongst them, which is apt to end in the compromise of giving effect to none.

The advantage of the former method is, that if the number of the commissioners be sufficiently limited and the scope given them be sufficiently ample, they may carry through their work from beginning to end, leaving nothing to seek but the stamp of authority. There are few things more important in the business of the State than that the results of inquiry and research should be realised by those who have had the conduct of it. B.

will never go to work as heartily and competently to give effect to A.'s inquiry as if it had been his own ; nor will A. inquire as pertinently and exactly if he knows that with inquiry his function will cease. A man will inquire to the purpose and consider the matter with distinctness and directness, then only, or more surely, when he knows that he will have eventually to solve every question that he raises. In general, therefore, a commission which is charged to collect information with reference to the expediency of any measure legislative or executive, should be further charged to conclude for or against the measure, and if concluding for it, to draft the bill or instruction by which they would propose that it should be carried into effect.

A commission should seldom consist of more than three members ; and in many cases a single commissioner with two secretaries would be better, but for the superior weight and authority which, whether erroneously or not, will attach in the public mind to the judgment of three commissioners as compared with that of one. Erroneously I believe it to be in all cases where the matter to be judged of by the commission is integral and not separable into portions more or less independent of each other ; because in such cases the judgment of the three or more men is commonly determined by the judgment of one amongst them.

But when the matters in question, though having some mutual relevancy, are susceptible of division in such

wise as to admit of different minds taking different parts, and of different views entering into one general purpose, then it may be expedient that the commission should consist of several members. In truth, the system of governing by a Cabinet is founded upon this principle,—the Cabinet being a board of commissioners for governing the country.

Such boards or other co-operative bodies should be so formed that youthfulness and elderliness may meet in due proportion in their counsels. If any such body be composed wholly of old and elderly men, it will commonly be found to be ineffective so far as invention of new courses and intrepidity of purpose is required; and perhaps also unequal to any unusual amount of spontaneous activity. If, on the other hand, it be composed wholly of young men, its operations will probably be wanting in circumspection; and the foresight by which it will be guided will be too keenly directed to the objects of a sanguine expectation, too dully to prospects of evil and counteraction. The respective positions in life of the young and the old operate to these results not less than their temperaments. For the young have their way to make, their reputation to earn; and it is for their interest as well as in their nature to be enterprising: the old have ascertained their place in life, and they have, perhaps, a reputation to lose.

Formerly it might be objected to boards that the sense of responsibility was weakened by division. But

in these days responsibility is brought to bear with an excessive and intimidating force, and in many cases the plural is the preferable responsibility.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### ON PARLIAMENTARY INTERPOSITION IN ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS.

THE most ordinary case of this interposition is when some civil officer is censured or dismissed by the government, and a member of Parliament represents the censure or dismissal as unjust.

It can hardly ever be worth while merely for the sake of one individual that the time of Parliament should be thus occupied : but it is well worth while for the sake of such control, from the known possibility of Parliamentary interference, as may produce general circumspection and impartiality on the part of the government.

It should never be forgotten, however, that supposing the time of Parliament to be used as it ought to be, the allotment of a single hour of it to the hearing of an individual's case is a great public loss, and a waste which can be justified only on the principle of making occasional sacrifices the effect of which shall spread into a general check.

Such interposition should be used sparingly therefore, and with conditions. 1st. That the government has been unjust must be not dubious but plain: the time of Parliament may with reason be occupied to right a wrong, but not to solve a doubt. 2nd. All possible previous steps must be shown to have been taken without success to attain the object of correction. 3rd. The business should be as far as possible laid before Parliament in a documentary form before it is permitted to be debated, that so all preliminary controversy may be avoided in the debate.

If fulfilment of these conditions were universally exacted by what is called "the sense of Parliament," the check upon the government would be sufficiently efficacious, and yet the instances would be few in which Parliament would find itself called upon to lay aside its momentous functions for the purpose of judging and protecting an individual,—a sort of business which, unless in a very clear case, a legislative assembly is in truth but ill adapted to deal with.

But as matters are now managed, if any person whose interests are affected by an administrative act, or any officer who has been dismissed for misconduct, be provided with influential friends, or with a sufficient share of personal energy and activity, the concernment can hardly be so trivial, or the case of injury so questionable, but that Parliament shall be exhibited to the country leaving to the right and to the left matters of the deepest



national interest, and starting off upon the allegation of individual wrong, with a wonderful extravagance in the mismeasurement of objects and misconception of duties.

This, though a great evil, is one which the government cannot well correct ; for if the government should try to stop a debate of this kind *in limine*, on the ground that it would waste the time of Parliament, they would subject themselves to an imputation of attempting to stifle an inquiry into their own conduct. All that they can do is, first to clear themselves on the case, and then to denounce with a deterrent severity the party who, with an unworthy forgetfulness of the high trust attaching to a seat in the councils of a country, shall have abused the ear of Parliament with unfounded and frivolous complaints.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ON AIDS TO LEGISLATION TO BE DERIVED FROM EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE.

It is not only necessary that the legislature should make provision in the laws for their due execution ; it is also desirable that the executive agency should work towards new legislation on the same topics. For the execution of laws deals with those particulars by an induction of

which the results to be aimed at in legislation are to be ascertained; and the generalization from those particulars can only be well effected when the lowest in the chain of functionaries is made subsidiary to the operations of the highest in a suggestive as well as in an executive capacity,—that is, when the experience of the functionary who puts the last hand to the execution of any particular class of enactments, is made available for the guidance of the legislature.

But in most cases this cannot be accomplished to any useful purpose otherwise than by a system of filtration. The lowest classes of functionaries, whilst they may be assumed to have the largest knowledge of facts, must also be taken to have the least power to discriminate and to generalize. They cannot be expected to distinguish barren from fruitful facts; those which are mere specialties from those which lead to general conclusions. What is wanted is, that the crude knowledge collected in the execution of the laws should pass upward from grade to grade of the civil functionaries intrusted with their administration, more and more digested and generalized in its progress; and, lastly, should reach the legislature in the shape of a matured project of law, whereby what was superfluous in the legislation in question might be abrogated; what was amiss might be amended; what was insufficient, enlarged; what was doubtful, determined; what was wanting, added.

As an example of the manner in which executive

experience might thus be made to tell back upon legislation, let the process be supposed to be adopted for the improvement of the various laws which depend for their execution, wholly or in part, upon the body of police as now constituted in London, under the authority of the statute 10 Geo. IV. c. 44. This body consists of—

1. Commissioners ;
2. Superintendents ;
3. Inspectors ;
4. Sergeants ;
5. Constables.

These last, the constables, must necessarily, as they walk the streets, witness from time to time many evils which there is not, though there might properly be, a lawful authority to correct. Let it be a part of their duty to report these forthwith to the sergeants ; let the sergeants be required to furnish a monthly selection of such reports, with any remarks they may wish to make upon them, to the inspectors ; let the inspectors be required to forward a quarterly digest and commentary to the superintendent ; the superintendent to the commissioners ; let the commissioners submit annually to the Secretary of State for the Home Department such projects and drafts for the amendment of the law as this filtered experience shall suggest ; and, finally, let the bill, which, after due revision, shall be approved by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, be brought into Parliament by the organ of that department in the House of Commons. Let the police magistrates also, who do not exactly fall into this line of police authorities, be required to make periodical reports of defects of law, as illustrated by cases coming before them,

and let these reports be dealt with in like manner. Without pretending to such practical knowledge of the metropolitan police as would insure aptitude in the allotment of this or that duty to one or the other grade, the question may yet be asked, whether a process, conducted generally upon the proposed principle, might not be expected to promote the cause of order and innocence in this metropolis?

But with the narrow limits which opinion, as it exists, assigns to the duties of the executive government and its servants (to which narrowness of duty the government and its servants naturally confine themselves), responsibility for defect of law falls nowhere; or if it be held to fall upon the legislature, it is so diffused over that numerous body as to be of no force or effect. When evil manifests itself, in however cognisable a shape, there is no member of the government, whether or not he be also a member of the legislature, nor any servant of the public, who does not think that his case for non-interference is complete, so soon as he makes out that the evil is owing to a fault in the law. The question whose fault is it that the law is faulty, is asked of no man; and naturally no man asks it of himself. But that must needs be regarded as an imperfect system of administrative government which does not lay these faults at the door of some individual functionary in the numerous cases in which it would be perfectly practicable to do so. Did C. observe the evil and report it to B.? if not, let him answer for it:

did B. consider of it, and suggest a remedy to A. ? if not, let B.'s neglect be denounced : did A. adopt B.'s suggestion, or devise something better, and go to Parliament for a remedial law ? if not, let the charge lie against A.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH ABLE, AND OF THE MANNER IN WHICH INDIFFERENT STATESMEN ARE DETERRED FROM AVAILING THEMSELVES OF ABLE SERVICE ; AND OF THE EVILS WHICH ENSUE FROM MEN'S AUTHORITY BEING IN THE INVERSE RATIO OF THEIR ABILITIES.

IT might be thought that able men would court a connection with each other from intellectual sympathies and the desire of mutual improvement ; and so indeed it is with those whose moral nature is large and high according to the measure of their understandings. But with others it is otherwise. Strong men, who, being compounded, as the strongest are, of weakness as well as strength, but who, feeling all their strength, do not at the same time feel their weakness,—statesmen of this kind, I say, are apt to rejoice unduly in self-dependence and the consciousness of substantive power, and to surround themselves with such men as will rather reflect them as mirrors than

adequately serve them as instruments. *To make the weak subservient* requires intellectual predominancy only,—and not always that; for strength of animal temperament and an overruling vivacity or a determined disposition will often of themselves suffice. *To make the strong subservient* demands certain moral sufficiencies. In order that the strong may serve the strong, there must be mutual respect, and in one or both of the parties a high and rather rare humility. There must be between the parties conceptions of what is more strong, great, and noble, than any fulfilments are: there must be over the efforts of both a common bond of reverence for what is greater than either. Where there is not this high and by consequence humble nature in a statesman, or where zeal for public objects does not predominate over self-importance, there are naturally motives enough which will deter one who is sufficiently strong to dispense with strong help from seeking it. Such men through moral deficiency become intellectually short-sighted, and their effect on the world is limited by the circle of their individual and proximate activity.

Weak men of low character and high station have yet greater deterrents, yet livelier jealousies and disgusts towards subordinate strength; though their need for it is more pressing and may often overrule their indisposition. I say of low character—meaning merely men wanting (as most men are) in such superiority to circumstance as would prevent them from being made low in character by

being thus misplaced in life. It is not natural that a statesman labouring under insufficiencies of understanding should like to have about him those who can take the measure of his capacity. It is not natural that a statesman troubled with infirmity of purpose and defect of civil courage, should wish to be served by men before whom he stands detected and rebuked. But if, casually or through the compulsion of circumstance, he comes to be served by such men, there will ensue with average human nature a debasing struggle. He will be driven to tricks and devices by way of glossing over the falseness of his position. He will have to keep up appearances of ruling, under a consciousness of being ruled. He will be under the necessity of accepting daily obligations from his inferiors, which he will be unwilling to acknowledge to himself, more unwilling to acknowledge to them, and most unwilling to acknowledge to the world. He will live under a sense of humiliation without humbleness; yielding the discharge of his functions to others, and thinking it due to the dignity of his station, to disguise the fact. That must be a rare honesty and generosity of nature which holds out against the corruption of such circumstances; for falseness of position naturally ends in falseness of character.

I know not what precept can suffice to correct the evils of this doubly unequal relation, if the superior in place shall not perceive that the best superiority is to be found in seeking the level of truth, and in a devotion to

the public welfare ; if the superior in understanding shall not feel that the arrogance of talent is as offensive, illiberal, and ignoble as any other species of arrogance : if both cannot meet upon a higher ground than that of either talent on the one hand or station on the other.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF PATRONAGE.

THE engrossing of a considerable quantity of patronage into one disposing hand has this advantage : that after the administrator shall have satisfied any private ends which he may have at heart with a portion of the patronage, he will dispose of the rest with reference to public interests. Whereas if the patronage be comminuted and placed in several hands, each of the patrons may have no more to dispose of than is required to serve his private purposes ; or, at all events, after feeding the private purposes of so many patrons, a smaller proportion will be left to be bestowed according to the dictates of public spirit. For a like reason the minister who has been long in office will be the most likely to dispense his patronage properly ; for the circle of his private friends is saturated.

When a vacancy is declared, no further delay than is requisite for inquiry and circumspection should take place



in choosing amongst the candidates. Delay in such cases extenuates the favour to the successful candidate, and aggravates the disappointment of the others;—it humiliates all. And expectants who are solicitous concerning effects on the character, will have cause to deprecate a prolonged suspense upon such occasions, as being calculated to make them think too much of themselves; except, indeed, the few who hold themselves under a strong moral discipline,—for these will bring strength out of every struggle.

In general the substance of refusals should be mitigated by the manner of them, even when applications are unreasonable. But, nevertheless, occasion should be taken from time to time, when importunity is signally extravagant, to give it such a repulse as shall mortify and expose the party applicant. By making one example of this kind a minister will intimidate many who would otherwise beset him with demands and supplications. And few things will occasion a statesman so much embarrassment as a prevailing opinion that he will yield that to importunity which he ought to proffer to less forward parties upon juster grounds, and that whether he grants or refuses no harm can be done by asking. A man who is known to be weak in this kind draws upon himself a rush and pressure of solicitation against which even a strong man might be unable to make head.

The victim should be selected by preference from amongst applicants of rank and station (who will give

occasion as abundantly as any other class), because importunity on the part of such persons is at once more to be feared for its mischief and less to be excused for its indelicacy; because the more eminent the offender the more effective the example; and because persons who are in possession of many worldly advantages can better afford to suffer mortification, and have not so strong a claim as others have upon the charitable constructions and liberal feelings of men in power.

A minister should adopt it as a rule, subject to few exceptions, that he is to make small account of testimonials and recommendations, unless subjected to severe scrutiny and supported by proved facts. Men who are scrupulously conscientious in other things will be often not at all so in their *kindnesses*. Such men, from motives of compassion, charity, goodwill, have sometimes given birth to results which the slightest exercise of common sense might have taught them to foresee, and which, if foreseen, might have alarmed the conscience of a buccaneer. I have known acts of kindness done by excellent persons in the way of recommendation, to which a tissue of evil passions, sufferings, cruelty, and bloodshed have been directly traceable; and these consequences were no other than might have been distinctly anticipated. The charity of such persons might be said to be twice cursed; but that the curse which it is to others may be remitted to them (let us hope) as too heavy a visitation for the sin of thoughtlessness.

Such being the slenderness of the trust to be placed in testimonials, the more easy duty in the exercise of ministerial influence over nominations to places, would seem to be in dealing with persons employed in the minister's more immediate service, of whose qualifications, therefore, he is personally cognisant. But if a man's translation to a different service be requisite for his promotion, his very merit will stand in his way with some patrons; for however the public service might be benefited by his employment in a higher station elsewhere, to them he is more useful where he is. Theirs is the policy of the ant, who bites the grain she stores, lest it should grow.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### CONCERNING THE AMUSEMENTS OF A STATESMAN.

AMUSEMENT is necessary to man in every station of life, and it is a main assistance to the knowledge of men to observe which way this necessity lies with them; to inquire, not only how they occupy themselves, but after what manner they amuse themselves. If the magistracy shows the man, according to the Greek adage, his amusements show him more; for in them nature has her way.

The species of relaxation which is adapted to a

statesman depends in part upon the manner in which he is apt to suffer from the pressure of business,—whether he is apt to sink into lassitude (which is the safe way), or to run amain in excitement. Books are an easy and commodious resource, because they can be summoned and dismissed at pleasure; but in the extreme of either of the cases above mentioned they will not be suitable; because in the one case the mind will be too dead to be moved by them, in the other it will be running too fast for them to lay hold of it. But in those which are not cases of extremity either way, books may be used,—light books for the languid man, strong books for the excited; and there are books of a light strength which may not come amiss to a man in either predicament.

But as there will not always be life enough in the society of books to afford enjoyment to a statesman, let him step from the library to the drawing-room. A small society should not infrequently be formed there, consisting for the most part—but not wholly—of intimate acquaintances, and they should be persons of lively conversation, but above all of easy natures. Knowledge and wit will naturally be found in sufficient proportions in the society of a man of talents occupying an eminent position; but if knowledge be argumentative and wit *agonistic*, the society becomes an arena, and loses all merit as a mode of relaxation. An adequate proportion of women will slacken the tone of conversation in these particulars, and yet tend to animate it also. And there

is this advantage in the company of women—especially if some of them be beautiful and innocent—that breaks in conversation are not felt to be blanks; for the sense of such a presence will serve to fill up voids and interstices. But though knowledge, wit, wisdom, and beauty should be found in this circle, there should be no sedulous exclusion of such persons not possessed of these recommendations, as would otherwise naturally find a place there. For unless the statesman between the business and the pleasures of the world have lost sight of its charities, he will not find his society the less of a relaxation for mixing some of the duties and benevolences of life with its enjoyments; and he will count amongst its amenities, if not amongst its charms, some proportion of attentions to the aged and kindness to the dull and unattractive. It may also be observed that dulness, like a drab ground, serves to give an enhanced effect to the livelier colours of society.

Music is an excellent mode of relaxation to those who possess—I will not say an *ear* for it, because that seems a shallow expression—but a faculty of the mind for it. Yet unless a man's susceptibility in this kind be other than ordinary, he will generally prefer music which mixes itself with conversation, or alternates with it by brief returns, to music which sets it aside. Instrumental music, exciting without engrossing the mind, will often rather stimulate and inspire conversation than suppress it; though to take this advantage of it, the company

must break up into retired groups or couples, speaking low in corners. But the singing of ladies is a thing which, in courtesy if not for enjoyment, must be heard in silence; unless (which is best) it be heard from an adjoining room, through an open door, so that they who desire to listen to the song closely may pass in, and they who would listen more loosely and talk the while, may stay out. But under all circumstances, and not for the sake of the talk only but for the sake of the songs, it is well that there should be some pause and space between one and another of them—filled up with instrumental music if you will. For a song which has a wholeness in itself should be suffered to stand by itself, and then to die away in the mind of the hearer, time being allowed for the effect of a preceding song to get out of the way of the effect of one which is to follow. It would be well, therefore, if ladies, who are often slow to begin their songs, would not be, when once begun, unknowing to intermit them.

John de Witt, in portraying the character of one of the princes of the House of Orange, says that he “was not blemished with many court vices; not delighting in *music*, dancing, hunting, gluttony, or drinking.” I have not been deterred by the opinion of the Grand Pensionary, as implied in this passage, from commending music as a mode of relaxation; for a greater man than he, and though perhaps not a better man, yet certainly a more austere moralist, has said, notwithstanding all his

austerity, "Who shall silence the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers?"\*—and in another place has advised that students should be recreated with music "whilst unsweating themselves," and that "the like also would not be inexpedient after meat, to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction."†

As to eating and drinking, they are matters of great danger to a statesman if he resort to them as a relaxation; and it has been observed that men of great abilities are generally of a large and vigorous animal nature. I have heard it remarked by a statesman of high reputation, that most great men have died of over-eating themselves; and without absolutely subscribing to the remark, I would say that it points to a principal peril in the life of such men; namely, the violent craving for one kind of excitement, which is left as in a void by the flames of another. If a statesman would live long,—which to do is a part of his duty, granting him fitted to render good service to the State,—he must pay a jealous and watchful attention to his diet. A patient in the fever ward of an hospital scarcely requires to be more carefully regulated in this particular. And he should observe that there are two false appetites to which he is liable;—the one an appetite resulting from intellectual labour, which though not altogether morbid is not to be relied upon for digestion in the same degree as that

\* Milton, 'Areopagitica.'

† Letter to Master Hartlib.

which results from bodily exercise ; the other proceeding from nervous irritability, which is purely fallacious.

The sitting after dinner, though much abbreviated in our days, might be further abridged, or indeed altogether abandoned, with advantage. An irritability of the stomach often results from confinement to the same posture for more than half an hour after dinner ; and if the conversation fails in interest, the dessert is resorted to, which, besides being superfluous, is an indefinite sort of eating.

Those to whom public speaking is much of an effort (and it tries the nerves of most men even after they have been accustomed to it for years) should, if possible, dine lightly at least half an hour before they are called upon to speak, and should resist the propensity which they will feel to eat soon after they have spoken. The relief and diversion to the nerves which is apt to be sought in this way after a speech, would be obtained in a more wholesome manner by walking for a considerable distance at a rapid pace.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

## ON MANNERS.

CONSIDERATIONS of manner and demeanour are by no means to be overlooked as frivolous or insignificant. Whether or not they ought to be, they are, in point of fact, an important element in the life and fortunes of a statesman, or of one who aspires to be a statesman, and generally of all men who seek advancement in a civil or in any other career. And in truth a man's manners have much real and intrinsic significancy, in so far forth as they are the result of his individual nature and taste, and not merely learnt or adopted from the society which he frequents. There is a conventional manner which tells nothing, and may conceal much; but there is also a natural manner by which a man may be known.

What is conventional and immaterial in manner may be taught; but in regard to what is important, there is only one precept by which a man can profit; and that is, that so often as he shall be visited with any consciousness of error in this kind (which will not be infrequently in the young and susceptible) he should search out the fault of character from which the fault of manner flows; and disregarding the superficial indication except *as* an indication, endeavour to dry up that source. Any want of essential good-breeding must grow out of a want of

liberality and benevolence ; any want of essential good taste in manner, out of some moral defect or disproportion ; and when a man stands self-accused as to the outgrowth, he should lay his axe to the root. The sense of shame for faults of manner would not be so strong a thing in men as it is, if it came out of the mere shallows of their nature, and were not capable of being directed towards some higher purpose than that of gracing their intercourse with society. At the same time, nothing will accomplish this lesser purpose more effectually than merging the trivial sensitiveness upon such matters in an earnestness of desire to be right upon them in their moral point of view ; and if a man shall make habitual reference to the principle of never doing anything in society from an ungenerous, gratuitously unkind, or ignoble feeling, he will hardly fail to obtain the ease and indifference as to everything else which is requisite for good manners ; and he will lose in his considerateness for other persons, and for principles which he feels to be worthy of consideration, the mixture of pride and disguised timidity, which is in this country the most ordinary type of inferiority of manner. There is a dignity in the desire to be right, even in the smallest questions wherein the feelings of others are concerned, which will not fail to supersede what is egoistical and frivolous in a man's personal feelings in society.

In the case of a statesman, perhaps it will be expedient that to the manner of nature and of principle,

something should be added upon occasion by histrionic art. This, however, may be a difficulty with many men ; and he who endeavours to exercise the art should be very sure that he possesses it ; and in such a kind as to make his natural manner the basis of his artificial ; for otherwise more will be lost than gained in the attempt. In a statesman's transactions there are many things which cannot be communicated otherwise than by manner without inconvenient commitment or controversy ; and that will be the most serviceable manner which can be expressive or inexpressive at pleasure, and be used as a dark lantern to his meanings.

With regard to arts of graciousness, they are the easiest of all to a statesman ; for praise and compliment, which may seem to partake of impertinence when proceeding from an inferior, pass gracefully downwards from one whose superiority of station gives him a right to assume that his approbation or his wish to conciliate has a value. A minister is *entitled* to be complimentary ; and what he has principally to take care of is that he do not forfeit the advantages of his privilege by abuse of it, and that his compliments shall be measured and appropriate. Prodigality of panegyric defeats its end by depreciating its value ; and misapplication of it ought always to be unsatisfactory by reason of its untruth ; and may, under certain circumstances, amount to a corrupt use of an important public instrument. But these are vices which belong to the coarseness of public life, and

are seldom altogether escaped by the ordinary statesman.

It has been said of compliments, that men are most flattered by having the merits attributed to them which they least possess ; but as it is only by liars that such compliments can be proffered, so it is only with fools that they can find a favourable acceptance. With others, partial truth with just discrimination will be the most effective agents of flattery. There is much also in the well timing of it ; and though compliments should arise naturally out of the occasion, they should not appear to be prompted by the spur of it ; for then they seem hardly spontaneous. Applaud a man's speech at the moment when he sits down, and he will take your compliment as exacted by the demands of common civility ; but let some space intervene, and then show him that the merits of his speech have dwelt with you when you might have been expected to have forgotten them, and he will remember your compliment for a much longer time than you have remembered his speech.

It is a grace in flattery so to let fall your compliments as that you shall seem to consider them to be a matter of indifference to him to whom they are addressed ; for thus one flattery will include another,—and that other perhaps the most agreeable,—being that of attributing to the party a peculiar absence of self-love. The compliment will also seem the more sincere, as being not aimed at the self-love of the party, but a mere suggestion of

fact. Some men may be indirectly flattered by what is in its direct purport the reverse of complimentary; because saying such things to them seems to give them credit for hardihood. Others can be imposed upon by a rough, bluff, hearty, plain-spoken way of eulogising them to their faces, as if what was said was no more than the honest truth, which there ought to be no scruple in declaring.

But the mode of flattery which, being at once safe and efficacious, is the best adapted to the purposes of a statesman, is the flattery of *listening*. He that can wear the appearance of drinking in every word that is said with thirsty ears, possesses such a faculty for conciliating mankind as a syren might envy. For no syren did ever so charm the ear of the listener, as the listening ear has charmed the soul of the syren. The chief drawback upon the advantages of this species of blandishment is, that it can hardly be employed but at some considerable cost of time; yet with a little dexterity this cost may be reduced: for the more earnest the attention, the more compulsory will seem the breaking off, when the statesman starts as from a dream and looks at his watch. There is another drawback, which is the cost of patience at which this purchase of goodwill is effected. This will certainly be considerable on the part of him who only *affects* to listen, and the way to reduce it is to listen in reality; for as sincere talking will impart some interest even to a flimsy material of talk, so with sincere listening

something worth notice may be distilled from every man's discourse. Yet it must be confessed that he who can listen with real attention to everything that is said to him, has a great gift of auscultation.

These, however, are merely the *tricks* of statesmanship, which it may be quite as well to despise as to practise.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

OF STATESMEN BRED SUCH, AND OF STATESMEN BRED  
IN THE ARMY, IN THE NAVY, IN COMMERCE, AND  
AT THE BAR.

IN matters of outward demeanour a difference may be perceived between statesmen bred in these several lines.

Men brought up to political life from the first will commonly stand the most aloof from mankind at large, or those whom they do not consider to be of the same rank and station with themselves. They begin life in its high places, and they begin it by opposing to the inconveniences of importunity the arrogance of youth. Or if even in youth they are free from arrogance (as men born to a high station often are, because they have less occasion for it), still they cannot but feel the convenience of

keeping themselves at that distance from men of humbler rank at which circumstances have placed them.

Men bred in the army or navy, whether high-born or not, have risen through the lower grades of their profession, and have necessarily mixed in daily intercourse with associates of middle station. A distant demeanour is not therefore natural to them, except as growing out of the exercise of authority and taking place in regard to those who serve under them. But what comes naturally to them in this relation they sometimes like to assume in others.

Statesmen bred at the bar are of all men the least disposed to carry into their outward demeanour the distinctions of rank and station. They have lived a life in which they have been roughly confronted with their fellow-creatures of all classes, and where the extrinsic demarcations between man and man get trampled under-foot in the "keen encounter of their wits." Moreover, the highest born amongst them has felt his dependence for success upon clients and their attorneys. The forced familiarities of the hustings fade away from a man's recollection like a drunken dream; but those of the bar are worked into his nature.

Mercantile men of the class which now and then furnishes a statesman, seem to have little in their original calling which should prepare them to be either affable or otherwise.

Speaking of aptitudes for such services of a general

nature as will frequently in the common course of things devolve a high civil authority upon military and naval officers (the administration of colonial governments, for example), it may be observed, that in affairs not falling altogether within the range of their knowledge and experience, the faults of the sailor will be faults of action and enterprise, the faults of the soldier will be faults of timidity and evasion. If indeed their self-love and self-consequence be much concerned in the matter in hand, if they be irritated by opposition and disrespect, they will be brought more nearly to a common level. But this, I think, will happen less frequently to the sailor than the soldier ; for though the former is more prone to peremptory and off-hand courses, the latter is more addicted to pomp and circumstance, carries his jealousy of what he considers his dignity into smaller matters, and finds more frequent occasion for quarrels. Upon the whole, I am of opinion that if the engineer and artillery corps, and also armies like those of India which are placed under peculiar circumstances, be excepted from the comparison, the navy is a more cultivating profession than the army, and produces minds of more general applicability to civil affairs.

Let the training circumstances be considered. The soldier's activity is liable to be sheathed in a long peace. The sailor, when he has no other enemy, wages his war with the elements : there is no treaty of perpetual amity with them. The soldier lives under temptations to idle-



ness or frivolous occupation ; he has generally a variety and choice of companions amongst his brother officers, who like himself have but little to do ; and he commonly finds himself in a situation to obtain easy and welcome access to other society, and especially to that of women. The sailor is limited in his choice of associates : he tires of those he has, and is thrown upon his own resources and his books. The ordinary subject-matter of his duties requires more care, skill, alacrity, and decisiveness, and offers more variety of interest, than the subject-matter of a soldier's duties under the ordinary circumstances of soldiership. Further, he must walk the quarter-deck *alone* four hours by day and four by night at least (and more if the ship's officers are upon two watches instead of three) ; and these will be hours of reflection in an open sea and fine weather, and under different circumstances they will be hours of observation and exigency. It is true that *he* also has his seasons of dissipation ; but his duties in harbour are more serious than those of a soldier of parallel rank in garrison ; and whilst he is most a man of pleasure, he is likewise to no inconsiderable extent a man of business : and some early day the wind changes, he is cast loose from his lighter social connections, one or two of them may be cherished in his fancy for a few days, but they cannot engross much of his life and understanding. In short, his profession combines more than any other, a life of solitude with a life of emergency ; and in consequence more than any

other unites thoughtfulness with efficiency. A statesman of my generation, who had more than once filled the place of first minister, has told me that in his opinion our sea captains are our best diplomatists. It is to be borne in mind, however, that they are employed as such only in emergencies.

Of the two men who have in our times evinced (so far as I can pretend to judge) the most powerful faculties of statesmanship, the one was a sailor, the other a soldier of the *Indian army*,—Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood, and Major-General Sir Thomas Munro. Both were men who had passed a large portion of their lives in what may be called solitude and seclusion, because it was separation from persons of their own race or class. They rarely mixed with any persons but those over whom they exercised an absolute authority, and with whom they transacted business. They lived aloof from the excitements of society and of daily political contention, and from the provocations to petty ambition and vanity. They were eminently meditative statesmen. Whether their oratorical would have been equal to their other powers, they had no opportunity of showing; but if the opportunity had occurred, and if the wisdom which they possessed could have been cultivated in combination with other modes of life, and with the talents necessary for the conduct of affairs in a deliberate assembly and in a Cabinet, they, or at least one of them (Sir Thomas Munro), would probably have attained to a more steadily

commanding station amongst European politicians than any of their contemporary countrymen have reached, or reaching, have long continued to occupy.

The causes of the superiority of artillery and engineer officers are obvious. They have to pass severe examinations in certain branches of knowledge before they can obtain their commissions;\* and their subsequent eminence in their profession depends upon scientific acquirements, to be mastered at the same time that they are mixing with the world and managing their relations with those whom they command and with those by whom they are commanded.

With regard to mercantile training as conducive to statesmanship, it should hardly, I think, be much esteemed, except in a country where special education to politics being unhappily unknown, an education in business of any kind may be considered an advantage. It is often supposed that a person brought up in commerce will have some peculiar qualifications for discharging the office of minister for affairs of trade. He may perhaps inspire more confidence in mercantile people, and in so far his previous connection with commerce may be an advantage to himself, and (if he be an efficient minister) to the public. But this confidence should not in reason result from that connection. The knowledge and faculties required for negotiating and legislating on commercial

\* Now (in 1878) the test of severe examinations is no longer confined to the artillery and engineers.

subjects, have in truth hardly anything in common with those required for conducting a particular commercial business. There is a good deal of error current upon this head. When any law is projected for the regulation of commerce, some set of merchants will commonly take alarm; and if they are assured that the law will not hurt them, they will ask—are they not likely to know their own business best? What should be the answer of a statesman? “Surely, gentlemen, each of us knows his own business best; and your business is to trade, and mine is to legislate.”

Of law-bred statesmen (if they have had practice at the bar) the peculiar merit is a more strenuous application of their minds to business than is often to be found in others. But they labour under no light counterpoise of peculiar demerit. It is a truth, though it may seem at first sight like a paradox, that in the affairs of life the reason may pervert the judgment. The straightforward view of things may be lost by considering them too closely and too curiously. When a naturally acute faculty of reasoning has had that high cultivation which the study and practice of the law affords, the wisdom of political, as well as of common life, will be to know how to lay it aside, and on proper occasions to arrive at conclusions by a grasp; substituting for a chain of arguments that almost unconscious process by which persons of strong natural understanding get right upon questions of common life, however in the art of reasoning unexercised.

The fault of a law-bred mind lies commonly in seeing too much of the question, not seeing its parts in their due proportions, and not knowing how much of material to throw overboard in order to bring a subject within the compass of human judgment. In large matters largely entertained, the symmetry and perspective in which they should be presented to the judgment requires that some considerations should be as if unseen by reason of their smallness and that some distant bearings should dwindle into nothing. A lawyer will frequently be found busy in much pinching of a case and no embracing of it—in routing and grunting and tearing up the soil to get at a grain of the subject;—in short, he will often aim at a degree of completeness and exactness which is excellent in itself, but altogether disproportionate to the dimensions of political affairs, or at least to those of certain classes of them.

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### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### THE STATESMAN OUT OF OFFICE.

ONE of the greatest penalties which ambition pays for power is when it incurs a forfeiture of the love of leisure. Yet this is a penalty which few who devote themselves

zealously to public business can hope to escape ; for the mind which has been accustomed to answer readily to incessant calls from without, will rarely retain much of self-originated activity. The love of leisure and of solitude belongs to the mind which is to itself a spontaneous source of thought ; and it will seldom happen that an affluence of spontaneous thought will remain to a mind which has been subjected habitually to the yoke and goad of circumstance. The craving for office with which statesmen are so often reproached is, perhaps, in the more active of them, quite as much a craving for business as for emolument or power ; and their unseasonable love of business grows out of their forfeiture of the love of leisure. Rarely as well as fortunately endowed by nature is that man who can love one or the other according to his occasions.

“ Pleasant it is to turn, on lonely shore,  
 Into some cavern of primeval rock,  
 So silent that the single drop which falls  
 In measured time upon the sparry floor,  
 Strikes on the blank of stillness like a shock :

To muse how many thrones have been o'erhurled,  
 How many wastes made palaces for Man,  
 How many palaces returned to wastes,  
 Since first this secret clepsydra began  
 To count the minutes of the hoary world.” \*

Such may be the retreat into leisure of a statesman who loves it with a poet's love. And some statesmen

\* “ Eleusinalia,” by the late Emmeline Hinxman (born Fisher).

have been poets in their hearts. But if leisure cannot be loved for its own sake by a statesman quitting office, it may yet be valued by him if he considers well even the less worthy of the uses which may be made of these intervals in a busy career. His mind may not be (what few are) sufficiently rich, elastic, and various to find a compensation for the sunshine in the deeper verdure which grows beneath the shade; but he may nevertheless estimate at something the profits to be derived from it in the spirit of that husbandry which looks for a ranker growth when thorns have been thrown over the turf. Let him consider, therefore, what are the defects of knowledge which have been most sensibly felt by him when in office and which he had then no time or opportunity to supply; and let this be his season of such preparation as shall enable him to resume office at a future time with more ample resources.

His health, also, will need to be recruited; and seldom as statesmen have the prudence to retire from office voluntarily on this account, it is not unfrequently, perhaps, that health and life are saved to them by dismissal. For it may be observed that few of the effective statesmen who, in this country and in these times, have enjoyed a long unbroken tenure of office, have lived their threescore years and ten.\*

\* It was so perhaps in 1836. It is no longer so in 1878. But for the last 40 years it can hardly be said that any tenure of office has been long.

Another purpose which may be answered by retirement, is to enable the statesman to see more clearly what course he has been pursuing in life, and whither it is leading him. When he quits the King's highway of office, he should endeavour to gain an eminence from which he may survey the region through which he has travelled, and his track through it, lying distinctly below him as in a map. In every man's career, and especially in that of a statesman, a change, a pause, a break, is necessary from time to time, to enable him to understand his life, and to weigh permanent interests and durable effects in an undisturbed medium. Change also, considered merely *as change*, helps to enlarge the nature of one who is competent to deal with adversity and prosperity. By vicissitude a reflecting mind is cultivated and instructed; a mind which is not too weak to bear it is invigorated; and one which tends upwards is elevated.

Whilst these advantages are to be derived from retirement, it will very often happen in this country that a *leading* statesman's loss of office is attended with but little loss of political importance. Even for the activity which is directed to immediate effects he may have no inconsiderable scope in the conduct of a Parliamentary opposition; and he will continue to cover a space in the public mind proportioned to the reputation which he has acquired. It might be thought, therefore, that in many such cases the change would be acceptable. In point of fact, however, it seems to be rarely so; and the reason



would appear to be that most statesmen do not find themselves enabled to bring home to their own minds a satisfactory sense of their importance merely by the contemplation of that in which it really consists, unaided by impressions upon the senses. A number of very little things, which go to make up the *bustle* of greatness, are necessary to keep up in them a strong and lively assurance that they are great. When Sir Walter Scott describes the greatness of Buonaparte in the most brilliant stage of his career, the arrival and despatch of couriers enter into the picture which he draws. And in like manner it may be believed that the impression which most statesmen receive of their own greatness is much enhanced, unconsciously perhaps to themselves, by the granting of audiences, the receiving of deputations, the summonses to levees and councils, and divers other incidents which colour their importance to the eyes of their fancy, making a *pictorial* presentment of it, as it were; whereas without those incidents, their power stands before them rather in a naked and *statuesque* ideal, by which an ordinary imagination is not so easily captivated. Painting is designated by Dryden the "*lena sororis*" of sculpture. The appreciation of greatness which is in no way made palpable to the mind through the senses is analogous to the love of posthumous greatness; which, when it is loved for its own sake purely and not partly for the sake of the present reputation of posthumous greatness to come, is the highest abstraction of ambition.

The most memorable example which our history presents, of a struggle between the love of the shows of greatness and the love of its realities, is that of Lord Bacon, after Shakespeare the most memorable of men. "*Multum incola fuit anima mea,*" had been his account of himself at an early period of his career ; but in a soft and comprehensive nature worldly susceptibilities were necessarily to have some share, and the circumstances of the time were calculated to give them too large a share. There never was a court in which a philosopher might so pardonably desire to set his foot, as that which existed when Bacon chose his path in life. The sovereign was such as he might honourably serve, the statesmen such as he might worthily compete with. Persevering and unavailing endeavours to rise during that reign exercised his heart in ambition and gave the greater value to his subsequent success ; and thus the indwelling spirit which nature had given him was for a time and in a measure sacrificed to an external life. But when this life in its turn fell a sacrifice to circumstances, then, though there was disgrace and a tainted character to be endured, his substantial greatness rose nevertheless like a monument over the shell that had been buried : and wide as may be the difference as to natural endowments between this man and others, yet statesmen who have any of the resources of a contemplative mind may, in their degree and according to their means, profit by a consideration of the manner in which Lord Bacon dignified his retirement from public life. It

is beautifully said in the close of a panegyric upon him by one of his most eminent contemporaries,\*—"In his adversity I ever prayed that God would give him strength; for greatness he could not want." And it was still more beautifully said by himself (as recorded by his chaplain in a diary recently unearthed by Mr. Spedding) that "he was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years. But it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years." There was left to him the greatness of truth, and the greatness of humility prevailing over humiliation.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### CONCLUSION.

I CLOSE these dissertations with a full sense of the incoherent manner in which they have been brought together, shaping themselves into no system, falling into no methodised sequence, and holding to each other by hardly any thing beyond their relevancy to one subject. My apology for so offering them is, that if I had applied myself to devise a system, or even a connected succession, I must necessarily have written more from speculative meditation, less from knowledge. What I knew practically, or by

\* Ben Jonson.

reflection flowing from circumstance, must have been connected by what I might persuade myself that I knew inventively, or by reflection flowing from reflection. I am well aware of the weight and value which is given to a work by a just and harmonious incorporation of its parts. But I may be permitted to say that there is also a value currently and not unduly attached to what men are prompted to think concerning matters within their knowledge. Perceiving that I was not in a condition to undertake such a work as might combine both values, the alternative which I have chosen is that of treating the topics severally, as they were thrown up by the sundry suggestion of experience.

It is possible, indeed, that by postponing my work to a future period, a further accumulation of experience might have enabled me to improve it in the matter of connection and completeness, without derogating from the other claim. But it has appeared to me that there are considerations which render the present time seasonable for the publication of a book, even thus imperfect, upon this theme.

Of the two classes of political questions,—those concerning forms of government and those concerning its administration,—there are seasons for both. I would sedulously guard myself against the error of undervaluing that class of questions of which I know least. I admit that, under very many aspects of political society, questions concerning forms of government exceed all others

in importance. I am far indeed from subscribing to that couplet of Pope's which has obtained such singular celebrity—

“ For forms of government let fools contest ;  
Whiche'er is best administered is best.”

No rational man did ever dispute that a good administration of government is the *summum bonum* of political science : but neither can it be reasonably denied that good forms of government are essential to its good administration : they are contested on this ground ; and to dismiss the contending parties with the epithet applied to them by Pope, appears to be hardly worthy of an instructed writer.

But with all due respect for questions of form and for an exclusive attention to them in their paramount season, what I would suggest is, that a time may come in which these questions should be degraded to a secondary rank and questions of administration should take their place. I would observe that the contest concerning forms may be so engrossing, and so long continued, as to defeat its own end. It may do so not only for the time, but in its ultimate result. Whilst all men's minds are agitated by these contests, whilst owing to this agitation administrative efficiency is suspended and administrations are fugitive and precarious, it is clear that the end in view is sacrificed for the time being. And though it be not equally clear, it may yet be reasonably offered for con-

sideration, that after constitutional reforms have been carried far enough to make it the interest of a government to engage in administrative reforms, the further progress of the former will be rather retarded than accelerated by the suspension of the latter.

Suppose, for example, the case of a people who felt the want of good laws in general, but whose greatest want, though the least felt, was that of moral, religious, and intellectual instruction; and suppose them living under a form of government so imperfect as not to make it the interest of their rulers to supply their wants: suppose this people in the progress of time to have attained casually enough of intellectual instruction to make them impatient of their form of government and thereupon to effect from time to time such changes of that form as shall at length make it the interest of the government to apply itself to their religious, moral, and civil improvement: so far forth their efforts and changes were means, and the end was not sacrificed, even temporarily. But imagine this people in the pursuit of this end, by these means, to have effected in their own minds and desires, as the manner of all people is, a conversion of the means into the end, and to have acquired a disposition to fix their desires upon changes of form, without any or with a disproportionate reference to administrative measures. From that time forward their agitation of constitutional questions, whether or not it may tend to amendments of their constitution, will at least conjoin

with that tendency a sacrifice. Measures for their instruction (which by the hypothesis is their greatest want) will be intermediately suspended or impeded. And furthermore, the constitutional reforms themselves may be either less rapidly or less beneficially and substantially obtained. For they who hold that knowledge is power, will admit that to retard the acquisition of knowledge by the people, pending the discussion of constitutional changes, is, in one of its results at least, to impede their advance to power, and to postpone the substance of popular power to the form.

It is not, of course, as logical propositions exacting necessary assent, that I apply these remarks to the present circumstances of this country. The case assumed merely represents my own opinion and belief in regard to our political predicament ; and the opinion and belief are stated as a motive for making an early effort, and an apology if it be a premature one, to divert the attention of thoughtful men from forms of government to the business of governing.

## APPENDIX.



BETWEEN 1836, when the 'Statesman' was first published, and this year of 1878 when it is republished, a large measure of experience has been obtained, and much discussion has arisen on the subject of selecting public servants according to the success they may achieve in examinations in which it is open to all men to compete ; and doubts have been recently entertained whether in some walks of the public service, it would not be better that the competition should be between a limited number of candidates chosen by responsible patrons. For example, diplomacy requires qualifications which are not to be met with in all classes of society ; and when open competition was adopted elsewhere, a competition between nominees was maintained in the Foreign Office. For the East Indian service open competition was adopted, but with questionable results. In the dealings of arbitrary authorities with races inferior in everything *except* good-breeding, it is important that the Europeans employed should have other qualifications in addition to those which ensure success in examinations. It occurred to me in 1855 that a compromise might be effected which would combine in a large measure the advantages of com-



petition with those of nomination, and it was explained and discussed in the correspondence which follows :—

*H. Taylor to Earl Granville.*

September 16, 1855.

I HAVE been reading in my holidays the Blue Book on the Civil Service, and one question has occurred to me, not raised in that remarkable collection of reports, which may possibly deserve consideration—the question whether it might not be expedient to combine with competition between candidates a competition between patrons. For example, when a Clerkship of the Customs shall fall vacant, the Treasury might nominate two candidates and the Chairman of the Board of Customs two, the four being to compete in examination for the appointment. On this system, so far as it might be an object to each patron that a nominee of his own should get the place, it would be the interest of each to name persons who might be more than a match for the persons named by the other.

In Mr. Bromley's report, and I think in some others, there is a recommendation that the patronage of clerkships in the Revenue Departments should be transferred from the Treasury to the heads of those Departments. It is those heads no doubt who have the more direct interest in the efficiency of their clerks, and I incline to think that they would make better appointments than are made by the Treasury: but I am not myself so much disposed as some men, and even some political men, to make light of the objections to a destruction of patronage used for political purposes; and I would much rather see the efficiency of the Civil Service provided for compatibly with the preservation of that patronage or of some large proportion of it. May it not be believed, however, that two nominations to compete, even if there be four competitors, will answer the purposes of the Secretary of the Treasury as well as one place to give away? What the Secretary of the Treasury wants to say to the Member, and what the Member wants to say to the Constituent, is, "I have done my best for you;" and whether that best is by giving a place or giving an opportunity, is not perhaps very material to either of them, or at least two opportunities may very well be

worth one place. And in so far as the place may be worth more than the opportunity to Treasury, Member, or Constituent, they will one or another or all, take pains to send a candidate on whom the opportunity will not be thrown away. Wherein if they fail, the nomination of the unpolitical patron will take effect.

*The Right Hon. Sir George Lewis, Bart., to H. Taylor.*

November 7, 1855.

I am much obliged to you for sending me a copy of your letter to Lord Granville. The suggestion which you make is original and ingenious, and might perhaps be tried with advantage. I should be afraid, however, of suggesting comparisons as to one person in office with another. The newspapers would say, "See what a virtuous man Sir J. Freemantle is, and what a wicked man Mr. Hayter is; four candidates of the former have succeeded, and four of the latter have been rejected." The truth is that a Secretary of the Treasury who nominates persons to subordinate places in the Revenue Departments knows nothing of his nominees or of their qualifications. He never sees them or hears much of their character. What is more, the Members who give him their names know very little more. When parents find out that there is a real examination for candidates, they will pick out of their sons one who can pass it with credit. They will soon make the discovery that it is useless to send a lout who is sure to be rejected. I have no faith in the principle of literary competition, but I would require that every candidate should leap over a bar of a certain height, and I would make *somebody* responsible for every candidate who is examined. The collection of reports to which you refer contains much interesting and valuable matter; but the difference of opinion even among competent judges is remarkable. I think Stephen unduly severe upon the Civil Service. As far as my experience has gone, it seems to me that every profession and every service—legal, clerical, medical, military, naval, etc.—contains a considerable proportion of lazy, dull, and ill-informed persons. The principle of competition cannot alter human nature, or make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and the number of *sows' ears* is large.

*H. Taylor to Sir George Lewis.*

November 12, 1855.

Many thanks for your letter. I am glad that you think my plan not unworthy of consideration. The objection which you make of a comparison odious to the Secretary of the Treasury, would have the less force in proportion as the plan had the more success in leading Members and Constituents to name better men; and I rather think that, as things are now, the Secretary of the Treasury gets small credit for his nominees on a comparison with those who come up in examination for the services beyond his range. It might possibly be an advantage to him, as well as to the public service, if any means could be found of making Members and Constituents careful as to whom they should recommend.

*My* faith is in competitive examination as against the "leaping-bar," or rather as over and above it. I am told by persons conversant with both kinds of examination in the Universities, that the non-competitive may do well at first and for a time and in the hands of this or that particular examiner, but that it is the most uncertain and variable of all tests, and that its general tendency is to dwindle to nothing. At present, and in the hands of Mr. Maitland, the examinations for the Civil Service are, I believe, effective, even when non-competitive, and more than half the candidates are rejected; but I am told that they are for the most part rejected for want of proficiency in spelling and in the first four rules of arithmetic. This is a very broad ground of rejection; and for several branches of the public service now, and in the progress of improvement one would hope before long for all the clerical class of offices, it would be desirable to have a method of examination adapted to deal with nicer distinctions. The distinction between one sow's ear and another may be carried farther than this. And wherever any but the broadest distinctions are to be dealt with, the competitive examination seems to me to be the only one which is likely to be really effective; inasmuch as justice to individuals is so much stronger a principle in the minds of men than justice to the State.

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*The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to H. Taylor.*

November 16, 1855.

I am so much in the Trevelyan and Northcote sense about patronage (as I believe is Granville) that I hail and welcome, in the spirit called Catholic, *all* proposals which involve abandonment of irresponsible nomination: I am pleased to see them jostling with one another on the road to progress; or I look upon them as so many rivers which will sooner or later all lose themselves in the sea of Freedom, and not evaporate afterwards. As regards, however, your own plan in particular, I am inclined to think with you that the permanent head, in competition with the political head or supervisor, would take great pains with his nominations. I do not doubt that, as you say, Customs nominations would be better than Treasury nominations; founding myself partly on this, which the experience, thus far, seems to have proved, that they could scarcely be worse. But I do not agree with you in valuing this "patronage." Though I am not much of an organic' reformer and wish to keep the old constitution on its old legs, I would give my eyes to cut away that huge portion and that worst portion of the system which is capable of excision.

Upon the whole, then, I give to your proposal a kind of perfidious support—the support which rank freetraders gave to a fixed duty on corn in 1841. I think you would loosen the bands and joints of the system of nomination, and I also admit that, if your modified plan should harden into permanence, it would, whether open to any other objection or not, give better men than the present plan.

*H. Taylor to Mr. Gladstone.*

November 19, 1855.

I am much obliged to you for your notice of my plan, and very glad that your far-goings and my short-comings do not prevent our travelling the same road for this stage. I am myself of opinion that, in a matter which is so new, it may be better that there should be more than one project and experiment agitated and tried before the Government goes the length which it may very possibly find it

expedient to go in the end. The system already adopted can hardly fail to light the way more or less.

Irresponsible nomination I am as much opposed to as you are ; but I think the endeavour should be to make nomination responsible and otherwise to guard it, and not to abolish it.

I find it objected to my plan, in some quarters, that the political patron's nominees would be rejected by the Civil Service Commissioners in a far larger proportion than the official patron's, and that this would throw discredit on the political patron and expose him to comments in the newspapers ; and the inference which I draw from this is, that it would make him responsible.

I have long thought that a good deal might be done, independently of examinations for junior situations, to attach some sort of responsibility to recommendations for employment and promotion in the public service. Even if no more were done than to make such recommendations matter of public record, instead of being kept and taken away by shifting private secretaries, a step would be gained. And, in the event of any delinquency on the part of a public servant, the record should be resorted to and produced to Parliament if called for. And I think that the record and the delinquency should always be brought to the notice of the persons responsible for the recommendation, with an intimation that, in case the papers should be called for, any explanation they might wish to give should accompany them. The mere knowledge that if they committed themselves to an unscrupulous recommendation or testimonial they might hear of it again, would be *some* check. I should think regulations to some such effect would be susceptible of being established by Order in Council.

It might also be enjoined that a person who had been already employed in one branch of the public service should not be employed in another without a report from the former upon his conduct and qualifications. I have known persons dismissed for scandalous misconduct from one branch of the public service to be presently re-employed in another, in a better office than that which they had lost.

*H. Taylor to Lord John Russell.*

November 22, 1855.

If you are not very busy, may I ask you to read the enclosed letter to Lord Granville, suggesting a plan for the disposal of patronage between the political and the permanent heads of departments, on a system of competing nominations. I do not know whether you take much interest in the new system of examinations for the Civil Service, but I have some faith in it, and a hope that its effects will not stop at the junior situations or the classified offices, but will reach indirectly those many very important but more isolated posts to which men are appointed *per saltum*. May one not venture to say that the weakness of our Government is partly owing to our statesmen not knowing sufficiently where to find men and how to choose them? Even without any new system it has always seemed to me that there are methods and devices by which a Minister might turn to better account, as occasions arise; the great resources, in the way of tools and instruments, which lie scattered through this intellectual country. One method is to keep, from the beginning of his career, a descriptive catalogue of the useful men who, from time to time, come within his knowledge. Without some such aid to memory, many men will be within a Minister's *knowledge* who will not be within his *recollection* at the moment when they are wanted. Another is to choose for his private secretary a man not only able in himself, but belonging to sets, lots, and societies of able men; for men of ability herd together, and to find one is to find the way to many. In these and other ways, without anything more systematic, I think that better appointments might be made than very often are made; but Ministers in this country have no time to think of such expedients, and should hardly be indifferent, I think, to any facilities which might accrue to them as the necessary results of a system. And if the improved system of appointments to the junior situations is to bring a good many men of ability into the inferior departments of the service, and, as some say, abler men than those departments have fitting employment for or can adequately pay, a Minister will have a straighter road opened to him than any which he could find for himself, and one which will lead to a more fruitful field of choice than casual opportunities are likely to present, however diligent he may be to profit by them.

*Lord J. Russell to H. Taylor.*

November 23, 1855.

What you say of having a Private Secretary conversant with men of talent is a valuable hint. The joint nomination by the Treasury and Chairmen of Revenue Boards might well be acted upon. But there seem to me two difficulties inherent in the subject which it is not easy to surmount. If the offices are thrown open to the market, there seems great force in Waddington's observation,—that you have no work to be done or salary to be received (with the exceptions, perhaps, of the Foreign Office and Colonial Office) adequate to satisfy the ambition and desire of noble occupation you have called into the public service. If you rely on patronage, you can only obtain the gauge of a young man of eighteen from those who know him, and those who know him are partial, being relations, friends, or political patrons. A Minister has not much chance of making a good choice at present; but I expect the tower proof to which all these new muskets are to be subjected will be a very fair test. A gentleman, yesterday, promised me the account of the first examinations, which, it appears, is in print.

After all, I cannot say I am much dissatisfied with what has been produced. In the changes which have taken place from 1830 to 1855, a good permanent Civil Service could alone have kept the carriages on the line, and they have been kept on the line.

Labouchere, your new master, is one of the purest and most virtuous of our political men—talk to him on this subject.

*H. Taylor to Earl Grey.*

November 23, 1855.

. . . . Since the House of Commons fell to decay, it has seemed to me that what has been chiefly wanting to give strength to Government is:—1st. That they should have the power to take men where they could find them, in the House or out of it, to fill political offices and speak in the House (without voting); and 2nd. That the permanent Civil Service should be supplied with a larger proportion of able men than heretofore: and this, not only with a view to the

better working of the ordinary and inferior services, but also with a view to place within easy reach of the Government men fitted for important detached appointments, so that Ministers of State, having occasion to make such appointments, may find capable men without using such arts and efforts as Ministers never do use, and I suppose never will use, to seek them. It is said that a certain system of examination and competition will bring into the ordinary Civil Service abler men than will stay in it for the salaries it can afford to give. I think it very desirable that it *should* do so, and that these abler men should be kept only for a time in inferior offices, and kept by the inducement of prospects rather than of pay, and that the Government should find the convenience of resorting to them to fill important appointments, instead of emasculating the Engineers and the Bar.

*Hon. Stephen Spring Rice to H. Taylor.*

November 26, 1855.

As to the two examinations, competitive, or what has been called the "leaping-bar," I do not agree with you in the importance you attach to the former, in your letter of the 12th to Lewis. It seems to me unavoidable that the matter of examination should be extremely elementary in character, so that it will be almost impossible to place the horses, as it would be in a race of 100 yards at Newmarket. A majority of the candidates would be equal; and perhaps the man who was truly and decidedly the best might be behind—as in the race, a delay of a couple of seconds in the start would settle the case in a short run, but be immaterial in a two mile course.

As to the "leaping-bar," the Civil Service Commissioners are now charged with a duty which Principals of Departments ought to have always acted upon, mostly professed to do so, and very frequently did. As far as it has yet gone, their existence must be said to have mainly led to the better administration of an existing system, not to the introduction of a new. Your plan is ingenious, but it rests wholly on there being a competitive examination, which appears to me inapplicable to the great mass of Civil Service appointments, though applicable enough to Indian writerships, commissions in the Engineers, and the like.



The branch of this large question that is, I am satisfied, far and far away the most important is that of *promotion*. If I were Chief Director of an office, I should prefer having the worst system of appointments provided I were left the right of promotion, to the best system with promotion governed by seniority or administered from without the office.

The difficulties in the way of improvement in this matter I consider to be two. First, the men at the head of the various departments, with whom practically rests the right of promotion, are mostly men of good abilities, almost invariably of high character, but constantly deficient in moral courage. I won't stop to inquire whether this deficiency is theirs only in common with the large majority of men, or whether it comes from the peculiarities of the class which furnishes them, viz., the class of second-rate men connected with or concerned in politics. I limit myself to asserting that whereas the characteristic of moral courage is perhaps the most indispensable of all (the requirement of fair abilities being first satisfied) for the head of an office, it is in my experience that in which the leading men I have known are most lamentably deficient. I confess I don't know how this is to be corrected. But I wish the existence of the evil were more generally known and acknowledged than it is, and there would then be some chance of amendment.

I can't say that the great political officers show any bright example in this matter to the subordinate chiefs of the permanent Civil Service. Are not Secretaries of State, and even collective Cabinets, known to have recourse to very strange devices rather than look the House of Commons in the face on some difficult or uncertain question? Then, besides the House of Commons as a bugbear, there is that shadowy entity, "Public Opinion," the *Times*, and, indeed, many others—timidity being apt enough to create its own objects. I must say, little as I agree with Gladstone about the war, that it is very refreshing to see how gallantly he has bearded the mob and the press. I don't think there is a man in the House but he who would have done it.

The second difficulty in the way of improving the system of promotion is that of duly adjusting the claims of *seniority* and superior competence. It is idle to speak of throwing the former consideration aside. I believe that much good would arise from an

attempt at definition by rule. I proposed something of the sort to Granville, and I think both he and his colleagues, Spearman and Hayter, were well disposed to it, but their Customs Enquiry was prematurely broken up, to the very great misfortune of the Department. Say that there are six classes of "Landing Waiters" in the Port of London, let three out of four vacancies in each class be filled by seniority, excluding only misconduct or such incapacity as has led to formal complaint. Let the fourth vacancy be filled by the best man in the class next below. I have a strong opinion that this measure alone would produce a prodigious change for the better.

To come back to the question of primary appointments, I go cordially with Trevelyan and Northcote in condemning the present system; but not because it is very mischievous to the public service; I care more for the constituencies. It brings into activity at elections very many dirty fellows who would otherwise lie quiet; and, as a ricocheted evil, these dirty fellows get rewarded and set up before their local rivals. The M.P.'s suffer too—not so much in having to flit to and fro in Downing-street or write little notes to Hayter, as from being obliged to deal with these tools, and from soon working down to their level of baseness. In Africa I tried eating with my fingers and taking sops put into my mouth by my Arab entertainers with theirs—in five minutes time I was accustomed to it.

*H. Taylor to The Hon. Stephen Spring Rice.*

December 24, 1855.

I have considered attentively your objection to competitive examinations of candidates for clerkships in the inferior services, and I have talked about it to persons conversant with examinations and persons conversant with the inferior services, and I do not myself, nor do they, acquiesce in the inapplicability of competition to such cases. We maintain that if the first four rules of arithmetic were the only subject of examination one man will be found better than another. If for the clerkship in question, rapid and correct addition were the desideratum (which it often will be), the competition will show which of four men can add up a given number

of columnus with the greatest speed and the fewest errors; or at least if, owing to a disturbance of the balance by trepidation, etc., it should not show which man will do it the best habitually, it has as good a chance of showing that as of showing the preference to be given in examinations for less elementary attainments. For I should wish to be clearly understood as not affirming that in either case the competitive examination will be by any means *sure* to show the preferable man; and I do not desire the competitive examination as a means of pushing up the standard to a higher pitch; on the contrary, I would take care, by the tasks set, to keep it at a moderate pitch; but I desire it because I believe it to be the only means of keeping an examination steady and effective at any pitch high or low. Rory Numbskull will always get himself passed, unless his passing shall give just ground of complaint to Thomas Tag, Robert Rag, and Cornelius Bobtail. The leaping-bar would be kicked over by any one of these gentlemen who could not clear it, if the others were not standing by to cry "Shame."

In your observations upon promotions I entirely concur; and I set a high value on the suggestion that three out of four vacancies in each class should be filled by seniority ("excluding only misconduct and such incapacity as has led to formal complaint"), and that the fourth should be filled by the best man in the class next below.

*The Hon. Stephen Spring Rice to H. Taylor.*

December 26, 1855.

I ought to have materially qualified what I said in my last by admitting my remarks to be comparatively inapplicable to your special proposal, viz., for establishing a competition between a very limited number of candidates named by different patrons.



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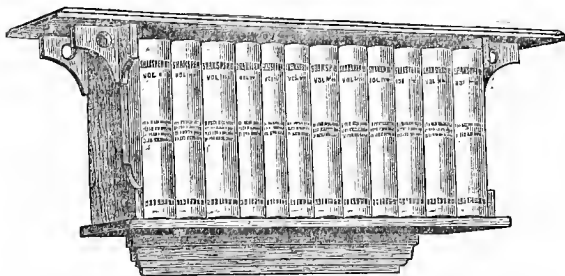
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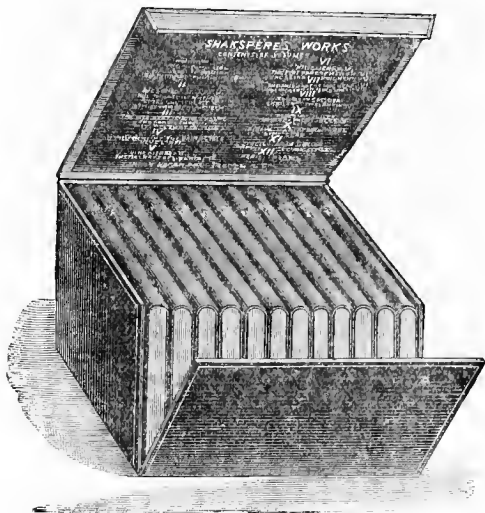


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## SPECIMEN OF TYPE.

4

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

*Salar.* My wind, cooling my broth,  
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought  
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.  
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run  
But I should think of shallows and of flats,  
And see my wealthy Andrew, dock'd in sand,  
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs  
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church  
And see the holy edifice of stone,  
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,  
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,  
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,  
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,  
And, in a word, but even now worth this,  
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought  
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought  
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?  
But tell not me: I know Antonio  
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

*Ant.* Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,  
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,  
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate  
Upon the fortune of this present year:  
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

*Salar.* Why, then you are in love.

*Ant.* Fie, fie!

*Salar.* Not in love neither? Then let us say you  
are sad,

Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy  
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,  
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed  
Janus,

Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:  
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes  
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;  
And other of such vinegar aspect











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