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# Prose Selections
from
Matthew Arnold

Edited by

E. T. Campagnac

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - - - - vii

THE FUNCTIONS OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME 1

MARCUS AURELIUS - - - - - - - - - 16

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT - - - - - - - - 39

FALKLAND - - - - - - - - - 71

MILTON - - - - - - - - - - 97

JOHN KEATS - - - - - - - - - 102

WORDSWORTH - - - - - - - - - - 106

NOTES - - - - - - - - - - 120

QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS - - - - . 128

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY - - - - - - - 131

INTRODUCTION

HERE are some passages taken from Matthew Arnold's prose works. He was an author not quite easy to read in his own day, and perhaps less easy for us to read now. But he was and continues to be worth reading, both for what he has to say and for his style in saying it. He is a critic; that is, a judge; a man who makes it his business to discriminate between what is good and what is not. He counsels us to be critics, too. It is a common mistake, of which we are still guilty, to suppose that a critic is a man who is content to condemn what he thinks evil, and even seeks it in order to exercise his faculty for condemnation. Of course, a critic condemns—what he disapproves: but of course, also, he praises—what he approves. His business and his delight are to seek whatsoever things are lovely and of good report; to seek these, and to disengage them from unlovely things; to make them more accessible, and more useful, by separating them from those other things.

If this is the business of a critic, it is clear that he must get and keep a standard of excellence by which he can test the world and himself. Now Arnold held the happy belief that the world will not willingly let die what is excellent. Things which fall short of excellence may, some of them, endure for a long time, others have a brief if brilliant vogue; but things excellent, though obscured now and again, and even through protracted periods, by misunderstanding, envy, malice and all uncharitableness, have in themselves an irresistible vitality; they last, and even the opposition which they encounter serves to establish in the end their claim upon the allegiance and the love of men. The excellent things are the eternal things. And as they conquer time, so they defy the narrow limits of place. The greatest works of men's minds and hands have indeed something personal and proper to their creators and something specially characteristic of the country, as well as of the epoch, of those creators; but they are sooner or later received, welcomed and made at home in other countries, and in the whole world. In fact, they become classical. This word, classical, has been applied in Europe, with general agreement and peculiar fitness, to the achievements, in several arts, and pre-eminently in the art of literature, of the Greeks and the Romans. And it was natural that Matthew Arnold, whose early training and whose lifelong study took him and held him to Greek and Roman models, should discover in them a standard for himself, a standard by which he judged the world. But he was no narrow scholar: he sought what had been best said and best done in all places and in all ages. Yet he was convinced that the best, wherever and whenever done or said, would prove to have the qualities, the essential qualities, of the Greek or of the Roman genius, lucidity and swiftness of thought and of expression, dignity and weight in both.

Matthew Arnold, born in December, 1822, was the eldest son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, who became Headmaster of Rugby School in 1828. After a year at Winchester College, he was brought in 1837 to his father's school, and from it went on to Oxford in 1841 as a scholar of Balliol College. Here he won the Hertford Scholarship in 1842, and the Newdigate Prize in 1843. He graduated with a second class in the Final Classical Schools in 1844, and in the next year was elected to a Fellowship at Oriel College. He spent a short time as a master at Rugby, but left it on his appointment in 1847 to be Private Secretary to the Lord President of the Council, Lord Lansdowne. In 1851 he undertook the work, which he continued for many years, of Inspector of Schools, and while holding this office made reports upon the schools and Universities of France and of Germany. He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1857 to 1867. More important, he was himself a poet. At school and, as we have noticed, at the University, he gave early evidence of his powers, which were to show themselves again in *The Strayed Reveller and other Poems* (1849); in *Empedocles on Etna* (1852); in *Poems*, First Series, 1853; and *Poems*, Second Series, 1855. *Merope* came in 1858, and *New Poems* in 1867. Collections of his poetry were published at later dates, in 1869, in 1885, and two years after his death in 1890.

His earliest prose is later than his earliest poetry. *England and the Italian Question* (1859) was followed by *Popular Education in France* in 1861, in which year were published his Oxford Lectures *On Translating Homer. Last Words on Translating Homer*, also lectures given from the Chair of Poetry, came in 1862. *Essays in Criticism* appeared in 1865; *On the Study of Celtic Literature* in 1867; *Schools and Universities on the Continent* in 1868; *Higher Schools and Universities in Germany* in 1874; *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869; *St. Paul and Protestantism* in 1870; *Literature and Dogma* in 1873; *God and the Bible* in 1875; *Last Essays on Church and Religion* in 1877; *Mixed Essays* in 1879; *Irish Essays* in 1882; *Discourses in America* (he paid two visits to that country) in 1885; *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, in 1888.[1]

If a man's work is his life, this record of Arnold's writing serves to show what were his occupations, what the themes upon which his mind was engaged. Fortunately, a man's work is not the whole of his life; he has rest as well as labour; he not only toils, but sometimes plays; he shows himself in public, and he is revealed, more fully because intimately, to his friends and his family. Yet, a good man has consistency, and the varying aspects of his character are still but aspects of character which varies only to grow in determination, and keeps a persistent unity in all its manifestations. Matthew Arnold filled several rôles, as it were, upon several stages; a poet, a critic of letters; an essayist dealing with politics, social problems, and religion: but in all his parts he maintains the same high seriousness, he resorts to the same standards of sweetness and light, and judges what comes to him by them; he exhibits in his own practice the doctrine that what is well thought can be well done, and that the record of what is well thought and well done must be well expressed. A foe of whatever is slovenly in idea, he is a foe of whatever is clumsy in speech; an advocate of righteousness, he is, for that reason, a lover of beauty. These two, righteousness and beauty, joined together (as he might have said) by God, he stoutly refused to sunder; he desired both, because he thought that neither could be perfectly achieved or won without the other; because, in fact, he thought that these two are one. He was quick to perceive, what we can all see—at any rate, when the fact is pointed out to us, as it is in page after page of his writings—that some persons and some peoples set more store by righteousness than by beauty, while to others beauty makes an appeal quicker and stronger than the appeal of righteousness. Hebraism there is, and Hellenism there is. And there is a grim goodness and there is a superficial beauty. So at least our language, when we press it to troublesome refinements and qualifications, encourages us to say and to think. But, according to Arnold, grim goodness is not quite good, and superficial beauty not quite beautiful. It was his twofold mission, so he thought, first to tell good people to be beautiful, and then to entreat beautiful people to be good. In the pursuit of this calling, it may be admitted that he was sometimes tiresome: all teachers are disposed to repeat themselves, and have some excuse for doing it; but he said what he had to say in season and out of season, with the unwearying zeal of a prophet—unwearying for himself, but sometimes fatiguing for his listeners. Yet the listeners who have been most patient have ever been ready to proclaim that they owed to him a genuine inspiration, that by him their appreciation of good work in whatever field was beyond reckoning enlivened and widened; and it is persons who have least profited by his teaching who have most loudly resented the fact that he took the liberty of trying to teach them anything at all. His teaching was not unneeded in the England of his lifetime: it is not unneeded now. Things lovely and of good report still need and deserve a champion, as they needed and found one, in Matthew Arnold, then. Faults of taste and faults of conduct are to be traced to the same source, to falsity of judgment, to cloudiness of vision; perfection in taste and perfection in conduct have the same origin, clearness of mind, simplicity of heart. Upon this he insisted, whatever the subject of his criticism.

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[1] The student will do well to consult the admirable *Bibliography of Matthew Arnold*, compiled and edited by Thomas Burnett Smart (London, J. Davy & Sons, 1892): to it I am much indebted.

It does not, or should not, surprise us that a man who was strongly held by a principle to the exposition of which he devoted his life, should not only repeat his message, but repeat it in the same words. If people, some people, were irritated by his repetition of the same doctrine, people also, and more people, and among them his warmest admirers, were vexed by the recurrence of the same phrases over and over again. But we must remember that truth is worth repetition and can bear it; and that a telling phrase, treasured at once on the first hearing by the alert, is only kept in the minds of persons less acute and less tenacious, if it is offered to them, and even pressed upon them, often. Teaching is the most difficult work in which to satisfy Arnold's own demand for the combination of effectiveness with delightfulness, and we may grant, though reluctantly, that he sometimes was effective (by repetition) when he had ceased to be delightful (by undue repetition). No man is beyond censure; few men afford a criterion by which they tempt us to test themselves, and bear the test as well as he. Moderation, the natural but disciplined habit of balance, of poise; freedom from exaggeration; reasonableness, urbanity; a just reserve, a generous self-abandonment—these, with vigour, steadfastness and courage, are qualities of style in literature and in other arts; they are qualities of manner in social behaviour and the conduct of affairs; they are qualities of character; and they are the qualities in art, in conduct, in character which Matthew Arnold praises; the opposite of these he denounces. His praises were, no doubt, very precious to persons who thought that they deserved them, and who discovered in themselves the characteristics which he applauds. His denunciations were treasured by the same persons, who rejoiced in the deftness with which he smote persons against whom they were directed. But the people who were smitten were not always 'senseless of the bob'; they felt the stroke, were hurt by it, and were not the less embittered and infuriated by it because they knew not how to return it. Rough and noisy protest is no fit reply to a shrewd, swift attack made by a dexterous and smiling enemy. Matthew Arnold has the air of one who smiles at his victims; sometimes he weeps over them: perhaps they hated his tears even more than his smiles. In effect, he told his fellow-countrymen that for all their victories over matter, for all their progress in the physical sciences, applied ever more profitably (if profit be measured by money) to the requirements of manufacture and commerce, for all their territorial aggrandisement and their immense accumulations of money—that, notwithstanding all these, they lacked something else, something better, without which these things were really valueless. He told them that they were, not wholly of course, but largely, deficient in ideas. And while some of them had enough 'ideas' to see the justice of the plea which, upon all sorts of occasions and with all sorts of subjects as his text, he was for ever making for ideas, and accepted what he said, others were unwilling to admit the charge he made against them and simply became angry. And being angry they showed that they were deficient in 'sweetness'; and as anger darkened their counsels, they proved that they were deficient in 'light.' It may be presumed, it may be confessed, that Arnold sometimes rejoiced when he brought a blush to the cheek of a 'barbarian' or reduced a 'Philistine' to impotent wrath. He made enemies; but he did not set out to make enemies; his purpose was to discover Truth in the form of Beauty, and to reconcile men to each other by bringing them into a common allegiance to Truth thus embodied. For him art must have a meaning; poetry is the 'criticism of life'; and business, organisation, affairs must be illuminated by ideas. Accordingly, he has found little favour either with 'practical' people who say that 'business is business,' or with certain 'pure scholars' who say that 'art is art.' Both have complained that he brought into one world notions and standards which are appropriate in another. But what Matthew Arnold, in substance, says in reply to these accusations is that both groups of critics are wrong in admitting that for man there are two worlds: he seeks 'humanity,' the sum of those qualities which make men 'humane,' and in the possession and exercise of which men find 'a city to dwell in,' a mode of life in which manifold and varied interests are brought into harmony and order. His earlier work, as we have remarked, was in poetry: later, as an essayist, he becomes a teacher, and sometimes a tiresome teacher. But he held, with Wordsworth, that a poet may be a teacher; and he has shown in the best of his prose that a teacher may achieve the unity, the tenseness, the beauty of purpose and expression which are some, at least, of the marks of true poetry. He was, of course, aware that much that he said disturbed and annoyed his hearers and his readers: but his intention was not to disturb and annoy, but to waken them to ideas, and even to change their own ideas for better ideas, and he desired to do this gently and sweetly, in good temper and good form.

A man reveals himself to the world, to his friends and to his mother with some, with more, and with complete, or nearly complete, sincerity. Some of Arnold's letters to his mother show him most clearly for what he was. Thus on 19th May, 1863, he writes:[1] "To an eminently *decorous* clerical journal my tendency to say exactly what I think about things and people is thoroughly distasteful and disquieting. However, one cannot change English ideas so much as, if I live, I hope to change them, without saying imperturbably what one thinks and making a good many people uncomfortable. The great thing is to speak without a particle of vice, malice, or rancour." Matthew Arnold could say exactly what he thought, and he was singularly free from vice, malice and rancour; but his imperturbable manner, which, designedly or not, had the effect of a certain condescension, of an Olympian superiority, increased the discomfort and disquiet of "a good many people."

More and more carefully, and in increasing numbers, people came to listen to Arnold, to heed what he said; and this, to know that he has attention, is always gratifying to a teacher. How best to use his opportunity a good teacher considers. In a letter, written on 29th October of the same year (1863), also to his mother, Arnold says: "It is very animating to think that one at last has a chance of *getting at* the English public. Such a public as it is, and such a work as one wants to do with it! Partly nature, partly time and study, have also by this time taught me thoroughly the precious truth that everything turns upon one's exercising the power of *persuasion*, of *charm*; that without this all fury, energy. reasoning power, acquirement are thrown away and only render their owner more miserable. Even in one's ridicule one must preserve a sweetness and good humour." Here we have the ideal which Matthew Arnold set before himself in accomplishing his self-imposed task of criticism—persuasion, charm, sweetness, good humour were in his pacific and pleasant armoury. It is delightful to learn that even persons who smarted a little under his criticism, perceived that gentleness, and not severity, or perhaps we should say a mild sternness, was what he sought.

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[1] *Letters*. Macmillan, vol. i. p. 194.

We get evidence of this in another letter (14th December, 1867) addressed to his mother. "What I like best is such a letter as I saw the other day to the Council Office, not meant for me to see, from a teacher defending his school against a severe report of mine; he finished by saying that he had not a word against the inspector, whom he would rather have than any other he had come in contact with, 'as he was always gentle and patient with the children.' The great thing is *humanity*, after all."

A speaker, however modest, must be heard, if he is to have any effect or influence; a writer, however reserved and restrained, desires readers, and each must use a style and adopt a manner which will arrest and keep the attention. Some critics disliked Arnold's style and manner; but to dislike them they had to hear him, to read him. He found and provoked his sharpest critics when he dealt with religious subjects; but in dealing with these, as in dealing with subjects of a different nature, "I write," he says, "in the manner which is natural to me." If there was some affectation in his manner (and what manner is not affected?), he could have used Charles Lamb's amiable retort that it was natural to him to be affected. So it was; and his affectation, his studied, but natural, manner, served, and was designed to serve, the purpose of carrying to his audience or his readers something which he believed it would be good for them to receive. In writing to his sister (November, 1874) he professes this:[1] "For it is my belief, at any rate, that I give something positive, which to a great many people may be of the very greatest comfort and service. And this is in part an answer to what you say about treating with lightness what is matter of life and death to so many people."

To keep in seriousness a gaiety of spirit, to keep in lightness a resolute tenacity of purpose, to touch affairs with the hand of an artist, delicate because of its strength, to deal with letters as if they had significance as well as form, to unite

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[1] *Letters*. Macmillan, vol. ii. p. 120.

Truth and Beauty, or by perceiving their proper unity to maintain it—these were Arnold's aims, and the student of the passages which follow must judge for himself whether these are high aims, and whether and how far Arnold attained them.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME

MANY objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said: "Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, "almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires,—criticism;" and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort.

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It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the highest function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men. They may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticising. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labour may be vainly spent in attempting it, which might with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now, in literature,—I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises,—the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time. At any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas, that is rather the business of the philosopher. The grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations,—making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare, this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

Nay, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, " in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

Or, to narrow our range, and quit these considerations of the general march of genius and of society,—considerations which are apt to become too abstract and impalpable —every one can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it must be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry has so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that for this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different, and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he *could* have been different. But surely the one thing wanting to make

Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is,—his thought richer, and his influence of wider application,—was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him.

But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry at this epoch; Shelley had plenty of reading, Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles—as we all say so glibly, and often with so little discernment of the real import of what we are saying—had not many books; Shakespeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive. And this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work. This is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare; but, besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining atmosphere of great value. Such an atmosphere the many-sided learning and the long and widely-combined critical effort of Germany formed for Goethe, when he lived and worked. There was no national glow of life and thought there as in the Athens of Pericles or the England of Elizabeth. That was the poet's weakness. But there was a sort of equivalent for it in the complete culture and unfettered thinking of a large body of Germans. That was his strength. In the England of the first quarter of this century there was neither a national glow of life and thought, such as we had in the age of Elizabeth, nor yet a culture and a force of learning and criticism such as were to be found in Germany. Therefore the creative power of poetry wanted, for success in the highest sense, materials and a basis ; a thorough interpretation of the world was necessarily denied to it.

At first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renascence, with its powerful episode the Reformation. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements ; movements in which the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity. The French Revolution took a political, practical character. The movement which went on in France under the old *régime*, from 1700 to 1789, was far more really akin than that of the Revolution itself to the movement of the Renascence ; the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution.

Goethe reproached this last expressly with having "thrown quiet culture back." Nay, and the true key to how much in our Byron, even in our Wordsworth, is this!—that they had their source in a great movement of feeling, not in a great movement of mind. The French Revolution, however,—that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred,—found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men, and not in their practical sense; this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time. This is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less successful; it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience? This is the English fashion, a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place is not law in another, what is law here to-day is not law even here to-morrow; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding on another's. The old woman who threw her stool at the head of the surpliced minister in St. Giles's Church at Edinburgh obeyed an impulse to which millions of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting*—that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force; at least I should say so if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in the *Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, impel great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is—it will probably long remain—the greatest, the most animating event in history. And as no sincere passion for the things of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit—the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected: she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element: on this theme we can all go on for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionise this world to their bidding,—that is quite another thing. There is a world of ideas and there is the world of practice ; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other ; but neither is to be suppressed.

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The notion of the free play of the mind upon all subjects being a pleasure in itself, being an object of desire, being an essential provider of elements without which a nation's spirit, whatever compensations it may have for them, must, in the long run, die of inanition, hardly enters into an Englishman's thoughts. It is noticeable that the word *curiosity*, which in other languages is used in a good sense, to mean, as a high and fine quality of man's nature, just this disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake,—it is noticeable, I say, that this word has in our language no sense of the kind, no sense but a rather bad and disparaging one. But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of this very quality. It obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind ; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever. This is an instinct for which there is, I think, little original sympathy in the practical English nature, and what there was of it has undergone a long benumbing period of blight and suppression in the epoch of concentration which followed the French Revolution.

But epochs of concentration cannot well endure for ever ; epochs of expansion, in the due course of things, follow them. Such an epoch of expansion seems to be opening in this country. In the first place all danger of a hostile forcible pressure of foreign ideas upon our practice has long disappeared; like the traveller in the fable, therefore, we begin to wear our cloak a little more loosely. Then, with a long peace, the ideas of Europe steal gradually and amicably in, and mingle, though in infinitesimally small quantities at a time, with our own notions. Then, too, in spite of all that is said about the absorbing and brutalising influence of our passionate material progress, it seems to me indisputable that this progress is likely, though not certain, to lead in the end to an apparition of intellectual life; and that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may begin to remember that he has a mind, and that the mind may be made the source of great pleasure. I grant it is mainly the privilege of faith, at present, to discern this end to our railways, our business, and our fortune-making; but we shall see if, here as elsewhere, faith is not in the end the true prophet. Our ease, our travelling, and our unbounded liberty to hold just as hard and securely as we please to the practice to which our notions have given birth, all tend to beget an inclination to deal a little more freely with these notions themselves, to canvass them a little, to penetrate a little into their real nature. Flutterings of curiosity, in the foreign sense of the word, appear amongst us, and it is in these that criticism must look to find its account. Criticism first; a time of true creative activity, perhaps,—which, as I have said, must inevitably be preceded amongst us by a time of criticism,—hereafter, when criticism has done its work.

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word,—*disinterestedness.* And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from what is called "the practical view of things;" by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches. By steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it. It subserves interests not its own. Our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted.

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If I have insisted too much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. I have wished, above all, to insist on the attitude which criticism should adopt towards things in general; on its right tone and temper of mind. But then comes another question as to the subject-matter which literary criticism should most seek. Here, in general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being; the idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides, and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence. The English critic of literature, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Again, judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business, and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself. And it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it,—but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract lawgiver,—that the critic will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our *best in the world ?*) criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment ; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still, under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic ; like mathematics, it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity.

But stop, some one will say ; all this talk is of no practical use to us whatever ; this criticism of yours is not what we have in our minds when we speak of criticism ; when we speak of critics and criticism, we mean critics and criticism of the current English literature of the day ; when you offer to tell criticism its function, it is to this criticism that we expect you to address yourself. I am sorry for it, for I am afraid I must disappoint these expectations. I am bound by my own definition of criticism : *a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.* How much of current English literature comes into this " best that is known and thought in the world ? " Not very much, I fear ; certainly less, at this moment, than of the current literature of France or Germany. Well, then, am I to alter my definition of criticism, in order to meet the requirements of a number of practising English critics, who, after all, are free in their choice of a business? That would be making criticism lend itself just to one of those alien practical considerations, which, I have said, are so fatal to it. One may say, indeed, to those who have to deal with the mass—so much better disregarded—of current English literature, that they may at all events endeavour, in dealing with this, to try it, so far as they can, by the standard of the best that is known and thought in the world; one may say, that to get anywhere near this standard, every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better. But, after all, the criticism I am really concerned with,—the criticism which alone can much help us for the future, the criticism which, throughout Europe, is at the present day meant, when so much stress is laid on the importance of criticism and the critical spirit,—is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special, local, and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme. And what is that but saying that we too, all of us, as individuals, the more thoroughly we carry it out, shall make the more progress?

There is so much inviting us!—what are we to take? what will nourish us in growth towards perfection? That is the question which, with the immense field of life and of literature lying before him, the critic has to answer; for himself first, and afterwards for others. In this idea of the critic's business the essays brought together in the following pages have their origin; in this idea, widely different as are their subjects, they have, perhaps, their unity.

I conclude with what I said at the beginning: to have the sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have, in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

Still, in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation; in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to underrate it. The epochs of Æschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their preeminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of literature; there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon. That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.

MARCUS AURELIUS

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[Marcus Aurelius] is perhaps the most beautiful figure in history. He is one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks, which stand for ever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have once been carried, and may be carried again. The interest of mankind is peculiarly attracted by examples of signal goodness in high places; for that testimony to the worth of goodness is the most striking which is borne by those to whom all the means of pleasure and self-indulgence lay open, by those who had at their command the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Marcus Aurelius was the ruler of the grandest of empires; and he was one of the best of men. Besides him, history presents one or two sovereigns eminent for their goodness, such as Saint Louis or Alfred. But Marcus Aurelius has, for us moderns, this great superiority in interest over Saint Louis or Alfred, that he lived and acted in a state of society modern by its essential characteristics, in an epoch akin to our own, in a brilliant centre of civilisation. Trajan talks of "our enlightened age" just as glibly as the *Times* talks of it. Marcus Aurelius thus becomes for us a man like ourselves, a man in all things tempted as we are. Saint Louis inhabits an atmosphere of mediæval Catholicism, which the man of the nineteenth century may admire, indeed, may even passionately wish to inhabit, but which, strive as he will, he cannot really inhabit. Alfred belongs to a state of society (I say it with all deference to the *Saturday Review* critic who keeps such jealous watch over the honour of our Saxon ancestors) half barbarous. Neither Alfred nor Saint Louis can be morally and intellectually as near to us as Marcus Aurelius.

The record of the outward life of this admirable man has in it little of striking incident. He was born at Rome on the 26th of April, in the year 121 of the Christian era. He was nephew and son-in-law to his predecessor on the throne, Antoninus Pius. When Antoninus died, he was forty years old, but from the time of his earliest manhood he had assisted in administering public affairs. Then, after his uncle's death in 161, for nineteen years he reigned as emperor. The barbarians were pressing on the Roman frontier, and a great part of Marcus Aurelius's nineteen years of reign was passed in campaigning. His absences from Rome were numerous and long. We hear of him in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Greece; but, above all, in the countries on the Danube, where the war with the barbarians was going on,—in Austria, Moravia, Hungary. In these countries much of his Journal seems to have been written; parts of it are dated from them; and there a few weeks before his fifty-ninth birthday, he fell sick and died.[1] The record of him on which his fame chiefly rests is the record of his inward life,—his *Journal*, or *Commentaries*, or *Meditations*, or *Thoughts*, for by all these names has the work been called. Perhaps the most interesting of the records of his outward life is that which the first book of this work supplies, where he gives an account of his education, recites the names of those to whom he is indebted for it, and enumerates his obligations to each of them. It is a refreshing and consoling picture, a priceless treasure for those, who, sick of the "wild and dreamlike trade of blood and guile," which seems to be nearly the whole of what history has to offer to our view, seek eagerly for that substratum of right thinking and well-doing which in all ages must surely have somewhere existed, for without it the continued life of humanity would have been impossible. "From my mother I learnt piety and beneficence, and abstinence not only from evil deeds but even from evil thoughts; and further, simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich." Let us remember that, the next time we are reading the sixth satire of Juvenal. "From my tutor I learnt" (hear it, ye tutors of princes!) "endurance of labour, and to want little, and to work with my own hands, and not to meddle with other people's affairs, and not to be ready to listen to slander." The vices and foibles of the Greek sophist or rhetorician —the *Græculus esuriens*—are in everybody's mind; but he who reads Marcus Aurelius's account of his Greek teachers and masters, will understand how it is that, in spite of the vices and foibles of individual *Græculi*, the education of the human race owes to Greece a debt which can never be overrated. The vague and colourless praise of history leaves on the mind hardly any impression of Antoninus Pius: it is only from the private memoranda of his nephew that we learn what a disciplined, hard-working, gentle, wise, virtuous man he was; a man who, perhaps, interests mankind less than his immortal nephew only because he has left in writing no record of his inner life,—*caret quia vate sacro.*

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[1] He died on the 17th of March, A.D. 180.

Of the outward life and circumstances of Marcus Aurelius, beyond these notices which he has himself supplied, there are few of much interest and importance. There is the fine anecdote of his speech when he heard of the assassination of the revolted Avidius Cassius, against whom he was marching; *he was sorry*, he said, *to be deprived of the pleasure of pardoning him.* And there are one or two more anecdotes of him which show the same spirit. But the great record for the outward life of a man who has left such a record of his lofty inward aspirations as that which Marcus Aurelius has left, is the clear consenting voice of all his contemporaries,—high and low, friend and enemy, pagan and Christian,—in praise of his sincerity, justice and goodness. The world's charity does not err on the side of excess, and here was a man occupying the most conspicuous station in the world, and professing the highest possible standard of conduct; —yet the world was obliged to declare that he walked worthily of his profession. Long after his death, his bust was to be seen in the houses of private men through the wide Roman empire. It may be the vulgar part of human nature which busies itself with the semblance and doings of living sovereigns, it is its nobler part which busies itself with those of the dead; these busts of Marcus Aurelius, in the homes of Gaul, Britain, and Italy, bear witness, not to the inmates' frivolous curiosity about princes and palaces, but to their reverential memory of the passage of a great man upon the earth.

Two things, however, before one turns from the outward to the inward life of Marcus Aurelius, force themselves upon one's notice, and demand a word of comment; he persecuted the Christians, and he had for his son the vicious and brutal Commodus. The persecution at Lyons in which Attalus and Pothinus suffered, the persecution at Smyrna, in which Polycarp suffered, took place in his reign. Of his humanity, of his tolerance, of his horror of cruelty and violence, of his wish to refrain from severe measures against the Christians, of his anxiety to temper the severity of these measures when they appeared to him indispensable, there is no doubt: but, on the one hand, it is certain that the letter, attributed to him, directing that no Christian should be punished for being a Christian, is spurious; it is almost certain that his alleged answer to the authorities of Lyons, in which he directs that Christians persisting in their profession shall be dealt with according to law, is genuine. Mr. Long seems inclined to try and throw doubt over the persecution at Lyons, by pointing out that the letter of the Lyons Christians relating it, alleges it to have been attended by miraculous and incredible incidents. "A man," he says, "can only act consistently by accepting all this letter or rejecting it all, and we cannot blame him for either." But it is contrary to all experience to say that because a fact is related with incorrect additions, and embellishments, therefore it probably never happened at all; or that it is not, in general, easy for an impartial mind to distinguish between the facts and the embellishments. I cannot doubt that the Lyons persecution took place, and that the punishment of Christians for being Christians was sanctioned by Marcus Aurelius. But then I must add that nine modern readers out of ten, when they read this, will, I believe, have a perfectly false notion of what the moral action of Marcus Aurelius, in sanctioning that punishment, really was. They imagine Trajan, or Antoninus Pius, or Marcus Aurelius, fresh from the perusal of the Gospel, fully aware of the spirit and holiness of the Christian saints, ordering their extermination because he loved darkness rather than light. Far from this, the Christianity which these emperors aimed at repressing was, in their conception of it, something philosophically contemptible, politically subversive, and morally abominable. As men, they sincerely regarded it much as well-conditioned people, with us, regard Mormonism; as rulers, they regarded it much as Liberal statesmen, with us, regard the Jesuits. A kind of Mormonism, constituted as a vast secret society, with obscure aims of political and social subversion, was what Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius believed themselves to be repressing when they punished Christians. The early Christian apologists again and again declare to us under what odious imputations the Christians lay, how general was the belief that these imputations were well-grounded, how sincere was the horror which the belief inspired. The multitude, convinced that the Christians were atheists who ate human flesh and thought incest no crime, displayed against them a fury so passionate as to embarrass and alarm their rulers. The severe expressions of Tacitus, *exitiabilis superstitio—odio humani generis convicti*, show how deeply the prejudices of the multitude imbued the educated class also. One asks oneself with astonishment how a doctrine so benign as that of Jesus Christ can have incurred misrepresentation so monstrous. The inner and moving cause of the misrepresentation lay, no doubt, in this,—that Christianity was a new spirit in the Roman world, destined to act in that world as its dissolvent; and it was inevitable that Christianity in the Roman world, like democracy in the modern world, like every new spirit with a similar mission assigned to it, should at its first appearance occasion an instinctive shrinking and repugnance in the world which it was to dissolve. The outer and palpable causes of the misrepresentation were, for the Roman public at large, the confounding of the Christians with the Jews, that isolated, fierce, and stubborn race, whose stubbornness, fierceness, and isolation, real as they were, the fancy of a civilised Roman yet further exaggerated; the atmosphere of mystery and novelty which surrounded the Christian rites; the very simplicity of Christian theism. For the Roman statesman, the cause of the mistake lay in that character of secret assemblages which the meetings of the Christian community wore, under a State-system as jealous of unauthorised associations as is the State-system of modern France.

A Roman of Marcus Aurelius's time and position could not well see the Christians except through the mist of these prejudices. Seen through such a mist, the Christians appeared with a thousand faults not their own; but it has not been sufficiently remarked that faults really their own many of them assuredly appeared with besides, faults especially likely to strike such an observer as Marcus Aurelius, and to confirm him in the prejudices of his race, station, and rearing. We look back upon Christianity after it has proved what a future it bore within it, and for us the sole representatives of its early struggles are the pure and devoted spirits through whom it proved this; Marcus Aurelius saw it with its future yet unshown, and with the tares among its professed progeny not less conspicuous than the wheat. Who can doubt that among the professing Christians of the second century, as among the professing Christians of the nineteenth, there was plenty of folly, plenty of rabid nonsense, plenty of gross fanaticism? who will even venture to affirm that, separated in great measure from the intellect and civilisation of the world for one or two centuries, Christianity, wonderful as have been its fruits, had the development perfectly worthy of its inestimable germ? Who will venture to affirm that, by the alliance of Christianity with the virtue and intelligence of men like the Antonines,—of the best product of Greek and Roman civilisation, while Greek and Roman civilisation had yet life and power,—Christianity and the world, as well as the Antonines themselves, would not have been gainers? That alliance was not to be. The Antonines lived and died with an utter misconception of Christianity; Christianity grew up in the Catacombs, not on the Palatine. And Marcus Aurelius incurs no moral reproach by having authorised the punishment of the Christians; he does not thereby become in the least what we mean by a *persecutor*. One may concede that it was impossible for him to see Christianity as it really was;—as impossible as for even the moderate and sensible Fleury to see the Antonines as they really were;—one may concede that the point of view from which Christianity appeared something anti-civil and anti-social, which the State had the faculty to judge and the duty to suppress, was inevitably his. Still however, it remains true that this sage, who made perfection his aim and reason his law, did Christianity an immense injustice and rested in an idea of State-attributes which was illusive. And this is, in truth, characteristic of Marcus Aurelius, that he is blameless, yet, in a certain sense, unfortunate; in his character, beautiful as it is, there is something melancholy, circumscribed, and ineffectual.

For of his having such a son as Commodus, too, one must say that he is not to be blamed on that account, but that he is unfortunate. Disposition and temperament are inexplicable things; there are natures on which the best education and example are thrown away; excellent fathers may have, without any fault of theirs, incurably vicious sons. It is to be remembered, also, that Commodus was left, at the perilous age of nineteen, master of the world; while his father, at that age, was but beginning a twenty years' apprenticeship to wisdom, labour, and self-command, under the sheltering teachership of his uncle Antoninus. Commodus was a prince apt to be led by favourites; and if the story is true which says that he left, all through his reign, the Christians untroubled, and ascribes this lenity to the influence of his mistress Marcia, it shows that he could be led to good as well as to evil. But for such a nature to be left at a critical age with absolute power, and wholly without good counsel and direction, was the more fatal. Still one cannot help wishing that the example of Marcus Aurelius could have availed more with his own only son. One cannot but think that with such virtue as his there should go, too, the ardour which removes mountains, and that the ardour which removes mountains might have even won Commodus. The word *ineffectual* again rises to one's mind ; Marcus Aurelius saved his own soul by his righteousness, and he could do no more. Happy they who can do this ! but still happier, who can do more !

Yet, when one passes from his outward to his inward life, when one turns over the pages of his *Meditations*,—entries jotted down from day to day, amid the business of the city or the fatigues of the camp, for his own guidance and support, meant for no eye but his own, without the slightest attempt at style, with no care, even, for correct writing, not to be surpassed for naturalness and sincerity,—all disposition to carp and cavil dies away, and one is overpowered by the charm of a character of such purity, delicacy, and virtue. He fails neither in small things nor in great ; he keeps watch over himself both that the great springs of action may be right in him, and that the minute details of action may be right also. How admirable in a hard-tasked ruler, and a ruler, too, with a passion for thinking and reading, is such a memorandum as the following :—

" Not frequently nor without necessity to say to any one, or to write in a letter, that I have no leisure ; nor continually to excuse the neglect of duties required by our relation to those with whom we live, by alleging urgent occupation."

And, when that ruler is a Roman emperor, what an " idea " is this to be written down and meditated by him :—

" The idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed."

And, for all men who "drive at practice," what practical rules may not one accumulate out of these *Meditations* :—

"The greatest part of what we say or do being unnecessary, if a man takes this away, he will have more leisure and less uneasiness. Accordingly, on every occasion a man should ask himself: 'Is this one of the unnecessary things?' Now a man should take away not only unnecessary acts, but also unnecessary thoughts, for thus superfluous acts will not follow after."

And again :—

"We ought to check in the series of our thoughts everything that is without a purpose and useless, but most of all the over curious feeling and the malignant; and a man should use himself to think of those things only about, which if one should suddenly ask, 'What hast thou now in thy thoughts?' with perfect openness thou mightest immediately answer, 'This or That;' so that from thy words it should be plain that everything in thee is simple and benevolent, and such as befits a social animal, and one that cares not for thoughts about sensual enjoyments, or any rivalry or envy and suspicion, or anything else for which thou wouldst blush if thou shouldst say thou hadst it in thy mind."

So, with a stringent practicalness worthy of Franklin, he discourses on his favourite text, *Let nothing be done without a purpose.* But it is when he enters the region where Franklin cannot follow him, when he utters his thoughts on the ground-motives of human action, that he is most interesting; that he becomes the unique, the incomparable Marcus Aurelius. Christianity uses language very liable to be misunderstood when it seems to tell men to do good, not, certainly, from the vulgar motives of worldly interest, or vanity, or love of human praise, but "that their Father which seeth in secret may reward them openly." The motives of reward and punishment have come, from the misconception of language of this kind, to be strangely overpressed by many Christian moralists, to the deterioration and disfigurement of Christianity. Marcus Aurelius says, truly and nobly :—

"One man, when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favour conferred. Another is not ready to do this, but still in his own mind he thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a manner does not even know what he has done, *but he is like a vine which has produced graves, and seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its proper fruit.* As a horse when he has run, a dog when he has caught the game, a bee when it has made its honey, so a man when he has done a good act, does not call out for others to come and see, but he goes on to another act, as a vine goes on to produce again the grapes in season. Must a man, then, be one of these, who in a manner acts thus without observing it ? Yes."

And again :—

"What more dost thou want when thou hast done a man a service ? Art thou not content that thou hast done something conformable to thy nature, and dost thou seek to be paid for it, *just as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking* ? "

Christianity, in order to match morality of this strain, has to correct its apparent offers of external reward, and to say : *The kingdom of God is within you.*

I have said that it is by its accent of emotion that the morality of Marcus Aurelius acquires a special character, and reminds one of Christian morality. The sentences of Seneca are stimulating to the intellect; the sentences of Epictetus are fortifying to the character; the sentences of Marcus Aurelius find their way to the soul. I have said that religious emotion has the power to *light up* morality: the emotion of Marcus Aurelius does not quite light up his morality, but it suffuses it; it has not power to melt the clouds of effort and austerity quite away, but it shines through them and glorifies them; it is a spirit, not so much of gladness and elation, as of gentleness and sweetness; a delicate and tender sentiment, which is less than joy and more than resignation. He says that in his youth he learned from Maximus, one of his teachers, "cheerfulness in all circumstances as well as in illness; *and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity:*" and it is this very admixture of sweetness with his dignity which makes him so beautiful a moralist. It enables him to carry even into his observation of nature a delicate penetration, a sympathetic tenderness, worthy of Wordsworth; the spirit of such a remark as the following has hardly a parallel, so far as my knowledge goes, in the whole range of Greek and Roman literature:—

"Figs, when they are quite ripe, gape open; and in the ripe olives the very circumstance of their being near to rottenness adds a peculiar beauty to the fruit. And the ears of corn bending down, and the lion's eyebrows, and the foam which flows from the mouth of wild boars, and many other things,—though they are far from being beautiful, in a certain sense,—still, because they come in the course of nature, have a beauty in them, and they please the mind ; so that if a man should have a feeling and deeper insight with respect to the things which are produced in the universe, there is hardly anything which comes in the course of nature which will not seem to him to be in a manner disposed so as to give pleasure."

But it is when his strain passes to directly moral subjects that his delicacy and sweetness lend to it the greatest charm. Let those who can feel the beauty of spiritual refinement read this, the reflection of an emperor who prized mental superiority highly :—

" Thou sayest, ' Men cannot admire the sharpness of thy wits.' Be it so ; but there are many other things of which thou canst not say, ' I am not formed for them by nature.' Show those qualities, then, which are altogether in thy power,—sincerity, gravity, endurance of labour, aversion to pleasure, contentment with thy portion and with few things, benevolence, frankness, no love of superfluity, freedom from trifling, magnanimity. Dost thou not see how many qualities thou art at once able to exhibit, as to which there is no excuse of natural incapacity and unfitness, and yet thou still remainest voluntarily below the mark ? Or art thou compelled, through being defectively furnished by nature, to murmur, and to be mean, and to flatter, and to find fault with thy poor body, and to try to please men, and to make great display, and to be so restless in thy mind ? No, indeed ; but thou mightest have been delivered from these things long ago. Only, if in truth thou canst be charged with being rather slow and dull of comprehension, thou must exert thyself about this also, not neglecting nor yet taking pleasure in thy dulness."

The same sweetness enables him to fix his mind, when he sees the isolation and moral death caused by sin, not on the cheerless thought of the misery of this condition, but on the inspiriting thought that man is blest with the power to escape from it :—

"Suppose that thou hast detached thyself from the natural unity,—for thou wast made by nature a part, but now thou hast cut thyself off,—yet here is this beautiful provision, that it is in thy power again to unite thyself. God has allowed this to no other part,—after it has been separated and cut asunder, to come together again. But consider the goodness with which he has privileged man; for he has put it in his power, when he has been separated, to return and to be united and to resume his place."

It enables him to control even the passion for retreat and solitude, so strong in a soul like his, to which the world could offer no abiding city :—

"Men seek retreat for themselves, houses in the country, seashores, and mountains; and thou, too, art wont to desire such things very much. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men, for it is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire into thyself. For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity. Constantly, then, give to thyself this retreat, and renew thyself; and let thy principles be brief and fundamental, which, as soon as thou shalt recur to them, will be sufficient to cleanse the soul completely, and to send thee back free from all discontent with the things to which thou returnest."

Against this feeling of discontent and weariness, so natural to the great for whom there seems nothing left to desire or to strive after, but so enfeebling to them, so deteriorating, Marcus Aurelius never ceased to struggle. With resolute thankfulness he kept in remembrance the blessings of his lot; the true blessings of it, not the false:

"I have to thank Heaven that I was subjected to a ruler and a father (Antoninus Pius) who was able to take away all pride from me, and to bring me to the knowledge that it is possible for a man to live in a palace without either guards, or embroidered dresses, or any show of this kind; but that it is in such a man's power to bring himself very near to the fashion of a private person, without being for this reason either meaner in thought or more remiss in action with respect to the things which must be done for public interest. . . . I have to be thankful that my children have not been stupid nor deformed in body; that I did not make more proficiency in rhetoric, poetry, and other studies, by which I should perhaps have been completely engrossed, if I had seen that I was making great progress in them; . . . that I knew Apollonius, Rusticus, Maximus; . . . that I received clear and frequent impressions about living according to nature, and what kind of a life that is, so that, so far as depended on Heaven, and its gifts, help, and inspiration, nothing hindered me from forthwith living according to nature, though I still fall short of it through my own fault, and through not observing the admonitions of Heaven, and, I may almost say, its direct instructions; that my body has held out so long in such a kind of life as mine; that though it was my mother's lot to die young, she spent the last years of her life with me; that whenever I wished to help any man in his need, I was never told that I had not the means of doing it; that, when I had an inclination to philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of a sophist."

And, as he dwelt with gratitude on these helps and blessings vouchsafed to him, his mind (so, at least, it seems to me) would sometimes revert with awe to the perils and temptations of the lonely height where he stood, to the lives of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian, in their hideous blackness and ruin; and then he wrote down for himself such a warning entry as this, significant and terrible in its abruptness:—

"A black character, a womanish character, a stubborn character, bestial, childish, animal, stupid, counterfeit, scurrilous, fraudulent, tyrannical!"

Or this:—

"About what am I now employing my soul? On every occasion I must ask myself this question, and enquire, What have I now in this part of me which they call the ruling principle, and whose soul have I now?—that of a child, or of a young man, or of a weak woman, or of a tyrant, or of one of the lower animals in the service of man, or of a wild beast?"

The character he wished to attain he knew well, and beautifully he has marked it, and marked, too, his sense of shortcoming:—

"When thou hast assumed these names,—good, modest, true, rational, equal-minded, magnanimous,—take care that thou dost not change these names; and, if thou shouldst lose them, quickly return to them. If thou maintainest thyself in possession of these names without desiring that others should call thee by them, thou wilt be another being, and wilt enter on another life. For to continue to be such as thou hast hitherto been, and to be torn in pieces and defiled in such a life, is the character of a very stupid man, and one overfond of his life, and like those half-devoured fighters with wild beasts, who though covered with wounds and gore still entreat to be kept to the following day, though they will be exposed in the same state to the same claws and bites. Therefore fix thyself in the possession of these few names: and if thou art able to abide in them, abide as if thou wast removed to the Happy Islands."

For all his sweetness and serenity, however, man's point of life " between two infinities " (of that expression Marcus Aurelius is the real owner) was to him anything but a Happy Island, and the performances on it he saw through no veils of illusion. Nothing is in general more gloomy and monotonous than declamations on the hollowness and transitoriness of human life and grandeur: but here, too, the great charm of Marcus Aurelius, his emotion, comes in to relieve the monotony and to break through the gloom; and even on this eternally used topic he is imaginative, fresh, and striking:—

" Consider, for example, the times of Vespasian. Thou wilt see all these things, people marrying, bringing up children, sick, dying, warring, feasting, trafficking, cultivating the ground, flattering, obstinately arrogant, suspecting, plotting, wishing for somebody to die, grumbling about the present, loving, heaping up treasure, desiring to be consuls or kings. Well then that life of these people no longer exists at all. Again, go to the times of Trajan. All is again the same. Their life too is gone. But chiefly thou shouldst think of those whom thou hast thyself known distracting themselves about idle things, neglecting to do what was in accordance with their proper constitution, and to hold firmly to this and to be content with it."

Again :—

" The things which are much valued in life are empty, and rotten, and trifling ; and people are like little dogs, biting one another, and little children quarrelling, crying, and then straightway laughing. But fidelity, and modesty, and justice, and truth, are fled

'Up to Olympus from the wide-spread earth.'

What then is there which still detains thee here ? "

And once more :—

" Look down from above on the countless herds of men, and their countless solemnities, and the infinitely varied voyagings in storms and calms, and the differences among those who are born, who live together, and die. And consider too the life lived by others in olden time, and the life now lived among barbarous nations, and how many know not even thy name, and how many will soon forget it, and how they who perhaps now are praising thee will very soon blame thee, and that neither a posthumous name is of any value, nor reputation, nor anything else."

He recognised, indeed, that (to use his own words) " the prime principle in man's constitution is the social " ; and he laboured sincerely to make not only his acts towards his fellow-men, but his thoughts also, suitable to this conviction :—

" When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee ; for instance, the activity of one, and the modesty of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth."

Still, it is hard for a pure and thoughtful man to live in a state of rapture at the spectacle afforded to him by his fellow-creatures; above all it is hard, when such a man is placed as Marcus Aurelius was placed, and has had the meanness and perversity of his fellow-creatures thrust, in no common measure, upon his notice,—has had, time after time, to experience how "within ten days thou wilt seem a god to those to whom thou art now a beast and an ape." His true strain of thought as to his relations with his fellow-men is rather the following. He has been enumerating the higher consolations which may support a man at the approach of death, and he goes on:—

"But if thou requirest also a vulgar kind of comfort which shall reach thy heart, thou wilt be made best reconciled to death by observing the objects from which thou art going to be removed, and the morals of those with whom thy soul will no longer be mingled. For it is no way right to be offended with men, but it is thy duty to care for them and to bear with them gently; and yet to remember that thy departure will not be from men who have the same principles as thyself. For this is the only thing, if there be any, which could draw us the contrary way and attach us to life, to be permitted to live with those who have the same principles as ourselves. But now thou seest how great is the distress caused by the difference of those who live together, so that thou mayest say: 'Come quick, O death, lest perchance I too should forget myself.'"

O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Sometimes this strain rises even to passion:—

"Short is the little which remains to thee of life. Live as on a mountain. Let men see, let them know a real man, who lives as he was meant to live. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him. For that is better than to live as men do."

It is remarkable how little of a merely local and temporary character, how little of those *scoriæ* which a reader has to clear away before he gets to the precious ore, how little that even admits of doubt or question, the morality of Marcus Aurelius exhibits. Perhaps as to one point we must make an exception. Marcus Aurelius is fond of urging as a motive for man's cheerful acquiescence in whatever befalls him, that "whatever happens to every man *is for the interest of the universal*;" that the whole contains nothing *which is not for its advantage*; that everything which happens to a man is to be accepted, "even if it seems disagreeable, *because it leads to the health of the universe*." And the whole course of the universe, he adds, has a providential reference to man's welfare: "*all other things have been made for the sake of rational beings*." Religion has in all ages freely used this language, and it is not religion which will object to Marcus Aurelius's use of it; but science can hardly accept as severely accurate this employment of the terms *interest* and *advantage*. To a sound nature and a clear reason the proposition that things happen "for the interest of the universal," as men conceive of interest, may seem to have no meaning at all, and the proposition that "all things have been made for the sake of rational beings" may seem to be false. Yet even to this language, not irresistibly cogent when it is thus absolutely used, Marcus Aurelius gives a turn which makes it true and useful, when he says: "The ruling part of man can make a material for itself out of that which opposes it, as fire lays hold of what falls into it, and rises higher by means of this very material;"—when he says: "What else are all things except exercises for the reason? Persevere then until thou shalt have made all things thine own, as the stomach which is strengthened makes all things its own, as the blazing fire makes flame and brightness out of everything that is thrown into it;"—when he says: "Thou wilt not cease to be miserable till thy mind is in such a condition, that, what luxury is to those who enjoy pleasure, such shall be to thee, in every matter which presents itself, the doing of the things which are conformable to man's constitution; for a man ought to consider as an enjoyment everything which it is in his power to do according to his own nature,—and it is in his power everywhere." In this sense it is, indeed, most true that "all things have been made for the sake of rational beings;" that "all things work together for good."

In general, however, the action Marcus Aurelius prescribes is action which every sound nature must recognise as right, and the motives he assigns are motives which every clear reason must recognise as valid. And so he remains the especial friend and comforter of all clear-headed and scrupulous, yet pure-hearted and upward-striving men, in those ages most especially that walk by sight, not by faith, but yet have no open vision. He cannot give such souls, perhaps, all they yearn for, but he gives them much ; and what he gives them, they can receive.

Yet no, it is not for what he thus gives them that such souls love him most ! it is rather because of the emotion which lends to his voice so touching an accent, it is because he too yearns as they do for something unattained by him. What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians ! The effusion of Christianity, its relieving tears, its happy self-sacrifice, were the very element, one feels, for which his soul longed; they were near him, they brushed him, he touched them, he passed them by. One feels, too, that the Marcus Aurelius one reads must still have remained, even had Christianity been fully known to him, in a great measure himself; he would have been no Justin ;—but how would Christianity have affected him ? in what measure would it have changed him ? Granted that he might have found, like the *Alogi* of modern times, in the most beautiful of the Gospels, the Gospel which has leavened Christendom most powerfully, the Gospel of St. John, too much Greek metaphysics, too much *gnosis ;* granted that this Gospel might have looked too like what he knew already to be a total surprise to him : what, then, would he have said to the Sermon on the Mount, to the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew ? What would have become of his notions of the *exitiabilis superstitio*, of the "obstinacy of the Christians" ? Vain question ! yet the greatest charm of Marcus Aurelius is that he makes us ask it. We see him wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless ; yet, with all this, agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond,—*tendentemque manus ripæ ulterioris amore.*

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

THE disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture*, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very different estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. With us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says: "The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent." This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is *a study of perfection.* It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: "To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent!" so, in the second view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson: "To make reason and the will of God prevail!"

Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking and it wants to be beginning to act; and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion as well as by the passion of doing good; that it demands worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them. And knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which is not based on reason and the will of

God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardour, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all round us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine,—social, political, religious,—has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded. The danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavour to see and learn the truth for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavour of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,—religion, that voice of the deepest human experience,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture,—culture seeking the determination of this question through *all* the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as of religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution,—likewise reaches. Religion says: *The kingdom of God is within you;* and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling, which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: "It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture." Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion.

And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward. And here, once more, culture lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness."

But, finally, perfection,—as culture from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience learns to conceive it,— is a harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here culture goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." Above all, the idea of perfection as a *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. Its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere. And, meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, ought to be made quite clear for every one to see, who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery, what are, even, religious organisations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have before now noticed Mr. Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. "May not every man in England say what he likes?"—Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying,—has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way the *Times*, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behaviour of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what *is* greatness?—culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well, then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed,—the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines. Culture says: "Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds: would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?" And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigour, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, one has heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of the *Times* on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right!

But bodily health and vigour, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarising a worship as that is. Every one with anything like an adequate idea of human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigour and activity. "Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things," says the author of the Epistle to Timothy. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly:—"Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of the body, *in reference to the services of the mind.*" But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assigns to it, a special and limited character, this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus:—"It is a sign of ἀφυΐα,' says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—"to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern." This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek word εὐφυΐα, a finely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive it: a harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest of things,"—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*—"the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*." The εὐφυής is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the ἀφυής, on the other hand, is our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essential character of human perfection; and Mr. Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. Far more than on our freedom, our population, and our industrialism, many amongst us rely upon our religious organisations to save us. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side,—which is the dominant idea of religion,—has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other.

The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was,—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount. It is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only, the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it *is* wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organisations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction,—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world has done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has. For no people in the world has the command to *resist the devil*, to *overcome the wicked one*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, employ, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organisations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies them in abundance with this grand language. And very freely do they use it; yet it is really the severest possible criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organisations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism. Nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organisation of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion." There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it, language, too, which is in our mouths every day. "Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling," says St. Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!" And religious organisations like this are what people believe in, rest in, and give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organisation which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organisations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organisations by the ideals of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage to a harmonious perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organisations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail. They have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense. They have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable. And they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty, of sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organisations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth: Let us look at the life of those who live in and for it,—so I say with regard to the religious organisations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*,—a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!

Another newspaper, representing, like the *Nonconformist*, one of the religious organisations of this country, was a short time ago giving an account of the crowd at Epsom on the Derby day, and of all the vice and hideousness which was to be seen in that crowd; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley, and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question: and how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so incomplete, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organisation as you yourself reflect it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organisations,

—expressing, as I have said, the most widespread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organisation or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God.* Children of God;—it is an immense pretension!—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our *city* which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *publice egestas, privatim opulentia,*—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequalled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph!* I say that when our religious organisations,—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made,—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human nature which we might turn to great use; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organisations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth, —mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete, a harmonious perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it *is* machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,—whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organisation,—or whether it is a religious organisation,—oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organisation, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it; and that its mischiefs are to be criticised, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose.

Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris,—and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism,—are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports; it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis; but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was perhaps necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists has been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech may be necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph* in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government may be necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth,—the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as any one who reads Dr. Newman's *Apology* may see, against what in one word may be called "Liberalism." Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it was necessary, it was inevitable that it should prevail. The Oxford movement was broken, it failed; our wrecks are scattered on every shore:—

> Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr. Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere, free-trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. I do not say that other and more intelligent forces than this were not opposed to the Oxford movement: but this was the force which really beat it; this was the force which Dr. Newman felt himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr. Lowe with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now? It is thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism; different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class industrialists, nor the dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better; all I say is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr. Newman's movement, the keen desire for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism,—who will estimate how much all these contributed to swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has mined the ground under the self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the way for its sudden collapse and supersession? It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer!

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what; but those promises come rather from its advocates, wishing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-class liberalism, than from clear tendencies which it has itself yet developed. But meanwhile it has plenty of well-intentioned friends against whom culture may with advantage continue to uphold steadily its ideal of human perfection; that this is *an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy.* Mr. Bright, who has a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class liberalism and the world of democracy, but who brings most of his ideas from the world of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who "appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise"; he leads his disciples to believe,—what the Englishman is always too ready to believe,—that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the democracy,—"the men," as he calls them, "upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests,"—he cries out to them: "See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labours what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world." Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr. Roebuck or Mr. Lowe debauches the minds of the middle classes, and makes such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he *is*, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the tabernacle he has built. Only the middle classes are told they have done it all with their energy, self-reliance, and capital, and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and sinews.

But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the *Journeyman Engineer*, will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection,—an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy,—is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of its own industrial performances.

Other well-meaning friends of this new power are for leading it, not in the old ruts of middle-class Philistinism, but in ways which are naturally alluring to the feet of democracy, though in this country they are novel and untried ways. I may call them the ways of Jacobinism. Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future,—these are the ways of Jacobinism. Mr. Frederic Harrison and other disciples of Comte,—one of them, Mr. Congreve, is an old friend of mine, and I am glad to have an opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character,—are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. Mr. Frederic

Harrison is very hostile to culture, and from a natural enough motive; for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism,—its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets towards new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas, or any other; and some man, some Bentham or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrowness and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race.

The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, will have us observe that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully at that time towards a new worship of this kind, and away from the old run of Latin and Sabine religious ideas. In a similar way, culture directs our attention to the natural current there is in human affairs, and to its continual working, and will not let us rivet our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so doing.

I remember, when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom America has yet produced,—Benjamin Franklin,—I remember the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. "I give," he continues, "a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend." We all recollect the famous verse of our translation: "Then Satan answered the Lord and said: 'Doth Job fear God for nought?'" Franklin makes this: "Does your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?" I well remember how, when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: "After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!" So, after hearing Bentham cried loudly up as the renovator of modern society, and Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the *Deontology*. There I read: "While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of talking wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience." From the moment of reading that, I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer. I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for supplying the rule of human society, for perfection.

Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system. of disciples, of a school ; with men like Comte, or the late Mr. Buckle, or Mr. Mill. However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the text : " Be not ye called Rabbi ! " and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi ; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection ; it wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection, that they may with the more authority recast the world , and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture,—eternally passing onwards and seeking,—is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past, cannot away with the inexhaustible indulgence proper to culture, the consideration of circumstances, the severe judgment of actions joined to the merciful judgment of persons. " The man of culture is in politics," cries Mr. Frederic Harrison, " one of the poorest mortals alive ! " Mr. Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a " turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action." Of what use is culture, he asks, except for " a critic of new books or a professor of *belles-lettres ?* " Why, it is of use because, in presence of the fierce exasperation which breathes, or rather, I may say, hisses through the whole production in which Mr. Frederic Harrison asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of use because, like religion,—that other effort after perfection,—it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness works in the end for light also; he who works for light works in the end for sweetness also. But he who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater!—the passion for making them *prevail*. It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be *real* thought and *real* beauty; *real* sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watch-words. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—nourished, and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea;* and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was

Abelard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why? Because they *humanised* knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: "Let us not leave thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth labourers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."

FALKLAND

"The English are just, but not amiable." A well-bred Frenchman, who has recently travelled in India, and who published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* an interesting account of what he saw and heard there, ends with this criticism. The criticism conveys, he says, as to the English and their rule, the real mind of the best informed and most intelligent of the natives of India with whom he conversed. They admitted the great superiority of the English rule in India to every other which had preceded it. They admitted the good intentions of the English rule: they admitted its activity, energy, incorruptibility, justice. Still, the final impression was this: something wanting in the English, something which they were not. *Les Anglais sont justes, mais pas bons.* "The English are just, but not kind and good."

It is proposed to raise on the field of Newbury, a monument to a famous Englishman who was amiable. A meeting was held at Newbury to launch the project, and Lord Carnarvon made there an excellent speech. I believe the subscription to the monument does not grow very rapidly. The unamiable ones amongst us, the vast majority, naturally perhaps keep their hands in their pockets. But let us take the opportunity, as others, too, have taken it, for at least recalling Falkland to memory. Let us give our attention for a moment to this phenomenon of an amiable Englishman.

Clarendon says :—

"At the battle of Newbury was slain the Lord Viscount Falkland, a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so glowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed Civil War than that single loss, it must be most infamous and execrable to all posterity. *Turpe mori, post te, solo non posse dolore.*"

Clarendon's style is here a little excessive, a little Asiatic. And perhaps a something Asiatic is not wholly absent, either, from that famous passage,—the best-known, probably, in all the *History of the Rebellion*,—that famous passage which describes Lord Falkland's longing for peace.

"Sitting among his friends, often, after a deep silence and frequent sighs, he would with a shrill and sad accent ingeminate the word *Peace, Peace;* and would passionately profess that the very agony of the war, and the view of the calamities and desolation the kingdom did and must endure, took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart."

Clarendon's touch, where in his memoirs he speaks of Falkland, is simpler than in the *History*. But we will not carp at this great writer and faithful friend. Falkland's life was an uneventful one, and but a few points in it are known to us. To Clarendon he owes it that each of those points is a picture.

In his speech at Newbury Lord Carnarvon said: "When we look back to the history of the Civil War, I can think of no character that stands out in higher, purer relief, than Falkland." "Of all the names," says Lord Carnarvon again, "which have come down to us from the Great Rebellion, none have come invested with higher respect and greater honour than the name of Lord Falkland." One asks oneself how this comes to be so. Falkland wrote both in verse and in prose. Both his verse and his prose have their interest, yet as a writer he scarcely counts. He was a gallant soldier, but gallant soldiers are not uncommon. He was an unsuccessful politician, and was reproached with deserting his party. He was Secretary of State for but two years, and in that office he accomplished, and could then accomplish, nothing remarkable. He was killed in the four-and-thirtieth year of his age. Horace Walpole pronounces him a much overrated man. But let us go through the scanty records of his life a little more deliberately.

Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, was born in 1610. His father, Sir Henry Cary, the first Lord Falkland, went to Ireland as Lord Deputy in 1622, and remained there until 1629. "The son was bred," says Clarendon, "in the court and in the university, but under the care, vigilance, and direction of such governors and tutors, that he learned all his exercises and languages better than most men do in more celebrated places." In 1629 the father, who appears to have been an able man, but violent and unfortunate, returned with broken fortunes to England. Shortly afterwards the son inherited from his maternal grandfather, the Lord Chief Baron Tanfield, who in his will passed over his daughter and her husband, the ex-Lord Deputy, a good estate at Burford and Great Tew, in Oxfordshire. At nineteen, then, the young Lucius Cary came into possession of "all his grandfather's land, with two very good houses very well furnished (worth about £2000 per annum), in a most pleasant country, and the two most pleasant places in that country, with a very plentiful personal estate." But, adds Clarendon :—

"With these advantages he had one great disadvantage (which in the first entrance into the world is attended with too much prejudice) in his person and presence, which was in no degree attractive or promising. His stature was low, and smaller than most men ; his motion not graceful, and his aspect so far from inviting, that it had somewhat in it of simplicity ; and his voice the worst of the three, and so untuned that instead of reconciling, it offended the ear, so that nobody would have expected music from that tongue ; and sure no man was ever less beholden to nature for its recommendation into the world. But then no man sooner or more disappointed this general and customary prejudice. That little person and small stature was quickly found to contain a great heart, a courage so keen, and a nature so fearless, that no composition of the strongest limbs and most harmonious and proportioned presence and strength ever more disposed any man to the greatest enterprise ; it being his greatest weakness to be too solicitous for such adventures. And that untuned tongue and voice easily discovered itself to be supplied and governed by a mind and understanding so excellent, that the wit and weight of all he said carried another kind of admiration in it, and even another kind of acceptation from the persons present, than any ornament of delivery could reasonably promise itself, or is usually attended with. And his disposition and nature was so gentle and obliging, so much delighted in courtesy, kindness, and generosity that all mankind could not but admire and love him."

For a year or two Falkland moved in the gay life of London, rich, accomplished, popular, with a passion for soldiering, with a passion for letters. He was of Ben Jonson's society at the "Apollo"; he mixed with Suckling, Carew, Davenant, Waller, Sandys, Sir Kenelm Digby; with Selden and Hobbes; with Hales of Eton and Chillingworth—great spirits in little bodies, these two last, like Falkland himself. He contracted a passionate friendship with a young man as promising and as universally beloved as himself, Sir Henry Morison. Ben Jonson has celebrated it; and it was on Morison's early death that Jonson wrote the beautiful lines which every one knows, beginning—

It is not growing like a tree,
In bulk, doth make men better be.

Falkland married, before he was of age, Morison's sister. The marriage gave mortal offence to his father. His father had projected for the young Lucius, says Clarendon, a marriage which might mend his own broken fortunes and ruined credit at court. The son behaved admirably. He offered to resign his whole estate to his father, and to rely entirely upon his father's pleasure for his own maintenance. He had deeds of conveyance prepared to that effect, and brought them to his father for signature:—

"But his father's passion and indignation so far transported him (though he was a gentleman of excellent parts), that he refused any reconciliation and rejected all the offers that were made him of the estate, so that his son remained still in the possession of his estate against his will, for which he found great reason afterwards to rejoice. But he was for the present so much afflicted with his father's displeasure that he transported himself and his wife into Holland, resolving to buy some military command, and to spend the remainder of his life in that profession. But being disappointed in the treaty he expected, and finding no opportunity to accommodate himself with such a command, he returned again into England; resolving to retire to a country life and to his books, that since he was not like to improve himself in arms he might advance in letters."

So began the *convivium philosophicum*, or *convivium theologicum*, of Falkland's life at Great Tew. With a genuine thoroughness of nature, with the high resolve to make up his mind about the matters of most vital concernment to man, and to make it up on good grounds, he plunged into study. The controversy with Rome was at that moment keen. Agents of conversion to the Romish Church, *corner-creepers* as they were called, penetrated everywhere. Two young brothers of Falkland himself were won over by them. More and more, therefore, his thoughts and his studies took a theological turn. On his first retirement to the country he had declared, says Clarendon, that " he would not see London in many years, which was the place he loved of all the world." But his father's death from the effects of an accident, soon afterwards, forced him back for a time to London. Then, on his return to Oxfordshire, he surrounded himself with friends from the university, who led with him the life which Clarendon's description has made memorable :—

"His house where he usually resided (Tew or Burford, in Oxfordshire), being within ten or twelve miles of the university, looked like the university itself by the company that was always found there. There were Dr. Sheldon, Dr. Morley, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Earles, Mr. Chillingworth, and indeed all men of eminent parts and faculties in Oxford, besides those who resorted thither from London; who all found their lodgings there as ready as in the colleges; nor did the lord of the house know of their coming or going, nor who were in his house, till he came to dinner or supper where all still met. Otherwise there was no troublesome ceremony or constraint, to forbid men to come to the house, or to make them weary of staying there. So that many came thither to study in a better air, finding all the books they could desire in his library, and all the persons together whose company they could wish, and not find in any other society. Here Mr..Chillingworth wrote and formed and modelled his excellent book against the learned Jesuit Mr. Nott (*The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*), after frequent debates upon the most important particulars; in many of which he suffered himself to be overruled by the judgment of his friends, though in others he still adhered to his own fancy, which was sceptical enough even in the highest points."

From "this happy and delightful conversation and restraint" Falkland was in 1639 called away by "the first alarum from the north," Charles the First's expedition to suppress the disturbances in Scotland. After the return of that expedition Falkland sate in the Short Parliament of

1640, which preceded the Long Parliament. The "Short Parliament" sate but a few weeks. Falkland was born a constitutionalist, a hater of all that is violent and arbitrary. What he saw in the Short Parliament made a favourable and deep impression upon him. "From these debates which were there managed with all imaginable gravity and solemnity, he contracted" (says Clarendon) "such a reverence to Parliaments that he thought it really impossible they could ever produce mischief or inconvenience to the kingdom, or that the kingdom could be tolerably happy in the intermission of them."

In the next Parliament this faith in Parliaments was destined to be roughly shaken. The Long Parliament met at the end of 1640. Falkland had a warm admiration for Hampden, and a strong disapprobation of the violent proceedings of the court. He acted with the popular party. He made a powerful speech against ship-money. He was convinced of Strafford's guilt, and joined in his prosecution. He spoke vigorously for the bill to remove the bishops from the House of Lords. But the reason and moderation of the man showed itself from the first. Alone among his party he raised his voice against pressing forward Strafford's impeachment with unfair and vindictive haste. He refused to consider, like the Puritans, the order of bishops as a thing by God's law either appointed or forbidden. He treated it as a thing expedient or inexpedient. And so foolish had been the conduct of the High Church bishops and clergy, so much and so mischievously had they departed from their true province, that it was expedient at that moment, Falkland thought, to remove the bishops from the House of Lords. "We shall find them," he said of the High

Church clergy, " to have tithed mint and anise, and have left undone the weightier works of the law. The most frequent subjects, even in the most sacred auditories, have been the *jus divinum* of bishops and tithes, the sacredness of the clergy, the sacrilege of impropriations, the demolishing of Puritanism." But he was careful to add : " We shall make no little compliment to those to whom this charge belongs, if we shall lay the faults of these men upon the *order* of the bishops." And even against these misdoing men he would join in no injustice. To his clear reason sacerdotalism was repulsive. He disliked Laud, moreover ; he had a natural antipathy to his heat, fussiness, and arbitrary temper. But he refused to concur in Laud's impeachment.

The Lords threw out the bill for the expulsion of the bishops. In the same session, a few months later, the bill was reintroduced in the House of Commons. But, during this time the attitude of the popular party had been more and more declaring itself. The party had professed at first that the removal of the bishops from Parliament was all they wanted ; that they had no designs against episcopacy and the Church of England. The strife deepened, and new and revolutionary designs emerged. When, therefore, the bill against the bishops was reintroduced, Falkland voted against it. Hampden reproached him with inconsistency. Hampden said, that " he was sorry to find a noble lord had changed his opinion since the time the last bill to this purpose had passed the House ; for he then thought it a good bill, but now he thought this an ill one." But Falkland answered, that " he had been persuaded at that time by that worthy gentleman to believe many things which he had since found to be untrue, and therefore he had changed his opinion in many particulars as well as to things as persons."

The king's party availed themselves eagerly of this changed disposition in a man so much admired and respected. They pressed Falkland to come to the aid of the Crown, and to take office. He was extremely loth to comply. He disapproved of the policy of the court party. He was for great reforms. He disliked Charles's obstinacy and insincerity. So distasteful, indeed, were they to him, that even after he had taken office it was difficult to him,—to him, the sweetest-mannered of men,—to maintain towards Charles the same amenity which he showed towards every one else. Compliant as he was to others, yet towards the king, says Clarendon, "he did not practice that condescension, but contradicted him with more bluntness and by sharp sentences; and in some particulars (as of the Church) to which the king was in conscience most devoted; and of this his majesty often complained." Falkland feared that, if he took office, the king would require a submission which he could not give. He feared, too, and to a man of his high spirit this thought was most galling, that his previous opposition to the court might be supposed to have had for its aim to heighten his value and to insure his promotion. He had no fancy, moreover, for official business, and believed himself unfit for it. Hyde at last, by earnestly pleading the considerations which, he thought, made his friend's acceptance of office a duty, overcame his reluctance. At the beginning of 1642 Falkland became a member of the King's Council, and Secretary of State.

We approach the end. Falkland "filled his place," says Clarendon, "with great sufficiency, being well versed in languages, to understand any that are used in business and to make himself understood." But in August 1642 the Civil War broke out. With that departure of the public peace fled for ever Falkland's own. He exposed himself at Edge-hill with even more than his ordinary carelessness of danger. As the war continued, his unhappiness grew upon him more and more. But let us quote Clarendon, who is here admirable :—

"From his entrance into this unnatural war, his natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew clouded, and a kind of sadness and dejection of spirit stole upon him which he had never been used to. Yet being one of those who believed that one battle would end all differences, and that there would be so great a victory on one side that the other would be compelled to submit to any conditions from the victor (which supposition and conclusion generally sank into the minds of most men, and prevented the looking after many advantages that might then have been laid hold of), he resisted those indispositions, *et in luctu, bellum inter remedia erat.* But after the king's return from Brentford, and the furious resolution of the two Houses not to admit any treaty for peace, those indispositions, which had before touched him, grew into a perfect habit of uncheerfulness. And he who had been so exactly easy and affable to all men that his face and countenance was always present and vacant to his company, and held any cloudiness and less pleasantness of the visage a kind of rudeness or incivility, became on a sudden less communicable, and thence very sad, pale, and exceedingly affected with the spleen. In his clothes and habits, which he had minded before always with more industry and neatness and expense than is usual to so great a soul, he was now not only incurious, but too negligent."

In this mood he came to Newbury. Before the battle he told one of his friends that "he was weary of the times and foresaw much misery to his country, and did believe he should be out of it ere night." But now, as always, the close contact with danger reanimated him:—

"In the morning before the battle, as always upon action, he was very cheerful, and put himself into the first rank of the Lord Byron's regiment, then advancing upon the enemy, who had lined the hedges on both sides with musketeers; from whence he was shot with a musket in the lower part of the belly, and in the instant falling from his horse, his body was not found till the next morning; till when there was some hope he might have been a prisoner, though his nearest friends, who knew his temper, received small comfort from that imagination. Thus fell that incomparable young man in the four-and-thirtieth year of his age, having so much despatched the true business of life that the eldest rarely attain to that immense knowledge, and the youngest enter not into the world with more innocency. Whosoever leads such a life, needs be the less anxious upon how short warning it is taken from him."

Falkland fell on the 20th of September 1643. His body was carried to Great Tew and buried in the churchyard there. But his grave is unmarked and unknown. The house too, in which he lived, is gone and replaced by a new one. The stables and dovecot, it is thought, existed in his time; and in the park are oaks and limes on which his eyes must have rested. He left his estates, and the control of his three children, all of them sons, to his wife, with whom he had lived happily and in great affection. But the lands of Tew and Burford have long passed away from his family.

And now, after this review of Falkland's life, let us ask whence arose that exalted esteem of him whereof Lord Carnarvon speaks, and whether it was deserved. In the first place, then, he had certainly, except personal beauty, everything to qualify him for a hero to the imagination of mankind in general. He had rank, accomplishment, sweet temper, exquisite courtesy, liberality, magnanimity, superb courage, melancholy, misfortune, early death. Of his accomplishment we have spoken. And he was accomplished, nay learned, "with the most dexterity and address," says Clarendon, "and the least pedantry and affectation, that ever man who knew so much was possessed with, of what quality soever." Of his amenity we have spoken also; of "his disposition so gentle and obliging, so much delighting in courtesy, that all mankind could not but admire and love him"; of "his gentleness and affability so transcendent and obliging, that it drew reverence, and some kind of compliance, from the roughest and most unpolished and stubborn constitutions, and made them of another temper of debate, in his presence, than they were in other places." Equally charming was his generosity and delicacy to all who stood in need of help, but especially to those "whose fortunes required, and whose spirits made them superior to, ordinary obligations."

Such is Clarendon's euphemistical phrase for poor and proud men of letters. His highmindedness is well shown in his offer, which we have already mentioned, to resign his fortune to his father. Let me quote another fine instance of it. He never would consent, while he was Secretary of State, to two practices which he found established in his office,—the employment of spies and the opening of letters :—

" For the first, he would say, such instruments must be void of all ingenuousness and common honesty before they could be of use, and afterwards they could never be fit to be credited ; and no single preservation could be worth so general a wound and corruption of human society, as the cherishing such persons would carry with it. The last he thought such a violation of the law of nature that no qualification by office could justify him in the trespass."

His courage, again, had just the characters which charm the imagination :—

" Upon any occasion of action, he always engaged his person in those troops which he thought, by the forwardness of the commanders, to be most like to be farthest engaged. And in all such encounters he had about him an extraordinary cheerfulness, without at all affecting the execution that usually attended them, in which he took no delight, but took pains to prevent it where it was not by resistance made necessary. Insomuch that at Edge-hill, when the enemy was routed, he was like to have incurred great peril by interposing to save those who had thrown away their arms, and against whom, it may be, others were more fierce for their having thrown them away. So that a man might think, he came into the field chiefly out of curiosity to see the face of danger, and charity to prevent the shedding of blood."

At the siege of Gloucester, when Hyde "passionately reprehended him for exposing his person unnecessarily to danger, as being so much beside the duty of his place (of Secretary of State) that it might be understood rather to be against it, he would say merely that his office could not take away the privilege of his age, and that a *secretary*, in war, might be present at the greatest *secret* of danger; but withal alleged seriously, that it concerned him to be more active in enterprises of hazard than other men, that all might see that his impatiency for peace proceeded not from pusillanimity or fear to adventure his own person."

To crown all, Falkland has for the imagination the indefinable, the irresistible charm of one who is and must be, in spite of the choicest gifts and graces, unfortunate,—of a man in the grasp of fatality. Like the Master of Ravenswood, that most interesting by far of all Scott's heroes, he is surely and visibly touched by the finger of doom. And he knows it himself; yet he knits his forehead, and holds on his way. His course must be what it must, and he cannot flinch from it; yet he loves it not, hopes nothing from it, foresees how it will end.

"He had not the court in great reverence, and had a presaging spirit that the king would fall into great misfortune; and often said to his friend that he chose to serve the king because honesty obliged him to it, but that he foresaw his own ruin by doing it."

Yes, for the imagination Falkland cannot but be a figure of ideal, pathetic beauty. But for the judgment, for sober reason? Here opinions differ.

Lord Carnarvon insisted on the salutary example of Falkland's moderation. The Dean of Westminster, who could not go to the Newbury meeting, wrote to say that in his opinion Falkland "is one of the few examples of political eminence unconnected with party, or rather equally connected with both parties; and he is the founder, or nearly the founder, of the best and most enlightening tendencies of the Church of England." And Principal Tulloch, whose chapter on Falkland is perhaps the most delightful chapter of his delightful book,[1] calls him "the inspiring chief of a circle of rational and moderate thinkers amidst the excesses of a violent and dogmatic age."

On the other hand, the *Spectator* pronounces Falkland to have been capricious and unstable, rather than truly moderate. It thinks that "he was vacillating, and did not count the cost of what he undertook." It judges his life to have been wasted. It says that "the heart of moderation is strength," and that "it seems to us easier to maintain that either Cromwell, or Pym, or Hampden, or Fairfax, presented the true type of moderation, than Falkland." Falkland recoiled, and changed sides; the others recognised the duty for a man "to take strong measures, if none less strong will secure an end which he deems of supreme importance."

Severe, too, upon Falkland, as might be expected, is the *Nonconformist*. It talks of his "amiable and hesitating inconsistency." It says that he was moved by "intellectual perception and spiritual sentiment" rather than by "moral impulse," while the Puritan leaders were "moved mainly by moral impulse." It adds that "the greatest reformers have always been those who have been swayed by moral feeling rather than by intellectual conceptions, and the greatest reforming movements have been those accomplished not by the enlightened knowledge of a few, but by the moral enthusiasm of the many." The Puritan leaders had faith. "They drew no complete picture of the ideal to be arrived at. But they were firmly and fixedly resolved, that, come what might, the wrongs of which they were conscious should not be endured." They followed, then, the voice of conscience and of duty; "and, broadly speaking, the voice of conscience is the voice of God." And therefore, while Falkland's death "has a special sadness as the end of an inconsistent and in a certain sense of a wasted life, on the other hand the death of Hampden was a martyr's seal to truths assured of ultimate triumph."

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[1] *Rational Theology in England in the Seventeenth Century.*

Truths assured of ultimate triumph! Let us pause upon those words. The Puritans were victors in the Civil War, and fashioned things to their own liking. How far was their system at home an embodiment of "truth"? Let us consult a great writer, too little read. *Who now reads Bolingbroke?* asked Burke scornfully. And the right answer is, so far as regards, at any rate, the historical writings of Bolingbroke: "Far too few of us; the more's the pity!" But let us hear Bolingbroke on the success of Puritanism at home:—

"Cavaliers and Roundheads had divided the nation, like Yorkists and Lancastrians. To reconcile these disputes by treaty became impracticable, when neither side would trust the other. To terminate them by the sword was to fight, not for preserving the constitution, but for the manner of destroying it. The constitution might have been destroyed under pretence of prerogative. It was destroyed under pretence of liberty. We might have fallen under absolute monarchy. We fell into absolute anarchy." And to escape from that anarchy, the nation, as every one knows, swung back into the very hands from which Puritanism had wrested it, to the bad and false system of government of the Stuarts.

But the Puritan government, though it broke down at home, was a wise and grand government abroad. No praise is more commonly heard than this. But it will not stand. The Puritan government, Cromwell's government, was a *strong* government abroad; a wise and true-sighted government abroad it was not. Again let us hear Bolingbroke:—

"Our Charles the First was no great politician, and yet he seemed to discern that the balance of power was turning in favour of France, some years before the treaties of Westphalia. He refused to be neuter, and threatened to take part with Spain. Cromwell either did not discern this turn of the balance of power, long afterward when it was much more visible; or, discerning it, he was induced by reasons of private interest to act against the general interest of Europe. Cromwell joined with France against Spain; and though he got Jamaica and Dunkirk, he drove the Spaniards into a necessity of making a peace with France, that has disturbed the peace of the world almost fourscore years, and the consequences of which have well-nigh beggared in our times the nation he enslaved in his." Bolingbroke deals in strong language, but there can be no doubt that the real imminent danger for Europe, in Cromwell's time, was French ambition and French aggrandisement. There can be no doubt that Cromwell either did not discern this, or acted as if he did not discern it; and that Europe had to bear, in consequence, the infliction of the Grand Monarch and of all he brought with him.

But is it meant that the Puritan triumph was the triumph of religion,—of conduct and righteousness? Alas! it was its defeat. So grossly imperfect, so false, was the Puritan conception and presentation of righteousness, so at war with the ancient and inbred integrity, piety, good nature, and good humour of the English people, that it led straight to moral anarchy, the profligacy of the Restoration. It led to the court, the manners, the stage, the literature, which we know. It led to the long discredit of serious things, to the dryness of the eighteenth century, to the "irreligion" which vexed Butler's righteous soul, to the aversion and incapacity for all deep inquiries concerning religion and its sanctions, to the belief so frequently found now among the followers of natural science that such inquiries are unprofitable. It led amongst that middle-class where religion still lived on, to a narrowness, an intellectual poverty, almost incredible. They "entered the prison of Puritanism, and had the key turned upon their spirit there for two hundred years." It led to that character of their steady and respectable life which makes one shiver: its hideousness, its immense ennui.

But is it meant, finally, that, after all, political liberty re-emerged in England, seriousness re-emerged; that they re-emerged and prevail, and that herein, and in the England of to-day, is the triumph of Puritanism? Yes, this is what is really meant. It is very commonly believed and asserted. But let us imitate the society of Great Tew, and make it our business "to examine and refine those grosser propositions which laziness and consent make current in vulgar conversation." Undoubtedly there has been a result from the long travail which England has passed through between the times of the Renascence and our own. *Something* has come of it all; and that something is the England of to-day, with its seriousness, such as it is, with its undeniable political liberty. Let us be thankful for what we have, and to the Puritans for their share in producing it. But, in the first place, is it certain that the England of to-day is the best imaginable and possible result from the elements with which we started at the Renascence? Because, if not, then by some other shaping of events, and without the Puritan triumph, we might conceivably have stood even yet better than we stand now. In the second place, is it certain that of the good which we admittedly have in the England of to-day,—the seriousness and the political liberty,—the Puritans and the Puritan triumph are the authors? The assumption that they are so is plausible,—it is current; it pervades, let me observe in passing, Mr. Green's fascinating History. But is the assumption sound? When one considers the strength, the boldness, the self-assertion, the instincts of resistance and independence in the English nature, it is surely hazardous to affirm that only by the particular means of the Puritan struggle and the Puritan triumph could we have become free in our persons and property. When we consider the character shown, the signal given, in the thinking of Thomas More and Shakespeare, of Bacon and Harvey, how shall we say that only at the price of Puritanism could England have had free thought?

When we consider the seriousness of Spenser, that ideal Puritan before the fanatical Puritans and without their faults; when we consider Spenser's seriousness and pureness, in their revolt against the moral disorder of the Renascence, and remember the allies which they had in the native integrity and piety of the English race, shall we even venture to say that only at the price of Puritanism could we have had seriousness? Puritanism has been one element in our seriousness; but it is not the whole of our seriousness, nor the best in it.

Falkland himself was profoundly serious. He was "in his nature so severe a lover of justice and so precise a lover of truth, that he was superior to all possible temptations for the violation of either." Far from being a man flighty and unstable, he was a man, says, Clarendon, *constant and pertinacious;* "constant and pertinacious, and not to be wearied with any pains." And he was, as I have said, a born constitutionalist, a hater of "exorbitances" of all kinds, governmental or popular. He "thought no mischief so intolerable as the presumption of ministers of state to break positive rules for reasons of state, or judges to transgress known laws upon the title of conveniency or necessity; which made him so severe against the Earl of Strafford and the Lord Finch, contrary to his natural gentleness and temper." He had the historic sense in politics; an aversion to root-and-branch work, to what he called, "great mutations." He was for using compromise and adjustment, for keeping what had long served and what was ready to hand, but amending it and turning it to better account. "I do not believe bishops to be *jure divino,*" he would say; "nay, I believe them not to be *jure divino.*"

Still, he was not disposed to "root up this ancient tree." He had no superstition about it. "He had in his own judgment," says Clarendon, "such a latitude in opinion that he did not believe any part of the order or government of it to be so essentially necessary to religion, but that it might be parted with and altered for a notable public benefit or convenience." On the other hand, "he was never in the least degree swayed or moved by the objections which were made against that government (episcopacy) in the Church, holding them most ridiculous; or affected to the other which those men (the Puritans) fancied to themselves." There Episcopacy and the Church of England had been for ages, and it was the part of a statesman, Falkland thought, rather to use them than to destroy them. All this is in the very spirit of English political liberty, as we now conceive it, and as, by the Revolution of 1688, it triumphed. But it is not in the spirit of the Puritans. The *truths assured of ultimate triumph* were, then, so far as political liberty is concerned, rather with Falkland than with the Puritans.

It was his historic sense, again, which made him, when compromise was plainly impossible, side with the king. Things had come, and by no fault of Falkland, to that pass, when the contention, as Bolingbroke truly says, was "not for preserving the constitution but for the manner of destroying it." In such a juncture Falkland looked for the best *power* or *purchase*, to use Burke's excellent expression, that he could find. He thought he found it in the Crown. He thought the Parliament a less available *power* or *purchase* than the Crown. He thought renovation more possible by means of the triumph of the Crown than by means of the triumph of the Parliament. He thought the triumph of the Parliament the greater leap into chaos. He may have been wrong. Whether a better result might have been got out of the Parliament's defeat than was got out of its triumph we can never know. What is certain is that the Parliament's triumph did bring things to a dead-lock, that the nation reverted to the monarchy, and that the final victory was neither for Stuarts nor Puritans. And it could not be for either of them, for the cause of neither was sound. Falkland had lucidity enough to see it. He gave himself to the cause which seemed to him least unsound, and to which "honesty," he thought, bound him; but he felt that the truth was not there, any more than with the Puritans,—neither the truth nor the future. This is what makes his figure and situation so truly tragic. For a sound cause he could not fight, because there was none; he could only fight for the least bad of two unsound ones. "Publicans and sinners on the one side," as Chillingworth said; "Scribes and Pharisees on the other." And Falkland had, I say, the lucidity of mind and the largeness of temper to see it.

Shall we blame him for his lucidity of mind and largeness of temper? Shall we even pity him? By no means. They are his great title to our veneration. They are what make him ours; what link him with the nineteenth century. He and his friends, by their heroic and hopeless stand against the inadequate ideals dominant in their time, kept open their communications with the future, lived with the future. Their battle is ours too; and that we pursue it with fairer hopes of success than they did, we owe to their having waged it and fallen. To our English race, with its insularity, its profound faith in action, its contempt for dreamers and failers, inadequate ideals in life, manners, government, thought, religion. will always be a source of danger. Energetic action makes up, we think, for imperfect knowledge. We think that all is well, that a man is following " a moral impulse," if he pursues an end which he " deems of supreme importance." We impose neither on him nor on ourselves the duty of discerning whether he is *right* in deeming it so.

Hence our causes are often as small as our noise about them is great. To see people busy themselves about Ritualism, that question of not the most strong-minded portion of the clergy and laity, or to see them busy themselves about that " burning question " of the fierce and acrimonious political Dissenters, the Burials Bill, leading up to the other " burning question " of Disestablishment —to see people so eager about these things, one might sometimes fancy that the whole English nation, as in Chillingworth's time it was divided into two great hosts of publicans and sinners on the one side, Scribes and Pharisees on the other, so in ours it was going to divide itself into two vast camps of Simpletons here, under the command, suppose, of Mr. Beresford Hope, and of Savages there, under the command of Mr. Henry Richard. And it is so notorious that great movements are always led by aliens to the sort of people who make the mass of the movement—by gifted outsiders—that I shall not, I hope, be suspected of implying that Mr. Beresford Hope is a simpleton or Mr. Henry Richard a savage. But what we have to do is to raise and multiply in this country a third host, with the conviction that the ideals both of Simpletons and Savages are profoundly inadequate and profoundly unedifying, and with the resolve to win victory for a better ideal than that of either of them.

Falkland and his friends had in their day a like task. On the one hand was the Royalist party, with its vices, its incurable delusions; on the other, the Puritans, with their temper, their false, old-Jewish mixture of politics with an ill-understood religion. I should have been glad to say not one word against Hampden in his honourable grave. But the lovers of Hampden cannot forbear to extol him at Falkland's expense. Alas! yet with what benign disdain might not Jesus have whispered to that exemplary but somewhat Philistine Buckinghamshire squire, *seeking the Lord* about militia or ship-money: "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

No, the true martyr was not Hampden. If we are to find a martyr in the history of the Great Civil War, let it be Falkland. He was the martyr of lucidity of mind and largeness of temper, in a strife of imperfect intelligences and tempers illiberal. Like his friend Hales of Eton, who in our century will again, he too, emerge, after having been long obscured by the Lauds and the Sheldons, by the Owens and the Baxters,—like Hales, Falkland in that age of harsh and rancorous tempers was "of a nature so kind, so sweet, that it was near as easy a task for any one to become so knowing as so obliging." Like Hales, too, Falkland could say: "The pursuit of truth hath been my only care ever since I fully understood the meaning of the word. For this I have forsaken all hopes, all friends, all desires which might bias me, and hinder me from driving right at what I aimed." Like Hales, and unlike our nation in general, Falkland concerned himself with the *why* of things as well as the *what*. "I comprise it all," says Hales, "in two words; *what* and *wherefore*. That part of your burden which contains *what*, you willingly take up. But that other, which comprehends *why*, that is either too hot or too heavy; you dare not meddle with it. But I must add that also to your burden, or else I must leave you for idle persons; for without the knowledge of why, of the grounds or reasons of things, there is no possibility of not being deceived." How countless are the deceived and deceiving from this cause! Nay, and the fanatics of the *what*, the neglecters of the *why*, are not unfrequently men of genius; they have the temperament which influences, which prevails, which acts magnetically upon men. So we have the Philistine of genius in religion,—Luther; the Philistine of genius in politics,—Cromwell; the Philistine of genius in literature,—Bunyan. All three of them, let us remark, are Germanic, and two of them are English. Mr. Freeman must be enchanted.

But let us return to Falkland,—to our martyr of sweetness and light, of lucidity of mind and largeness of temper. Let us bid him farewell, not with compassion for him, and not with excuses, but in confidence and pride. Slowly, very slowly, his ideal of lucidity of mind and largeness of temper conquers; but it conquers. In the end it will prevail; only we must have patience. The day will come when this nation shall be renewed by it. But, O lime-trees of Tew, and quiet Oxfordshire fieldbanks where the first violets are even now raising their heads!—how often, ere that day arrive for Englishmen, shall your renewal be seen!

MILTON

* * * * * * *

IN calling up Milton's memory we call up, let me say, a memory upon which, in prospect of the Anglo-Saxon contagion and of its dangers supposed and real, it may be well to lay stress even more than upon Shakespeare's. If to our English race an inadequate sense for perfection of work is a real danger, if the discipline of respect for a high and flawless excellence is peculiarly needed by us, Milton is of all our gifted men the best lesson, the most salutary influence. In the sure and flawless perfection of his rhythm and diction he is as admirable as Virgil or Dante, and in this respect he is unique amongst us. No one else in English literature and art possesses the like distinction.

Thomson, Cowper, Wordsworth, all of them good poets who have studied Milton, followed Milton, adopted his form, fail in their diction and rhythm if we try them by that high standard of excellence maintained by Milton constantly. From style really high and pure Milton never departs; their departures from it are frequent.

Shakespeare is divinely strong, rich, and attractive. But sureness of perfect style Shakespeare himself does not possess. I have heard a politician express wonder at the treasures of political wisdom in a certain celebrated scene of *Troilus and Cressida*; for my part I am at least equally moved to wonder at the fantastic and false diction in which Shakespeare has in that scene clothed them. Milton, from one end of *Paradise Lost* to the other, is in his diction and rhythm constantly a great artist in the great style. Whatever may be said as to the subject of his poem, as to the conditions under which he received his subject and treated it, that praise, at any rate, is assured to him.

For the rest, justice is not at present done, in my opinion, to Milton's management of the inevitable matter of a Puritan epic, a matter full of difficulties, for a poet. Justice is not done to the *architectonics*, as Goethe would have called them, of *Paradise Lost*; in these, too, the power of Milton's art is remarkable. But this may be a proposition which requires discussion and development for establishing it, and they are impossible on an occasion like the present.

That Milton, of all our English race, is by his diction and rhythm the one artist of the highest rank in the great style whom we have; this I take as requiring no discussion, this I take as certain.

The mighty power of poetry and art is generally admitted. But where the soul of this power, of this power at its best, chiefly resides, very many of us fail to see. It resides chiefly in the refining and elevation wrought in us by the high and rare excellence of the great style. We may feel the effect without being able to give ourselves clear account of its cause, but the thing is so. Now, no race needs the influences mentioned, the influences of refining and elevation, more than ours; and in poetry and art our grand source for them is Milton.

To what does he owe this supreme distinction? To nature first and foremost, to that bent of nature for inequality which to the worshippers of the average man is so unacceptable; to a gift, a divine favour. "The older one grows," says Goethe, "the more one prizes natural gifts, because by no possibility can they be procured and stuck on." Nature formed Milton to be a great poet. But what other poet has shown so sincere a sense of the grandeur of his vocation, and a moral effort so constant and sublime to make and keep himself worthy of it? The Milton of religious and political controversy, and perhaps of domestic life also, is not seldom disfigured by want of amenity, by acerbity. The Milton of poetry, on the other hand, is one of those great men "who are modest"—to quote a fine remark of Leopardi, that gifted and stricken young Italian, who in his sense for poetic style is worthy to be named with Dante and Milton—"who are modest, because they continually compare themselves, not with other men, but with that idea of the perfect which they have before their mind." The Milton of poetry is the man, in his own magnificent phrase, of "devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." And finally, the Milton of poetry is, in his own words again, the man of "industrious and select reading." Continually he lived in companionship with high and rare excellence, with the great Hebrew poets and prophets, with the great poets of Greece and Rome. The Hebrew compositions were not in verse, and can be not inadequately represented by the grand, measured prose of our English

Bible. The verse of the poets of Greece and Rome no translation can adequately reproduce. Prose cannot have the power of verse; verse-translation may give whatever of charm is in the soul and talent of the translator himself, but never the specific charm of the verse and poet translated. In our race are thousands of readers, presently there will be millions, who know not a word of Greek and Latin, and will never learn those languages. If this host of readers are ever to gain any sense of the power and charm of the great poets of antiquity, their way to gain it is not through translations of the ancients, but through the original poetry of Milton, who has the like power and charm, because he has the like great style.

Through Milton they may gain it, for, in conclusion, Milton is English; this master in the great style of the ancients is English. Virgil, whom Milton loved and honoured, has at the end of the *Æneid* a noble passage, where Juno, seeing the defeat of Turnus and the Italians imminent, the victory of the Trojan invaders assured, entreats Jupiter that Italy may nevertheless survive and be herself still, may retain her own mind, manners, and language, and not adopt those of the conqueror.

> "Sit Latium, sint Albani per secula reges!"

Jupiter grants the prayer; he promises perpetuity and the future to Italy—Italy reinforced by whatever virtue the Trojan race has, but Italy, not Troy. This we may take as a sort of parable suiting ourselves. All the Anglo-Saxon contagion, all the flood of Anglo-Saxon commonness, beats vainly against the great style but cannot shake it, and has to accept its triumph. But it triumphs in Milton, in one of our own race, tongue, faith, and morals. Milton has made the great style no longer an exotic here; he has made it an inmate amongst us, a leaven, and a power. Nevertheless he, and his hearers on both sides of the Atlantic, are English, and will remain English—

> "Sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt."

The English race overspreads the world, and at the same time the ideal of an excellence the most high and the most rare abides a possession with it for ever.

JOHN KEATS

* * * * * * *

To see things in their beauty is to see things in their truth, and Keats knew it. "What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth," he says in prose ; and in immortal verse he has said the same thing—

> "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

No, it is not all ; but it is true, deeply true, and we have deep need to know it. And with beauty goes not only truth, joy goes with her also ; and this too Keats saw and said, as in the famous first line of his *Endymion* it stands written—

> "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

It is no small thing to have so loved the principle of beauty as to perceive the necessary relation of beauty with truth, and of both with joy. Keats was a great spirit, and counts for far more than many even of his admirers suppose, because this just and high perception made itself clear to him. Therefore a dignity and a glory shed gleams over his life, and happiness, too, was not a stranger to it. "Nothing startles me beyond the moment," he says ; "the setting sun will always set me to rights or if a sparrow come before my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel." But he had terrible bafflers,—consuming disease and early death. "I think," he writes to Reynolds, "if I had a free and healthy and lasting organisation of heart, and lungs as strong as an ox's, so as to be able to bear unhurt the shock of extreme thought and sensation without weariness, I could pass my life very nearly alone, though it should last eighty years. But I feel my body too weak to support me to the height; I am obliged continually to check myself, and be nothing." He had against him even more than this; he had against him the blind power which we call Fortune. "O that something fortunate," he cries in the closing months of his life, "had ever happened to me or my brothers!—then I might hope,—but despair is forced upon me as a habit." So baffled and so sorely tried,—while laden, at the same time, with a mighty formative thought requiring health, and many days, and favouring circumstances, for its adequate manifestation,—what wonder if the achievement of Keats be partial and incomplete?

Nevertheless, let and hindered as he was, and with a short term and imperfect experience,—"young," as he says of himself, "and writing at random, straining after particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion,"—notwithstanding all this, by virtue of his feeling for beauty and of his perception of the vital connection of beauty with truth, Keats accomplished so much in poetry, that in one of the two great modes by which poetry interprets, in the faculty of naturalistic interpretation, in what we call natural magic, he ranks with Shakespeare. "The tongue of Kean," he says in an admirable criticism of that great actor and of his enchanting elocution, "the tongue of Kean must seem to have robbed the Hybla bees and left them honeyless. There is an indescribable *gusto* in his voice ;—in *Richard*, "Be stirring with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk!" comes from him as through the morning atmosphere towards which he yearns." This magic, this "indescribable *gusto* in the voice," Keats himself, too, exhibits in his poetic expression. No one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness. "I think," he said humbly, "I shall be among the English poets after my death." He is ; he is with Shakespeare.

For the second great half of poetic intrepretation, for that faculty of moral interpretation which is in Shakespeare, and is informed by him with the same power of beauty as his naturalistic interpretation, Keats was not ripe. For the architectonics of poetry, the faculty which presides at the evolution of works like the *Agamemnon* or *Lear*, he was not ripe. His *Endymion*, as he himself well saw, is a failure, and his *Hyperion*, fine things as it contains, is not a success. But in shorter things, where the matured power of moral interpretation, and the high architectonics which go with complete poetic development, are not required, he is perfect. The poems which follow[1] prove it,—prove it far better by themselves than anything which can be said about them will prove it. Therefore I have chiefly spoken here of the man, and of the elements in him which explain the production of such work. Shakespearian work it is ; not imitative, indeed, of Shakespeare, but Shakespearian, because its expression has that rounded perfection and felicity of loveliness of which Shakespeare is the great master. To show such work is to praise it. Let us now end by delighting ourselves with a fragment of it, too broken to find a place among the pieces which follow, but far too beautiful to be lost. It is a fragment of an ode for May-day. O might I, he cries to May, O might I

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[1] This essay was written as an introduction to the selection of Keats's poems given in T. H. Ward's *English Poets*. Vol. IV. 1880.

"... thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
Leaving great verse unto a little clan !
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
Save of the quiet primrose, and the span
Of heaven, and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song should die away,
Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day !"

WORDSWORTH

* * * * * * *

Long ago, in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. I said that a great poet receives his distinctive character of superiority from his application, under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, from his application, I say, to his subject, whatever it may be, of the ideas

> " On man, on nature, and on human life,"

which he has acquired for himself. The line quoted is Wordsworth's own ; and his superiority arises from his powerful use, in his best pieces, his powerful application to his subject, of ideas " on man, on nature, and on human life."

Voltaire, with his signal acuteness, most truly remarked that " no nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation." And he adds : " There, it seems to me, is the great merit of the English poets." Voltaire does not mean, by " treating in poetry moral ideas," the composing moral and didactic poems ;—that brings us but a very little way in poetry. He means just the same thing as was meant when I spoke above " of the noble and profound application of ideas to life" ; and he means the application of these ideas under the conditions fixed for us by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth. If it is said that to call these ideas *moral* ideas is to introduce a strong and injurious limitation, I answer that it is to do nothing of the kind, because moral ideas are really so main a part of human life. The question, *how to live*, is itself a moral idea ; and it is the question which most interests every man, and with which, in some way or other, he is perpetually occupied. A large sense is of course to be given to the term *moral.* Whatever bears upon the question, "how to live," comes under it.

> "Nor love thy life, nor hate ; but, what thou liv'st,
> Live well ; how long or short, permit to heaven."

In those fine lines Milton utters, as every one at once perceives, a moral idea. Yes, but so too, when Keats consoles the forward-bending lover on the Grecian Urn, the lover arrested and presented in immortal relief by the sculptor's hand before he can kiss, with the line,

> "For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair"—

he utters a moral idea. When Shakespeare says, that

> "We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep,"

he utters a moral idea.

Voltaire was right in thinking that the energetic and profound treatment of moral ideas, in this large sense, is what distinguishes the English poetry. He sincerely meant praise, not dispraise or hint of limitation; and they err who suppose that poetic limitation is a necessary consequence of the fact, the fact being granted as Voltaire states it. If what distinguishes the greatest poets is their powerful and profound application of ideas to life, which surely no good critic will deny, then to prefix to the term ideas here the term moral makes hardly any difference, because human life itself is in so preponderating a degree moral.

It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,—to the question: How to live. Morals are often treated in a narrow and false fashion; they are bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their day; they are fallen into the hands of pedants and professional dealers; they grow tiresome to some of us. We find attraction, at times, even in a poetry of revolt against them; in a poetry which might take for its motto Omar Kheyam's words: "Let us make up in the tavern for the time which we have wasted in the mosque." Or we find attractions in a poetry indifferent to them; in a poetry where the contents may be what they will, but where the form is studied and exquisite. We delude ourselves in either case; and the best cure for our delusion is to let our minds rest upon that great and inexhaustible word *life*, until we learn to enter into its meaning. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life;* a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life.*

Epictetus had a happy figure for things like the play of the senses, or literary form and finish, or argumentative ingenuity, in comparison with "the best and master thing" for us, as he called it, the concern, how to live. Some people were afraid of them, he said, or they disliked and undervalued them. Such people were wrong; they were unthankful or cowardly. But the things might also be over-prized, and treated as final when they are not. They bear to life the relation which inns bear to home. "As if a man, journeying home, and finding a nice inn on the road, and liking it, were to stay for ever at the inn! Man, thou hast forgotten thine object; thy journey was not *to* this, but *through* this. 'But this inn is taking.' And how many other inns, too, are taking, and how many fields and meadows! but as places of passage merely. You have an object, which is this: to get home, to do your duty to your family, friends, and fellow-countrymen, to attain inward freedom, serenity, happiness, contentment. Style takes your fancy, arguing takes your fancy, and you forget your home and want to make your abode with them and to stay with them, on the plea that they are taking. Who denies that they are taking? but as places of passage, as inns And when I say this, you suppose me to be attacking the care for style, the care for argument. I am not; I attack the resting in them, the not looking to the end which is beyond them."

Now, when we come across a poet like Théophile Gautier, we have a poet who has taken up his abode at an inn, and never got farther. There may be inducements to this or that one of us, at this or that moment, to find delight in him, to cleave to him; but after all, we do not change the truth about him,—we only stay ourselves in his inn along with him. And when we come across a poet like Wordsworth, who sings

> " Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love and hope,
> And melancholy fear subdued by faith,
> Of blessed consolations in distress,
> Of moral strength and intellectual power,
> Of joy in widest commonalty spread "—

then we have a poet intent on " the best and master thing," and who prosecutes his journey home. We say, for brevity's sake, that he deals with *life*, because he deals with that in which life really consists. This is what Voltaire means to praise in the English poets,—this dealing with what is really life. But always it is the mark of the greatest poets that they deal with it; and to say that the English poets are remarkable for dealing with it, is only another way of saying, what is true, that in poetry the English genius has especially shown its power.

Wordsworth deals with it, and his greatness lies in his dealing with it so powerfully. I have named a number of celebrated poets above all of whom he, in my opinion, deserves to be placed. He is to be placed above poets like Voltaire, Dryden, Pope, Lessing, Schiller, because these famous personages, with a thousand gifts and merits, never, or scarcely ever, attain the distinctive accent and utterance of the high and genuine poets—

> " Quique pii vates et Phœbo digna locuti,"

at all. Burns, Keats, Heine, not to speak of others in our list, have this accent;—who can doubt it? And at the same time they have treasures of humour, felicity, passion, for which in Wordsworth we shall look in vain. Where, then, is Wordsworth's superiority? It is here; he deals with more of life than they do; he deals with *life*, as a whole, more powerfully.

No Wordsworthian will doubt this. Nay, the fervent Wordsworthian will add, as Mr. Leslie Stephen does, that Wordsworth's poetry is precious because his philosophy is sound; that his "ethical system is as distinctive and capable of exposition as Bishop Butler's"; that his poetry is informed by ideas which "fall spontaneously into a scientific system of thought." But we must be on our guard against the Wordsworthians, if we want to secure for Wordsworth his due rank as a poet. The Wordsworthians are apt to praise him for the wrong things, and to lay far too much stress upon what they call his philosophy. His poetry is the reality, his philosophy,—so far, at least, as it may put on the form and habit of "a scientific system of thought," and the more that it puts them on,—is the illusion. Perhaps we shall one day learn to make this proposition general, and to say: Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion. But in Wordsworth's case, at any rate, we cannot do him justice until we dismiss his formal philosophy.

The *Excursion* abounds with philosophy, and therefore the *Excursion* is to the Wordsworthian what it never can be to the disinterested lover of poetry,—a satisfactory work. "Duty exists," says Wordsworth, in the *Excursion*; and then he proceeds thus—

> "... Immutably survive,
> For our support, the measures and the forms,
> Which an abstract Intelligence supplies,
> Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not."

And the Wordsworthian is delighted, and thinks that here is a sweet union of philosophy and poetry. But the disinterested lover of poetry will feel that the lines carry us really not a step farther than the proposition which they would interpret; that they are a tissue of elevated but abstract verbiage, alien to the very nature of poetry.

Or let us come direct to the centre of Wordsworth's philosophy, as "an ethical system, as distinctive and capable of systematical exposition as Bishop Butler's"—

> " . . . One adequate support
> For the calamities of mortal life
> Exists, one only;—an assured belief
> That the procession of our fate, howe'er
> Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
> Of infinite benevolence and power;
> Whose everlasting purposes embrace
> All accidents, converting them to good."

That is doctrine such as we hear in church too, religious and philosophic doctrine; and the attached Wordsworthian loves passages of such doctrine, and brings them forward in proof of his poet's excellence. But however true the doctrine may be, it has, as here presented, none of the characters of *poetic* truth, the kind of truth which we require from a poet, and in which Wordsworth is really strong.

Even the "intimations" of the famous Ode, those corner-stones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth,—the idea of the high instincts and affections coming out in childhood, testifying of a divine home recently left, and fading away as our life proceeds, —this idea, of undeniable beauty as a play of fancy, has itself not the character of poetic truth of the best kind;

it has no real solidity. The instinct of delight in Nature and her beauty had no doubt extraordinary strength in Wordsworth himself as a child. But to say that universally this instinct is mighty in childhood, and tends to die away afterwards, is to say what is extremely doubtful. In many people, perhaps with the majority of educated persons, the love of Nature is nearly imperceptible at ten years old, but strong and operative at thirty. In general we may say of these high instincts of early childhood, the base of the alleged systematic philosophy of Wordsworth, what Thucydides says of the early achievements of the Greek race : " It is impossible to speak with certainty of what is so remote ; but from all that we can really investigate, I should say that they were no very great things."

Finally, the " scientific system of thought " in Wordsworth gives us at last such poetry as this, which the devout Wordsworthian accepts—

" O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this Imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey ;
Binding herself by statute to secure,
For all the children whom her soil maintains,
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth."

Wordsworth calls Voltaire dull, and surely the production of these un-Voltairian lines must have been imposed on him as a judgment! One can hear them being quoted at a Social Science Congress ; one can call up the whole scene. A great room in one of our dismal provincial towns; dusty air and jaded afternoon daylight; benches full of men with bald heads and women in spectacles; an orator lifting up his face from a manuscript written within and without to declaim these lines of Wordsworth; and in the soul of any poor child of nature who may have wandered in thither, an unutterable sense of lamentation, and mourning, and woe!

"But turn we," as Wordsworth says, "from these bold, bad men," the haunters of Social Science Congresses. And let us be on our guard, too, against the exhibitors and extollers of a "scientific system of thought" in Wordsworth's poetry. The poetry will never be seen aright while they thus exhibit it. The cause of its greatness is simple, and may be told quite simply. Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in Nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.

The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally. Wordsworth brings us word, therefore, according to his own strong and characteristic line, he brings us word

"Of joy in widest commonalty spread."

Here is an immense advantage for a poet. Wordsworth tells of what all seek, and tells of it at its truest and best source, and yet a source where all may go and draw for it.

Nevertheless, we are not to suppose that everything is precious which Wordsworth, standing even at this perennial and beautiful source, may give us. Wordsworthians are apt to talk as if it must be. They will speak with the same reverence of *The Sailor's Mother*, for example, as of *Lucy Gray*. They do their master harm by such lack of discrimination. *Lucy Gray* is a beautiful success ; *The Sailor's Mother* is a failure. To give aright what he wishes to give, to interpret and render successfully, is not always within Wordsworth's own command. It is within no poet's command ; here is the part of the Muse, the inspiration, the God, the "not ourselves." In Wordsworth's case, the accident, for so it may almost be called, of inspiration, is of peculiar importance. No poet, perhaps, is so evidently filled with a new and sacred energy when the inspiration is upon him ; no poet, when it fails him, is so left "weak as is a breaking wave." I remember hearing him say that "Goethe's poetry was not inevitable enough." The remark is striking and true ; no line in Goethe, as Goethe said himself, but its maker knew well how it came there. Wordsworth is right, Goethe's poetry is not inevitable ; not inevitable enough. But Wordsworth's poetry, when he is at his best, is inevitable, as inevitable as Nature herself. It might seem that Nature not only gave him the matter for his poem, but wrote his poem for him. He has no style. He was too conversant with Milton not to catch at times his master's manner, and he has fine Miltonic lines ; but he has no assured poetic style of his own, like Milton. When he seeks to have a style he falls into ponderosity and pomposity. In the *Excursion* we have his style, as an artistic product of his own creation; and although Jeffrey completely failed to recognise Wordsworth's real greatness, he was yet not wrong in saying of the *Excursion*, as a work of poetic style: "This will never do." And yet magical as is that power, which Wordsworth has not, of assured and possessed poetic style, he has something which is an equivalent for it.

Every one who has any sense for these things feels the subtle turn, the heightening, which is given to a poet's verse by his genius for style. We can feel it in the

"After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well"—

of Shakespeare; in the

". . . though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues"—

of Milton. It is the incomparable charm of Milton's power of poetic style which gives such worth to *Paradise Regained*, and makes a great poem of a work in which Milton's imagination does not soar high. Wordsworth has in constant possession, and at command, no style of this kind; but he had too poetic a nature, and had read the great poets too well, not to catch, as I have already remarked, something of it occasionally. We find it not only in his Miltonic lines; we find it in such a phrase as this, where the manner is his own, not Milton's—

". . . the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities;"

although even here, perhaps, the power of style which is undeniable, is more properly that of eloquent prose than the subtle heightening and change wrought by genuine poetic style. It is style, again, and the elevation given by style, which chiefly makes the effectiveness of *Laodameia*. Still the right sort of verse to choose from Wordsworth, if we are to seize his true and most characteristic form of expression, is a line like this from *Michael*—

"And never lifted up a single stone."

There is nothing subtle in it, no heightening, no study of poetic style, strictly so called, at all; yet it is expression of the highest and most truly expressive kind.

Wordsworth owed much to Burns, and a style of perfect plainness, relying for effect solely on the weight and force of that which with entire fidelity it utters, Burns could show him.

> "The poor inhabitant below
> Was quick to learn and wise to know,
> And keenly felt the friendly glow
> And softer flame;
> But thoughtless follies laid him low
> And stain'd his name."

Every one will be conscious of a likeness here to Wordsworth; and if Wordsworth did great things with this nobly plain manner, we must remember, what indeed he himself would always have been forward to acknowledge, that Burns used it before him.

Still Wordsworth's use of it has something unique and unmatchable. Nature herself seems, I say, to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes; from the profound sincereness with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of his subject itself. He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain, first-hand, almost austere naturalness. His expression may often be called bald, as, for instance, in the poem of *Resolution and Independence*; but it is bald as the bare mountain tops are bald, with a baldness which is full of grandeur.

Wherever we meet with the successful balance, in Wordsworth, of profound truth of subject with profound truth of execution, he is unique. His best poems are those which most perfectly exhibit this balance. I have a warm admiration for *Laodameia* and for the great *Ode*; but if I am to tell the very truth, I find *Laodameia* not wholly free from something artificial, and the great *Ode* not wholly free from something declamatory. If I had to pick out poems of a kind most perfectly to show Wordsworth's unique power, I should rather choose poems such as *Michael*, *The Fountain*, *The Highland Reaper*. And poems with the peculiar and unique beauty which distinguishes these, Wordsworth produced in considerable number; besides very many other poems of which the worth, although not so rare as the worth of these, is still exceedingly high.

On the whole, then, as I said at the beginning, not only is Wordsworth eminent by reason of the goodness of his best work, but he is eminent also by reason of the great body of good work which he has left to us. With the ancients I will not compare him. In many respects the ancients are far above us, and yet there is something that we demand which they can never give. Leaving the ancients, let us come to the poets and poetry of Christendom. Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Milton, Goethe, are altogether larger and more splendid luminaries in the poetical heaven than Wordsworth. But I know not where else, among the moderns, we are to find his superiors.

* * * * * * *

I have spoken lightly of Wordsworthians; and if we are to get Wordsworth recognised by the public and by the world, we must recommend him not in the spirit of a clique, but in the spirit of disinterested lovers of poetry. But I am a Wordsworthian myself. I can read with pleasure and edification *Peter Bell*, and the whole series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, and the address to Mr. Wilkinson's spade, and even the *Thanksgiving Ode*;—everything of Wordsworth, I think, except *Vaudracour and Julia*. It is not for nothing that one has been brought up in the veneration of a man so truly worthy of homage; that one has seen him and heard him, lived in his neighbourhood, and been familiar with his country. No Wordsworthian has a tenderer affection for this pure and sage master than I, or is less really offended by his defects. But Wordsworth is something more than the pure and sage master of a small band of devoted followers, and we ought not to rest satisfied until he is seen to be what he is. He is one of the very chief glories of English Poetry; and by nothing is England so glorious as by her poetry. Let us lay aside every weight which hinders our getting him recognised as this, and let our one study be to bring to pass, as widely as possible and as truly as possible, his own word concerning his poems: "They will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, and will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier."

NOTES

P. 1, l 2. **on translating Homer.** Matthew Arnold gave three lectures on this subject at Oxford in 1861, and a further lecture, "Last Words on Translating Homer," in 1862.

P. 4, l. 16. **its productions are doomed.** It is perhaps still too soon to decide whether Arnold's prophecy has been fulfilled: yet neither Shelley nor Wordsworth lacks readers, and Byron has come back to something of his earlier popularity.

l. 27. **Goethe.** "He does not seem to me to be a great poet in either of the classes of poets" and "I have tried to read Goethe. I never could succeed." *Prose Works of W. Wordsworth*, Grosart, iii. 435 and 465.

P. 5, l. 10. **Pindar,** b. 522, d. 448 B.C.; **Sophocles,** b. 496, d. 406 B.C.

P. 6, ll. 17-20. **works of genius . . . the Renascence.** To recall, in our own literature only, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Hooker, is to see the force of Arnold's comparison.

l. 31. **Voltaire,** b. 1694, d. 1778; **Rousseau,** b. 1712, d. 1778.

P. 9, l. 10 **curiosity**: *curiositas*, desire of knowledge (Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*).

curiosité, passion d'apprendre, de posséder des choses rares, singulières, etc. (Fleming et Tibbins, *Dictionnaire Français-Anglais*).

P. 10, l. 30. **last** importance: greatest importance.

P. 11, l. 27. **Our organs of criticism**: The *Edinburgh Review* appeared first in 1803, the *Quarterly Review* in 1809, and *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817.

P. 15, l. 24. **Aeschylus,** b. 525, d. 456 B.C.

P. 16, l. 15. **Saint Louis**: b. 1214, d. 1270. "Voltaire, no partial panegyrist in such a case, has said of him that 'it is not given to man to carry virtue to a higher point'" (Jervis, *History of France*, p. 142).

P. 18, l. 16. The sixth satire of Juvenal is a vehement attack on the women of Rome.

P. 19, l. 7. **assassination of the revolted Avidius Cassius** : see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 3.

P. 21, ll. 19-20. **odious imputations** : "If the Empire had been afflicted by any recent calamity, by a plague, a famine, or an unsuccessful war; if the Tiber had, or if the Nile had not, risen beyond its banks, if the earth had shaken, or if the temperate order of the seasons had been interrupted, the superstitious pagans were convinced that the crimes and the impiety of the Christians, who were spared by the excessive lenity of the government, had at length provoked the divine justice.... The impatient clamour of the multitude denounced the Christians as the enemies of gods and men, doomed them to the severest tortures, and, venturing to accuse by name some of the most distinguished of the new sectaries, required with irresistible vehemence, that they should be instantly apprehended and cast to the lions" (Gibbon, chapter 16).

P. 26, l. 25. **Franklin,** Benjamin; b. 1706, d. 1790; American statesman and philosopher, one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence.

P. 28, l. 4. **Seneca,** L. Annaeus; b. a few years B.C., put to death A.D. 65 by command of Nero, whose teacher and adviser he had been. Author of numerous treatises, *De Consolatione, De Animi Tranquillitate, De Constantiâ Sapientis,* and plays. His *Epistolae ad Laelium* also survive.

l. 5. **Epictetus** : Stoic philosopher; taught in Rome, and later, after the expulsion of the philosophers by Domitian, at Nicopolis in Epirus.

P. 31, l. 23. **Apollonius, Rusticus, Maximus.** Marcus Aurelius acknowledges his debt to these teachers: "From Rusticus, I first conceived the need of moral correction and amendment.... From Apollonius, to keep free and to stake nothing on the hazards of chance; never, for one instant, to lose sight of reason; to keep equable in temper, under assaults of pain, or the loss of a child, or in tedious illnesses.... From Maximus, self-mastery and concentration of aim" (*Meditations,* Bk. I, trans. Rendall).

P. 36, l. 10. **scoriae** : refuse, dross or slag from burnt metal.

P. 38, l. 15. **Justin,** Martyr; a student of Zeno, Aristotle, Pythagoras and Plato; became a Christian; martyred (?) 166.

l. 32. **ripae ulterioris amore** : "stretching out his arms in yearning for the further shore" (Virgil, *Aeneid,* vi. 314).

P. 39. **Sweetness and Light.** This is the title of the first chapter of *Culture and Anarchy,* which first appeared in 1869 as a complete book. The several chapters had been already printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1867-68.

P. 40, l. 21. **Montesquieu** ; b. 1689, d. 1755. His chief work was the *Esprit des Lois,* 1748.

P. 41, l. 17. **Bishop Wilson**; b. 1663, d. 1755. Author of *Sacra Privata*, and of *Maxims of Piety and Christianity*, the latter to be found in the English Theological Library, Macmillan, 1898, edited by F. Relton. In the Preface to *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold speaks of the Bishop's "ardour and unction," his "downright honesty and plain good sense."

P. 45, l. 24. **Mr. Bright**, John; b. 1811, d. 1889. A leader of the Free Trade movement.

Mr. Frederic Harrison; b. 1831, d. 1923; positivist, critic, historian.

P. 46, l. 29. **Faith in machinery.** The doctrine which Arnold preaches here had already been preached by Thomas Carlyle. See, for example, *Signs of the Times* (1829) in the collected critical essays.

P 47, l. 9. **Mr. Roebuck**, John Arthur; b. 1801, d. 1879: lawyer, pamphleteer and politician; M.P. for Bath, 1832-7 and 1841-7; Chairman of the Administrative Reform Association, 1856; author of *Colonies of England* (1849), *History of the Whig Ministry of 1830* (1852).

P. 50, l. 32. **Epictetus**: The Encheiridion or Manual, compiled by Arrian: see the translation by P. E. Matheson, *Discourses and Manual of Epictetus*, Clarendon Press, vol. ii. p. 233, § 41.

P. 57, l. 15. **publice egestas, privatim opulentia**: in public life, penury; in private, luxury.

P. 59, l. 32. **Beales**, Edmond; b. 1803, d. 1881; lawyer and politician: President of the Reform League, 1866.

Bradlaugh, Charles; b. 1833, d. 1891; social reformer, secularist, wrote under title of 'Iconoclast'; M.P. for Northampton.

P. 60, l. 24. **Dr. Newman**, John Henry, Cardinal Newman; b. 1801, d. 1890; leader of the Tractarian Movement. *Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ*, 1864.

P. 61, l. 15. **Mr. Lowe**, Robert, Viscount Sherbrooke; b. 1811, d. 1892; Vice-President of the Education Department, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Gladstone's Ministry of 1868.

P. 64, l. 28. **Comte**, Auguste; b. 1798, d. 1857; founder of Positivism, or the Religion of Humanity.

P. 65, l. 10. **Bentham**, Jeremy; b. 1748, d. 1832; author of *Fragment on Government* (1776); and *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789).

P. 67, l. 5. **Mr. Buckle**, Henry Thomas; b. 1821, d. 1862; author of *Introduction to the History of Civilisation in England.*
Mr. Mill, John; b. 1806, d. 1873; philosopher, author of many books, including *A System of Logic* (1843); *On Liberty* (1859); *Utilitarianism* (1861); *Representative Government* (1861).

P. 70, l. 1. **Abelard**, Peter; b. 1079, d. 1142; theologian and philosopher.

l. 3. **Lessing**, Gotthold Ephraim; b. 1729, d. 1781; an interpreter and critic of the spirit of Greek Art; author of *Laocoön* (1766). **Herder**, Johann Gottfried; b. 1744, d. 1803; poet and critic; his chief work was *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit.*

P. 72, l. 3. **Clarendon**, Edward Hyde, Earl of; b. 1608, d. 1674; author of the *History of the Great Rebellion,* which, begun sixty years earlier, did not appear till 1704. For the account of Falkland's character see Book VII., 217 ff.

l. 12. **Turpe mori . . . :** "It is discreditable not to be able to die, after you, from grief alone." (Lucan: *Pharsalia,* ix, 108.)

l. 15. **Asiatic**: an "exaggerated unnaturalness" has been called the general characteristic of "Asiatic" orators. Cicero discusses them in the *Brutus.* Cicero himself was charged by some of his critics with this quality. Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria,* xii. 10. § 12.

P. 73, l. 17. **Horace Walpole**; b. 1717, d. 1797; author of the *Castle of Otranto*; best known for his letters. "The history of England, throughout a very large segment of the eighteenth century, is simply a synonym for the works of Horace Walpole" (Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library,* vol. i. 322).

P. 75. l. 10. **Suckling**, Sir John; b. (?) 1609, d. 1642; cavalier and poet.

Carew, Thomas; b. (?) 1598, d. (?) 1639. He has a place, as Mr. Saintsbury says, "apart it may be from the greater summits of poetry and lower than they are, but untouched, unapproached by any peak in its own kind."

Davenant, Sir William; b. 1605, d. 1668; a poet, though not a great poet; Laureate after Ben Jonson.

Waller, Edmund; b. 1605, d. 1687. Mr. Saintsbury speaks of his "neat and graceful, if not radiantly lovely or bewitching muse."

Sandys, George; b. 1578, d. 1644; traveller, prose writer and poet; made translations from Ovid.

Kenelm Digby; b. 1603, d. 1665. His chief works were two treatises *On the Nature of Bodies and the Nature of Man's Soul* and *Private Memoirs.*

l. 11. **Hales**, John; b. 1584, d. 1656. Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and later of Eton College; an advocate of freedom of thought and toleration.

l. 12. **Chillingworth**, William; b. 1602, d. 1644. His chief work was *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation* ; fought for Charles I. in the Civil Wars.

P 77, l. 7. **Sheldon,** Gilbert; b. 1598, d. 1677; Warden of All Souls' College, Oxford; Bishop of London; Archbishop of Canterbury.

Morley, George; b 1597, d. 1684; Bishop first of Worcester and then of Winchester.

Hammond, Henry; d. 1660; author of many works, including *Practical Catechism* (1644); and *Paraphrases and Annotations on the New Testament* (1653).

Earles (or Earle), John; b. (?) 1601, d. 1665; Bishop of Salisbury; author of *Microcosmographie, or a Piece of the World discovered; in Essays and Characters,* published anonymously, 1628.

P. 81, l. 22. **et in luctu bellum inter remedia erat** : "and in the general misery war itself was a remedy" (Tacitus, *Agricola,* 29).

P. 87, l. 21. **Who now reads Bolingbroke?** The question is asked by Burke in *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790). See Burke's *Select Works,* edited by E. J. Payne, Clarendon Press, vol. ii. p. 105. Matthew Arnold's reply to the question is amply justified. **Bolingbroke,** Henry St. John, Viscount, b. 1678, d. 1751.

l. 27. "**Cavaliers and Roundheads . . .**": Bolingbroke, "Remarks on the History of England," Letter XIX. (Bolingbroke, *Works,* Bohn, 1844, vol. i. p. 408).

P. 88, l. 15. "**Our Charles the First . . .**": Bolingbroke, "On the Study and Use of History," Letter VII. (Bohn, vol. ii. p. 257).

P. 96, l. 1. "**I comprise it all**": John Hales, "Of Private Judgment in Religion" (*The Works of John Hales,* ed. by Lord Hailes, Glasgow, 1764, vol 3, p. 150).

l. 18. **Mr. Freeman.** Edward A. Freeman, Professor of History at Oxford, constantly proclaimed the Teutonic virtues, which he contrasted with those of "Southern heathenism" (*i.e.* the Greeks and the Romans). See *Thoughts on the Study of History* (1849), and *The Norman Conquest,* vol. i. p. 18, etc.

P. 99, ll. 2, 3. **that bent of nature for inequality.** Here, as often, Arnold speaks under the influence of, or at least in agreement with, Thomas Carlyle.

l. 15. **Leopardi,** Giacomo, Italian poet; b. 1798, d. 1837.

P. 100, l. 24. **Sit Latium** : Virgil, *Aeneid,* xii. 826.

P. 101, l. 7. **Sermonem Ausonii** : *Aeneid,* xii. 834 :

"Let Latium, and let Alban kings endure
For ages; be there still a Roman stock,
Strong with Italian vigour. Troy is fallen,
And name with nation, let the fallen lie."

The Author of mankind and all that is
Smiling made answer: "Jove's own sister thou,
And Saturn's other offspring, such wild waves
Of passion heav'st within thy bosom's depth!
But come, this unavailing wrath allay:
Thy suit I grant, and willing let thee win.
Ausonia's folk their native tongue shall keep
And customs; and, as now, their name shall be;
The Teucrians shall but in the mass be merged
And settle; I myself will add their rites
Of ceremonial worship, and make all
Of one tongue, Latins."

(*Aeneid*, trans. by James Rhoades.)

P. 102, l. 2. "**What the Imagination seizes...**": Letter to Bailey, dated Leatherhead post-mark 22 Nov. 1817. *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats*, ed. Monckton Milnes, vol. i. p. 64 (Moxon, 1848).

l. 5. "**Beauty is truth...**": *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*

l. 20. "**Nothing startles me...**": In the letter, already quoted, to Bailey, Monckton Milnes, vol. i. p. 67.

P. 103, ll. 3-4 ff. "**if I had a free and healthy and lasting organisation...**" Letter dated Winchester 25 Aug. [1819], Monckton Milnes, vol. ii. p. 15.

l. 12. "**O, that something fortunate...**": Letter to Brown, Naples, 1 Nov. [1820], Monckton Milnes, vol. ii. p. 78.

ll. 22-23. "**young and writing at random.**" Letter to his brother and sister, 14 Feb. [1819], Monckton Milnes, vol. i. p. 257.

P. 104, ll. 11-12. "**I think I shall be...**" Letter to his brother, George, 29 Oct. 1818, *Life and Letters*, vol. i. p. 227.

P. 106, l. 9. "**On man, on nature, and on human life.**" Wordsworth, *The Recluse*: see below, note on p. 110. The curious student will refer to Wordsworth's Preface (1814) to *The Excursion.*

l. 15. **Voltaire.** "Nulle nation n'a traité la morale en vers avec plus d'énergie et de profondeur que la nation anglaise; c'est là, ce me semble, le plus grand mérite de ses poètes" (*Histoire du Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xxxiv.).

P. 107, ll. 13-14. "**Nor love thy life, nor hate...**": *Paradise Lost*, xi. 553-554.

l. 23. "**We are such stuff...**": *Tempest*, Act iv. sc. 1, 156-8.

P. 108, l. 20. **Omar Kheyam** (Khayyam). Persian poet and astronomer, b. (?) 1017, d. (?) 1123. His *Rubáiyát* or Quatrains were (75 of them) translated into English in 1859 by Edward FitzGerald.

l. 32. **Epictetus.** See *Discourses*, Book II., ch. 23.

P. 109, l. 28. **Théophile Gautier**: b. 1811, d. 1872.

P. 110, l. 3. **"Of truth, of grandeur . . ."** (Wordsworth, *The Recluse*):

"A voice shall speak, and what shall be the theme?
On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed .
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whenceso'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear, subdued by Faith;
Of blessèd consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing:—'fit audience let me find, though few.'"

This is, indeed (as Wordsworth calls it) a "Prospectus"; but —except for a single line—not poetry.

P. 110, l. 28. **Quique pii vates et Phoebo digna locuti**: "the good poets whose speech abased not Apollo" (Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 662).

P. 111, l. 8. **his "ethical system . . ."**: Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, ii. p. 256, Wordsworth's Ethics.

ll. 29-32. **". . . Immutably survive"**: *The Excursion*, Book IV., Despondency Corrected.

P. 112, ll. 10-17. **". . . One adequate support"**: *The Excursion*, Book IV., Despondency Corrected.

P. 113, l. 19. **"O for the coming . . ."**: *The Excursion*, Book IX., Discourse of the Wanderer and An Evening Visit to the Lake.

P. 114, l. 9. **"But turn we from these bold, bad men."** From the poem *To the Lady Fleming on seeing the Foundation preparing for the Erection of Rydal Chapel, Westmorland.*

P. 116, l. 1. **Jeffrey**, Francis; editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. "This will never do," was the opening sentence of his famous review of *The Excursion* in the November number, 1814.

l. 11. **"After life's fitful fever..."**: *Macbeth*, Act iii. sc. 2.

ll. 13-14. **"... though fall'n on evil days"**: *Paradise Lost*, vii. 25.

ll. 25-27. **"the fierce confederate storm"**:

"if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish, or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn."

(*The Recluse.*)

P. 117, l. 14. **"The poor inhabitant below"**: from *A Bard's Epitaph* (1796).

P. 118, l. 25. **the great body of good work.** Wordsworth gains and not loses by selection, and Matthew Arnold did him the good service of separating the good from the dull in his poetry. Jeffrey himself admitted that even in *The Excursion* he found "a very great number of single lines and images, that sparkle like gems in the desert, and startle us with an intimation of the great poetic powers that lie buried in the rubbish that has been heaped around them. It is difficult to pick up these..." (Jeffrey, *Edinburgh Review*, Nov. 1814). Matthew Arnold did pick them up, and found that they were both more numerous and less disconnected than had been supposed.

QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

I

1. What does Matthew Arnold mean by " criticism " ? In what sense can criticism be creative ?

2. Do you agree that Byron's poetry had " little enduranco " in it ? Give reasons for your opinion.

3. Shelley " incoherent " ; Wordsworth " wanting in completeness and variety." Consider these judgments.

4. The Athens of Pericles, the England of Elizabeth. Set out some likenesses and some contrasts.

5. Explain " epochs of concentration," " epochs of expansion."

6. "Disinterestedness." Examine this word and Arnold's use of it.

II

1. Write down what you know of Marcus Aurelius, either from this essay or from other sources.

2. Is satire a good or the best form for criticism ? And, what is satire ? Illustrate your answer by reference to Juvenal.

3. " Pagan." How do you use this word ? How has it come to have the meaning which you give to it ? What is its history ?

4. " Christianity grew up in the Catacombs, not on the Palatine." What does this mean ?

5. " Ineffectual." Do you think this epithet is well applied to Marcus Aurelius ? Compare him with Falkland.

6. " What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians ! " What Christian elements do you find in the teaching of Marcus Aurelius ?

III

1. "Culture." What are its qualities, according to Matthew Arnold .

2. What does Matthew Arnold mean by “ faith in machinery ” ? And why does he dislike it ? What does he include in “ machinery ” ?

3. What are “ Philistines ” and “ Barbarians ” ?

4. The virtues and the faults of Puritans—what are they ?

5. Picture to yourself Shakespeare and Virgil accompanying the Pilgrim Fathers on their voyage. Develop this suggestion.

6. “ The men of culture are the true apostles of equality.” Discuss this statement. Do you think it true ?

IV

1. “ An amiable Englishman.” Can you name other examples, besides Falkland, of “ this phenomenon ” ?

2. What do you know of Horace Walpole ?

3. “ Simplicity,” “ integrity,” “ dexterity,” “ address,” “ pedantry,” “ affectation.” Write short notes on each of these words.

4. “ The charm of one who is . . . unfortunate.” Write a short essay on this theme, illustrating it with examples from your reading.

5. What contributions has Puritanism made to literature ?

6. “ But, O lime-trees of Tew . . .” Examine this ending of the essay : is it natural, or artificial, or both ?

V

1. What is meant by the “ Anglo-Saxon contagion ” ?

2. What comparisons would you make, from your own studies, between Milton and (*a*) Virgil and (*b*) Dante ?

3. Write a brief essay on “ The Average Man.”

4. State and discuss what Matthew Arnold says of the sources of Milton’s “ supreme distinction.”

5. Carefully examine any passage of Virgil, at your choice, in comparison with any translation of it in prose and in verse.

6. “ Milton has made the great style . . . amongst us, a leaven and a power.” Illustrate this statement.

VI

1. What specially wins your admiration in Keats’s poetry ?

2. What does Arnold’s criticism of Keats amount to ?

3. Can a young man be a great poet ?

4. ‘ The architectonics of poetry.” What does this mean ?

5. Why is *Endymion* "a failure," and *Hyperion* "not a success"?

6 Does your knowledge of Keats's life help you to understand his poetry?

VII

1. What does Matthew Arnold mean by "moral ideas"? Consider the passages of poetry in which he finds them.

2. "Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion." Write an essay on this theme.

3. Quote or indicate some lines, passages or poems of Wordsworth which you think pure poetry, and then say what the purely poetic quality of them is.

4. What traces do you find in Wordsworth of Milton's influence?

5. Give instances of Wordsworth's intimate knowledge of and delight in Nature.

6. What claim has Wordsworth to be called a "romantic" poet?

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

1. For Matthew Arnold's life, and for some criticism of his work, readers should look to the books of Mr. G. W. E. Russell and Professor Saintsbury. For an estimate of him as critic, prose writer and poet in relation to his contemporaries, they should consult Professor Hugh Walker's *Age of Tennyson.*

2. But it is more important to know an author at first hand than to learn what even great critics may say about him. Readers, who have been interested in these selections, should try to read the books from which they have been taken to see how the author treats his several subjects at length. And if they wish to test his judgment of men and of books, they should get from biographies or general histories some record of the chief personages mentioned, and go direct to the authors whom Arnold quotes. For example, they should read again and again some familiar passage of Homer, or Virgil, or Milton, or Wordsworth, and with the passage fresh in their minds reconsider what Arnold said about each of these poets.

3. And readers must look for commentary on Arnold as an essayist to Arnold as a poet. No better exercise can they set themselves than to enquire whether he has the same or different ideas to convey in the two different forms of his art.

4. Not least happily will they be guided if they consult his letters, as illustrating the development of his opinions, the formation of his style and his dealings both with his relatives and his friends, and with the larger world with which he was brought into communication.

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