

CARLYLE'S MISCELLANIES.

VOL. III.

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CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

ESSAYS,

BY

THOMAS CARLYLE.

VOLUME III.

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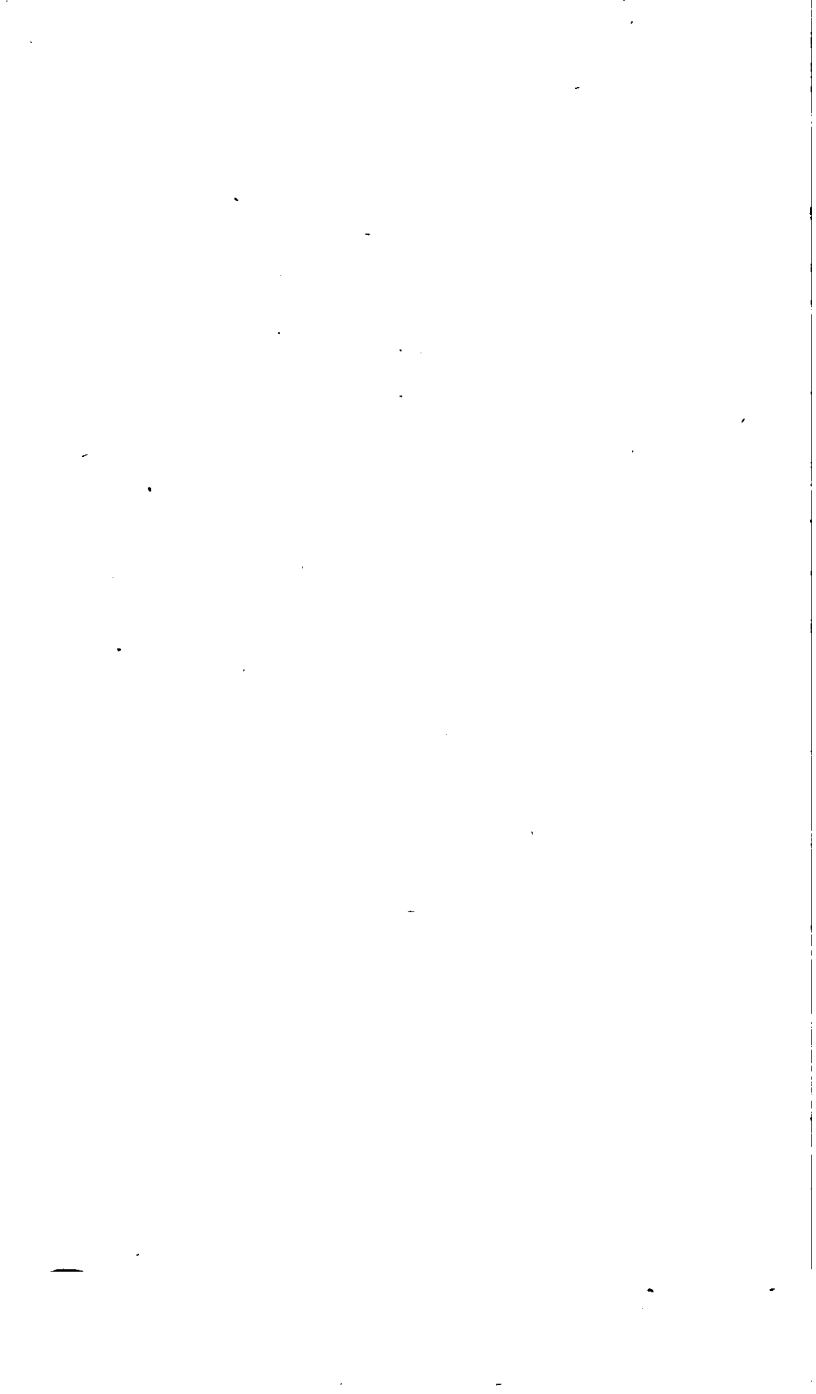
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ERRATA.

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" 201,	" 11,	" <i>is,</i>	" <i>is.</i>
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Page 303, *for* Edinburgh Review, 1832, *read* Foreign Quarterly Review, 1833.



THE MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS CARLYLE.

TAYLOR'S HISTORIC SURVEY OF GERMAN POETRY.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1831.]

GERMAN Literature has now for upwards of half a century been making some way in England ; yet by no means at a constant rate, rather in capricious flux and reflux, — deluge alternating with desiccation : never would it assume such moderate, reasonable currency, as promised to be useful and lasting. The history of its progress here would illustrate the progress of more important things ; would again exemplify what obstacles a new spiritual object, with its mixture of truth and of falsehood, has to encounter from unwise enemies, still more from unwise friends ; how dross is mistaken for metal, and common ashes are solemnly labelled as fell poison ; how long, in such cases, blind Passion must vociferate before she can awaken Judgment ; in short, with what tumult, vicissitude, and protracted difficulty, a foreign doctrine adjusts and locates

* Historic Survey of German Poetry, interspersed with various Translations. By W. Taylor, of Norwich. 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1830.

itself among the homeborn. Perfect ignorance is quiet, perfect knowledge is quiet; not so the transition from the former to the latter. In a vague, all-exaggerating twilight of wonder, the new has to fight its battle with the old; Hope has to settle accounts with Fear: thus the scales strangely waver; public opinion, which is as yet baseless, fluctuates without limit; periods of foolish admiration and foolish execration must elapse, before that of true inquiry and zeal according to knowledge can begin.

Thirty years ago, for example, a person of influence and understanding thought good to emit such a proclamation as the following: 'Those ladies, who take the lead in society, are loudly called upon to act as guardians of the public taste as well as of the public virtue. They are called upon, therefore, to oppose, with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of those swarms of Publications now daily issuing from the banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other and more fatal arms, are overrunning civilized society. Those readers, whose purer taste has been formed on the correct models of the old classic school, see with indignation and astonishment the Huns and Vandals once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid motion, hurried back to the reign of Chaos and old Night, by distorted and unprincipled Compositions, which, in spite of strong flashes of genius, unite the taste of the Goths with the morals of Bag-shot.' — 'The newspapers announce that Schiller's *Tragedy of the Robbers*, which inflamed the young nobility of Germany to enlist themselves into a band of highwaymen, to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is now acting in England by persons of quality!'

* *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education.* By Hannah More The Eighth Edition, p. 41.

Whether our fair Amazons, at sound of this alarm-trumpet, drew up in array of war to discomfit those invading Compositions, and snuff out the lights of that questionable private theatre, we have not learned ; and see only that, if so, their campaign was fruitless and needless. Like the old Northern Immigrators, those new Paper Goths marched on resistless whither they were bound ; some to honor, some to dishonor, the most to oblivion and the impalpable inane ; and no weapon or artillery, not even the glances of bright eyes, but only the omnipotence of Time, could tame and assort them. Thus, Kotzebue's truculent armaments, once so threatening, all turned out to be mere Fantasms and Night apparitions ; and so rushed onwards, like some Spectre Hunt, with loud howls indeed, yet hurrying nothing into chaos but themselves. While again, Schiller's *Tragedy of the Robbers*, which did not inflame either the young or the old nobility of Germany to rob in the forests of Bohemia, or indeed to do anything, except perhaps yawn a little less, proved equally innocuous in England, and might still be acted without offence, could living individuals, idle enough for that end, be met with here. Nay, this same Schiller, not indeed by *Robbers*, yet by *Wallensteins*, by *Maids of Orleans*, and *Wilhelm Tells*, has actually conquered for himself a fixed dominion among us, which is yearly widening ; round which other German kings, of less intrinsic prowess, and of greater, are likewise erecting thrones. And yet, as we perceive, civilized society still stands in its place ; and the public taste, as well as the public virtue, live on, though languidly, as before. For, in fine, it has become manifest that the old Cimmerian forest is now quite felled and tilled ; that the true Children of Night, whom we have to dread, dwell not on the banks of the Danube, but nearer hand.

Could we take our progress in knowledge of German

Literature since that diatribe was written, as any measure of our progress in the science of Criticism, above all, in the grand science of national Tolerance, there were some reason for satisfaction. With regard to Germany itself, whether we yet stand on the right footing, and know at last how we are to live in profitable neighborhood and intercourse with that country; or whether the present is but one other of those capricious tides, which also will have its reflux, may seem doubtful: meanwhile, clearly enough, a rapidly growing favor for German Literature comes to light; which favor too is the more hopeful, as it now grounds itself on better knowledge, on direct study and judgment. Our knowledge is better, if only because more general. Within the last ten years, independent readers of German have multiplied perhaps a hundred fold; so that now this acquirement is almost expected as a natural item in liberal education. Hence, in a great number of minds, some immediate personal insight into the deeper significance of German Intellect and Art;—everywhere, at least a feeling that it has some such significance. With independent readers, moreover, the writer ceases to be independent, which of itself is a considerable step. Our British Translators, for instance, have long been unparalleled in modern literature, and, like their country, ‘the envy of surrounding nations:’ but now there are symptoms that, even in the remote German province, they must no longer range quite at will; that the butchering of a *Faust* will henceforth be accounted literary homicide, and practitioners of that quality must operate on the dead subject only. While there are Klingemanns and Claurens in such abundance, let no merely ambitious, or merely hungry Interpreter, fasten on Goethes and Schillers. Remark, too, with satisfaction, how the old-established British Critic now feels that it has become unsafe to speak delirium on this subject; wherefore he prudently

restricts himself to one of two courses: either to acquire some understanding of it, or, which is the still surer course, altogether to hold his peace. Hence freedom from much babble that was wont to be oppressive: probably no watch-horn with such a note as that of Mrs. More's can again be sounded, by male or female Dogberry, in these Islands. Again, there is no one of our younger, more vigorous Periodicals, but has its German craftsman, gleaning what he can: we have seen Jean Paul quoted in English Newspapers. Nor, among the signs of improvement, at least of extended curiosity, let us omit our British Foreign Reviews, a sort of merchantmen that regularly visit the Continental, especially the German ports, and bring back such ware as luck yields them, with the hope of better. Last, not least among our evidences of Philo-Germanism, here is a whole *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, in three sufficient octavos; and this not merely in the eulogistic and recommendatory vein, but proceeding in the way of criticism, and indifferent, impartial narrative: a man of known character, of talent, experience, penetration, judges that the English public is prepared for such a service, and likely to reward it.

These are appearances, which, as advocates for the friendly approximation of all men and all peoples, and the readiest possible interchange of whatever each produces of advantage to the others, we must witness gladly. Free literary intercourse with other nations, what is it but an extended Freedom of the Press; a liberty to read (in spite of Ignorance, of Prejudice, which is the worst of Censors) what our foreign teachers also have printed for us? — ultimately, therefore, a liberty to speak and to hear, were it with men of all countries and of all times; to use, in utmost compass, those precious natural organs, by which not Knowledge only but mutual Affection is chiefly generated

among mankind! It is a natural wish in man to know his fellow-passengers in this strange Ship, or rather in this strange Life-voyage: neither need he be content to confine himself to the cabin where he himself chooses to be, but may extend to all accessible departments of the vessel. In all he will find mysterious beings, of Wants and Endeavors like his own; in all he will find Men; with these let him comfort and manifoldly instruct himself. As to German Literature, in particular, which professes to be not only new, but original, and rich in curious information for us; which claims, moreover, nothing that we have not granted to the French, Italian, Spanish, and in a less degree to far meaner literatures, we are gratified to see that such claims can no longer be resisted. In the present fallow state of our English Literature, when no Poet cultivates his own poetic field, but all are harnessed into Editorial teams, and ploughing in concert, for Useful Knowledge, or Bibliopolic Profit, we regard this renewal of our intercourse with poetic Germany, after twenty years of languor or suspension, as among the most remarkable and even promising features of our recent intellectual history. In the absence of better tendencies, let this, which is no idle, but, in some points of view, a deep and earnest one, be encouraged. For ourselves, in the midst of so many louder and more exciting interests, we feel it a kind of duty to cast some glances now and then on this little stiller interest: since the matter is once for all to be inquired into, sound notions on it should be furthered, unsound ones cannot be too speedily corrected. It is on such grounds that we have taken up this *Historical Survey*.

Mr. Taylor is so considerable a person, that no Book published by him, on any subject, can be without weight. On German Poetry, such is the actual state of public information and curiosity, his guidance will be sure to lead or mislead a numerous class of inquirers. We are

therefore called on to examine him with more than usual strictness and minuteness. The Press, in these times, has become so active; Literature — what is still called Literature — has so dilated in volume, and diminished in density, that the very Reviewer feels at a nonplus, and has ceased to review. Why thoughtfully examine what was written without thought; or note faults and merits, where there is neither fault nor merit? From a Nonentity, embodied, with innocent deception, in foolscap and printers' ink, and named Book; from the common wind of Talk, even when it is conserved by such mechanism, for days, in the shape of Froth, — how shall the hapless Reviewer filter aught in that once so profitable colander of his? He has ceased, as we said, to attempt the impossible, — cannot review, but only discourse; he dismisses his too unproductive Author, generally with civil words, not to quarrel needlessly with a fellow-creature; and must try, as he best may, to grind from his own poor garner. Authors long looked with an evil, envious eye on the Reviewer, and strove often to blow out his light, which only burnt the clearer for such blasts; but now, cunningly altering their tactics, they have extinguished it by want of oil. Unless for some unforeseen change of affairs, or some new-contrived machinery, of which there is yet no trace, the trade of Reviewer is well nigh done.

The happier are we that Mr. Taylor's Book is of the old stamp, and has substance in it for our uses. If no honor, there will be no disgrace, in having carefully examined it; which service, indeed, is due to our readers, not without curiosity in this matter, as well as to the Author. In so far as he seems a safe guide, and brings true tidings from the promised land, let us proclaim that fact, and recommend him to all pilgrims: if, on the other hand, his tidings are false, let us hasten to make this also known; that the Ger-

man Canaan suffer not, in the eyes of all unhearted, by spurious samples of its produce and reports of bloodthirsty sons of Anak dwelling there, when this harbinger and spy brings out of it. In either case, we may hope, our Author, who loves the Germans in his way and would have his countrymen brought into closer acquaintance with them, will feel that, in purpose at least, we are coöperating with him.

First, then, be it admitted without hesitation, that Mr. Taylor, in respect of general talent and acquirement, takes his place above all our expositors of German things; that his book is greatly the most important we yet have on this subject. Here are upwards of fourteen hundred solid pages of commentary, narrative, and translation, submitted to the English reader; numerous statements and personages, hitherto unheard of, or vaguely heard of, stand here in fixed shape; there is, if no map of intellectual Germany, some first attempt at such. Farther, we are to state that our author is a zealous, earnest man; no hollow dilettante hunting after shadows, and prating he knows not what; but a substantial, distinct, remarkably decisive man; has his own opinion on many subjects, and can express it adequately. We should say, precision of idea was a striking quality of his: no vague transcendentalism, or mysticism of any kind; nothing but what is measurable and tangible, and has a meaning which he that runs may read, is to be apprehended here. He is a man of much classical and other reading; of much singular reflection; stands on his own basis, quiescent yet immovable: a certain rugged vigor of natural power, interesting even in his distortions, is everywhere manifest. Lastly, we venture to assign him the rare merit of honesty: he speaks out in plain English what is in him; seems heartily convinced of his own doctrines, and preaches them because they are his own; not for the sake of sale,

but of truth; at worst, for the sake of making prose-lytes.

On the strength of which properties, we reckon that this *Historic Survey* may, under certain conditions, be useful and acceptable to two classes. First, to incipient students of German Literature in the original; who in any History of their subject, even in a bare catalogue, will find help; though for that class, unfortunately, Mr. Taylor's help is much diminished in value by several circumstances; by this one, were there no other, that he nowhere cites any authority: the path he has opened may be the true or the false one; for farther researches and lateral surveys there is no direction or indication. But, secondly, we reckon that this Book may be welcome to many of the much larger miscellaneous class, who read less for any specific object than for the sake of reading; to whom any book, that will, either in the way of contradiction or of confirmation, by new wisdom, or new perversion of wisdom, stir up the stagnant inner man, is a windfall; the rather if it bring some historic tidings also, fit for remembering, and repeating; above all, if, as in this case, the style with many singularities have some striking merits, and so the book be a light exercise, even an entertainment.

To such praise and utility the work is justly entitled; but this is not all it pretends to; and more cannot without many limitations be conceded it. Unluckily the *Historic Survey* is not what it should be, but only what it would be. Our Author hastens to correct in his Preface any false hopes his ~~Titlepage~~ *Titlepage* may have excited: 'A complete History of German Poetry,' it seems, 'is hardly within reach of his local command of library: so comprehensive an undertaking would require another residence in a country from which he has now been separated more than forty years;' and which various considerations render it unadvisable to revisit. Nev-

ertheless, 'having long been in the practice of importing the productions of its fine literature,' and of working in that material, as critic, translator, and translator, he has now composed one 'periodic publication of this country, he has now composed 'introductory and connective sections,' filled up deficiencies, retrenched superfluities; and so, collecting and remodelling those 'successive contributions,' cements them together into the 'new and entire work' here offered to the public. 'With fragments,' he concludes, 'long since hewn, as it were, and sculptured, I attempt to construct an English Temple of Fame to the memory of those German Poets.'

There is no doubt but a Complete History of German Poetry exceeds any local or universal command of books which a British man can at this day enjoy; and, farther, presents obstacles of an infinitely more serious character than this. A History of German, or of any national Poetry, would form, taken in its complete sense, one of the most arduous enterprises any writer could engage in. Poetry, were it the rudest, so it be sincere, is the attempt which man makes to render his existence harmonious, the utmost he can do for that end: it springs therefore from his whole feelings, opinions, activity, and takes its character from these. It may be called the music of his whole manner of being; and, historically considered, is the test how far Music, or Freedom, existed therein; how far the feeling of Love, of Beauty, and Dignity, could be elicited from that peculiar situation of his, and from the views he there had of Life and Nature, of the Universe, internal and external. Hence, in any measure to understand the Poetry, to estimate its worth, and historical meaning, we ask as a quite fundamental inquiry: What that situation was? Thus the History of a nation's Poetry is the essence of its History, political, economic, scientific, religious. With all these the complete Historian of a national Poetry will be familiar;

the national physiognomy, in its finest traits, and through its successive stages of growth, will be clear to him: he will discern the grand spiritual Tendency of each period, what was the highest Aim and Enthusiasm of mankind in each, and how one epoch naturally evolved itself from the other. He has to record this highest Aim of a nation, in its successive directions and developments; for by this the Poetry of the nation modulates itself, this is the Poetry of the nation.

Such were the primary essence of a true History of Poetry; the living principle round which all detached facts and phenomena, all separate characters of Poems and Poets, would fashion themselves into a coherent whole, if they are by any means to cohere. To accomplish such a work for any Literature would require not only all outward aids, but an excellent inward faculty: all telescopes and observatories were of no avail, without the seeing eye and the understanding heart.

Doubtless, as matters stand, such models remain in great part ideal; the stunted result of actual practice must not be too rigidly tried by them. In our language, we have yet no example of such a performance. Neither elsewhere, except perhaps in the well-meant, but altogether ineffectual, attempt of Denina, among the Italians, and in some detached, though far more successful, sketches by German writers, is there any that we know of. To expect an English History of German Literature in this style were especially unreasonable; where not only the man to write it, but the people to read and enjoy it are wanting. Some *Historic Survey*, wherein such an ideal standard, if not attained, if not approached, might be faithfully kept in view, and endeavored after, would suffice us. Neither need such a Survey, even as a British Surveyor might execute it, be deficient in striking objects, and views of a general interest. There is the spectacle of a great people, closely related to

us in blood, language, character, advancing through fifteen centuries of culture; with the eras and changes that have distinguished the like career in other nations. Nay, perhaps, the intellectual history of the Germans is not without peculiar attraction, on two grounds: first, that they are a separate unmixed people; that in them one of the two grand stem-tribes, from which all modern European countries derive their population and speech, is seen growing up distinct, and in several particulars following its own course; secondly, that by accident and by desert, the Germans have more than once been found playing the highest part in European culture; at more than one era the grand Tendencies of Europe have first embodied themselves into action in Germany, the main battle between the New and the Old has been fought and gained there. We mention only the Swiss Revolt, and Luther's Reformation. The Germans have not indeed so many classical works to exhibit as some other nations; a Shakspeare, a Dante, has not yet been recognised among them; nevertheless, they too have had their Teachers and inspired Singers; and in regard to popular Mythology, traditionary possessions and spirit, what we may call the *inarticulate* Poetry of a nation, and what is the element of its spoken or written Poetry, they will be found superior to any other modern people.

The Historic Surveyor of German Poetry will observe a remarkable nation struggling out of Paganism; fragments of that stern Superstition, saved from the general wreck, and still, amid the new order of things, carrying back our view, in faint reflexes, into the dim primeval time. By slow degrees the chaos of the Northern Immigrations settles into a new and fairer world; arts advance; little by little, a fund of Knowledge, of Power over Nature, is accumulated for man; feeble glimmerings, even of a higher knowledge, of a poetic, break forth; till at length in the *Swabian Era*, as

it is named, a blaze of true though simple Poetry bursts over Germany, more splendid, we might say, than the Troubadour Period of any other nation; for that famous *Nibelungen Song*, produced, at least ultimately fashioned in those times, and still so significant in these, is altogether without parallel elsewhere.

To this period, the essence of which was young Wonder, and an enthusiasm for which Chivalry was still the fit exponent, there succeeds, as was natural, a period of Inquiry, a Didactic period; wherein, among the Germans, as elsewhere, many a Hugo von Trimberg delivers wise saws, and moral apophthegms, to the general edification: later, a Town-clerk of Strasburg sees his *Ship of Fools* translated into all living languages, twice into Latin, and read by Kings; the Apologue of *Reynard the Fox* gathering itself together, from sources remote and near, assumes its Low-German vesture; and becomes the darling of high and low, nay still lives with us, in rude genial vigor, as one of the most remarkable indigenous productions of the Middle Ages. Nor is acted poetry of this kind wanting; the Spirit of Inquiry translates itself into Deeds which are poetical, as well as into words: already at the opening of the fourteenth century, Germany witnesses the first assertion of political right, the first vindication of Man against Nobleman; in the early history of the German Swiss. And again, two centuries later, the first assertion of intellectual right, the first vindication of Man against Clergyman; in the history of Luther's Reformation. Meanwhile the Press has begun its incalculable task; the indigenous Fiction of the Germans, what we have called their inarticulate Poetry, issues in innumerable *Volks-bücher* (People's-Books), the progeny and kindred of which still live in all European countries: the People have their Tragedy and their Comedy; *Tyll Eulen-*

spiegel shakes every diaphragm with laughter ; the rudest heart quails with awe at the wild mythus of *Faust*.

With Luther, however, the Didactic Tendency has reached its poetic acme ; and now we must see it assume a prosaic character, and Poetry for a long while decline. The Spirit of Inquiry, of Criticism, is pushed beyond the limits, or too exclusively cultivated : what had done so much, is supposed capable of doing all ; Understanding is alone listened to, while Fancy and Imagination languish inactive, or are forcibly stifled ; and all poetic culture gradually dies away. As if with the high resolute genius, and noble achievements, of its Luthers and Huttens, the genius of the country had exhausted itself, we behold generation after generation of mere Prosaists succeed these high Psalmists. Science indeed advances, practical manipulation in all kinds improves ; Germany has its Copernics, Hevels, Guericke, Keplers ; later, a Leibnitz opens the path of true Logic, and teaches the mysteries of Figure and Number : but the finer Education of mankind seems at a stand. Instead of Poetic recognition and worship, we have stolid Theologic controversy, or still shallower Freethinking ; pedantry, servility, mode-hunting, every species of Idolatry and Affectation, holds sway. The World has lost its beauty, Life its infinite majesty, as if the Author of it were no longer divine : instead of admiration and creation of the True, there is at best criticism and denial of the False ; to Luther there has succeeded Thomasius. In this era, so unpoetical for all Europe, Germany torn in pieces by a Thirty Year's War, and its consequences, is preëminently prosaic ; its few Singers are feeble echoes of foreign models little better than themselves. No Shakspeare, no Milton appears there ; such, indeed, would have appeared earlier, if at all, in the current of German history : but instead, they have only at best Opitzes, Flemmings, Logans, as we had our Queen

Anne Wits ; or, in their Lohensteins, Gryphs, Hoffmannswaldaus, though in inverse order, an unintentional parody of our Drydens and Lees.

Nevertheless from every moral death there is a new birth ; in this wondrous course of his, man may indeed linger, but cannot retrograde or stand still. In the middle of last century, from among Parisian Erotics, rickety Sentimentalism, Court aperies, and hollow Dulness, striving in all hopeless courses, we behold the giant spirit of Germany awaken as from long slumber ; shake away these worthless fetters, and by its Lessings and Klopstocks, announce, in true German dialect, that the Germans also are men. Singular enough in its circumstances was this resuscitation ; the work as of a 'spirit on the waters,' — a movement agitating the great popular mass ; for it was favoured by no court or king : all sovereignties, even the pettiest, had abandoned their native Literature, their native language, as if to irreclaimable barbarism. The greatest king produced in Germany since Barbarossa's time, Frederick the Second, looked coldly on the native endeavor, and saw no hope but in aid from France. However, the native endeavor prospered without aid : Lessing's announcement did not die away with him, but took clearer utterance, and more inspired modulation from his followers ; in whose works it now speaks, not to Germany alone, but to the whole world. The results of this last Period of German Literature are of deep significance, the depth of which is perhaps but now becoming visible. Here, too, it may be, as in other cases, the Want of the Age has first taken voice and shape in Germany ; that change from Negation to Affirmation, from Destruction to Re-construction, for which all thinkers in every country are now prepared, is perhaps already in action there. In the nobler Literature of the Germans, say some, lie the rudiments of a new spiritual era, which it is

for this, and for succeeding generations to work out and realize. The ancient creative Inspiration, it would seem, is still possible in these ages; at a time when Skepticism, Frivolity, Sensuality, had withered Life into a sand desert, and our gayest prospect was but the *false mirage*, and even our Byrons could utter but a death-song or despairing howl, the Moses'-wand has again smote from that Horeb refreshing streams, towards which the better spirits of all nations are hastening, if not to drink, yet wistfully and hopefully to examine. If the older Literary History of Germany has the common attractions, which in a greater or a less degree belong to the successive epochs of other such Histories; its newer Literature, and the historical delineation of this, has an interest such as belongs to no other.

It is somewhat in this way, as appears to us, that the growth of German Poetry must be construed and represented by the historian: these are the general phenomena and vicissitudes, which, if elucidated by proper individual instances, by specimens fitly chosen, presented in natural sequence, and worked by philosophy into union, would make a valuable book; on any and all of which the observations and researches of so able an inquirer as Mr. Taylor would have been welcome. Sorry are we to declare that of all this, which constitutes the essence of anything calling itself *Historic Survey*, there is scarcely a vestige in the book before us. The question, What is the German mind; what is the culture of the German mind; what course has Germany followed in that matter; what are its national characteristics as manifested therein? appears not to have presented itself to the author's thought. No theorem of Germany and its intellectual progress, not even a false one, has he been at pains to construct for himself. We believe, it is impossible for the most assiduous reader to gather from these three Volumes any portraiture of the national mind of

Germany, — not to say in its successive phases and the historical sequence of these, but in any one phase or condition. The work is made up of critical, biographical, bibliographical dissertations, and notices concerning this and the other individual poet; interspersed with large masses of translation; and except that all these are strung together in the order of time, has no historical feature whatever. Many literary lives as we read, the nature of literary life in Germany, — what sort of moral, economical, intellectual element it is that a German writer lives in and works in, — will nowhere manifest itself. Indeed, far from depicting Germany, scarcely on more than one or two occasions does our author even look at it, or so much as remind us that it were capable of being depicted. On these rare occasions, too, we are treated with such philosophic insight as the following: ‘The Germans are not an imitative, but they are a listening people: they can do nothing without directions, and anything with them. As soon as Gottsched’s rules for writing German correctly had made their appearance, every body began to write German.’ Or we have theoretic hints, resting on no basis, about some new tribunal of taste which at one time had formed itself ‘in the mess-rooms of the Prussian officers!’

In a word, the ‘connecting sections,’ or indeed by what alchymy such a congeries could be connected into a *Historic Survey*, have not become plain to us. Considerable part of it consists of quite detached little Notices, mostly of altogether insignificant men; heaped together as separate fragments; fit, had they been unexceptionable in other respects, for a Biographical Dictionary, but nowise for a *Historic Survey*. Then we have dense masses of Translation, sometimes good, but seldom of the characteristic pieces; an entire *Iphigenia*, an entire *Nathan the Wise*; nay worse, a *Sequel to Nathan*, which when we have conscien-

tiously struggled to peruse, the Author turns round, without any apparent smile, and tells us that it is by a nameless writer, and worth nothing. Not only Mr. Taylor's own Translations, which are generally good, but contributions from a whole body of laborers in that department, are given : for example, near sixty pages, very ill rendered by a Miss Plumtre, of a *Life of Kotzebue*, concerning whom, or whose life, death, or burial, there is now no curiosity extant among men. If in that 'English Temple of Fame,' with its hewn and sculptured stones, those Biographical-Dictionary fragments and fractions are so much dry *rubble-work* of whinstone, is not this quite despicable *Autobiography of Kotzebue* a rood or two of mere *turf*, which, as ready-cut, our architect, to make up measure, has packed in among his marble ashlar, whereby the whole wall will the sooner bulge? But indeed, generally speaking, symmetry is not one of his architectural rules. Thus, in volume First, we have a long story translated from a German Magazine, about certain antique Hyperborean *Baresarks*, amusing enough, but with no more reference to Germany than to England; while in return the *Nibelungen Lied* is despatched in something less than one line, and comes no more to light. Tyll Eulenspiegel, who was not an 'anonymous Satire, entitled the *Mirror of Owls*,' but a real flesh-and-blood hero of that name, whose tombstone is standing to this day near Lubeck, has some four lines for his share; *Reineke de Vos* about as many, which also are inaccurate. Again, if Wieland have his half-volume, and poor Ernst Schulze, poor Zacharias Werner, and numerous other poor men, each his chapter; Luther also has his two sentences, and is in these weighed against—Dr. Isaac Watts. Ulrich Hutten does not occur here; Hans Sachs and his Mastersingers escape notice, or even do worse; the poetry of the Reformation is not alluded to. The name of Jean Paul

Friedrich Richter appears not to be known to Mr. Taylor ; or, if want of rhyme was to be the test of a Prosaist, how comes Salomon Gesner here ? Stranger still, Ludwig Tieck is not once mentioned ; neither is Novalis ; neither is Maler Müller. But why dwell on these omissions and commissions ? is not all included in this one wellnigh incredible fact, that one of the largest articles in the Book, a tenth part of the whole *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, treats of that delectable genius, August von Kotzebue ?

The truth is, this *Historic Survey* has not anything historical in it ; but is a mere aggregate of Dissertations, Translations, Notices, and Notes, bound together indeed by the circumstance that they are all about German Poetry, 'about it and about it ;' also by the sequence of time, and still more strongly by the Bookbinder's packthread ; but by no other sufficient tie whatever. The authentic title, were not some mercantile varnish allowable in such cases, might be : 'General Jail-delivery of all Publications and Manuscripts, original or translated, composed or borrowed, on the subject of German Poetry ; by' &c.

To such Jail-delivery, at least when it is from the prison of Mr. Taylor's Desk at Norwich, and relates to a subject in the actual predicament of German Poetry among us, we have no fundamental objection : and for the name, now that it is explained, there is nothing in a name ; a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. However, even in this lower and lowest point of view, the *Historic Survey* is liable to grave objections : its worth is of no unmixed character. We mentioned that Mr. Taylor did not often cite authorities : for which doubtless he may have his reasons. If it be not from French Prefaces, and the *Biographie Universelle*, and other the like sources, we confess ourselves altogether at a loss to divine whence any reasonable individual gathered such notices as these. Books indeed are scarce ; but the

most untoward situation may command Wachler's *Vorlesungen*, Horn's *Poesie und Beredsamkeit*, Meister's *Characteristiken*, Koch's *Compendium*, or some of the thousand and one compilations of that sort, numerous and accurate in German, more than in any other literature: at all events, Jörden's *Lexicon Deutscher Dichter und Prosaisten*, and the world-renowned Leipsic *Conversations-Lexicon*. No one of these appears to have been in Mr. Taylor's possession; — Bouterweck alone, and him he seems to have consulted perfunctorily. A certain proportion of errors in such a work is pardonable and unavoidable: scarcely so the proportion observed here. The *Historic Survey* abounds with errors, perhaps beyond any book it has ever been our lot to review. Of these many, indeed, are harmless enough: as, for instance, where we learn that Görres was born in 1804, (not in 1776); though in that case he must have published his *Shah-Nameh* at the age of three years; or where it is said that Werner's epitaph 'begs Mary Magdalene to pray for his soul,' which it does not do, if indeed any one cared what it did. Some are of a quite mysterious nature; either impregnated with a wit which continues obstinately latent, or indicating that, in spite of Railways and Newspapers, some portions of this Island are still impermeable. For example, 'It (*Goetz von Berlichingen*) was admirably translated into English, in 1799, at Edinburgh, by *William Scott*, Advocate; no doubt, the same person who, under the poetical but assumed name of *Walter*, has since become the most extensively popular of the British writers.' — Others again are the fruit of a more culpable ignorance; as when we hear that Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* is literally meant to be a fictitious narrative, and no genuine Biography; that his *Stella* ends quietly in Bigamy, (to Mr. Taylor's satisfaction,) which, however the French Translation may run, in the original it certainly does not. Mr. Taylor

likewise complains that his copy of *Faust* is incomplete : so, we grieve to state, is ours. Still worse is it when speaking of distinguished men, who probably have been at pains to veil their sentiments on certain subjects, our author takes it upon him to lift such veil, and with perfect composure pronounces this to be a Deist, that a Pantheist, that other an Atheist, often without any due foundation. It is quite erroneous, for example, to describe Schiller by any such unhappy term as that of Deist : it is very particularly erroneous to say that Goethe anywhere 'avows himself an Atheist,' that he 'is a Pantheist ;'—indeed, that he is, was, or is like to be any *ist* to which Mr. Taylor would attach just meaning.

But on the whole, what struck us most in these errors, is their surprising number. In the way of our calling, we at first took pencil, with intent to mark such transgressions ; but soon found it too appalling a task, and so laid aside our black-lead and our art (*castus artemque*). Happily, however, a little natural invention, assisted by some tincture of arithmetic, came to our aid. Six pages, studied for that end, we did mark ; finding therein thirteen errors : the pages are 167 – 173 of Volume Third, and still in our copy, have their marginal stigmas, which can be vindicated before a jury of Authors. Now if 6 give 13, who sees not that 1455, the entire number of pages, will give 3152, and a fraction ? Or, allowing for translations, which are freer from errors, and for philosophical Discussions, wherein the errors are of another sort ; nay, granting with a perhaps unwarranted liberality, that these six pages may yield too high an average, which we know not that they do,— may not, in round numbers, Fifteen Hundred be given as the approximate amount, not of Errors, indeed, yet of Mistakes and Mistatements, in these three octavos ?

Of errors in doctrine, false critical judgments, and all

sorts of philosophical hallucination, the number, more difficult to ascertain, is also unfortunately great. Considered, indeed, as in any measure a picture of what is remarkable in German Poetry, this *Historic Survey* is one great Error. We have to object to Mr. Taylor on all grounds; that his views are often partial and inadequate, sometimes quite false and imaginary; that the highest productions of German Literature, those works in which properly its characteristic and chief worth lie, are still as a sealed book to him; or, what is worse, an open book that he will not read, but pronounces to be filled with blank paper. From a man of such intellectual vigor, who has studied his subject so long, we should not have expected such a failure.

Perhaps the main principle of it may be stated, if not accounted for, in this one circumstance, that the *Historic Survey*, like its Author, stands separated from Germany by 'more than forty years.' During this time Germany has been making unexampled progress; while our author has either advanced in the other direction, or continued quite stationary. Forty years, it is true, make no difference in a classical Poem; yet much in the readers of that Poem, and its position towards these. Forty years are but a small period in some Histories, but in the history of German Literature, the most rapidly extending, incessantly fluctuating object even in the spiritual world, they make a great period. In Germany, within these forty years, how much has been united, how much has fallen asunder! Kant has superseded Wolf; Fichte, Kant; Schelling, Fichte; and now, it seems, Hegel is bent on superseding Schelling. Baumgarten has given place to Schlegel; the *Deutsche Bibliothek* to the Berlin *Hermes*: Lessing still towers in the distance like an Earthborn Atlas; but in the poetical Heaven, Wieland and Klopstock burn fainter, as new and more radiant luminaries have arisen. Within the last forty years, German

Literature has become national, idiomatic, distinct from all others; by its productions during that period, it is either something or nothing.

Nevertheless it is still at the distance of forty years, sometimes we think it must be fifty, that Mr. Taylor stands. 'The fine Literature of Germany,' no doubt he has 'imported;' yet only with the eyes of 1780 does he read it. Thus Sulzer's *Universal Theory* continues still to be his roadbook to the temple of German taste; almost as if the German critic should undertake to measure *Waverley* and *Manfred* by the scale of Blair's *Lectures*. Sulzer was an estimable man, who did good service in his day; but about forty years ago, sunk into a repose, from which it would now be impossible to rouse him. The superannuation of Sulzer appears not once to be suspected by our Author; as indeed little of all the great work that has been done or undone, in Literary Germany within that period, has become clear to him. The far-famed *Xenien* of Schiller's *Musen Almanach* are once mentioned, in some half-dozen lines, wherein also there are more than half-a-dozen inaccuracies, and one rather egregious error. Of the results that followed from these *Xenien*; of Tieck, Wackenroder, the two Schlegels, and Novalis, whose critical Union, and its works, filled all Germany with tumult, discussion, and at length with new conviction, no whisper transpires here. The *New School*, with all that it taught, untaught, and mis-taught, is not so much as alluded to. Schiller and Goethe, with all the poetic world they created, remain invisible, or dimly seen: Kant is a sort of Political Reformer. It must be stated with all distinctness, that of the newer and higher German Literature, no reader will obtain the smallest understanding from these Volumes.

Indeed, quite apart from his inacquaintance with actual Germany, there is that in the structure or habit of Mr. Tay-

lor's mind, which singularly unfits him for judging of such matters well. We must complain that he reads German Poetry, from first to last, with English eyes ; will not accommodate himself to the spirit of the Literature he is investigating, and do his utmost, by loving endeavor, to win its secret from it ; but plunges in headlong, and silently assuming that all this was written for him and for his objects, makes short work with it, and innumerable false conclusions. It is sad to see an honest traveller confidently gauging all foreign objects with a measure that will not mete them ; trying German Sacred Oaks by their fitness for British shipbuilding ; walking from Dan to Beersheba, and finding so little that he did not bring with him. This, we are too well aware, is the commonest of all errors, both with vulgar readers, and with vulgar critics ; but from Mr. Taylor we had expected something better ; nay, let us confess, he himself now and then seems to attempt something better, but too imperfectly succeeds in it.

The truth is, Mr. Taylor, though a man of talent, as we have often admitted, and as the world well knows, though a downright, independent, and to all appearance most praiseworthy man, is one of the most peculiar critics to be found in our times. As we construe him from these Volumes, the basis of his nature seems to be Polemical ; his whole view of the world, of its Poetry, and whatever else it holds, has a militant character. According to this philosophy, the whole duty of man, it would almost appear, is to lay aside the opinion of his grandfather. Doubtless, it is natural, it is indispensable, for a man to lay aside the opinion of his grandfather, when it will no longer hold together on him ; but we had imagined that the great and infinitely harder duty was — To turn the opinion that does hold together to some account. However, it is not in receiving the New, and creating good with it, but solely in pulling to pieces the

Old, that Mr. Taylor will have us employed. Often, in the course of these pages, might the British reader sorrowfully exclaim: 'Alas! is this the year of grace 1831, and are we still *here*? Armed with the hatchet and tinder-box; still no symptom of the sower's-sheet and plough?' These latter, for our Author, are implements of the dark ages; the ground is full of thistles and jungle; cut down and spare not. A singular aversion to Priests, something like a natural horror and hydrophobia, gives him no rest night nor day: the gist of all his speculations is to drive down more or less effectual palisades against that class of persons; nothing that he does but they interfere with or threaten; the first question he asks of every passer-by, be it German Poet, Philosopher, Farce-writer, is, 'Arian or Trinitarian? Wilt thou help me or not?' Long as he has now labored, and though calling himself Philosopher, Mr. Taylor has not yet succeeded in sweeping his arena clear; but still painfully struggles in the questions of Naturalism and Supernaturalism, Liberalism and Servilism.

Agitated by this zeal, with its fitful hope and fear, it is that he goes through Germany; scenting out Infidelity with the nose of an ancient Heresy-hunter, though for opposite purposes; and, like a recruiting sergeant, beating aloud for recruits; nay, where in any corner he can spy a tall man, clutching at him, to crimp him or impress him. Goethe's and Schiller's creed we saw specified above; those of Lessing and Herder are scarcely less edifying; but take rather this sagacious exposition of Kant's Philosophy:

The Alexandrian writings do not differ so widely as is commonly apprehended from those of the Königsberg School; for they abound with passages, which, while they seem to flatter the popular credulity, resolve into allegory the stories of the gods, and into an illustrative personification the soul of the world; thus insinuating, to the more alert and penetrating, the speculative rejec-

tion of opinions with which they are encouraged and commanded in action to comply. With analogous spirit, Professor Kant studiously introduces a distinction between Practical and Theoretical Reason; and while he teaches that rational conduct will indulge the hypothesis of a God, a revelation, and a future state, (this, we presume, is meant by calling them *inferences of Practical Reason*,) he pretends that Theoretical Reason can adduce no one satisfactory argument in their behalf: so that his morality amounts to a defence of the old adage, "Think with the wise, and act with the vulgar;" a plan of behavior which secures to the vulgar an ultimate victory over the wise. * * Philosophy is to be withdrawn within a narrower circle of the initiated; and these must be induced to conspire in favoring a vulgar superstition. This can best be accomplished by enveloping with enigmatic jargon the topics of discussion; by employing a cloudy phraseology, which may intercept from below the war-whoop of impiety, and from above the evulgation of infidelity; by contriving a kind of "cipher of illuminism," in which public discussions of the most critical nature can be carried on from the press, without alarming the prejudices of the people, or exciting the precautions of the magistrate. Such a cipher, in the hands of an adept, is the dialect of Kant. Add to this, the notorious Gallicanism of his opinions, which must endear him to the patriotism of the philosophers of the Lyceum; and it will appear probable that the reception of his forms of syllogizing should extend from Germany to France; should completely and exclusively establish itself on the Continent; entomb with the Reasonings the Reason of the modern world; and form the tasteless fretwork which seems about to convert the halls of liberal Philosophy into churches of mystical Supernaturalism.'

These are, indeed, fearful symptoms, and enough to quicken the diligence of any recruiting officer that has the good cause at heart. Reasonably may such officer, beleagured with 'witchcraft and demonology, trinitarianism, intolerance,' and a considerable list of *et-ceteras*, and, still seeing no hearty followers of his flag, but a mere Falstaff regiment, smite upon his thigh, and, in moments of despondency,

lament that Christianity had ever entered, or, as we here have it, 'intruded' into Europe at all; that, at least, some small slip of heathendom, 'Scandinavia, for instance,' had not been 'left to its natural course, unmisguided by ecclesiastical missionaries and monastic institutions. Many superstitions, which have fatigued the credulity, clouded the intellect, and impaired the security of man, and which, alas! but too naturally followed in the train of the sacred books, would there, perhaps, never have struck root; and in one corner of the world, the inquiries of reason might have found an earlier asylum, and asserted a less circumscribed range.' Nevertheless, there is still hope, preponderating hope. 'The general tendency of the German school,' it would appear, could we but believe such tidings, 'is to teach French opinions in English forms.' Philosophy can now look down with some approving glances on Socinianism. Nay, the literature of Germany, 'very liberal and tolerant,' is gradually overflowing, even into the Slavonian nations, 'and will found, in new languages and climates, those latest inferences of a corrupt but instructed refinement, which are likely to rebuild the morality of the Ancients on the ruins of Christian Puritanism.'

Such retrospections and prospections bring to mind an absurd rumor which, confounding our author with his namesake, the celebrated translator of Plato and Aristotle, represented him as being engaged in the repair and reestablishment of the Pagan religion. For such rumor, we are happy to state, there is not, and was not, the slightest foundation. Wieland may, indeed, at one time, have put some whims into his disciple's head; but Mr. Taylor is too solid a man to embark in speculations of that nature. Prophetic daydreams are not practical projects; at all events, as we here see, it is not the old Pagan gods that we are to bring back, but only the ancient Pagan morality, a refined and

reformed Paganism;— as some middle-aged householder, if distressed by tax-gatherers and duns, might resolve on becoming thirteen again, and a bird-nesting schoolboy. Let no timid Layman apprehend any overflow of Priests from Mr. Taylor, or even of Gods. Is not this commentary on the hitherto so inexplicable conversion of Friedrich Leopold, Count Stolberg, enough to quiet every alarmist?

‘On the Continent of Europe, the gentleman, and Frederic Leopold was emphatically so, is seldom brought up with much solicitude for any positive doctrine: among the Catholics, the moralist insists on the duty of conforming to the religion of one’s ancestors; among the Protestants, on the duty of conforming to the religion of the magistrate; but Frederic Leopold seems to have invented a new point of honor, and a most rational one, the duty of conforming to the religion of one’s father-in-law.

‘A young man is the happier, while single, for being unencumbered with any religious restraints; but when the time comes for submitting to matrimony, he will find the precedent of Frederic Leopold well entitled to consideration. A predisposition to conform to the religion of the father-in-law facilitates advantageous matrimonial connexions; it produces in a family the desirable harmony of religious profession; it secures the sincere education of the daughters in the faith of their mother; and it leaves the young men at liberty to apostatize in their turn, to exert their right of private judgment, and to choose a worship for themselves. Religion, if a blemish in the male, is surely a grace in the female sex: courage of mind may tend to acknowledge nothing above itself; but timidity is ever disposed to look upwards for protection, for consolation, and for happiness.’

With regard to this latter point, whether Religion is ‘a blemish in the male, and surely a grace in the female sex,’ it is possible judgments may remain suspended: Courage of mind, indeed, will prompt the squirrel to set itself in posture against an armed horseman; yet whether for men and women, who seem to stand, not only under the Galaxy and

Stellar system, and under Immensity and Eternity, but even under any bare bodkin or drop of prussic acid, 'such courage of mind as may tend to acknowledge nothing above itself,' were ornamental or the contrary; whether, lastly, religion is grounded on Fear, or on something infinitely higher and inconsistent with Fear, — may be questions. But they are of a kind we are not at present called to meddle with.

Mr. Taylor promulgates many other strange articles of faith, for he is a positive man, and has a certain quiet wilfulness; these, however, cannot henceforth much surprise us. He still calls the Middle Ages, during which nearly all the inventions and social institutions, whereby we yet live as civilized men, were originated or perfected, 'a Millennium of Darkness;' on the faith chiefly of certain long-past Pedants, who reckoned everything barren, because Chrysolaras had not yet come, and no Greek Roots grew there. Again, turning in the other direction, he criticizes Luther's Reformation, and repeats that old, and indeed quite foolish, story of the Augustine Monk's having a merely commercial grudge against the Dominican; computes the quantity of blood shed for Protestantism; and, forgetting that men shed blood, in all ages, for any cause, and for no cause, for Sansculottism, for Bonapartism, thinks that, on the whole, the Reformation was an error and failure. Pity that Providence (as King Alphonso wished in the Astronomical case) had not created its man three centuries sooner, and taken a little counsel from him! On the other hand, 'Voltaire's Reformation' was successful; and here, for once, Providence was right. Will Mr. Taylor mention what it was that Voltaire *reformed*? Many things he *de-formed*, deservedly and undeservedly, but the thing that he *formed* or *re-formed* is still unknown to the world.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add, that Mr. Taylor's whole

Philosophy is sensual ; that is, he recognises nothing that cannot be weighed, measured, and, with one or the other organ, eaten and digested. Logic is his only lamp of life ; where this fails the region of Creation terminates. For him there is no Invisible, Incomprehensible ; whosoever, under any name, believes in an invisible, he treats, with leniency and the loftiest tolerance, as a mystic and lunatic ; and if the unhappy crackbrain has any handicraft, literary or other, allows him to go at large, and work at it. Withal he is a great-hearted, strong-minded, and, in many points, interesting man. There is a majestic composure in the attitude he has assumed ; massive, immovable, uncomplaining, he sits in a world of Delirium ; and for his Future looks with sure faith, — only in the direction of the Past. We take him to be a man of sociable turn, not without kindness ; at all events of the most perfect courtesy. He despises the entire Universe, yet speaks respectfully of Translators from the German, and always says that they ‘ English beautifully.’ A certain mild Dogmatism sits well on him ; peaceable, incontrovertible, uttering the palpably absurd, as if it were a mere truism. On the other hand, there are touches of a grave, scientific obscenity, which are questionable. This word Obscenity we use with reference to our readers, and might also add Profanity, but not with reference to Mr. Taylor ; he, as we said, is scientific merely ; and where there is no *cænum* and no *fanum*, there can be no obscenity and no profanity.

To a German we might have compressed all this long description into a single word : Mr. Taylor is simply what they call a *Philister* ; every fibre of him is Philistine. With us such men usually take into Politics, and become Code-makers and Utilitarians : it was only in Germany that they ever meddled much with Literature ; and there worthy Nicolai has long since terminated his Jesuit-hunt ; no Ade-

lung now writes books, *Ueber die Nützlichkeit der Empfindung* (On the Utility of Feeling). Singular enough, now, when that old species had been quite extinct for almost half a century in their own land, appears a native-born English Philistine, made in all points as they were. With wondering welcome we hail the Strongboned; almost as we might a resuscitated Mammoth. Let no David choose smooth stones from the brook to sling at him: is he not our own Goliath, whose limbs were made in England, whose thews and sinews any soil might be proud of? Is he not, as we said, a man that can stand on his own legs without collapsing when left by himself? in these days one of the greatest rarities, almost prodigies.

We cheerfully acquitted Mr. Taylor of Religion; but must expect less gratitude when we farther deny him any feeling for true Poetry, as indeed the feelings for Religion and for Poetry of this sort are one and the same. Of Poetry Mr. Taylor knows well what will make a grand, especially a large, *picture* in the imagination: he has even a creative gift of this kind himself, as his style will often testify; but much more he does not know. How indeed should he? Nicolai, too, 'judged of Poetry as he did of Brunswick Mum, simply by *tasting* it.' Mr. Taylor assumes, as a fact known to all thinking creatures, that Poetry is neither more nor less than 'a stimulant.' Perhaps above five hundred times in the *Historic Survey* we see this doctrine expressly acted on. Whether the piece to be judged of is a Poetical Whole, and has what the critics have named a genial life, and what that life is, he inquires not; but, at best, whether it is a logical Whole, and for most part, simply, whether it is stimulant. The praise is, that it has fine situations, striking scenes, agonizing scenes, harrows his feelings, and the like. Schiller's *Robbers* he finds to be stimulant; his *Maid of Orleans* is not stimulant, but

'among the weakest of his tragedies, and composed apparently in ill health.' The author of *Pizarro* is supremely stimulant; he of *Torquato Tasso* is 'too quotidian to be stimulant.' We had understood that alcohol was stimulant in all its shapes; opium also, tobacco, and indeed the whole class of narcotics; but heretofore found Poetry in none of the Pharmacopœias. Nevertheless, it is edifying to observe with what fearless consistency Mr. Taylor, who is no half-man, carries through this theory of stimulation. It lies privily in the heart of many a reader and reviewer; nay, Schiller, at one time, said that 'Molière's old woman seemed to have become sole Editress of all Reviews;' but seldom, in the history of Literature, has she had the honesty to unveil, and ride triumphant, as in these volumes. Mr. Taylor discovers that the only Poet to be classed with Homer is Tasso; that Shakspeare's Tragedies are cousins-german to those of Otway; that poor, moaning, monotonous Macpherson is an epic poet. Lastly, he runs a labored parallel between Schiller, Goethe, and Kotzebue; one is more this, the other more that; one strives hither, the other thither, through the whole string of critical predicables; almost as if we should compare scientifically Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the *Prophecies of Isaiah*, and Mat Lewis's *Tales of Terror*.

Such is Mr. Taylor; a strong-hearted oak, but in an unkindly soil, and beat upon from infancy by Trinitarian and Tory Southwesters: such is the result which native vigor, wind-storms, and thirsty mould have made out among them; grim boughs dishevelled in multangular complexity, and of the stiffness of brass; a tree crooked every way, unwedgeable and gnarled. What bandages or cordages of ours, or of man's, could straighten it, now that it has grown there for half a century? We simply point out that there is excellent tough *knee-timber* in it, and of straight timber little or none.

In fact, taking Mr. Taylor as he is and must be, and keeping a perpetual account and protest with him on these peculiarities of his, we find that on various parts of his subject he has profitable things to say. The Göttingen group of Poets, 'Bürger and his set,' such as they were, are pleasantly delineated. The like may be said of the somewhat earlier Swiss brotherhood, whereof Bodmer and Breitinger are the central figures; though worthy, wonderful Lavater, the wandering Physiognomist and Evangelist, and Protestant Pope, should not have been first forgotten, and then crammed into an insignificant paragraph. Lessing, again, is but poorly managed; his main performance, as was natural, reckoned to be the writing of *Nathan the Wise*; we have no original portrait here, but a pantagraphical reduced copy of some foreign sketches or scratches, quite unworthy of such a man, in such a historical position, standing on the confines of Light and Darkness, like Day on the misty mountain tops. Of Herder also there is much omitted; the *Geschichte der Menschheit* scarcely alluded to; yet some features are given, accurately and even beautifully. A slow-rolling grandiloquence is in Mr. Taylor's best passages, of which this is one: if no poetic light, he has occasionally a glow of true rhetorical heat. Wieland is lovingly painted, yet on the whole faithfully, as he looked some fifty years ago, if not as he now looks: this is the longest article in the *Historic Survey*, and much too long; those Paganizing *Dialogues* in particular had never much worth, and at present have scarcely any.

Perhaps the best of all these Essays is that on Klopstock. The sphere of Klopstock's genius does not transcend Mr. Taylor's scale of poetic altitudes; though it perhaps reaches the highest grade there; the 'stimulant' theory recedes into the background; indeed there is a rhetorical amplitude and brilliancy in the *Messias* which

elicits in our critic an instinct truer than his philosophy is. He has honestly studied the *Messias*, and presents a clear outline of it; neither has the still purer spirit of Klopstock's *Odes* escaped him. We have English Biographies of Klopstock, and a miserable Version of his great Work; but perhaps there is no writing in our language that offers so correct an emblem of him as this analysis. Of the *Odes* we shall here present one, in Mr. Taylor's translation, which, though in prose, the reader will not fail to approve of. It is, perhaps, the finest passage in this whole *Historic Survey*.

‘THE TWO MUSES.

‘I saw — tell me, was I beholding what now happens, or was I beholding futurity? — I saw with the Muse of Britain the Muse of Germany engaged in competitory race — flying warm to the goal of coronation.

‘Two goals, where the prospect terminates, bordered the career: Oaks of the forest shaded the one; near to the other waved Palms in the evening shadow.

‘Accustomed to contest, stepped she from Albion proudly into the arena; as she stepped, when, with the Grecian Muse and with her from the Capitol, she entered the lists.

‘She beheld the young trembling rival, who trembled yet with dignity; glowing roses worthy of victory streamed flaming over her cheek, and her golden hair flew abroad.

‘Already she retained with pain in her tumultuous bosom the contracted breath; already she hung bending forward towards the goal; already the herald was lifting the trumpet, and her eyes swam with intoxicating joy.

‘Proud of her courageous rival, prouder of herself, the lofty Britoness measured, but with noble glance, thee, Tuiskone: “Yes, by the bards, I grew up with thee in the grove of oaks:

“But a tale had reached me that thou wast no more. Pardon, O Muse, if thou beest immortal, pardon that I but now learn it. Yonder at the goal alone will I learn it.

“There it stands. But dost thou see the still further one, and its crowns also? This repress courage, this proud silence, this look which sinks fiery upon the ground, I know:

“Yet weigh once again, ere the herald sound a note dangerous to thee. Am I not she who have measured myself with her from Thermopylæ, and with the stately one of the Seven Hills?”

She spake: the earnest decisive moment drew nearer with the herald. “I love thee,” answered quick with looks of flame, Teutona, “Britoness, I love thee to enthusiasm;

“But not warmer than immortality and these Palms: Touch, if so wills thy genius, touch them before me; yet will I, when thou seizest it, seize also the crown.

“And, O how I tremble! O ye Immortals, perhaps I may reach first the high goal: then, O then, may thy breath attain my loose-streaming hair!”

‘The herald shrilled. They flew with eagle-speed. The wide career smoked up clouds of dust. I looked: Beyond the Oak billowed yet thicker the dust, and I lost them.’

‘This beautiful allegory,’ adds Mr. Taylor, ‘requires no illustration; but it constitutes one of the reasons for suspecting that the younger may eventually be the victorious Muse.’ We hope not; but that the generous race may yet last through long centuries. Tuiskone has shot through a mighty space, since this Poet saw her: what if she were now slackening her speed, and the Britoness quickening hers?

If the Essay on Klopstock is the best, that on Kotzebue is undoubtedly the worst, in this book, or perhaps in any book written by a man of ability in our day. It is one of those acts which, in the spirit of philanthropy, we could wish Mr. Taylor to conceal in profoundest secrecy; were it not that hereby the ‘stimulant’ theory, a heresy which still lurks here and there even in our better criticism, is in some sort brought to a crisis, and may the sooner depart from this world, or at least from the high places of it, into others

more suitable. Kotzebue, whom all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and peoples, his own people the foremost, after playing with him for some foolish hour, have swept out of doors as a lifeless bundle of dyed rags, is here scientifically examined, measured, pulse-felt, and pronounced to be living, and a divinity. He has such prolific 'invention,' abounds so in 'fine situations,' in passionate scenes, is so soul-harrowing, so stimulant. The *Proceedings at Bow Street* are stimulant enough, neither is prolific invention, interesting situations, or soul-harrowing passion wanting among the Authors that compose there; least of all if we follow them to Newgate, and the gallows: but when did the *Morning Herald* think of inserting its *Police Reports* among our Anthologies? Mr. Taylor is at the pains to analyze very many of Kotzebue's productions, and translates copiously from two or three: how the Siberian Governor took on when his daughter was about to run away with one Benjowsky, who, however, was enabled to surrender his prize, there on the beach, with sails hoisted, by 'looking at his wife's picture;' how the people 'lift young Burgundy from the Tun,' not indeed to drink him, for he is not wine but a Duke; how a certain stout-hearted West Indian, that has made a fortune, proposes marriage to his two sisters, but finding the ladies reluctant, solicits their serving-woman, whose reputation is not only cracked, but visibly quite rent asunder, accepts her nevertheless, with her thriving cherub, and is the happiest of men; — with more of the like sort. On the strength of which we are assured that, 'according to my judgment, Kotzebue is the greatest dramatic genius that Europe has evolved since Shakspeare.' Such is the table which Mr. Taylor has spread for pilgrims in the Prose Wilderness of Life: thus does he sit like a kind host, ready to carve; and though the viands and beverage are but, as it were, stewed garlic, Yarmouth herrings,

and *blus-ruis*, praises them as 'stimulant,' and courteously presses the universe to fall to.

What a purveyor with this palate shall say to Nectar and Ambrosia, may be curious as a question in Natural History; but hardly otherwise. The most of what Mr. Taylor has written on Schiller, on Goethe, and the new Literature of Germany, a reader that loves him, as we honestly do, will consider as unwritten, or written in a state of somnambulism. He who has just quitted Kotzebue's Bear-garden, and Fives-court, and pronounces it to be all stimulant and very good, what is there for him to do in the Hall of the Gods? He looks transiently in; asks with mild authority; 'Arian or Trinitarian? Quotidian or Stimulant?' and receiving no answer but a hollow echo, which almost sounds like laughter, passes on, muttering that they are dumb idols, or mere Nürnberg waxwork.

It remains to notice Mr. Taylor's Translations. Apart from the choice of subjects, which in probably more than half the cases is unhappy, there is much to be said in favor of these. Compared with the average of British Translations, they may be pronounced of almost ideal excellence; compared with the best Translations extant, for example, the German *Shakspeare*, *Homer*, *Calderon*, they may still be called better than indifferent. One great merit Mr. Taylor has: rigorous adherence to his original; he endeavors at least to copy with all possible fidelity the turn of phrase, the tone, the very metre, whatever stands written for him. With the German language he has now had a long familiarity, and, what is no less essential, and perhaps still rarer among our Translators, has a decided understanding of English. All this of Mr. Taylor's own Translations: in the borrowed pieces, whereof there are several, we seldom, except indeed in those by Shelley and Coleridge, find much worth; sometimes a distinct worthlessness. Mr.

Taylor has made no conscience of clearing those unfortunate performances even from their gross blunders. Thus, in that 'excellent version by Miss Plumptre,' we find this statement: Professor Müller could not utter a period without introducing the words *with under*, 'whether they had business there or not;' which statement, were it only on the ground that Professor Müller was not sent to Bedlam, there to utter periods, we venture to deny. Doubtless his besetting sin was *mitunter*, which indeed means *at the same time*, or the like, (etymologically, *with among*,) but nowise *with under*. One other instance we shall give, from a much more important subject. Mr. Taylor admits that he does not make much of *Faust*: however, he inserts Shelley's version of the *Mayday Night*; and another scene, evidently rendered by quite a different artist. In this latter, Margaret is in the Cathedral during High-Mass, but her whole thoughts are turned inwards on a secret shame and sorrow: an Evil Spirit is whispering in her ear; the Choir chant fragments of the *Dies iræ*; she is like to choke and sink. In the original, this passage is in verse; and, we presume, in the translation also, — founding on the capital letters. The concluding lines are these:

' MARGARET.

I feel imprison'd. The thick pillars gird me.
The vaults low'r o'er me. Air, air, I faint.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Where wilt thou lie concealed? for sin and shame
Remain not hidden — woe is coming *down*.

THE CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tum dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus?
Cum vix justus sit securus.

EVIL SPIRIT.

From thee the glorified avert their view,
The pure forbear to offer thee a hand.

THE CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tum dicturus ?

MARGARET.

Neighbor, your ——'

— Your what? — Angels and ministers of grace defend us! — '*Your Drambottle.*' Will Mr. Taylor have us understand, then, that 'the noble German nation,' more especially the fairer half thereof, (for the 'Neighbor' is *Nachbarin*, Neighboress,) goes to church with a decanter of brandy in its pocket? Or would he not rather, even forcibly, interpret *Fläschchen* by *vinaigrette*, by *volatile-salts*? — The world has no notice that this passage is a borrowed one but will, notwithstanding, as the more charitable theory, hope and believe so.

We have now done with Mr. Taylor; and would fain, after all that has come and gone, part with him in good nature and good will. He has spoken freely, we have answered freely. Far as we differ from him in regard to German Literature, and to the much more important subjects here connected with it; deeply as we feel convinced that his convictions are wrong and dangerous, are but half true, and, if taken for the whole truth, wholly false and fatal, we have nowise blinded ourselves to his vigorous talent, to his varied learning, his sincerity, his manful independence and self-support. Neither is it for speaking out plainly that we blame him. A man's honest, earnest opinion is the most precious of all he possesses: let him communicate this, if he is to communicate anything. There is, doubtless, a time to speak, and a time to keep silence; yet

Fontenelle's celebrated aphorism, *I might have my hand full of truth, and would open only my little finger*, may be practised also to excess, and the little finger itself kept closed. That reserve, and knowing silence, long so universal among us, is less the fruit of active benevolence, of philosophic tolerance, than of indifference and weak conviction. Honest Skepticism, honest Atheism, is better than that withered lifeless Dilettantism and amateur Eclecticism, which merely toys with all opinions; or than that wicked Machiavelism, which in thought denying everything, except that Power is Power, in words, for its own wise purposes, loudly believes everything: of both which miserable habits the day, even in England, is wellnigh over. That Mr. Taylor belongs not, and at no time belonged, to either of these classes, we account a true praise. Of his *Historic Survey* we have endeavored to point out the faults and the merits: should he reach a second edition, which we hope, perhaps he may profit by some of our hints, and render the work less unworthy of himself and of his subject. In its present state and shape, this English Temple of Fame can content no one. A huge, anomalous, heterogeneous mass, no section of it like another, oriel-window alternating with rabbit-hole, wrought capital on pillar of dried mud; heaped together out of marble, loose earth, rude boulder-stone; hastily roofed in with shingles,—such is the Temple of Fame; uninhabitable either for priest or statue, and which nothing but a continued suspension of the laws of gravity can keep from rushing ere long into a chaos of stone and dust. For the English worshipper, who in the meanwhile has no other temple, we search out the least dangerous apartments; for the future builder, the materials that will be valuable.

And now, in washing our hands of this all-too sordid but

not unnecessary task, one word on a more momentous object. Does not the existence of such a Book, do not many other indications, traceable in France, in Germany, as well as here, betoken that a new era in the spiritual intercourse of Europe is approaching; that instead of isolated, mutually repulsive National Literatures, a World-Literature may one day be looked for? The better minds of all countries begin to understand each other, and, which follows naturally, to love each other, and help each other; by whom ultimately all countries in all their proceedings are governed.

Late in man's history, yet clearly at length, it becomes manifest to the dullest, that mind is stronger than matter, that mind is the creator and shaper of matter; that not brute Force, but only Persuasion and Faith is the king of this world. The true Poet, who is but the inspired Thinker, is still an Orpheus whose Lyre tames the savage beasts, and evokes the dead rocks to fashion themselves into palaces and stately inhabited cities. It has been said, and may be repeated, that Literature is fast becoming all in all to us; our Church, our Senate, our whole Social Constitution. The true Pope of Christendom is not that feeble old man in Rome; nor is its Autocrat the Napoleon, the Nicolas, with his half million even of obedient bayonets: such Autocrat is himself but a more cunningly-devised bayonet and military engine in the hands of a mightier than he. The true Autocrat and Pope is that man, the real or seeming Wisest of the past age; crowned after death; who finds his Hierarchy of gifted Authors, his Clergy of assiduous Journalists; whose Decretals, written not on parchment, but on the living souls of men, it were an inversion of the Laws of Nature to disobey. In these times of ours, all Intellect has fused itself into Literature: Literature, Printed Thought, is the molten sea and wonder-bearing Chaos, into which mind

after mind casts forth its opinion, its feeling, to be molten into the general mass, and to work there; Interest after Interest is engulfed in it, or embarked on it: higher, higher it rises round all the Edifices of Existence; they must all be molten into it, and anew bodied forth from it, or stand unconsumed among its fiery surges. Woe to him whose Edifice is not built of true Asbest, and on the everlasting Rock; but on the false sand, and of the drift-wood of Accident, and the paper and parchment of antiquated Habit! For the power, or powers, exist not on our Earth, that can say to that sea, roll back, or bid its proud waves be still.

What form so omnipotent an element will assume; how long it will welter to and fro as a wild Democracy, a wild Anarchy; what Constitution and Organization it will fashion for itself, and for what depends on it, in the depths of Time, is a subject for prophetic conjecture, wherein brightest hope is not unmingled with fearful apprehension and awe at the boundless unknown. The more cheering is this one thing which we do see and know — That its tendency is to a universal European Commonweal; that the wisest in all nations will communicate and coöperate; whereby Europe will again have its true Sacred College, and Council of Amphictyons; wars will become rarer, less inhuman, and, in the course of centuries, such delirious ferocity in nations, as in individuals it already is, may be proscribed, and become obsolete forever.

TRAGEDY OF THE NIGHT-MOTH.

[Fraser's Magazine, 1831.]

Magna Ausus.

'T is placid midnight, stars are keeping
Their meek and silent course in heaven ;
Save pale recluse, all things are sleeping,
His mind to study still is given.

But see ! a wandering Night-moth enters,
Allured by taper gleaming bright ;
A while keeps hovering round, then ventures
On Goethe's mystic page to light.

With awe she views the candle blazing ;
A universe of fire it seems
To moth-*savante* with rapture gazing,
Or fount whence Life and Motion streams.

What passions in her small heart whirling,
Hopes boundless, adoration, dread ;
At length her tiny pinions twirling,
She darts and — puff ! — the moth is dead !

The sullen flame, for her scarce sparkling,
Gives but one hiss, one fitful glare ;
Now bright and busy, now all darkling,
She snaps and fades to empty air.

Her bright gray form that spread so slimly,
Some fan she seemed of pigmy Queen ;
Her silky cloak that lay so trimly,
Her wee, wee eyes that looked so keen,

Last moment here, now gone for ever,
To nought are passed with fiery pain ;
And ages circling round shall never
Give to this creature shape again !

Poor moth ! near weeping I lament thee,
Thy glossy form, thy instant woe ;
'T was zeal for ' things too high ' that sent thee
From cheery earth to shades below.

Short speck of boundless space was needed
For home, for kingdom, world to thee !
Where passed unheeding as unheeded,
Thy slender life from sorrow free.

But syren hopes from out thy dwelling
Enticed thee, bade thee Earth explore, —
Thy frame so late with rapture swelling,
Is swept from Earth forevermore !

Poor moth ! thy fate my own resembles :
Me too a restless asking mind
Hath sent on far and weary rambles,
To seek the good I ne'er shall find.

Like thee, with common lot contented,
With humble joys and vulgar fate,
I might have lived and ne'er lamented,
Moth of a larger size, a longer date !

But Nature's majesty unveiling,
What seemed her wildest, grandest charms,
Eternal Truth and Beauty hailing,
Like thee, I rushed into her arms.

What gained we, little moth ? Thy ashes,
Thy one brief parting pang may show :
And withering thoughts for soul that dashes
From deep to deep, are but a death more slow.

CHARACTERISTICS.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1831.]

THE healthy know not of their health, but only the sick : this is the Physician's Aphorism ; and applicable in a far wider sense than he gives it. We may say, it holds no less in moral, intellectual, political, poetical, than in merely corporeal therapeutics ; that wherever, or in what shape soever, powers of the sort which can be named *vital* are at work, herein lies the test of their working right or working wrong.

In the Body, for example, as all doctors are agreed, the first condition of complete health is, that each organ perform its function unconsciously, unheeded ; let but any organ announce its separate existence, were it even boastfully, and for pleasure, not for pain, then already has one of those unfortunate ' false centres of sensibility ' established itself, already is derangement there. The perfection of bodily wellbeing is, that the collective bodily activities seem one ; and be manifested, moreover, not in themselves, but in the action they accomplish. If a Dr. Kitchener boast that his system is in high order, Dietetic Philosophy may

* 1. An Essay on the Origin and Prospects of Man. By Thomas Hope. 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1831.

2. *Philosophische Vorlesungen, insbesondere aber Philosophie der Sprache und des Wortes. Geschrieben und vorgetragen zu Dresden im December 1828, und in den ersten Tagen des Januars 1829.* (Philosophical Lectures, especially on the Philosophy of Language and the Gift of Speech. . Written and delivered at Dresden in December 1828, and the early days of January 1829.) By Friedrich von Schlegel. 8vo. Vienna, 1830.

indeed take credit ; but the true Peptician was that Countryman who answered that, 'for his part, he had no system.' In fact, unity, agreement, is always silent, or soft-voiced ; it is only discord that loudly proclaims itself. So long as the several elements of Life, all fitly adjusted, can pour forth their movement like harmonious tuned strings, it is a melody and unison ; Life, from its mysterious fountains, flows out as in celestial music and diapason,—which also, like that other music of the spheres, even because it is perennial and complete, without interruption and without imperfection, might be fabled to escape the ear. Thus, too, in some languages, is the state of health well denoted by a term expressing unity ; when we feel ourselves as we wish to be, we say that we are *whole*.

Few mortals, it is to be feared, are permanently blessed with that felicity of 'having no system : ' nevertheless, most of us, looking back on young years, may remember seasons of a light, aërial translucency and elasticity, and perfect freedom ; the body had not yet become the prison-house of the soul, but was its vehicle and implement, like a creature of the thought, and altogether pliant to its bidding. We knew not that we had limbs, we only lifted, hurled, and leapt ; through eye and ear, and all avenues of sense, came clear unimpeded tidings from without, and from within issued clear victorious force ; we stood as in the centre of Nature, giving and receiving, in harmony with it all ; unlike Virgil's Husbandmen, 'too happy *because* we did not know our blessedness.' In those days, health and sickness were foreign traditions that did not concern us ; our whole being was as yet One, the whole man like an incorporated Will. Such, were Rest or ever-successful Labor the human lot, might our life continue to be : a pure, perpetual, unregarded music ; a beam of perfect white light, rendering all things visible, but itself unseen, even because it was of that per-

fect whiteness, and no irregular obstruction had yet broken it into colors. (The beginning of Inquiry is Disease: all Science, if we consider well, as it must have originated in the feeling of something being wrong, so it is and continues to be but Division, Dismemberment, and partial healing of the wrong. Thus, as was of old written, the Tree of Knowledge springs from a root of evil, and bears fruits of good and evil. Had Adam remained in Paradise, there had been no Anatomy and no Metaphysics.

But, alas, as the Philosopher declares, 'Life itself is a disease; a working incited by suffering;' action from passion! The memory of that first state of Freedom and paradisiac Unconsciousness has faded away into an ideal poetic dream. We stand here too conscious of many things: with Knowledge, the symptom of Derangement, we must even do our best to restore a little Order. Life is, in few instances, and at rare intervals, the diapason of a heavenly melody; oftenest the fierce jar of disruptions and convulsions, which, do what we will, there is no disregarding. Nevertheless such is still the wish of Nature on our behalf; in all vital action, her manifest purpose and effort is, that we should be unconscious of it, and, like the peptic Countryman, never know that we 'have a system.' For indeed vital action everywhere is emphatically a means, not an end; Life is not given us for the mere sake of Living, but always with an ulterior external Aim: neither is it on the process, on the means, but rather on the result, that Nature, in any of her doings, is wont to intrust us with insight and volition. Boundless as is the domain of man, it is but a small fractional proportion of it that he rules with Consciousness and by Forethought: what he can contrive, nay, what he can altogether know and comprehend, is essentially the mechanical, small; the great is ever, in one sense or other, the vital, it is essentially the mysterious, and only the sur-

face of it can be understood. But Nature, it might seem, strives, like a kind mother, to hide from us even this, that she is a mystery : she will have us rest on her beautiful and awful bosom as if it were our secure home ; on the bottomless boundless Deep, whereon all human things fearfully and wonderfully swim, she will have us walk and build, as if the film which supported us there (which any scratch of a bare bodkin will rend asunder, any sputter of a pistol-shot instantaneously burn up) were no film, but a solid rock-foundation. For ever in the neighborhood of an inevitable Death, man can forget that he is born to die ; of his Life, which, strictly meditated, contains in it an Immensity and an Eternity, he can conceive lightly, as of a simple implement wherewith to do day-labor and earn wages. So cunningly does Nature, the mother of all highest Art, which only apes her from afar, 'body forth the Finite from the Infinite ;' and guide man safe on his wondrous path, not more by endowing him with vision, than, at the right place, with blindness ! Under all her works, chiefly under her noblest work, Life, lies a basis of Darkness, which she benignantly conceals ; in Life, too, the roots and inward circulations which stretch down fearfully to the regions of Death and Night, shall not hint of their existence, and only the fair stem with its leaves and flowers, shone on by the fair sun, disclose itself, and joyfully grow.

However, without venturing into the abstruse, or too eagerly asking Why and How, in things where our answer must needs prove, in great part, an echo of the question, let us be content to remark farther, in the merely historical way, how that Aphorism of the bodily Physician holds good in quite other departments. Of the Soul, with her activities, we shall find it no less true than of the Body : nay, cry the Spiritualists, is not that very division of the unity, Man, into a dualism of Soul and Body, itself the symptom

of disease ; as, perhaps, your frightful theory of Materialism, of his being but a Body, and therefore, at least, once more a unity, may be the paroxysm which was critical, and the beginning of cure ! But omitting this, we observe, with confidence enough, that the truly strong mind, view it as Intellect, as Morality, or under any other aspect, is nowise the mind acquainted with its strength ; that here as before the sign of health is Unconsciousness. In our inward, as in our outward world, what is mechanical lies open to us : not what is dynamical and has vitality. Of our Thinking, we might say it is but the mere upper surface that we shape into articulate Thoughts ; — underneath the region of argument and conscious discourse, lies the region of meditation ; here, in its quiet mysterious depths, dwells what vital force is in us ; here, if aught is to be created, and not merely manufactured and communicated, must the work go on. Manufacture is intelligible, but trivial ; Creation is great, and cannot be understood. Thus if the Debator and Demonstrator, whom we may rank as the lowest of true thinkers, knows what he has done, and how he did it, the Artist, whom we rank as the highest, knows not ; must speak of Inspiration, and in one or the other dialect, call his work the gift of a divinity.

But on the whole, 'genius is ever a secret to itself ;' of this old truth we have, on all sides, daily evidence. The Shakspeare takes no airs for writing *Hamlet* and the *Tempest* ; understands not that it is anything surprising : Milton, again, is more conscious of his faculty, which accordingly is an inferior one. On the other hand, what cackling and strutting must we not often hear and see, when, in some shape of academical prolusion, maiden speech, review article, this or the other well-fledged goose has produced its goose-egg, of quite measurable value, were it the pink of its whole kind ; and wonders why all mortals do not wonder !

Foolish enough, too, was the College Tutor's surprise at Walter Shandy : how, though unread in Aristotle, he could nevertheless argue ; and not knowing the name of any dialectic tool, handled them all to perfection. Is it the skilfullest Anatomist that cuts the best figure at Sadler's Wells ? or does the Boxer hit better for knowing that he has a flexor longus and a flexor brevis ? But, indeed, as in the higher case of the Poet, so here in that of the Speaker and Inquirer, the true force is an unconscious one. The healthy Understanding, we should say, is not the Logical, argumentative, but the Intuitive ; for the end of Understanding is not to prove, and find reasons, but to know and believe. Of Logic, and its limits, and uses and abuses, there were much to be said and examined ; one fact, however, which chiefly concerns us here, has long been familiar ; that the man of logic and the man of insight ; the Reasoner and the Discoverer, or even Knower, are quite separable, — indeed, for most part, quite separate characters. In practical matters, for example, has it not become almost proverbial that the man of logic cannot prosper ? This is he whom business people call Systematic and Theorizer and Word-monger ; his *vital* intellectual force lies dormant or extinct, his whole force is mechanical, conscious : of such a one it is foreseen that, when once confronted with the infinite complexities of the real world, his little compact theorem of the world will be found wanting ; that unless he can throw it overboard, and become a new creature, he will necessarily founder. Nay, in mere Speculation itself, the most ineffectual of all characters, generally speaking, is your dialectic man-at-arms ; were he armed cap-a-pie in syllogistic mail of proof, and perfect master of logic-fence, how little does it avail him ! Consider the old Schoolmen, and their pilgrimage towards Truth : the faithfullest endeavor, incessant unwearied motion, often great natural vigor ; only no progress : nothing

but antic feats of one limb poised against the other ; there they balanced, somersettted, and made postures ; at best gyrated swiftly, with some pleasure, like Spinning Der-vishes, and ended where they began. So is it, so will it always be, with all System-makers and builders of logical card-castles ; of which class a certain remnant must, in every age, as they do in our own, survive and build. Logic is good, but it is not the best. The Irrefragable Doctor, with his chains of induction, his corollaries, dilemmas, and other cunning logical diagrams and apparatus, will cast you a beautiful horoscope, and speak reasonable things ; nevertheless your stolen jewel, which you wanted him to find you, is not forthcoming. Often by some winged word, winged as the thunderbolt is, of a Luther, a Napoleon, a Goethe, shall we see the difficulty split asunder, and its secret laid bare ; while the Irrefragable, with all his logical tools, hews at it, and hovers round it, and finds it on all hands too hard for him.

Again, in the difference between Oratory and Rhetoric, as indeed everywhere in that superiority of what is called the Natural over the Artificial, we find a similar illustration. The Orator persuades and carries all with him, he knows not how ; the Rhetorician can prove that he ought to have persuaded and carried all with him : the one is in a state of healthy unconsciousness, as if he ' had no system ; ' the other, in virtue of regimen and dietetic punctuality, feels at best that ' his system is in high order. ' So stands it, in short, with all forms of Intellect, whether as directed to the finding of Truth, or to the fit imparting thereof ; to Poetry, to Eloquence, to depth of Insight, which is the basis of both these ; always the characteristic of right performance is a certain spontaneity, an unconsciousness ; ' the healthy know not of their health, but only the sick. ' So that the old precept of the critic, as crabbed as it looked to his ambitious disciple,

might contain in it a most fundamental truth, applicable to us all, and in much else than Literature: 'Whenever you have written any sentence that looks particularly excellent, be sure to blot it out.' In like manner, under milder phraseology, and with a meaning purposely much wider, a living Thinker has taught us: 'Of the Wrong we are always conscious, of the Right never.'

But if such is the law with regard to Speculation and the Intellectual power of man, much more is it with regard to Conduct, and the power, manifested chiefly therein, which we name Moral. 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:' whisper not to thy own heart, How worthy is this action; for then it is already becoming worthless. The good man is he who *works* continually in well-doing; to whom well-doing is as his natural existence, awakening no astonishment, requiring no commentary; but there, like a thing of course, and as if it could not but be so. Self-contemplation, on the other hand, is infallibly the symptom of disease, be it or be it not the sign of cure: an unhealthy Virtue is one that consumes itself to leanness in repenting and anxiety; or, still worse, that inflates itself into dropsical boastfulness and vain glory: either way, it is a self-seeking; an unprofitable looking behind us to measure the way we have made: whereas the sole concern is to walk continually forward, and make more way. If in any sphere of Man's Life, then in the moral sphere, as the inmost and most vital of all, it is good that there be wholeness; that there be unconsciousness, which is the evidence of this. Let the free, reasonable Will, which dwells in us, as in our Holy of Holies, be indeed free, and obeyed like a Divinity, as is its right and its effort: the perfect obedience will be the silent one. Such perhaps were the sense of that maxim, enunciating, as is usual, but the half of a truth: 'To say that we have a clear conscience is to utter a solecism; had we never sinned, we

should have had no conscience.' Were defeat unknown, neither would victory be celebrated by songs of triumph.

This, true enough, is an ideal, impossible state of being; yet ever the goal towards which our actual state of being strives; which it is the more perfect the nearer it can approach. Nor, in our actual world, where Labor must often prove ineffectual, and thus in all senses Light alternate with Darkness, and the nature of an ideal Morality be much modified, is the case, thus far, materially different. It is a fact which escapes no one, that, generally speaking, whose is acquainted with his worth has but a little stock to cultivate acquaintance with. Above all, the public acknowledgment of such acquaintance, indicating that it has reached quite an intimate footing, bodes ill. Already, to the popular judgment, he who talks much about Virtue in the abstract, begins to be suspicious; it is shrewdly guessed that where there is great preaching, there will be little almsgiving. Or again, on a wider scale, we can remark that ages of Heroism are not ages of Moral Philosophy; Virtue, when it can be philosophized of, has become aware of itself, is sickly, and beginning to decline. A spontaneous habitual all-pervading spirit of Chivalrous Valor shrinks together, and perks itself up into shriveled Points of Honor; humane Courtesy and Nobleness of mind dwindle into punctilious Politeness, 'avoiding meats;' 'paying tithes of mint and anise, neglecting the weightier matters of the law.' Goodness, which was a rule to itself, must appeal to Precept, and seek strength from Sanctions; the Freewill no longer reigns unquestioned and by divine right, but like a mere earthly sovereign, by expediency, by Rewards and Punishments: or rather, let us say, the Freewill, so far as may be, has abdicated and withdrawn into the dark, and a spectral nightmare of a Necessity usurps its throne; for now that mysterious Self-impulse of the whole man, heaven-

inspired, and in all senses partaking of the Infinite, being captiously questioned in a finite dialect, and answering, as it needs must, by silence, — is conceived as non-extant, and only the outward Mechanism of it remains acknowledged : of Volition, except as the synonym of Desire, we hear nothing ; of ‘ Motives,’ without any Mover, more than enough.

So, too, when the generous Affections have become well-nigh paralytic, we have the reign of Sentimentality. The greatness, the profitableness, at any rate the extremely ornamental nature of high feeling, and the luxury of doing good ; charity, love, self-forgetfulness, devotedness, and all manner of godlike magnanimity are everywhere insisted on, and pressingly inculcated in speech and writing, in prose and verse ; Socinian Preachers proclaim ‘ Benevolence ’ to all the four winds, and have TRUTH engraved on their watch-seals : unhappily with little or no effect. Were the Limbs in right Walking order, why so much demonstrating of Motion ? The barrenest of all mortals is the Sentimentalist. Granting even that he were sincere, and did not wilfully deceive us, or without first deceiving himself, what good is in him ? Does he not lie there as a perpetual lesson of despair, and type of bedrid valetudinarian impotence ? His is emphatically a Virtue that has become, through every fibre, conscious of itself ; it is all sick, and feels as if it were made of glass, and durst not touch or be touched : in the shape of work, it can do nothing ; at the utmost, by incessant nursing and caudling, keep itself alive. As the last stage of all, when Virtue, properly so called, has ceased to be practised, and become extinct, and a mere remembrance, we have the era of Sophists, descanting of its existence, proving it, denying it, mechanically ‘ accounting ’ for it ; — as dissectors and demonstrators cannot operate till once the body be dead.

Thus is true Moral genius, like true Intellectual, which

indeed is but a lower phasis thereof, 'ever a secret to itself.' The healthy moral nature loves Goodness, and without wonder wholly lives in it: the unhealthy makes love to it, and would fain get to live in it; or, finding such courtship fruitless, turns round, and not without contempt abandons it. These curious relations of the Voluntary and Conscious to the Involuntary and Unconscious, and the small proportion which, in all departments of our life, the former bears to the latter, — might lead us into deep questions of Psychology and Physiology: such, however, belong not to our present object. Enough, if the fact itself become apparent, that Nature so meant it with us; that in this wise we are made. We may now say, that view man's individual Existence under what aspect we will, under the highest Spiritual, as under the merely Animal aspect, everywhere the grand vital energy, while in its sound state, is an unseen unconscious one; or, in the words of our old Aphorism, 'the healthy know not of their health, but only the sick.'

To understand man, however, we must look beyond the individual man and his actions or interests, and view him in combination with his fellows. It is in Society that man first feels what he is; first becomes what he can be. In Society an altogether new set of spiritual activities are evolved in him, and the old immeasurably quickened and strengthened. Society is the genial element wherein his nature first lives and grows; the solitary man were but a small portion of himself, and must continue for ever folded in, stunted, and only half alive. 'Already,' says a deep Thinker, with more meaning than will disclose itself at once, 'my opinion, my conviction, gains *infinitely* in strength and sureness, the moment a second mind has adopted it.' Such, even in its simplest form, is association; so wondrous the communion of soul with soul as directed to the mere act of Knowing! In other higher acts, the wonder is still more manifest; as in

that portion of our being which we name the Moral: for properly, indeed, all communion is of a moral sort, whereof such intellectual communion (in the act of knowing) is itself an example. But with regard to Morals strictly so called, it is in Society, we might almost say, that Morality begins; here at least it takes an altogether new form, and on every side, as in living growth, expands itself. The Duties of Man to himself, to what is Highest in himself, make but the First Table of the Law: to the First Table is now superadded a Second, with the Duties of Man to his Neighbor; whereby also the significance of the First now assumes its true importance. Man has joined himself with man; soul acts and reacts on soul; a mystic miraculous unfathomable Union establishes itself; Life, in all its elements, has become intensified, consecrated. The lightning-spark of Thought, generated, or say rather heaven-kindled, in the solitary mind, awakens its express likeness in another mind, in a thousand other minds, and all blaze up together in combined fire; reverberated from mind to mind, fed also with fresh fuel in each, it acquires incalculable new Light as Thought, incalculable new Heat as converted into Action. By and by, a common store of Thought can accumulate, and be transmitted as an everlasting possession: Literature, whether as preserved in the memory of Bards, in Runes and Hieroglyphs engraved on stone, or in Books of written or printed paper, comes into existence, and begins to play its wondrous part. Politics are formed; the weak submitting to the strong; with a willing loyalty, giving obedience that he may receive guidance: or say rather, in honor of our nature, the ignorant submitting to the wise; for so it is in all even the rudest communities, man never yields himself wholly to brute Force, but always to moral Greatness; thus the universal title of respect, from the Oriental *Scheik*, from the *Sachem* of the red Indians, down to our English

Sir, implies only that he whom we mean to honor is our *senior*. Last, as the crown and all-supporting keystone of the fabric, Religion arises. The devout meditation of the isolated man, which flitted through his soul, like a transient tone of Love and Awe from unknown lands, acquires certainty, continuance, when it is shared in by his brother men. 'Where two or three are gathered together' in the name of the Highest, then first does the Highest, as it is written, 'appear among them to bless them;' then first does an Altar and act of united Worship open a way from Earth to Heaven; whereon, were it but a simple Jacob's-ladder, the heavenly Messengers will travel, with glad tidings and unspeakable gifts for men. Such is SOCIETY, the vital articulation of many individuals into a new collective individual: greatly the most important of man's attainments on this earth; that in which, and by virtue of which, all his other attainments and attempts find their arena, and have their value. Considered well, Society is the standing wonder of our existence; a true region of the Supernatural; as it were, a second all-embracing Life, wherein our first individual Life becomes doubly and trebly alive, and whatever of Infinitude was in us bodies itself forth, and becomes visible and active.

To figure society as endowed with Life is scarcely a metaphor; but rather the statement of a fact by such imperfect methods as language affords. Look at it closely, that mystic Union, Nature's highest work with man; wherein man's volition plays an indispensable yet so subordinate a part, and the small Mechanical grows so mysteriously and indissolubly out of the infinite Dynamical, like Body out of Spirit,—is truly enough vital, what we can call vital, and bears the distinguishing character of life. In the same style also, we can say that Society has its periods of sickness and vigor, of youth, manhood, decrepitude, disso-

lution, and new-birth ; in one or other of which stages we may, in all times, and all places where men inhabit, discern it ; and do ourselves, in this time and place, whether as coöperating or as contending, as healthy members or as diseased ones, to our joy and sorrow, form part of it. The question, what is the actual condition of Society ? has in these days unhappily become important enough. No one of us is unconcerned in that question ; but for the majority of thinking men a true answer to it, such is the state of matters, appears almost as the one thing needful. Meanwhile as the true answer, that is to say, the complete and fundamental answer and settlement, often as it has been demanded, is nowhere forthcoming, and indeed by its nature is impossible, any honest approximation towards such is not without value. The feeblest light, or even so much as a more precise recognition of the darkness, which is the first step to attainment of light, will be welcome.

This once understood, let it not seem idle if we remark that here too our old Aphorism holds ; that again in the Body Politic, as in the animal body, the sign of right performance is Unconsciousness. Such indeed is virtually the meaning of that phrase 'artificial state of society,' as contrasted with the natural state, and indicating something so inferior to it. For, in all vital things, men distinguish an Artificial and a Natural ; founding on some dim perception or sentiment of the very truth we here insist on : the Artificial is the conscious, mechanical ; the Natural is the unconscious, dynamical. Thus as we have an artificial Poetry, and prize only the natural ; so likewise we have an artificial Morality, an artificial Wisdom, an artificial Society. The artificial Society is precisely one that knows its own structure, its own internal functions ; not in watching, not in knowing which, but in working outwardly to the fulfilment of its aim, does the well-being of a Society consist.

Every Society, every Polity, has a spiritual principle ; is the embodiment, tentative, and more or less complete, of an Idea : all its tendencies of endeavor, specialities of custom, its laws, politics, and whole procedure (as the glance of some Montesquieu across innumerable superficial entanglements can partly decipher) are prescribed by an Idea, and flow naturally from it, as movements from the living source of motion. This idea, be it of devotion to a Man or class of Men, to a Creed, to an Institution, or even, as in more ancient times, to a piece of land, is ever a true Loyalty ; has in it something of a religious, paramount, quite infinite character ; it is properly the Soul of the State, its Life ; mysterious as other forms of Life, and like these working secretly, and in a depth beyond that of consciousness.

Accordingly, it is not in the vigorous ages of a Roman Republic that Treatises of the Commonwealth are written : while the Decii are rushing with devoted bodies on the enemies of Rome, what need of preaching Patriotism ? The virtue of Patriotism has already sunk from its pristine, all-transcendent condition, before it has received a name. So long as the Commonwealth continues rightly athletic, it cares not to dabble in anatomy. Why teach Obedience to the sovereign ; why so much as admire it, or separately recognise it, while a divine idea of Obedience perennially inspires all men ? Loyalty, like Patriotism, of which it is a form, was not praised till it had begun to decline ; the *Preux Chevaliers* first became rightly admirable, when 'dying for their king,' had ceased to be a habit with chevaliers. For if the mystic significance of the State, let this be what it may, dwells vitally in every heart, encircles every life as with a second higher life, how should it stand self-questioning ? It must rush outward, and express itself by works. Besides, if perfect, it is there as by necessity, and does not excite inquiry : it is also by nature, infinite, has no limits ;

therefore can be circumscribed by no conditions and definitions ; cannot be reasoned of ; except *musically*, or in the language of Poetry, cannot yet so much as be spoken of.

In those days, Society was what we name healthy, sound at heart. Not, indeed, without suffering enough ; not without perplexities, difficulty on every side : for such is the appointment of man ; his highest and sole blessedness is, that he toil, and know what to toil at : not in ease, but in united victorious labor, which is at once evil and the victory over evil, does his Freedom lie. Nay, often, looking no deeper than such superficial perplexities of the early Time, historians have taught us that it was all one mass of contradiction and disease ; and in the antique Republic, or feudal Monarchy, have seen only the confused chaotic quarry, not the robust laborer, or the stately edifice he was building of it. If Society, in such ages, had its difficulty, it had also its strength ; if sorrowful masses of rubbish so encumbered it, the tough sinews to hurl them aside, with indomitable heart, were not wanting. Society went along without complaint ; did not stop to scrutinize itself, to say, How well I perform, or, Alas, how ill ! Men did not yet feel themselves to be 'the envy of surrounding nations ;' and were enviable on that very account. Society was what we can call *whole*, in both senses of the word. The individual man was in himself a whole, or complete union ; and could combine with his fellows as the living member of a greater whole. For all men, through their life, were animated by one great Idea ; thus all efforts pointed one way, everywhere there was *wholeness*. Opinion and Action had not yet become disunited ; but the former could still produce the latter, or attempt to produce it, as the stamp does its impression while the wax is not hardened. Thought, and the Voice of thought, were also a unison ; thus, instead of Speculation we had Poetry ; Literature, in its rude utter-

ance, was as yet a heroic Song, perhaps, too, a devotional Anthem. Religion was everywhere; Philosophy lay hid under it, peacefully included in it. Herein, as in the life-centre of all, lay the true health and oneness. Only at a later era must Religion split itself into Philosophies; and thereby the vital union of Thought being lost, disunion and mutual collision in all provinces of Speech and of Action more and more prevail. For if the Poet, or Priest, or by whatever title the inspired thinker may be named, is the sign of vigor and wellbeing; so likewise is the Logician, or uninspired thinker, the sign of disease, probably of decrepitude and decay. Thus, not to mention other instances, one of them much nearer hand, — so soon as Prophecy among the Hebrews had ceased, then did the reign of Argumentation begin; and the ancient Theocracy, in its Sadduceisms and Phariseisms, and vain jangling of sects and doctors, give token that the *soul* of it had fled, and that the *body* itself, by natural dissolution, 'with the old forces still at work, but working in reverse order,' was on the road to final disappearance.

We might pursue this question into innumerable other ramifications; and everywhere, under new shapes, find the same truth, which we here so imperfectly enunciate, disclosed: that throughout the whole world of man, in all manifestations and performances of his nature, outward and inward, personal and social, the Perfect, the Great is a mystery to itself, knows not itself; whatsoever does know itself is already little, and more or less imperfect. Or otherwise, we may say, Unconsciousness belongs to pure unmixed Life; Consciousness to a diseased mixture and conflict of Life and Death: Unconsciousness is the sign of Creation; Consciousness at best, that of Manufacture. So deep, in this existence of ours, is the significance of Myste-

ry. Well might the Ancients make silence a god ; for it is the element of all godhood, infinitude, or transcendental greatness ; at once the source and the ocean wherein all such begins and ends. In the same sense too, have Poets sung ‘ Hymns to the Night ; ’ as if Night were nobler than Day ; as if Day were but a small motley-colored veil spread transiently over the infinite bosom of Night, and did but deform and hide from us its purely transparent, eternal deeps. So likewise have they spoken and sung as if Silence were the grand epitome and complete sum-total of all Harmony ; and Death, what mortals call Death, properly the beginning of Life. Under such figures, since except in figures there is no speaking of the Invisible, have men endeavored to express a great Truth ; — a Truth, in our times, as nearly as is perhaps possible, forgotten by the most ; which nevertheless continues for ever true, for ever all-important, and will one day, under new figures, be again brought home to the bosoms of all.

But, indeed, in a far lower sense, the rudest mind has still some intimation of the greatness there is in Mystery. If Silence was made a god of by the Ancients, he still continues a government clerk among us Moderns. To all Quacks, moreover, of what sort soever, the effect of Mystery is well known : here and there some Cagliostro, even in latter days, turns it to notable account : the Blockhead also, who is ambitious, and has no talent, finds sometimes in ‘ the talent of silence,’ a kind of succedaneum. Or again, looking on the opposite side of the matter, do we not see, in the common understanding of mankind, a certain distrust, a certain contempt of what is altogether self-conscious and mechanical ? As nothing that is wholly seen through has other than a trivial character ; so anything professing to be great, and yet wholly to see through itself, is already known to be false, and a failure. The evil repute your ‘ theoretic-

cal men ' stand in, the acknowledged inefficiency of ' Paper Constitutions,' and all that class of objects, are instances of this. Experience often repeated, and perhaps a certain instinct of something far deeper that lies under such experiences, has taught men so much. They know, beforehand, that the loud is generally the insignificant, the empty. Whatsoever can proclaim itself from the house-tops may be fit for the hawker, and for those multitudes that must needs buy of him ; but for any deeper use, might as well continue unproclaimed. Observe, too, how the converse of the proposition holds ; how the insignificant, the empty, is usually the loud ; and, after the manner of a drum, is loud even because of its emptiness. The uses of some Patent Dinner Calefactor can be bruited abroad over the whole world in the course of the first winter ; those of the Printing Press are not so well seen into for the first three centuries : the passing of the Select Vestries Bill raises more noise and hopeful expectancy among mankind, than did the promulgation of the Christian Religion. Again, and again, we say, the great, the creative, and enduring, is ever a secret to itself ; only the small, the barren, and transient, is otherwise.

If we now, with a practical medical view, examine, by this same test of Unconsciousness, the Condition of our own Era, and of man's Life therein, the diagnosis we arrive at is nowise of a flattering sort. The state of Society in our days is of all possible states the least an unconscious one : this is specially the Era when all manner of Inquiries into what was once the unfelt, involuntary sphere of man's existence, find their place, and as it were occupy the whole domain of thought. What, for example, is all this that we hear, for the last generation or two, about the Improvement of the Age, the Spirit of the Age, Destruction of Prejudice, Progress of the Species, and the March of Intellect, but an

unhealthy state of self-sentience, self-survey; the precursor and prognostic of still worse health? That Intellect do march, if possible at double-quick time, is very desirable; nevertheless why should she turn round at every stride, and cry: See you what a stride I have taken! Such a marching of Intellect is distinctly of the spavined kind; what the Jockeys call 'all action and no go.' Or at best, if we examine well, it is the marching of that gouty Patient, whom his Doctors had clapt on a metal floor artificially heated to the searing point, so that he was obliged to march, and marched with a vengeance — nowhither. Intellect did not awaken for the first time yesterday; but has been under way from Noah's Flood downwards: greatly her best progress, moreover, was in the old times, when she said nothing about it. In those same 'dark ages,' Intellect (metaphorically as well as literally) could invent *glass*, which now she has enough ado to grind into *spectacles*. Intellect built not only Churches, but a Church, *the Church*, based on this firm Earth, yet reaching up, and leading up, as high as Heaven; and now it is all she can do to keep its doors bolted, that there be no tearing of the Surplices, no robbery of the Alms-box. She built a Senate-house likewise, glorious in its kind; and now it costs her a wellnigh mortal effort to sweep it clear of vermin, and get the roof made rain-tight.

But the truth is, with Intellect, as with most other things, we are now passing from that first or boastful stage of Self-sentience into the second or painful one: out of these often asseverated declarations that 'our system is in high order,' we come now, by natural sequence, to the melancholy conviction that it is altogether the reverse. Thus, for instance, in the matter of Government, the period of the 'Invaluable Constitution' must be followed by a Reform Bill; to laudatory De Lolmes succeed objurgatory Benthams. At any rate, what Treatises on the Social Contract, on the Elective

Franchise, the Rights of Man, the Rights of Property, Codifications, Institutions, Constitutions, have we not, for long years, groaned under! Or again, with a wider survey, consider those Essays on Man, Thoughts on Man, Inquiries concerning Man; not to mention Evidences of the Christian Faith, Theories of Poetry, Considerations on the Origin of Evil, which during the last century have accumulated on us to a frightful extent. Never since the beginning of Time was there, that we hear or read of, so intensely self-conscious a Society. Our whole relations to the Universe and to our fellow man have become an Inquiry, a Doubt: nothing will go on of its own accord, and do its function quietly; but all things must be probed into, the whole working of man's world be anatomically studied. Alas, anatomically studied, that it may be medically aided! Till at length, indeed, we have come to such a pass, that except in this same Medicine, with its artifices and appliances, few can so much as imagine any strength or hope to remain for us. The whole Life of Society must now be carried on by drugs: doctor after doctor appears with his nostrum, of Coöperative Societies, Universal Suffrage, Cottage-and-Cow systems, Repression of Population, Vote by Ballot. To such height has the dyspepsia of Society reached; as indeed the constant grinding internal pain, or from time to time the mad spasmodic throes, of all Society do otherwise too mournfully indicate.

Far be it from us to attribute, as some unwise persons do, the disease itself to this unhappy sensation that there is a disease! The Encyclopedists did not produce the troubles of France; but the troubles of France produced the Encyclopedists, and much else. The Self-consciousness is the symptom merely; nay, it is also the attempt towards cure. We record the fact, without special censure; not wondering that Society should feel itself, and in all ways

complain of aches and twinges, for it has suffered enough. Napoleon was but a Job's-comforter, when he told his wounded Staff-officer, twice unhorsed by cannon balls, and with half his limbs blown to pieces : *Vous vous écoutez trop !*

On the outward, or as it were Physical diseases of Society, it were beside our purpose to insist here. These are diseases which he who runs may read ; and sorrow over, with or without hope. Wealth has accumulated itself into masses ; and Poverty, also in accumulation enough, lies impassably separated from it ; opposed, uncommunicating, like forces in positive and negative poles. The gods of this lower world sit aloft on glittering thrones, less happy than Epicurus' gods, but as indolent, as impotent ; while the boundless living chaos of Ignorance and Hunger welters terrific, in its dark fury, under their feet. How much among us might be likened to a whited sepulchre ; outwardly all Pomp and Strength ; but inwardly full of horror and despair and dead men's bones ! Iron highways, with their wains fire-winged, are uniting all ends of the firm Land ; quays and moles, with their innumerable stately fleets, tame the Ocean into our pliant bearer of burdens ; Labor's thousand arms, of sinew and of metal, all-conquering, everywhere, from the tops of the mountain down to the depths of the mine and the caverns of the sea, ply unweariedly for the service of man : Yet man remains unserved. He has subdued this Planet, his habitation and inheritance, yet reaps no profit from the victory. Sad to look upon, in the highest stage of civilization, nine-tenths of mankind must struggle in the lowest battle of savage or even animal man, the battle against Famine. Countries are rich, prosperous in all manner of increase, beyond example : but the Men of those countries are poor, needier than ever of all sustenance outward and inward ; of Belief, of Knowledge, of Money, of Food. The rule, *Sic vos non vobis*, never altogether to be

got rid of in men's Industry, now presses with such incubus weight, that Industry must shake it off, or utterly be strangled under it; and, alas, can as yet but gasp and rave, and aimlessly struggle, like one in the final delirium. Thus Change, or the inevitable approach of Change, is manifest everywhere. In one Country we have seen lava-torrents of fever-frenzy envelope all things; Government succeed Government, like the phantasms of a dying brain: in another Country, we can even now see, in maddest alternation, the Peasant governed by such guidance as this: To labor earnestly one month in raising wheat, and the next month labor earnestly in burning it. So that Society, were it not by nature immortal, and its death ever a new-birth, might appear, as it does in the eyes of some, to be sick to dissolution, and even now writhing in its last agony. Sick enough we must admit it to be, with disease enough, a whole nosology of diseases; wherein he perhaps is happiest that is not called to prescribe as physician;—wherein, however, one small piece of policy, that of summoning the Wisest in the Commonwealth, by the sole method yet known or thought of, to come together and with their whole soul consult for it, might, but for late tedious experiences, have seemed unquestionable enough.

But leaving this, let us rather look within, into the Spiritual condition of Society, and see what aspects and prospects offer themselves there. For, after all, it is there properly that the secret and origin of the whole is to be sought: the Physical derangements of Society are but the image and impress of its Spiritual; while the heart continues sound, all other sickness is superficial, and temporary. False Action is the fruit of false Speculation; let the spirit of Society be free and strong, that is to say, let true Principles inspire the members of Society, then neither can disorders accumulate in its Practice; each disorder will be promptly, faithfully

inquired into, and remedied as it arises. But alas, with us the Spiritual condition of Society is no less sickly than the Physical. Examine man's internal world, in any of its social relations and performances, here too all seems diseased self-consciousness, collision, and mutually-destructive struggle. Nothing acts from within outwards in undivided healthy force; everything lies impotent, lamed, its force turned inwards, and painfully 'listens to itself.'

To begin with our highest Spiritual function, with Religion, we might ask, whither has Religion now fled? Of Churches and their establishments we here say nothing; nor of the unhappy domains of Unbelief, and how innumerable men, blinded in their minds, must 'live without-God in the world;' but, taking the fairest side of the matter, we ask, What is the nature of that same Religion, which still lingers in the hearts of the few who are called, and call themselves, specially the Religious? Is it a healthy Religion, vital, unconscious of itself; that shines forth spontaneously in doing of the Work, or even in preaching of the Word? Unhappily, no. Instead of heroic martyr Conduct, and inspired and soul-inspiring Eloquence, whereby Religion itself were brought home to our living bosoms, to live and reign there, we have 'Discourses on the Evidences,' endeavoring, with smallest result, to make it probable that such a thing as Religion exists. The most enthusiastic Evangelicals do not preach a Gospel, but keep describing how it should and might be preached; to awaken the sacred fire of Faith, as by a sacred contagion, is not their endeavor; but, at most, to describe how Faith shows and acts, and scientifically distinguish true Faith from false. Religion, like all else, is conscious of itself, listens to itself; it becomes less and less creative, vital; more and more mechanical. Considered as a whole, the Christian Religion, of late ages has been continually dissipating itself into Metaphysics; and

threatens now to disappear, as some rivers do, in deserts of barren sand.

Of Literature, and its deep-seated, wide-spread maladies, why speak? Literature is but a branch of Religion, and always participates in its character: However, in our time, it is the only branch that still shows any greenness; and, as some think, must one day become the main stem. Now, apart from the subterranean and tartarean regions of Literature;—leaving out of view the frightful, scandalous statistics of Puffing, the mystery of Slander, Falsehood, Hatred, and other convulsion-work of rabid Imbecility, and all that has rendered Literature on that side a perfect 'Babylon the mother of Abominations,' in very deed, making the world 'drunk' with the wine of her iniquity;—forgetting all this, let us look only to the regions of the upper air; to such Literature as can be said to have some attempt towards truth in it, some tone of music, and if it be not poetical, to hold of the poetical. Among other characteristics, is not this manifest enough: that it knows itself? Spontaneous devotedness to the object, being wholly possessed by the object, what we can call Inspiration, has wellnigh ceased to appear in Literature. Which melodious Singer forgets that he is singing melodiously? (We have not the love of greatness, but the love of the love of greatness.) Hence infinite Affectations, Distractions; in every case inevitable Error. Consider, for one example, this peculiarity of Modern Literature, the sin that has been named View-hunting. In our elder writers, there are no paintings of scenery for its own sake; no euphuistic gallantries with Nature, but a constant heart-love for her, a constant dwelling in communion with her. View-hunting, with so much else that is of kin to it, first came decisively into action through the *Sorrows of Werter*; which wonderful Performance, indeed, may in many senses be regarded as the progenitor of all that has

since become popular in Literature ; whereof, in so far as concerns spirit and tendency, it still offers the most instructive image ; for nowhere, except in its own country, above all in the mind of its illustrious Author, has it yet fallen wholly obsolete. Scarcely ever, till that late epoch, did any worshipper of Nature become entirely aware that he was worshipping, much to his own credit, and think of saying to himself: Come let us make a description! Intolerable enough: when every puny whipster draws out his pencil, and insists on painting you a scene ; so that the instant you discern such a thing as ‘ wavy outline,’ ‘ mirror of the lake,’ ‘ stern headland,’ or the like, in any Book, you must timorously hasten on ; and scarcely the Author of Waverley himself can tempt you not to skip.

Nay, is not the diseased self-conscious state of Literature disclosed in this one fact, which lies so near us here, the prevalence of Reviewing! Sterne’s wish for a reader ‘ that would give up the reins of his imagination into his author’s hands and be pleased he knew not why, and cared not wherefore,’ might lead him a long journey now. Indeed, for our best class of readers, the chief pleasure, a very stunted one, is this same knowing of the Why ; which many a Kames and Bossu has been, ineffectually enough, endeavoring to teach us : till at last these also have laid down their trade ; and now your Reviewer is a mere *taster* ; who tastes, and says, by the evidence of such palate, such tongue, as he has got — It is good ; it is bad. Was it thus that the French carried out certain inferior creatures on their Algerine Expedition, to taste the wells for them, and try whether they were poisoned? Far be it from us to disparage our own craft, whereby we have our living! Only we must note these things: that Reviewing spreads with strange vigor ; that such a man as Byron reckons the Reviewer and the Poet equal ; that at the last Leipsic Fair,

there was advertised a Review of Reviews. By and by it will be found that 'all Literature has become one boundless self-devouring Review; and as in London routs, we have to do nothing, but only to see others do nothing.' — Thus does Literature also, like a sick thing, superabundantly 'listen to itself.'

No less is this unhealthy symptom manifest, if we cast a glance on our Philosophy, on the character of our speculative Thinking. Nay already, as above hinted, the mere existence and necessity of a Philosophy is an evil. Man is sent hither not to question, but to work: 'the end of man,' it was long ago written, 'is an Action, not a Thought.' In the perfect state, all Thought were but the Picture and inspiring Symbol of Action; Philosophy, except as Poetry and Religion, had no being. And yet how, in this imperfect state, can it be avoided, can it be dispensed with? Man stands as in the centre of Nature; his fraction of Time encircled by Eternity, his handbreadth of Space encircled by Infinitude: how shall he forbear asking himself, What am I; and Whence; and Whither? How too, except in slight partial hints, in kind asseverations and assurances, such as a mother quiets her fretfully inquisitive child with, shall he get answer to such inquiries?

The disease of Metaphysics, accordingly, is a perennial one. In all ages, those questions of Death and Immortality, Origin of Evil, Freedom and Necessity, must, under new forms, anew make their appearance; ever, from time to time, must the attempt to shape for ourselves some Theorem of the Universe be repeated. And ever unsuccessfully: for what Theorem of the Infinite can the Finite render complete? We, the whole species of Mankind, and our whole existence and history, are but a floating speck in the illimitable ocean of the All; yet *in* that ocean; indissoluble portion thereof; partaking of its infinite tendencies; borne this

way and that by its deep-swelling tides, and grand ocean currents ; — of which what faintest chance is there that we should ever exhaust the significance, ascertain the goings and comings? A region of Doubt, therefore, hovers for ever in the background ; in Action alone can we have certainty. Nay, properly, Doubt is the indispensable, inexhaustible material whereon Action works, which Action has to fashion into Certainty and Reality ; only on a canvass of Darkness, such is man's way of being, could the many-colored picture of our Life paint itself and shine.

Thus if our oldest system of Metaphysics is as old as the *Book of Genesis*, our latest is that of Mr. Thomas Hope, published only within the current year. It is a chronic malady that of Metaphysics, as we said, and perpetually recurs on us. At the utmost, there is a better and a worse in it ; a stage of convalescence, and a stage of relapse with new sickness : these for ever succeed each other, as is the nature of all Life-movement here below. The first, or convalescent stage, we might also name that of Dogmatical or Constructive Metaphysics ; when the mind constructively endeavors to scheme out, and assert for itself an actual Theorem of the Universe, and therewith for a time rests satisfied. The second or sick stage might be called that of Skeptical or Inquisitory Metaphysics ; when the mind having widened its sphere of vision, the existing Theorem of the Universe no longer answers the phenomena, no longer yields contentment ; but must be torn in pieces, and certainty anew sought for in the endless realms of Denial. All Theologies and sacred Cosmogonies belong, in some measure, to the first class : in all Pyrrhonism from Pyrrho down to Hume and the innumerable disciples of Hume, we have instances enough of the second. In the former, so far as it affords satisfaction, a temporary anodyne to Doubt, an arena for wholesome action, there may be much good ; indeed in this

case, it holds rather of Poetry than of Metaphysics, might be called Inspiration rather than Speculation. The latter is Metaphysics proper; a pure, unmixed, though from time to time a necessary evil.

For truly, if we look into it, there is no more fruitless endeavor than this same, which the Metaphysician proper toils in: to educe Conviction out of Negation. How, by merely testing and rejecting what is not, shall we ever attain knowledge of what is? Metaphysical Speculation, as it begins in No or Nothingness, so it must needs end in Nothingness; circulates and must circulate in endless vortices; creating, swallowing—*itself*. Our being is made up of Light and Darkness, the Light resting on the Darkness, and balancing it; everywhere there is Dualism, Equipoise; a perpetual Contradiction dwells in us: 'where shall I place myself to escape from my own shadow?' Consider it well, Metaphysics is the attempt of the mind to rise above the mind; to environ, and shut in, or as we say, *comprehend* the mind. Hopeless struggle, for the wisest, as for the foolish! What strength of sinew, or athletic skill, will enable the stoutest athlete to fold his own body in his arms, and, by lifting, lift up *himself*? The Irish Saint swam the Channel 'carrying his head in his teeth:' but the feat has never been imitated.

That this is the age of Metaphysics, in the proper, or skeptical Inquisitory sense; that there was a necessity for its being such an age, we regard as our indubitable misfortune. From many causes, the arena of free Activity has long been narrowing, that of skeptical Inquiry becoming more and more universal, more and more perplexing. The Thought conducts not to the Deed; but in boundless chaos, self-devouring, engenders monstrosities, fantasms, fire-breathing chimeras. Profitable Speculation were this: What is to be done; and How is it to be done? But with us not so

much as the What can be got sight of. For some generations, all Philosophy has been a painful, captious, hostile question towards everything in the Heaven above, in the Earth beneath : Why art thou there ? Till at length it has come to pass that the worth and authenticity of all things seems dubitable or deniable : our best effort must be unproductively spent not in working, but in ascertaining our mere Whereabout, and so much as whether we are to work at all. Doubt, which, as was said, ever hangs in the background of our world, has now become our middle-ground and foreground ; whereon, for the time, no fair Life-picture can be painted, but only the dark air-cavass itself flow round us, bewildering and benighting.

Nevertheless, doubt as we will, man is actually Here ; not to ask questions, but to do work : in this time, as in all times, it must be the heaviest evil for him, if his faculty of Action lie dormant, and only that of skeptical Inquiry exert itself. Accordingly, whoever looks abroad upon the world, comparing the Past with the Present, may find that the practical condition of man, in these days, is one of the saddest ; burdened with miseries which are in a considerable degree peculiar. In no time was man's life what he calls a happy one ; in no time can it be so. A perpetual dream there has been of Paradises, and some luxurious Lubberland, where the brooks should run wine, and the trees bend with ready-baked viands ; but it was a dream merely, an impossible dream. Suffering, Contradiction, Error, have their quite perennial, and even indispensable, abode in this Earth. Is not Labor the inheritance of man ? And what Labor for the present is joyous, and not grievous ? Labor, Effort, is the very interruption of that Ease, which man foolishly enough fancies to be his Happiness : and yet without Labor there were no Ease, no Rest, so much as conceivable. Thus Evil, what we call Evil, must ever exist while man exists : Evil, in the

widest sense we can give it, is precisely the dark, disordered material out of which man's Freewill has to create an edifice of order, and Good. Ever must Pain urge us to Labor; and only in free Effort can any blessedness be imagined for us.

But if man has, in all ages, had enough to encounter, there has, in most civilized ages, been an inward force vouchsafed him, whereby the pressure of things outward might be withstood. Obstruction abounded; but Faith also was not wanting. It is by Faith that man removes mountains: while he had Faith, his limbs might be wearied with toiling, his back galled with bearing; but the heart within him was peaceable and resolved. In the thickest gloom there burnt a lamp to guide him. If he struggled and suffered, he felt that it even should be so; knew for what he was suffering and struggling. Faith gave him an inward Willingness; a world of Strength wherewith to front a world of Difficulty. The true wretchedness lies here: that the Difficulty remain and the Strength be lost; that Pain cannot relieve itself in free Effort; that we have the Labor, and want the Willingness. Faith strengthens us, enlightens us, for all endeavors and endurances; with Faith we can do all, and dare all, and life itself has a thousand times been joyfully given away. But the sum of man's misery is even this, that he feel himself crushed under the Juggernaut wheels and know that Juggernaut is no divinity, but a dead mechanical idol.

Now this is specially the misery which has fallen on man in our Era. Belief, Faith has wellnigh vanished from the world. The youth on awakening in this wondrous Universe, no longer finds a competent theory of its wonders. Time was, when if he asked himself: What is man; what are the duties of man? the answer stood ready written for him. But now the ancient 'ground-plan of the All' belies itself

when brought into contact with reality ; Mother Church has, to the most, become a superannuated Stepmother, whose lessons go disregarded ; or are spurned at, and scornfully gainsayed. For young Valor and thirst of Action no ideal Chivalry invites to heroism, prescribes what is heroic : the old ideal of Manhood has grown obsolete, and the new is still invisible to us, and we grope after it in darkness, one clutching this phantom, another that ; Werterism, Byronism, even Brummelism, each has its day. For Contemplation and love of Wisdom no Cloister now opens its religious shades ; the Thinker must, in all senses, wander homeless, too often aimless, looking up to a Heaven which is dead for him, round to an Earth which is deaf. Action, in those old days, was easy, was voluntary, for the divine worth of human things lay acknowledged ; Speculation was wholesome, for it ranged itself as the handmaid of Action ; what could not so range itself died out by its natural death, by neglect. Loyalty still hallowed obedience, and made rule noble ; there was still something to be loyal to : the Godlike stood embodied under many a symbol in men's interests and business ; the Finite shadowed forth the Infinite ; Eternity looked through Time. The Life of man was encompassed and overcanopied by a glory of Heaven, even as his dwelling-place by the azure vault.

How changed in these new days ! Truly may it be said, the Divinity has withdrawn from the Earth ; or veils himself in that wide-wasting Whirlwind of a departing Era, wherein the fewest can discern his goings. Not Godhead, but an iron, ignoble circle of Necessity embraces all things ; binds the youth of these times into a sluggish thrall, or else exasperates him into a rebel. Heroic Action is paralyzed ; for what worth now remains unquestionable with him ? At the fervid period when his whole nature cries aloud for Action, there is nothing sacred under whose banner he can

act; the course and kind and conditions of free Action are all but undiscoverable. Doubt storms in on him through every avenue; inquiries of the deepest, painfulest sort must be engaged with; and the invincible energy of young years waste itself in skeptical, suicidal cavillings; in passionate 'questionings of Destiny,' whereto no answer will be returned.

For men, in whom the old perennial principal of Hunger (be it Hunger of the poor Day-drudge who stills it with eighteenpence a-day, or of the ambitious Place-hunter who can nowise still it with so little) suffices to fill up existence, the case is bad; but not the worst. These men have an aim, such as it is; and can steer towards it, with chagrin enough truly; yet, as their hands are kept full, without desperation. Unhappier are they to whom a higher instinct has been given; who struggle to be persons, not machines; to whom the Universe is not a warehouse, or at best fancy-bazaar, but a mystic temple and hall of doom. For such men there lie properly two courses open. The lower, yet still an estimable class, take up with worn-out Symbols of the Godlike; keep trimming and trucking between these and Hypocrisy, purblindly enough, miserably enough. A numerous intermediate class end in Denial; and form a theory that there is no theory; that nothing is certain in the world, except this fact of Pleasure being pleasant; so they try to realize what trifling modicum of Pleasure they can come at, and to live contented therewith, winking hard. Of these we speak not here; but only of the second nobler class, who also have dared to say No, and cannot yet say Yea; but feel that in the No they dwell as in a Golgotha, where life enters not, where peace is not appointed them. Hard, for most part, is the fate of such men; the harder the nobler they are. In dim forecastings, wrestles within them the 'Divine Idea of the World,' yet will nowhere visibly

reveal itself. They have to realize a Worship for themselves, or live unworshipping. The Godlike has vanished from the world ; and they, by the strong cry of their soul's agony, like true wonder-workers, must again evoke its presence. This miracle is their appointed task ; which they must accomplish, or die wretchedly : this miracle has been accomplished by such ; but not in our land ; our land yet knows not of it. Behold a Byron, in melodious tones, ' cursing his day : ' he mistakes earthborn passionate Desire for heaven-inspired Freewill ; without heavenly loadstar, rushes madly into the dance of meteoric lights that hover on the mad Mahlstrom ; and goes down among its eddies. Hear a Shelley filling the earth with inarticulate wail ; like the infinite, inarticulate grief and weeping of forsaken infants. A noble Friedrich Schlegel, stupified in that fearful loneliness, as of a silenced battle-field, flies back to Catholicism ; as a child might to its slain mother's bosom, and cling there. In lower regions, how many a poor Hazlitt must wander on God's verdant earth, like the Unblest on burning deserts ; passionately dig wells, and draw up only the dry quicksand ; believe that he is seeking Truth, yet only wrestle among endless Sophisms, doing desperate battle as with spectre-hosts ; and die and make no sign !

To the better order of such minds any mad joy of Denial has long since ceased : the problem is not now to deny, but to ascertain and perform. Once in destroying the False, there was a certain inspiration ; but now the genius of Destruction has done its work, there is now nothing more to destroy. The doom of the Old has long been pronounced, and irrevocable ; the Old has passed away : but, alas, the New appears not in its stead ; the Time is still in pangs of travail with the New. Man has walked by the light of conflagrations, and amid the sound of falling cities ; and now there is darkness, and long watching till it be morning.

The voice even of the faithful can but exclaim: 'As yet struggles the twelfth hour of the Night: birds of darkness are on the wing, spectres uproar, the dead walk, the living dream. — Thou, Eternal Providence, wilt cause the day to dawn!'*

Such being the condition, temporal and spiritual, of the world at our Epoch, can we wonder that the world 'listens to itself,' and struggles and writhes, everywhere externally and internally, like a thing in pain? Nay, is not even this unhealthy action of the world's Organization, if the symptom of universal disease, yet also the symptom and sole means of restoration and cure? The effort of Nature, exerting her medicative force to cast out foreign impediments, and once more become One, become whole? In Practice, still more in Opinion, which is the precursor and prototype of Practice, there must needs be collision, convulsion; much has to be ground away. Thought must needs be Doubt and Inquiry, before it can again be Affirmation and Sacred Precept. Innumerable 'Philosophies of Man,' contending in boundless hubbub, must annihilate each other, before an inspired Poesy and Faith for Man can fashion itself together.

From this stunning hubbub, a true Babylonish confusion of tongues, we have here selected two voices; less as objects of praise or condemnation, than as signs how far the confusion has reached, what prospect there is of its abating. Friedrich Schlegel's *Lectures*, delivered at Dresden, and Mr. Hope's *Essay*, published in London, are the latest utterances of European Speculation: far asunder in external place, they stand at a still wider distance in inward purport; are, indeed, so opposite and yet so cognate that they may,

* Jean Paul's *Hesperus*. *Vorrede*.

in many senses, represent the two Extremes of our whole modern system of Thought; and be said to include between them all the Metaphysical Philosophies, so often alluded to here, which, of late times, from France, Germany, England, have agitated and almost overwhelmed us. Both in regard to matter and to form, the relation of these two Works is significant enough.

Speaking first of their cognate qualities, let us remark, not without emotion, one quite extraneous point of agreement; the fact that the Writers of both have departed from this world; they have now finished their search, and had all doubts resolved: while we listen to the voice, the tongue that uttered it has gone silent for ever. But the fundamental, all-pervading similarity lies in this circumstance, well worthy of being noted, that both these Philosophies are of the Dogmatic, or Constructive sort: each in its way is a kind of Genesis; an endeavor to bring the Phenomena of man's Universe once more under some theoretic Scheme: in both there is a decided principle of unity; they strive after a result which shall be positive; their aim is not to question, but to establish. This, especially if we consider with what comprehensive concentrated force it is here exhibited, forms a new feature in such works.

Under all other aspects, there is the most irreconcilable opposition; a staring contrariety, such as might provoke contrasts were there far fewer points of comparison. If Schlegel's Work is the apotheosis of Spiritualism; Hope's again is the apotheosis of Materialism: in the one, all Matter is evaporated into a Phenomenon, and terrestrial Life itself, with its whole doings and showings, held out as a Disturbance (*Zerrüttung*) produced by the *Zeitgeist* (Spirit of Time); in the other, Matter is distilled and sublimated into some semblance of Divinity: the one regards Space and Time as mere forms of man's mind, and without external

existence or reality ; the other supposes Space and Time to be 'incessantly created,' and rayed in upon us like a sort of 'gravitation.' Such is their difference in respect of purport ; no less striking is it in respect of manner, talent, success, and all outward characteristics. Thus, if in Schlegel we have to admire the power of Words, in Hope we stand astonished, it might almost be said, at the want of an articulate Language. To Schlegel his Philosophic Speech is obedient, dexterous, exact, like a promptly-ministering genius ; his names are so clear, so precise and vivid, that they almost (sometimes altogether) become things for him : with Hope there is no Philosophical Speech ; but a painful, confused, stammering, and struggling after such ; or the tongue, as in dotish forgetfulness, maunders low, longwinded, and speaks not the word intended, but another ; so that here the scarcely intelligible, in these endless convolutions, becomes the wholly unreadable ; and often we could ask, as that mad pupil did of his tutor in Philosophy, 'But whether is Virtue a fluid, then, or a gas ?' If the fact, that Schlegel, in the city of Dresden, could find audience for such high discourse, may excite our envy ; this other fact, that a person of strong powers, skilled in English Thought and master of its Dialect, could write the *Origin and Prospects of Man*, may painfully remind us of the reproach, 'that England has now no language for Meditation ; that England, the most Calculative, is the least Meditative, of all civilized countries.'

It is not our purpose to offer any criticism of Schlegel's Book ; in such limits as were possible here, we should despair of communicating even the faintest image of its significance. To the mass of readers, indeed, both among the Germans themselves, and still more elsewhere, it nowise addresses itself, and may lie for ever sealed. We point it out as a remarkable document of the Time and of the Man ;

can recommend it, moreover, to all earnest Thinkers, as a work deserving their best regard : a work full of deep meditation, wherein the infinite mystery of Life, if not represented, is decisively recognised. Of Schlegel, himself and his character, and spiritual history, we can profess no thorough or final understanding ; yet enough to make us view him with admiration and pity, nowise with harsh contemptuous censure ; and must say, with clearest persuasion, that the outcry of his being ' a renegade,' and so forth, is but like other such outcries, a judgment where there was neither jury, nor evidence, nor judge. The candid reader, in this Book itself, to say nothing of all the rest, will find traces of a high, far-seeing, earnest spirit, to whom ' Austrian Pensions,' and the Kaiser's crown, and Austria altogether, were but a light matter to the finding and vitally appropriating of Truth. Let us respect the sacred mystery of a Person ; rush not irreverently into man's Holy of Holies ! Were the lost little one, as we said already, found ' sucking its dead mother, on the field of carnage,' could it be other than a spectacle for tears ? A solemn mournful feeling comes over us when we see this last Work of Friedrich Schlegel, the unwearied seeker, end abruptly in the middle ; and, as if he *had not* yet found, as if emblematically of much, end with an ' Aber —,' with a ' But — !' This was the last word that came from the Pen of Friedrich Schlegel : about eleven at night he wrote it down, and there paused sick ; at one in the morning, Time for him had merged itself in Eternity ; he was, as we say, no more.

Still less can we attempt any criticism of Mr. Hope's new Book of Genesis. Indeed, under any circumstances, criticism of it were now impossible. Such an utterance could only be responded to in peals of laughter ; and laughter sounds hollow and hideous through the vaults of the dead. Of this monstrous Anomaly, where all sciences are

heaped and huddled together, and the principles of all are, with a childlike innocence, plied hither and thither, or wholly abolished in case of need ; where the First Cause is figured as a huge Circle, with nothing to do but radiate ' gravitation ' towards its centre ; and so construct a Universe, wherein all, from the lowest cucumber with its coolness, up to the highest seraph with his love, were but, ' gravitation,' direct or reflex, ' in more or less central globes,' — what can we say, except, with sorrow and shame, that it could have originated nowhere save in England ? It is a general agglomerate of all facts, notions, whims, and observations, as they lie in the brain of an English gentleman ; as an English gentleman, of unusual thinking power, is led to fashion them, in his schools and in his world : all these thrown into the crucible, and if not fused, yet soldered or conglutinated with boundless patience ; and now tumbled out here, heterogeneous, amorphous, unspeakable, a world's wonder. Most melancholy must we name the whole business ; full of long-continued thought, earnestness, loftiness of mind ; not without glances into the Deepest, a constant fearless endeavor after truth ; and with all this nothing accomplished, but the perhaps absurdest Book written in our century by a thinking man. A shameful Abortion ; which, however, need not now be smothered or mangled, for it is already dead ; only, in our love and sorrowing reverence for the writer of *Anastasis*, and the heroic seeker of Light, though not bringer thereof, let it be buried and forgotten.

For ourselves, the loud discord which jars in these two Works, in innumerable works of the like import, and generally in all the Thought and Action of this period, does not any longer utterly confuse us. Unhappy who, in such a time, felt not, at all conjunctures, ineradicably in his heart the knowledge that a God made this Universe, and a Demon not ! And shall Evil always prosper, then ? Out of all

Evil comes Good ; and no Good that is possible but shall one day be real. Deep and sad as is our feeling that we stand yet in the bodeful Night ; equally deep, indestructible is our assurance that the Morning also will not fail. Nay, already, as we look round, streaks of a dayspring are in the east : it is dawning ; when the time shall be fulfilled, it will be day. The progress of man towards higher and nobler Developments of whatever is highest and noblest in him, lies not only prophesied to Faith, but now written to the eye of Observation, so that he who runs may read.

One great step of progress, for example, we should say, in actual circumstances, was this same ; the clear ascertainment that we are in progress. About the grand Course of Providence, and his final Purposes with us, we can know nothing, or almost nothing : man begins in darkness, ends in darkness ; mystery is everywhere around us and in us, under our feet, among our hands. Nevertheless so much has become evident to every one, that this wondrous Mankind is advancing somewhither ; that at least all human things are, have been, and for ever will be, in Movement and Change ; — as, indeed, for beings that exist in Time, by virtue of Time, and are made of Time, might have been long since understood. In some provinces, it is true, as in Experimental Science, this discovery is an old one ; but in most others it belongs wholly to these latter days. How often, in former ages, by eternal Creeds, eternal Forms of Government, and the like, has it been attempted, fiercely enough, and with destructive violence, to chain the Future under the Past ; and say to the Providence, whose ways with man are mysterious, and through the great Deep : Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther ! A wholly insane attempt ; and for man himself, could it prosper, the frightfullest of all enchantments, a very Life-in-Death. Man's task here below, the destiny of every individual man, is to

be in turns Apprentice and Workman; or say rather, Scholar, Teacher, Discoverer: by nature he has a strength for learning, for imitating; but also a strength for acting, for knowing on his own account. Are we not in a World seen to be Infinite; the relations lying closest together modified by those latest-discovered, and lying farthest asunder? Could you ever spell-bind man into a Scholar merely, so that he had nothing to discover, to correct; could you ever establish a Theory of the Universe that were entire, unimprovable, and which needed only to be got by heart; man then were spiritually defunct, the species We now name Man had ceased to exist. But the gods, kinder to us than we are to ourselves, have forbidden such suicidal acts. As Phlogiston is displaced by Oxygen, and the Epicycles of Ptolemy by the Ellipses of Kepler; so does Paganism give place to Catholicism, Tyranny to Monarchy, and Feudalism to Representative Government,—where also the process does not stop. Perfection of Practice, like completeness of Opinion, is always approaching, never arrived; Truth, in the words of Schiller, *immer wird, nie ist*; never is, always is *a-being*.

Sad, truly, were our condition did we know but this, that Change is universal and inevitable. Launched into a dark shoreless sea of Pyrrhonism, what would remain for us but to sail aimless, hopeless; or make madly merry, while the devouring Death had not yet engulfed us? As, indeed, we have seen many, and still see many do. Nevertheless so stands it not. The venerator of the Past (and to what pure heart is the Past, in that 'moonlight of memory,' other than sad and holy?) sorrows not over its departure, as one utterly bereaved. The true Past departs not, nothing that was worthy in the Past departs; no Truth or Goodness realized by man ever dies, or can die; but is all still here, and, recognised or not, lives and works through endless changes.

If all things, to speak in the German dialect, are discerned by us, and exist for us, in an element of Time, and therefore of Mortality and Mutability; yet Time itself reposes on Eternity: the truly Great and Transcendental has its basis and substance in Eternity; stands revealed to us as Eternity in a vesture of Time. Thus in all Poetry, Worship, Art, Society, as one form passes into another, nothing is lost: it is but the superficial, as it were the *body* only, that grows obsolete and dies; under the mortal body lies a *soul* that is immortal; that anew incarnates itself in fairer revelation; and the Present is the living sum-total of the whole Past.

In Change, therefore, there is nothing terrible, nothing supernatural: on the contrary, it lies in the very essence of our lot, and life in this world. To-day is not yesterday: we ourselves change; how can our Works and Thoughts, if they are always to be the fittest, continue always the same? Change, indeed, is painful; yet ever needful: and if Memory have its force and worth, so also has Hope. Nay, if we look well to it, what is all Derangement, and necessity of great Change, in itself such an evil, but the product simply of *increased resources* which the old *methods* can no longer administer; of new wealth which the old coffers will no longer contain? What is it, for example, that in our own day bursts asunder the bonds of ancient Political Systems, and perplexes all Europe with the fear of Change, but even this: the increase of social resources, which the old social methods will no longer sufficiently administer? The new omnipotence of the Steam-engine is hewing asunder quite other mountains than the physical. Have not our economical distresses, those barnyard Conflagrations themselves, the frightfullest madness of our mad epoch, their rise also in what is a real increase: increase of Men; of human Force; properly, in such a Planet as ours, the most

precious of all increases? It is true again, the ancient methods of administration will no longer suffice. Must the indomitable millions, full of old Saxon energy and fire, lie cooped up in this Western Nook, choking one another, as in a Blackhole of Calcutta, while a whole fertile untenanted Earth, desolate for want of the ploughshare, cries: Come and till me, come and reap me? If the ancient Captains can no longer yield guidance, new must be sought after: for the difficulty lies not in nature, but in artifice: the European Calcutta-Blackhole has no walls but air ones, and paper ones. — So too, Skepticism itself, with its innumerable mischiefs, what is it but the sour fruit of a most blessed increase, that of Knowledge; a fruit, too, that will not always continue *sour*?

In fact, much as we have said and mourned about the unproductive prevalence of Metaphysics, it was not without some insight into the use that lies in them. Metaphysical Speculation, if a necessary evil, is the forerunner of much good. The fever of Skepticism must needs burn itself out, and burn out thereby the Impurities that caused it; then again will there be clearness, health. The principle of Life, which now struggles painfully, in the outer, thin, and barren domain of the Conscious or Mechanical, may then withdraw into its inner Sanctuaries, its abysses of mystery and miracle; withdraw deeper than ever into that domain of the Unconscious, by nature infinite and inexhaustible; and creatively work there. From that mystic region, and from that alone, all wonders, all Poesies, and Religions, and Social Systems have proceeded: the like wonders, and greater and higher, lie slumbering there; and, brooded on by the spirit of the waters, will evolve themselves, and rise like exhalations from the Deep.

Of our modern Metaphysics, accordingly, may not this already be said, that if they have produced no Affirmation,

they have destroyed much Negation? It is a disease expelling a disease: the fire of Doubt, as above hinted, consuming away the Doubtful; that so the Certain come to light, and again lie visible on the surface. English or French Metaphysics, in reference to this last stage of the speculative process, are not what we allude to here; but only the Metaphysics of the Germans. In France or England, since the days of Diderot and Hume, though all thought has been of a skeptico-metaphysical texture, so far as there were any Thought, we have seen no Metaphysics; but only more or less ineffectual questionings whether such could be. In the Pyrrhonism of Hume and the Materialism of Diderot, Logic had, as it were, overshot itself, overset itself. Now, though the athlete, to use our old figure, cannot, by much lifting, lift up his own body, he may shift it out of a laming posture, and get to stand in a free one. Such a service have German Metaphysics done for man's mind. The second sickness of Speculation has abolished both itself and the first. Friedrich Schlegel complains much of the fruitlessness, the tumult and transiency of German as of all Metaphysics; and with reason: yet in that wide-spreading, deep-whirling vortex of Kantism, so soon metamorphosed into Fichteism, Schellingism, and then as Hegelism, and Cousinism, perhaps finally evaporated, is not this issue visible enough, that Pyrrhonism and Materialism, themselves necessary phenomena in European culture, have disappeared; and a Faith in Religion has again become possible and inevitable for the scientific mind; and the word *Free-thinker* no longer means the Denier or Caviller, but the Believer, or the Ready to believe? Nay, in the higher Literature of Germany, there already lies, for him that can read it, the beginning of a new revelation of the Godlike; as yet unrecognised by the mass of the world; but waiting there for recognition, and

sure to find it when the fit hour comes. This age also is not wholly without its Prophets.

Again, under another aspect, if Utilitarianism, or Radicalism, or the Mechanical Philosophy, or by whatever name it is called, has still its long task to do; nevertheless we can now see through it and beyond it: in the better heads, even among us English, it has become obsolete; as in other countries, it has been, in such heads, for some forty or even fifty years. What sound mind among the French, for example, now fancies that men can be governed by 'Constitutions;' by the never so cunning mechanizing of Self-interests, and all conceivable adjustments of checking and balancing; in a word, by the best possible solution of this quite insoluble and impossible problem, *Given a world of Knaves, to produce an Honesty from their united action?* Were not experiments enough of this kind tried before all Europe, and found wanting, when, in that doomsday of France, the infinite gulf of human Passion shivered asunder the thin rinds of Habit; and burst forth all-devouring, as in seas of Nether Fire? Which cunningly-devised 'Constitution,' constitutional, republican, democratic, sans-culottic, could bind that raging chasm together? Were they not all burnt up, like Paper as they were, in its molten eddies; and still the fire-sea raged fiercer than before? It is not by Mechanism, but by Religion; not by Self-interest, but by Loyalty, that men are governed or governable.

Remarkable it is, truly, how everywhere the eternal fact begins again to be recognised, that there is a Godlike in human affairs; that God not only made us and beholds us, but is in us and around us; that the Age of Miracles, as it ever was, now is. Such recognition we discern on all hands, and in all countries: in each country after its own fashion. In France, among the younger nobler minds, strangely enough; where, in their loud contention with the

Actual and Conscious, the Ideal or Unconscious is, for the time, without exponent; where Religion means not the parent of Polity, as of all that is highest, but Polity itself; and this and the other earnest man has not been wanting, who could whisper audibly: 'Go to, I will make a religion.' In England still more strangely; as in all things, worthy England will have its way: by the shrieking of hysterical women, casting out of devils, and other 'gifts of the Holy Ghost.' Well might Jean Paul say, in this his twelfth hour of the Night, 'the living dream;' well might he say, 'the dead walk.' Meanwhile let us rejoice rather that so much has been seen into, were it through never so diffracting media, and never so madly distorted; that in all dialects, though but half-articulately, this high Gospel begins to be preached: 'Man is still Man.' The genius of Mechanism, as was once before predicted, will not always sit like a choking incubus on our soul; but at length when by a new magic Word the old spell is broken, become our slave, and as familiar-spirit do all our bidding. 'We are near awakening when we dream that we dream.'

He that has an eye and a heart can even now say: Why should I falter? Light has come into the world; to such as love Light, so as Light must be loved, with a boundless all-doing, all-enduring love. For the rest, let that vain struggle to read the mystery of the Infinite cease to harass us. It is a mystery which, through all ages, we shall only read here a line of, there another line of. Do we not already know that the name of the Infinite is Good, is God? Here on Earth we are as Soldiers, fighting in a foreign land; that understand not the plan of the campaign, and have no need to understand it; seeing well what is at our hand to be done. Let us do it like Soldiers, with submission, with courage, with a heroic joy. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.' Behind us, behind each

one of us, lie Six Thousand Years of human effort, human conquest : before us is the boundless Time, with its as yet uncreated and unconquered Continents and Eldorados, which we, even we, have to conquer, to create ; and from the bosom of Eternity shine for us celestial guiding stars.

‘ My inheritance how wide and fair !

Time is my fair seed-field, of Time I'm heir.’

GOETHE'S PORTRAIT.*

[Fraser's Magazine, 1832.]

READER! thou here beholdest the Eidolon of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. So looks and lives, now in his eighty-third year, afar in the bright little friendly circle of Weimar, 'the clearest, most universal man of his time.' Strange enough is the cunning that resides in the ten fingers, especially what they bring to pass by pencil and pen! Him who never saw England, England now sees: from Fraser's 'Gallery' he looks forth here, wondering, doubtless, how *he* came into such a *Lichtstrasse* ('light-street,' or galaxy); yet with kind recognition of all neighbors, even as the moon looks kindly on lesser lights, and, were they but fish-oil cressets, or terrestrial Vauxhall stars (of clipped tin), forbids not their shining. — Nay, the very soul of the man thou canst likewise behold. Do but look well in those forty volumes of 'musical wisdom,' which, under the title of *Goethe's Werke*, Cotta of Tübingen, or Black and Young of Covent Garden — once offer them a trifle of drink-money — will cheerfully hand thee: greater sight, or more profitable, thou wilt not meet with in this generation. The German language, it is presumable, thou knowest; if not, shouldst thou undertake the study thereof for that sole end, it were well worth thy while.

Croquis (a man otherwise of rather satirical turn) sur-

* By Stieler of Munich; the copy in Fraser's Magazine proved a total failure and involuntary caricature, — resembling, as was said at the time, a wretched old-clothesman carrying behind his back a hat which he seemed to have stolen.

prises us, on this occasion, with a fit of enthusiasm. He declares often, that here is the finest of all living heads; speaks much of blended passion and repose; serene depths of eyes; the brow, the temples, royally arched, a very palace of thought;—and so forth.

The writer of these Notices is not without decision of character, and can believe what he knows. He answers Brother Croquis, that it is no wonder the head should be royal and a palace; for a most royal work was appointed to be done therein. Reader! within that head the whole world lies mirrored, in such clear, ethereal harmony, as it has done in none since Shakspeare left us: even *this* Rag-fair of a world, wherein thou painfully strugglest, and (as is like) stumblest— all lies transfigured here, and revealed authentically to be still holy, still divine. What alchymy was that: to find a mad universe full of skepticism, discord, desperation; and *transmute* it into a wise universe of belief, and melody, and reverence! Was not *there* an *opus magnum*, if one ever was? This, then, is he who, heroically doing and enduring, has accomplished it.

In this distracted time of ours, wherein men have lost their old loadstars, and wandered after night-fires and foolish will-o'-wisp; and all things, in that 'shaking of the nations,' have been tumbled into chaos, the high made low and the low high, and ever and anon some duke of this, and king of that, is gurgled aloft, to float there for moments; and fancies himself the governor and head-director of it all, and *is* but the topmost froth-bell, to burst again and mingle with the wild fermenting mass,— in this so despicable time, we say, there were nevertheless— be the bounteous heavens ever thanked for it!— *two great men* sent among us. The one, in the island of St. Helena now sleeps 'dark and lone, amid the ocean's everlasting lullaby;' the other still rejoices in the blessed sunlight, on the banks of the Ilme,

Great was the part allotted each, great the talent given him for the same; yet, mark the contrast! Bonaparte walked through the war-convulsed world like an all-devouring earthquake, heaving, thundering, hurling kingdom over kingdom; Goethe was as the mild-shining, inaudible light, which, notwithstanding, can again make that chaos into a creation. Thus, too, we see Napoleon, with his Austerlitzes, Waterloos, and Borodinos, is quite gone — all departed, sunk to silence like a tavern-brawl. While this other! — *he* still shines with his direct radiance; his inspired words are to abide in living hearts, as the life and inspiration of thinkers, born and still unborn. Some fifty years hence, his thinking will be found translated, and ground down, even to the capacity of the diurnal press; acts of parliament will be passed in virtue of him: — this man, if we well consider of it, is appointed to be ruler of the world.

Reader! to thee thyself, even now, he has one counsel to give, the secret of his whole poetic alchymy: *GEDENKE ZU LEBEN*. Yes, 'think of living!' Thy life, wert thou the 'pitifullest of all the sons of earth,' is no idle dream, but a solemn reality. It is thy own; it is all thou hast to front eternity with. Work, then, even as he has done, and does — 'LIKE A STAR UNHASTING, YET UNRESTING.' — *Sic valeas*.

BIOGRAPHY.*

[Fraser's Magazine, 1839.]

MAN'S sociality of nature evinces itself, in spite of all that can be said, with abundant evidence by this one fact, were there no other: the unspeakable delight he takes in Biography. It is written, 'The proper study of mankind is man'; to which study, let us candidly admit, he, by true or by false methods, applies himself, nothing loath. 'Man is perennially interesting to man; nay, if we look strictly to it, there is nothing else interesting.' How inexpressibly comfortable to know our fellow-creature; to see into him, understand his goings forth, decipher the whole heart of his mystery: nay, not only to see into him, but even to see out of him, to view the world altogether as he views it; so that we can theoretically construe him, and could almost practically personate him; and do now thoroughly discern both what manner of man he is, and what manner of thing he has got to work on and live on!

A scientific interest and a poetic one alike inspire us in this matter. A scientific: because every mortal has a Problem of Existence set before him, which, were it only, what for the most it is, the Problem of keeping soul and body together, must be to a certain extent *original*, unlike every other; and yet, at the same time, so *like* every other;

* The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL. D.: including a Tour to the Hebrides: By James Boswell, Esq. — A new Edition, with numerous Additions and Notes: By John Wilson Croker, LL. D., F. R. S. 5 vols. London, 1831.

like our own, therefore ; instructive, moreover, since we also are indentured to *live*. A poetic interest still more : for precisely this same struggle of human Free-will against material Necessity, which every man's Life, by the mere circumstance that the man continues alive, will more or less victoriously exhibit, — is that which above all else, or rather inclusive of all else, calls the Sympathy of mortal hearts into action ; and whether as acted, or as represented and written of, not only is Poetry, but is the sole Poetry possible. Borne onwards by which two all-embracing interests, may the earnest Lover of Biography expand himself on all sides, and indefinitely enrich himself. Looking with the eyes of every new neighbor, he can discern a new world different for each : feeling with the heart of every neighbor, he lives with every neighbor's life, even as with his own. Of these millions of living men each individual is a mirror to us : a mirror both scientific and poetic ; or, if you will, both natural and magical ; — from which one would so gladly draw aside the gauze veil ; and, peering therein, discern the image of his own natural face, and the supernatural secrets that prophetically lie under the same !

Observe, accordingly, to what extent, in the actual course of things, this business of Biography is practised and relished. Define to thyself, judicious Reader, the real significance of these phenomena, named Gossip, Egotism, Personal Narrative (miraculous or not), Scandal, Raillery, Slander, and such like ; the sum-total of which (with some fractional addition of a better ingredient, generally too small to be noticeable) constitutes that other grand phenomenon still called ' Conversation.' Do they not mean wholly : *Biography* and *Autobiography* ? Not only in the common Speech of men ; but in all Art, too, which is or should be the concentrated and conserved essence of what men can speak and show, Biography is almost the one thing needful.

Even in the highest works of Art our interest, as the critics complain, is too apt to be strongly or even mainly of a Biographic sort. In the Art, we can nowise forget the Artist : while looking on the *Transfiguration*, while studying the *Iliad*, we ever strive to figure to ourselves what spirit dwelt in Raphael ; what a head was that of Homer, wherein, woven of Elysian light and Tartarean gloom, that old world fashioned itself together, of which these written Greek characters are but a feeble though perennial copy. The Painter and the Singer are present to us ; we partially and for the time become the very Painter and the very Singer, while we enjoy the Picture and the Song. Perhaps, too, let the critic say what he will, this is the highest enjoyment, the clearest recognition, we can have of these. Art indeed is Art ; yet Man also is Man. Had the *Transfiguration* been painted without human hand ; had it grown merely on the canvass, say by atmospheric influences, as lichen-pictures do on rocks, — it were a grand Picture doubtless ; yet nothing like so grand as *the* Picture, which, on opening our eyes, we everywhere in Heaven and in Earth see painted ; and everywhere pass over with indifference, — because the Painter was not a Man. Think of this ; much lies in it. The Vatican is great ; yet poor to Chimborazo or the Peak of Teneriffe : its dome is but a foolish Big-endian or Little-endian chip of an egg-shell, compared with that star-fretted Dome where Arcturus and Orion glance for ever ; which latter, notwithstanding, who looks at, save perhaps some necessitous star-gazer bent to make Almanacs, some thick quilted watchman, to see what weather it will prove ? The Biographic interest is wanting : no Michael Angelo was He who built that ‘ Temple of Immensity ; ’ therefore do we, pitiful Littlenesses as we are, turn rather to wonder and to worship in the little toybox of a Temple built by our like.

Still more decisively, still more exclusively does the

Biographic interest manifest itself, as we descend into lower regions of spiritual communication; through the whole range of what is called Literature. Of History, for example, the most honored, if not honorable species of composition, is not the whole purport biographic? 'History,' it has been said, 'is the essence of innumerable Biographies.' Such, at least, it should be: whether it is, might admit of question. But, in any case, what hope have we in turning over those old interminable Chronicles, with their garrulities and insipidities; or still worse, in patiently examining those modern Narrations, of the Philosophic kind, where 'Philosophy, teaching by Experience,' must sit like owl on housetop, seeing nothing, understanding nothing, uttering only, with solemnity enough, her perpetual most wearisome *hoo-hoo*: — what hope have we, except the for most part fallacious one of gaining some acquaintance with our fellow-creatures, though dead and vanished, yet dear to us; how they got along in those old days, suffering and doing; to what extent, and under what circumstances, they resisted the Devil and triumphed over him, or struck their colors to him, and were trodden under foot by him; how, in short, the perennial Battle went, which men name Life, which we also in these new days, with indifferent fortune, have to fight, and must bequeath to our sons and grandsons to go on fighting, — till the Enemy one day be quite vanquished and abolished, or else the great Night sink and part the combatants; and thus, either by some Millennium or some new Noah's Deluge, the Volume of Universal History wind itself up! Other hope, in studying such Books, we have none: and that it is a deceitful hope, who that has tried knows not? A feast of widest Biographic insight is spread for us; we enter full of hungry anticipation: alas! like so many other feasts, which Life invites us to, a mere Ossian's 'feast of shells,' — the food and liquor being all emptied out and

clean gone, and only the vacant dishes and deceitful emblems thereof left! Your modern Historical Restaurateurs are indeed little better than high-priests of Famine; that keep choicest china dinner-sets, only no dinner to serve therein. Yet such is our Biographic appetite, we run trying from shop to shop, with ever new hope; and, unless we could eat the wind, with ever new disappointment.

Again, consider the whole class of Fictitious Narratives; from the highest category of epic or dramatic Poetry, in Shakspeare and Homer, down to the lowest of froth Prose, in the Fashionable Novel. What are all these but so many mimic Biographies? Attempts, here by an inspired Speaker, there by an uninspired Babblers, to deliver himself, more or less ineffectually, of the grand secret wherewith all hearts labor oppressed: The significance of Man's Life; — which deliverance, even as traced in the unfurnished head, and printed at the Minerva Press, finds readers. For, observe, though there is *a* greatest Fool, as a superlative in every kind; and *the* most Foolish man in the Earth is now indubitably living and breathing, and did this morning or lately eat breakfast, and is even now digesting the same; and looks out on the world, with his dim horn-eyes, and inwardly forms some unspeakable theory thereof: yet where shall the authentically Existing be personally met with! Can one of us, otherwise than by guess, know that we have got sight of him, have orally communed with him? To take even the narrower sphere of this our English metropolis, can any one confidently say to himself, that he has conversed with the identical, individual, Stupidest man now extant in London? No one. Deep as we dive in the Profound, there is ever a new depth opens: where the ultimate bottom may lie, through what new scenes of being we must pass before reaching it (except that we know it does lie somewhere, and might by human faculty and opportunity be reached), is

altogether a mystery to us. Strange, tantalizing pursuit! We have the fullest assurance, not only that there is a Stupidest of London men actually resident, with bed and board of some kind, in London; but that several persons have been or perhaps are now speaking face to face with him: while for us, chase it as we may, such scientific blessedness will too probably be for ever denied!— But the thing we meant to enforce was this comfortable fact, that no known Head was so wooden, but there might be other heads to which it were a genius and Friar Bacon's Oracle. Of no given Book, not even of a Fashionable Novel, can you predicate with certainty that its vacuity is absolute; that there are not other vacuities which shall partially replenish themselves therefrom, and esteem it a *plenum*. How knowest thou, may the distressed Novelist exclaim, that I, here where I sit, am the Foolishest of existing mortals; that this my Long-ear of a Fictitious Biography shall not find one and the other, into whose still longer ears it may be the means, under Providence, of instilling somewhat? We answer, None knows, none can certainly know: therefore, write on, worthy Brother, even as thou canst, as it has been given thee.

Here, however, in regard to 'Fictitious Biographies,' and much other matter of like sort, which the greener mind in these days inditeth, we may as well insert some singular sentences on the importance and significance of *Reality*, as they stand written for us in Professor Gottfried Sauerteig's *Ästhetische Springwürzel*: a Work, perhaps, as yet new to most English readers. The Professor and Doctor is not a man whom we can praise without reservation; neither shall we say that his *Springwürzel* (a sort of magical pick-locks, as he affectedly names them) are adequate to 'start' every bolt that locks up an æsthetic mystery: nevertheless, in his crabbed, one-sided way, he sometimes hits masses of

the truth. We endeavor to translate faithfully, and trust the reader will find it worth serious perusal :

'The significance, even for poetic purposes,' says Sauerteig, 'that lies in REALITY, is too apt to escape us; is perhaps only now beginning to be discerned. When we named *Rousseau's Confessions* an elegiaco-didactic Poem, we meant more than an empty figure of speech; we meant a historical scientific fact.

'Fiction, while the feigner of it knows that he is feigning, partakes, more than we suspect, of the nature of *lying*; and has ever an, in some degree, unsatisfactory character. All Mythologies were once Philosophies; were *believed*: the Epic Poems of old time, so long as they continued *epic*, and had any complete impressiveness, were Histories, and understood to be narratives of *facts*. In so far as Homer employed his gods as mere ornamental fringes, and had not himself, or at least did not expect his hearers to have, a belief that they were real agents in those antique doings; so far did he fail to be *genuine*; so far was he a partially *hollow* and false singer; and sang to please only a portion of man's mind, not the whole thereof.

'Imagination is, after all, but a poor matter when it must part company with Understanding, and even front it hostilely in flat contradiction. Our mind is divided in twain: there is contest; wherein that which is weaker must needs come to the worse. Now of all feelings, states, principles, call it what you will, in man's mind, is not Belief the clearest, strongest; against which all others contend in vain? Belief is, indeed, the beginning and first condition of all spiritual Force whatsoever: only in so far as Imagination, were it but momentarily, is *believed*, can there be any use or meaning in it, any enjoyment of it. And what is momentary Belief? The enjoyment of a moment. Whereas a perennial Belief were enjoyment perennially, and with the whole united soul.

'It is thus that I judge of the Supernatural in an Epic Poem; and would say, the instant it has ceased to be authentically supernatural, and become what you call "Machinery;" sweep it out of sight (*schaff'cs mir vom Halse*)! Of a truth, that same "Machinery," about which the critics make such hubbub, was well named

Machinery; for it is in very deed mechanical, nowise inspired or poetical. Neither for us is there the smallest æsthetic enjoyment in it; save only in this way: that we believe it *to have been believed*, — by the Singer or his Hearers; into whose case we now laboriously struggle to transport ourselves; and so, with stinted enough result, catch some reflex of the Reality, which for them was wholly real, and visible face to face. Whenever it has come so far that your “Machinery” is avowedly mechanical and unbelieved, — what is it else, if we dare tell ourselves the truth, but a miserable, meaningless Deception, kept up by old use and wont alone? If the gods of an *Iliad* are to us no longer authentic Shapes of Terror, heart-stirring, heart-appalling, but only vague-glittering Shadows, — what must the dead Pagan gods of an *Epigoniad* be, the dead-living Pagan-Christian gods of a *Lusiad*, the concrete-abstract, evangelical-metaphysical gods of a *Paradise Lost*? Superannuated lumber! Cast raiment, at best; in which some poor mime, strutting and swaggering, may or may not set forth new noble Human Feelings (again a Reality), and so secure, or not secure, our pardon of such hoydenish masking, — for which, in any case, he has a pardon to *ask*.

‘True enough, none but the earliest Epic Poems can claim this distinction of entire credibility, of Reality: after an *Iliad*, a *Shaster*, a *Koran*, and other the like primitive performances, the rest seem, by this rule of mine, to be altogether excluded from the list. Accordingly, what *are* all the rest, from Virgil’s *Aeneid* downwards, in comparison? — Frosty, artificial, heterogeneous things; more of gumflowers than of roses; at best, of the two mixed incoherently together: to some of which, indeed, it were hard to deny the title of Poems; yet to no one of which can that title belong in any sense even resembling the old high one it, in those old days, conveyed, — when the epithet “divine” or “sacred,” as applied to the uttered Word of man, was not a vain metaphor, a vain sound, but a real name with meaning. Thus, too, the farther we recede from those early days, when Poetry, as true Poetry is always, was still sacred or divine, and inspired (what ours, in great part, only pretends to be), — the more impossible becomes it to produce any, we say not true Poetry, but tolerable semblance of such; the hollower, in particular, grow all manner of Epics; till

at length, as in this generation, the very name of Epic sets men a-yawning, the announcement of a new Epic is received as a public calamity.

'But what if the *impossible* being-once for all quite discarded, the *probable* be well adhered to: how stands it with fiction *then*? Why, then, I would say, the evil is much mended, but nowise completely cured. We have then, in place of the wholly dead modern Epic, the partially living modern Novel; to which latter it is much easier to lend that above-mentioned, so essential "momentary credence" than to the former: indeed, infinitely easier; for the former being flatly incredible, no mortal *can* for a moment credit it, for a moment enjoy it. Thus, here and there, a *Tom Jones*, a *Meister*, a *Cruve*, will yield no little solacement to the minds of men; though still immeasurably less than a *Reality* would, were the significance thereof as impressively unfolded, were the genius that could so unfold it once given us by the kind Heavens. Neither say thou that proper Realities are wanting: for Man's Life, now as of old, is the genuine work of God; wherever there is a Man, a God also is revealed, and all that is Godlike: a whole epitome of the Infinite, with its meanings, lies enfolded in the Life of every Man. Only, alas, that the Seer to discern this same Godlike, and with fit utterance *unfold* it for us, is wanting, and may long be wanting!

'Nay, a question arises on us here, wherein the whole German reading-world will eagerly join: Whether man *can* any longer be so interested by the spoken Word, as he often was in those primeval days, when, rapt away by its inscrutable power, he pronounced it, in such dialect as he had, to be *transcendental* (to *transcend* all measure), to be sacred, prophetic, and the inspiration of a god? For myself, I (*ich meines Ortes*), by faith or by insight, do heartily understand that the answer to such question will be, Yea! For never that I could in searching find out, has Man been, by Time which devours so much, deprived of any faculty whatsoever that he in any era was possessed of. To my seeming, the babe born yesterday has all the organs of Body, Soul, and Spirit, and in exactly the same combination and entireness, that the oldest Pelasgic Greek, or Mesopotamian Patriarch, or Father Adam, himself could boast of. Ten fingers, one heart with venous and arterial

blood therein, still belong to man that is born of woman: when did he lose any of his spiritual Endowments either; above all, his highest spiritual Endowment, that of revealing Poetic Beauty, and of adequately receiving the same? Not the material, not the susceptibility is wanting; only the poet, or long series of Poets, to work on these. True, alas too true, the Poet is still utterly wanting, or all but utterly: nevertheless have we not centuries enough before us to produce him in? Him and much else! — I, for the present, will but predict that chiefly by working more and more on REALITY, and evolving more and more wisely *its* inexhaustible meanings; and, in brief, speaking forth in fit utterance whatsoever our whole soul *believes*, and ceasing to speak forth what thing soever our whole soul does not believe, — will this high emprise be accomplished, or approximated to.'

These notable, and not unfounded, though partial and *deep*-seeing rather than *wide*-seeing observations on the great import of REALITY, considered even as a poetic material, we have inserted the more willingly, because a transient feeling to the same purpose may often have suggested itself to many readers; and, on the whole, it is good that every reader and every writer understand, with all intensity of conviction, what quite infinite worth lies in *Truth*; how all-pervading, omnipotent, in man's mind, is the thing we name *Belief*. For the rest, Herr Sauerteig, though one-sided, on this matter of Reality, seems heartily persuaded, and is not perhaps so ignorant as he looks. It cannot be unknown to him, for example, what noise is made about 'Invention;' what a supreme rank this faculty is reckoned to hold in the poetic endowment. Great truly is Invention; nevertheless, that is but a poor exercise of it with which Belief is not concerned. 'An Irishman with whisky in his head,' as poor Byron said, will invent you, in this kind, till there is enough and to spare. Nay, perhaps, if we consider well, the highest exercise of Invention has, in very deed, nothing to do with Fiction; but is an invention of new

Truth, what we can call a Revelation; which last does undoubtedly transcend all other poetic efforts, nor can Herr Sauerteig be too loud in its praises. But, on the other hand, whether such effort is still possible for man, Herr Sauerteig and the bulk of the world are probably at issue, — and will probably continue so till that same 'Revelation' or new 'Invention of Reality,' of the sort he desiderates, shall itself make its appearance.

Meanwhile, quitting these airy regions, let any one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical *fact* may become, as contrasted with the grandest *fictional event*; what an incalculable force lies for us in this consideration: The Thing which I here hold imaged in my mind did actually occur; was, in very truth, an element in the system of the All, whereof I too form part; had therefore, and has, through all time, an authentic being; is not a dream, but a reality! We ourselves can remember reading, in *Lord Clarendon*, with feelings perhaps somehow accidentally opened to it, — certainly with a depth of impression strange to us then and now, — that insignificant looking passage, where Charles, after the battle of Worcester, glides down, with Squire Careless, from the Royal Oak, at nightfall, being hungry: how, 'making a shift to get over hedges and ditches, after walking at least eight or nine miles, which were the more grievous to the King by the weight of his boots (for he could not put *them* off, when he cut off his hair, for want of shoes), before morning they came to a poor cottage, the owner whereof being a Roman Catholic was known to Careless.' How this poor drudge, being knocked up from his snoring, 'carried them into a little barn full of hay, which was a better lodging than he had for himself;' and by and by, not without difficulty, brought his Majesty 'a piece of bread and a great pot of buttermilk,' saying candidly that 'he himself lived by his daily

labor, and that what he had brought him was the fare he and his wife had : ' on which nourishing diet his Majesty, ' staying upon the haymow, ' feeds thankfully for two days ; and then departs, under new guidance, having first changed clothes, down to the very shirt and ' old pair of shoes, ' with his landlord ; and so, as worthy Bunyan has it, ' goes on his way, and sees him no more. ' * Singular enough if we will think of it ! This then was a genuine flesh-and-blood Rustic of the year 1651 : he did actually swallow bread and butter-milk (not having ale and bacon), and do field-labor ; with these hob-nailed ' shoes ' has sprawled through mud-roads in winter, and, jocund or not, driven his team a-field in summer : he made bargains ; had chafferings and higglings, now a sore heart, now a glad one ; was born ; was a son, was a father ; — toiled in many ways, being forced to it, till the strength was all worn out of him : and then — lay down ' to rest his galled back, ' and sleep there till the long-distant morning ! — How comes it, that he alone of all the British rustics who tilled and lived along with him, on whom the blessed sun on that same ' fifth day of September ' was shining, should have chanced to rise on us ; that this poor pair of clouted Shoes, out of the million million hides that have been tanned, and cut, and worn, should still subsist, and hang visibly together ? We see him but for a moment ; for one moment, the blanket of the Night is rent asunder, so that we behold and see, and then closes over him — for ever.

So too, in some *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, how indelible, and magically bright, does many a little *Reality* dwell in our remembrance ! There is no need that the personages on the scene be a King and Clown ; that the scene be the Forest of the Royal Oak, ' on the borders of Staffordshire : '

* History of the Rebellion, iii. 625.

need only that the scene lie on this old firm Earth of ours, where we also have so surprisingly arrived; that the personages be *men*, and *seen* with the eyes of a man. Foolish enough, how some slight, perhaps mean and even ugly incident (if *real*, and well presented) will fix itself in a susceptible memory, and lie ennobled there; silvered over with the pale cast of thought, with the pathos which belongs only to the Dead. For the Past is all holy to us; the Dead are all holy, even they that were base and wicked while alive. Their baseness and wickedness was not *They*, was but the heavy unmanageable Environment that lay round them, with which they fought unprevailing: *they* (the etherial God-given Force that dwelt in them, and was their *Self*) have now shuffled off that heavy Environment, and are free and pure: their life-long Battle, go how it might, is all ended, with many wounds or with fewer; they have been recalled from it, and the once harsh-jarring battle-field has become a silent awe-inspiring Golgotha, and *Gottesacker* (Field of God)!—Boswell relates this in itself smallest and poorest of occurrences: ‘As we walked along the Strand to-night, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted us in the usual enticing manner. “No, no, my girl,” said Johnson; “it won’t do.” He, however, did not treat her with harshness; and we talked of the wretched life of such women.’ Strange power of *Reality*! Not even this poorest of occurrences, but now, after seventy years are come and gone, has a meaning for us. Do but consider that it is *true*; that it did in very deed occur! That unhappy Outcast, with all her sins and woes, her lawless desires, too complex mischances, her wailings and her riotings, has departed utterly: alas! her siren finery has got all besmitched; ground, generations since, into dust and smoke; of her degraded body, and whole miserable earthly existence, all is away: *she* is no longer here, but far from us,

in the bosom of Eternity, — whence we too came, whither we too are bound ! Johnson said, ‘ No, no, my girl ; it won’t do ; ’ and then ‘ we talked ; ’ — and herewith the wretched one, seen but for the twinkling of an eye, passes on into the utter Darkness. No high Calista, that ever issued from Story-teller’s brain, will impress us more deeply than this meanest of the mean ; and for a good reason : That *she* issued from the Maker of Men.

It is well worth the Artist’s while to examine for himself what it is that gives such pitiful incidents their memorableness ; his aim likewise is, above all things, to be *memorable*. Half the effect, we already perceive, depends on the object ; on its being *real*, on its being really *seen*. The other half will depend on the observer ; and the question now is : How are real objects to be *so* seen ; on what quality of observing, or of style in describing, does this so intense pictorial power depend ? Often a slight circumstance contributes curiously to the result : some little, and perhaps to appearance accidental, feature is presented ; a light-gleam, which instantaneously *excites* the mind, and urges it to complete the picture, and evolve the meaning thereof for itself. By critics, such light-gleams and their almost magical influence have frequently been noted : but the power to produce such, to select such features as will produce them, is generally treated as a knack, or trick of the trade, a secret for being ‘ graphic ; ’ whereas these magical feats are, in truth, rather inspirations ; and the gift of performing them, which acts unconsciously, without forethought, and as if by nature alone, is properly a *genius* for description.

One grand, invaluable secret there is, however, which includes all the rest, and, what is comfortable, lies clearly in every man’s power : *To have an open loving heart, and what follows from the possession of such !* Truly has it been said, emphatically in these days ought it to be repeat-

ed: A loving Heart is the beginning of all Knowledge. This it is that opens the whole mind, quickens every faculty of the intellect to do its fit work, that of *knowing*; and therefrom, by sure consequence, of *vividly uttering forth*. Other secret for being 'graphic' is there none, worth having: but this is an all-sufficient one. See, for example, what a small Boswell can do! Hereby, indeed, is the whole man made a living mirror, wherein the wonders of this ever-wonderful Universe are, in their true light (which is ever a magical, miraculous one) represented, and reflected back on us. It has been said, 'the heart sees farther than the head:' but, indeed, without the seeing heart, there is no true seeing for the head so much as possible; all is mere *oversight*, hallucination, and vain superficial phantasmagoria, which can permanently profit no one.

Here, too, may we not pause for an instant, and make a practical reflection? Considering the multitude of mortals that handle the Pen in these days, and can mostly spell, and write without glaring violations of grammar, the question naturally arises: How is it, then, that no Work proceeds from them, bearing any stamp of authenticity and permanence; of worth for more than one day? Ship-loads of Fashionable Novels, Sentimental Rhymes, Tragedies, Farces, Diaries of Travel, Tales by flood and field, are swallowed monthly into the bottomless Pool: still does the Press toil; innumerable Paper-makers, Compositors, Printers' Devils, Bookbinders, and Hawkers grown hoarse with loud proclaiming, rest not from their labor; and still, in torrents, rushes on the great array of Publications, unpausing, to their final home; and still Oblivion, like the Grave, cries: Give! Give! How is it that of all these countless multitudes, no one can attain to the smallest mark of excellence, or produce aught that shall endure longer than 'snowflake on the river,' or the foam of penny-beer? We an-

swer: Because they *are* foam; because there is no *Reality* in them. These Three Thousand men, women, and children, that make up the army of British Authors, do not, if we will well consider it, *see* anything whatever; consequently *have* nothing that they can record and utter, only more or fewer things that they can plausibly pretend to record. The Universe, of Man and Nature, is still quite shut up from them; the 'open secret' still utterly a secret; because no sympathy with Man or Nature, no love and free simplicity of heart has yet unfolded the same. Nothing but a pitiful Image of their own pitiful Self, with its vanities, and grudgings, and ravenous hunger of all kinds, hangs for ever painted in the retina of these unfortunate persons; so that the starry ALL, with whatsoever it embraces, does but appear as some expanded magic-lantern shadow of that same Image, — and naturally looks pitiful enough.

It is vain for these persons to allege that they are naturally without gift, naturally stupid and sightless, and so *can* attain to no knowledge of anything; therefore, in writing of anything, must needs write falsehoods of it, there being in it no truth for them. Not so, good Friends. The stupidest of you has a certain faculty; were it but that of articulate speech (say, in the Scottish, the Irish, the Cockney dialect, or even in 'Governess-English'), and of physically discerning what lies under your nose. The stupidest of you would perhaps grudge to be compared in faculty with James Boswell; yet see what he has produced! You do not use your faculty honestly; your heart is shut up; full of greediness, malice, discontent; so your intellectual sense cannot be open. It is vain also to urge that James Boswell had opportunities; saw great men and great things, such as you can never hope to look on. What make ye of Parson White in Selborne? He had not only no great men to look on, but not even men; merely sparrows and

cock-chafers: yet has he left us a *Biography* of these; which, under its title *Natural History of Selborne*, still remains valuable to us; which has copied a little sentence or two *faithfully* from the Inspired Volume of Nature, and so is itself not without inspiration. Go ye and do likewise. Sweep away utterly all frothiness and falsehood from your heart; struggle unweariedly to acquire, what is possible for every god-created Man, a free, open, humble soul: *speak not at all, in any wise, till you have somewhat to speak*; care not for the *reward* of your speaking, but simply and with undivided mind for the *truth* of your speaking: then be placed in what section of Space and of Time soever, do but open your eyes, and they shall actually *see*, and bring you real *knowledge*, wondrous, worthy of *belief*; and instead of one Boswell and one White, the world will rejoice in a thousand, — stationed on their thousand several watch-towers, to instruct us by indubitable documents, of whatsoever in our so stupendous World comes to light and *is*! O, had the Editor of this Magazine but a magic rod to turn all that not inconsiderable Intellect, which now deluges us with artificial fictitious soap-lather, and mere Lying, into the faithful study of Reality, — what knowledge of great, everlasting Nature, and of Man's ways and doings therein, would not every year bring us in! Can we but change one single soap-latherer and mountebank Juggler, into a true Thinker and Doer, that even *tries* honestly to think and do, — great will be our reward.

But to return; or rather from this point to begin our journey! If now, what with Herr Sauerteig's *Springwurz*, what with so much lucubration of our own, it have become apparent how deep, immeasurable is the 'worth that lies in *Reality*,' and farther, how exclusive the interest which man takes in Histories of Man, — may it not seem

lamentable, that so few genuinely good *Biographies* have yet been accumulated in Literature ; that in the whole world, one cannot find, going strictly to work, above some dozen, or baker's dozen, and those chiefly of very ancient date ? Lamentable ; yet, after what we have just seen, accountable. Another question might be asked : How comes it that in England we have simply one good Biography, this *Boswell's Johnson* ; and of good, indifferent, or even bad attempts at Biography, fewer than any civilized people ? Consider the French and Germans, with their Moreris, Bayles, Jördenses, Jöchers, their innumerable *Mémoires*, and *Schilderungen*, and *Biographies Universelles* ; not to speak of Rousseaus, Goethes, Schubarts, Jung-Stillings : and then contrast with these our poor Birches and Kippises and Pecks, — the whole breed of whom, moreover, is now extinct !

With this question, as the answer might lead us far, and come out unflattering to patriotic sentiment, we shall not intermeddle ; but turn rather, with greater pleasure, to the fact, that one excellent Biography is actually English ; — and even now lies, in Five new Volumes, at our hand, soliciting a new consideration from us ; such as, age after age (the Perennial showing ever new phases as *our* position alters), it may long be profitable to bestow on it ; — to which task we here, in this position, in this age, gladly address ourselves.

First, however, Let the foolish April-fool-day pass by ; and our Reader, during these twenty-nine days of uncertain weather that will follow, keep pondering, according to convenience, the purport of BIOGRAPHY in general : then, with the blessed dew of May-day, and in unlimited convenience of space, shall all that we have written on *Johnson*, and *Boswell's Johnson*, and *Croker's Boswell's Johnson*, be faithfully laid before him.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.*

[Fraser's Magazine, 1832.]

Æsop's Fly, sitting on the axle of the chariot, has been much laughed at for exclaiming : What a dust I do raise ! Yet which of us, in his way, has not sometimes been guilty of the like ? Nay, so foolish are men, they often, standing at ease and as spectators on the highway, will volunteer to exclaim of the Fly (not being tempted to it, as *he* was) exactly to the same purport : What a dust *thou* dost raise ! Smallest of mortals, when mounted aloft by circumstances, come to seem great ; smallest of phenomena connected with them are treated as important, and must be sedulously scanned, and commented upon with loud emphasis.

That Mr. Croker should undertake to edit *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, was a praiseworthy but no miraculous procedure : neither could the accomplishment of such undertaking be in an epoch like ours, anywise regarded as an event in Universal History ; the right or the wrong accomplishment thereof was, in very truth, one of the most insignificant of things. However, it sat in a great environment, on the axle of a high, fast-rolling, parliamentary chariot ; and all the world has exclaimed over it, and the author of it : What a dust thou dost raise ! List to the Reviews, and 'Organs of Public Opinion,' from the *National Omnibus*

* The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL. D. : including a Tour to the Hebrides : By James Boswell, Esq. — A new Edition, with numerous Additions and Notes : By John Wilson Croker, LL. D., F. R. S. vols. London, 1831.

upwards: criticisms, vituperative and laudatory, stream from their thousand throats of brass and of leather; here chanting *Io pœans*; there grating harsh thunder, or vehement shrew-mouse squeaklets; till the general ear is filled, and nigh deafened. Boswell's Book had a noiseless birth, compared with this Edition of Boswell's Book. On the other hand, consider with what degree of tumult *Paradise Lost* and the *Iliad* were ushered in!

To swell such clamor, or prolong it beyond the time, seems nowise our vocation here. At most, perhaps, we are bound to inform simple readers, with all possible brevity, what manner of performance and Edition this is; especially, whether, in our poor judgment, it is worth laying out three pounds sterling upon, yea or not. The whole business belongs distinctly to the lower ranks of the trivial class.

Let us admit, then, with great readiness, that as Johnson once said, and the Editor repeats, 'all works which describe manners, require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less;' that, accordingly, a new Edition of Boswell was desirable; and that Mr. Croker has given one. For this task he had various qualifications: his own voluntary resolution to do it; his high place in society unlocking all manner of archives to him; not less, perhaps, a certain anecdotico-biographic turn of mind, natural or acquired; we mean, a love for the *minuter* events of History, and talent for investigating these. Let us admit, too, that he has been very diligent; seems to have made inquiries perseveringly far and near; as well as drawn freely from his own ample stores; and so tells us to appearance quite accurately, much that he has not found lying on the highways, but has had to seek and dig for. Numerous persons, chiefly of quality, rise to view in these Notes; when and also where they came into this world, received office or promotion, died, and were buried (only what they *did*, except digest, remaining often too mysteri-

ous), — is faithfully enough set down. Whereby all that their various and doubtless widely-scattered Tombstones could have taught us, is here presented, at once, in a bound Book. Thus is an indubitable conquest, though a small one, gained over our great enemy, the all-destroyer Time ; and as such shall have welcome.

Nay, let us say that the spirit of Diligence, exhibited in this department, seems to attend the Editor honestly throughout : he keeps everywhere a watchful outlook on his Text ; reconciling the distant with the present, or at least indicating and regretting their irreconcilability ; elucidating, smoothing down ; in all ways, exercising, according to ability, a strict editorial superintendence. Any little Latin or even Greek phrase is rendered into English, in general with perfect accuracy ; citations are verified, or else corrected. On all hands, moreover, there is a certain spirit of Decency maintained and insisted on : if not good morals, yet good manners, are rigidly inculcated ; if not Religion, and a devout Christian heart, yet Orthodoxy, and a cleanly, Shovel-hatted look, — which, as compared with flat Nothing, is something very considerable. Grant too, as no contemptible triumph of this latter spirit, that though the Editor is known as a decided Politician and Party-man, he has carefully subdued all temptations to transgress in that way : except by quite involuntary indications, and rather as it were the pervading temper of the whole, you could not discover on which side of the Political Warfare he is enlisted and fights. This, as we said, is a great triumph of the Decency-principle : for this, and for these other graces and performances, let the Editor have all praise.

Herewith, however, must the praise unfortunately terminate. Diligence, Fidelity, Decency, are good and indispensable : yet, without Faculty, without Light, they will not do the work. Along with that Tombstone-information, perhaps

even without much of it, we could have liked to gain some answer, in one way or other, to this wide question : What and how was *English Life* in Johnson's time ; wherein has ours grown to differ therefrom ? In other words : What things have we to forget, what to fancy and remember, before we, from such distance, can put ourselves in Johnson's *place* ; and so, in the full sense of the term, *understand* him, his sayings, and his doings ? This was indeed specially the problem which a Commentator and Editor had to solve : a complete solution of it should have lain in him, his whole mind should have been filled and prepared with perfect insight into it ; then, whether in the way of express Dissertation, of incidental Exposition and Indication, opportunities enough would have occurred of bringing out the same : what was dark in the figure of the Past had thereby been enlightened ; Boswell had, not in show and word only, but in very fact, been made *new* again, readable to us who are divided from him, even as he was to those close at hand. Of all which very little has been attempted here ; accomplished, we should say, next to nothing, or altogether nothing.

Excuse, no doubt, is in readiness for such omission ; and, indeed, for innumerable other failings ;— as where, for example, the Editor will punctually explain what is already sun-clear ; and then anon, not without frankness, declare frequently enough that 'the Editor does not understand,' that 'the Editor cannot guess,'— while, for most part, the Reader cannot help both guessing and seeing. Thus, if Johnson say, in one sentence, that 'English names should not be used in Latin verses ;' and then, in the next sentence, speak blamingly of 'Carteret being used as a dactyl,' will the generality of mortals detect any puzzle there ? Or again, where poor Boswell writes : 'I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady, educated in France :

“*Ma foi, monsieur, notre bonheur depend de la façon que notre sang circule;*” — though the Turkish lady here speaks English-French, where is the call for a Note like this: ‘Mr. Boswell no doubt fancied these words had some meaning, or he would hardly have quoted them; but what that meaning is the Editor cannot guess?’ The Editor is clearly no witch at a riddle. — For these and all kindred deficiencies, the excuse as we said, is at hand; but the fact of their existence is not the less certain and regrettable.

Indeed, it, from a very early stage of the business, becomes afflictively apparent, how much the Editor, so well furnished with all external appliances and means, is from within unfurnished with means for forming to himself any just notion of Johnson, or of Johnson’s Life; and therefore of speaking on that subject with much hope of edifying. Too lightly is it from the first taken for granted that *Hunger*, the great basis of our life, is also its apex and ultimate perfection; that as ‘Neediness and Greediness and Vain-glory’ are the chief qualities of most men, so no man, not even a Johnson, acts or can think of acting on any other principle. Whatsoever, therefore, cannot be referred to the two former categories (Need and Greed), is without scruple ranged under the latter. It is here properly that our Editor becomes burdensome; and, to the weaker sort, even a nuisance. ‘What good is it,’ will such cry, ‘when we had still some faint shadow of belief that man was better than a selfish Digesting-machine, what good is it to poke in, at every turn, and explain how this and that which we thought noble in old Samuel, was vulgar, base; that for him too there was no reality but in the Stomach; and except Pudding, and the finer species of pudding which is named Praise, life had no pabulum? Why, for instance, when we know that Johnson *loved* his good Wife, and says expressly that their marriage was ‘a love-match on both sides,’—

should two closed lips open to tell us only this: 'Is it not possible that the obvious advantage of having a woman of experience to superintend an establishment of this kind (the Edial School) may have contributed to a match so disproportionate in point of age — ED.?' Or again when, in the Text, the honest cynic speaks freely of his former poverty, and it is known that he once lived on fourpence halfpenny a-day, — need a Commentator advance, and comment thus: 'When we find Dr. Johnson tell unpleasant truths to, or of, other men, let us recollect that he does not appear to have spared himself, on occasions in which he might be forgiven for doing so?' Why in short,' continues the exasperated Reader, 'should Notes of this species stand affronting me, when there might have been no Note at all?' — Gentle Reader, we answer, Be not wroth. What other could an honest Commentator do, than give thee the best he had? Such was the picture and theorem he had fashioned for himself of the world and of man's doings therein: take it, and draw wise inferences from it. If there did exist a Leader of Public Opinion, and Champion of Orthodoxy in the Church of Jesus of Nazareth, who reckoned that man's glory consisted in not being poor; and that a Sage, and Prophet of his time, must needs blush because the world had paid him at that easy rate of fourpence halfpenny *per diem*, — was not the fact of such existence worth knowing, worth considering?

Of a much milder hue, yet to us practically of an all-defacing, and, for the present enterprise quite ruinous character, — is another grand fundamental failing; the last we shall feel ourselves obliged to take the pain of specifying here. It is that our Editor has fatally, and almost surprisingly, mistaken the limits of an Editor's function; and so, instead of working on the margin with his Pen, to elucidate as best might be, strikes boldly into the body of the page

with his Scissors, and there clips at discretion! Four Books Mr. C. had by him, wherefrom to gather light for the fifth, which was Boswell's. What does he do but now, in the placidest manner, — slit the whole five into slips, and sew these together into a *sextum quid*, exactly at his own convenience; giving Boswell the credit of the whole! By what art-magic, our readers ask, has he united them? By the simplest of all: by Brackets. Never before was the full virtue of the Bracket made manifest. You begin a sentence under Boswell's guidance, thinking to be carried happily through it by the same: but no; in the middle, perhaps after your semicolon, and some consequent 'for,' — starts up one of these Bracket-ligatures, and stitches you in from half a page, to twenty or thirty pages of a Hawkins, Tyers, Murphy, Piozzi; so that often one must make the old sad reflection, 'where we are we know, whither we are going no man knoweth!' It is truly said also, 'There is much between the cup and the lip;' but here the case is still sadder: for not till after consideration can you ascertain, now when the cup is *at* the lip, what liquor is it you are imbibing; whether Boswell's French wine which you began with, or some Piozzi's ginger-beer, or Hawkins's entire, or perhaps some other great Brewer's penny-swipes or even alegar, which has been surreptitiously substituted instead thereof. A situation almost original; not to be tried a second time! But, in fine, what ideas Mr. Croker entertains of a literary *whole* and the thing called *Book*, and how the very Printer's Devils did not rise in mutiny against such a conglomeration as this, and refuse to print it, — may remain a problem.

But now happily our say is said. All faults, the Moralists tell us, are properly *shortcomings*; crimes themselves are nothing other than a *not doing enough*; a *fighting*, but with defective vigor. How much more a mere insufficiency,

and this after good efforts, in handicraft practice ! Mr. Croker says : ' The worst that can happen is that all the present Editor has contributed may, if the reader so pleases, be rejected as *surplusage*.' It is our pleasant duty to take with hearty welcome what he has given ; and render thanks even for what he meant to give. Next and finally, it is our painful duty to declare, aloud if that be necessary, that his gift, as weighed against the hard money which the Booksellers demand for giving it you, is (in our judgment) very greatly the lighter. No portion, accordingly, of our small floating capital has been embarked in the business, or shall ever be ; indeed, were we in the market for such a thing, there is simply *no* Edition of *Boswell* to which this last would seem preferable. And now enough, and more than enough !

We have next a word to say of James Boswell. Boswell has already been much commented upon ; but rather in the way of censure and vituperation, than of true recognition. He was a man that brought himself much before the world ; confessed that he eagerly coveted fame, or if that were not possible, notoriety ; of which latter as he gained far more than seemed his due, the public were incited, not only by their natural love of scandal, but by a special ground of envy, to say whatever ill of him could be said. Out of the fifteen millions that then lived, and had bed and board, in the British Islands, this man has provided us a greater *pleasure* than any other individual, at whose cost we now enjoy ourselves ; perhaps has done us a greater *service* than can be specially attributed to more than two or three : yet, ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists ; his recompense in solid pudding (so far as copyright went) was not excessive ; and as for the empty praise, it has altogether been denied him.

Men are unwiser than children ; they do *not* know the hand that feeds them.

Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye ; visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities again, belonged not to the Time he lived in ; were far from common then, indeed, in such a degree, were almost unexampled ; not recognisable therefore by every one ; nay, apt even (so strange had they grown) to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to, and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber and gross liver ; gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler ; had much of the sycophant, alternating with the brag-gadocio, curiously spiced too with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb ; that he gloried much when the Tailor, by a court-suit, had made a new man of him ; that he appeared at the Shakspeare Jubilee with a riband, imprinted 'CORSIKA BOSWELL,' round his hat ; and in short, if you will, lived no day of his life without doing and saying more than one pretentious ineptitude : all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff up the smell of coming pleasure, and scent it from afar ; in those bag-cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more ; in that coarsely protruded shelf-mouth, that fat dewlapped chin ; in all this, who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough ; much that could not have been ornamental in the temper of a great man's overfed great man (what the Scotch name *stunky*), though it had been more natural there. The under part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, what great and genuine

good lay in him was nowise so self-evident. That Boswell was a hunter after spiritual Notabilities, that he loved such, and longed, and even crept and crawled to be near them; that he first (in old Touchwood Auchinleck's phraseology) 'took on with Paoli,' and then being off with 'the Corsican landlouper,' took on with a schoolmaster, 'ane that kepted a schule, and ca'd it an academy : ' that he did all this, and could not help doing it, we account a very singular merit. The man, once for all, had an 'open sense,' an open loving heart, which so few have: where Excellence existed, he was compelled to acknowledge it; was drawn towards it, and (let the old sulphur-brand of a Laird say what he liked) *could not but* walk with it, — if not as superior, if not as equal, then as inferior and lackey, better so than not at all. If we reflect now that this love of Excellence had not only *such* an evil nature to triumph over; but also what an *education* and social position withstood it and weighed it down, its innate strength, victorious over all these things, may astonish us. Consider what an inward impulse there must have been, how many mountains of impediment hurled aside, before the Scottish Laird could, as humble servant, embrace the knees (the bosom was not permitted him) of the English Dominie! 'Your Scottish Laird,' says an English naturalist of these days, 'may be defined as the hungriest and vainest of all bipeds yet known.' Boswell too was a Tory; of quite peculiarly feudal, genealogical, pragmatical temper, had been nurtured in an atmosphere of Heraldry; at the feet of a very Gamaliel in that kind; within bare walls, adorned only with pedigrees, amid serving-men in threadbare livery; all things teaching him, from birth upwards, to remember, that a Laird was a Laird. Perhaps there was a special vanity in his very blood: old Auchinleck had, if not the gay, tail-spreading, peacock vanity of his son, no little of the slow-stalking, contentious,

hissing vanity of the gander; a still more fatal species. Scottish Advocates will yet tell you how the ancient man, having chanced to be the first sheriff appointed (after the abolition of 'hereditary jurisdictions') by royal authority, was wont, in dull pompous tone, to preface many a deliverance from the bench, with these words: 'I, the first king's Sheriff in Scotland.'

And now behold the worthy Bozzy, so prepossessed and held back by nature and by art, fly nevertheless like iron to its magnet, whither his better genius called! You may surround the iron and the magnet with what enclosures and encumbrances you please, — with wood, with rubbish, with brass: it matters not, the two feel each other, they struggle restlessly towards each other, they *will* be together. The iron may be a Scottish squirelet, full of gulosity and 'gigmanity;' * the magnet an English plebeian, and moving rag-and-dust mountain, coarse, proud, irascible, imperious: nevertheless, behold how they embrace, and inseparably cleave to one another! It is one of the strangest phenomena of the past century, that at a time when the old reverent feeling of Discipleship (such as brought men from far countries, with rich gifts, and prostrate soul, to the feet of the Prophets) had passed utterly away from men's practical experience, and was no longer surmised to exist (as it does), perennial, indestructible, in man's inmost heart, — James Boswell should have been the individual, of all others, predestined to recall it, in such singular guise, to the wondering, and, for a long while, laughing, and unrecognising world. It has been commonly said, The man's vulgar vanity was all that attached him to Johnson; he delighted to be

* 'Q. What do you mean by "respectable?" — A. He always kept a gig.' — (*Thurtell's Trial.*) — 'Thus,' it has been said, 'does society naturally divide itself into four classes: Noblemen, Gentlemen, Gigmen, and Men.'

seen near him, to be thought connected with him. Now let it be at once granted that no consideration springing out of vulgar vanity could well be absent from the mind of James Boswell, in this his intercourse with Johnson, or in any considerable transaction of his life. At the same time ask yourself: Whether such vanity, and nothing else, actuated him therein; whether this was the true essence and moving principle of the phenomenon, or not rather its outward vesture, and the accidental environment (and defacement) in which it came to light? The man was, by nature and habit, vain; a sycophant-coxcomb, be it granted: but had there been nothing more than vanity in him, was Samuel Johnson the man of men to whom he must attach himself? At the date when Johnson was a poor rusty-coated 'scholar,' dwelling in Temple-lane, and indeed throughout their whole intercourse afterwards, were there not chancellors and prime ministers enough; graceful gentlemen, the glass of fashion; honor-giving noblemen; dinner-giving rich men; renowned fire-eaters, swordsmen, gownsmen; Quacks and Realities of all hues,—any one of whom bulked much larger in the world's eye than Johnson ever did? To any one of whom, by half that submissiveness and assiduity, our Bozzy might have recommended himself; and sat there, the envy of surrounding lickspittles; pocketing now solid emolument, swallowing now well-cooked viands and wines of rich vintage; in each case, also, shone on by some glittering reflex of Renown or Notoriety, so as to be the observed of innumerable observers. To no one of whom, however, though otherwise a most diligent solicitor and purveyor, did he so attach himself: such vulgar courtierships were his paid drudgery, or leisure-amusement; the worship of Johnson was his grand, ideal, voluntary business. Does not the frothy-hearted yet enthusiastic man, doffing his Advocate's-wig, regularly take

post, and hurry up to London, for the sake of his Sage chiefly; as to a Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of his whole year? The plate-licker and wine-bibber dives into Bolt Court, to sip muddy coffee with a cynical old man, and a sour-tempered blind old woman (feeling the cups, whether they are full, with her finger); and patiently endures contradictions without end; too happy so he may but be allowed to listen and live. Nay, it does not appear that vulgar vanity could ever have been much flattered by Boswell's relation to Johnson. Mr. Croker says, Johnson was, to the last, little regarded by the great world; from which, for a vulgar vanity, all honor, as from its fountain, descends. Bozzy, even among Johnson's friends and special admirers, seems rather to have been laughed at than envied: his officious, whisking, consequential ways, the daily reproofs and rebuffs he underwent, could gain from the world no golden, but only leaden, opinions. His devout Discipleship seemed nothing more than a mean Spanielship, in the general eye. His mighty 'constellation,' or sun, round whom he, as satellite, observantly gyrated, was, for the mass of men, but a huge ill-snuffed tallow-light, and he a weak night-moth, circling foolishly, dangerously about it, not knowing what he wanted. If he enjoyed Highland dinners and toasts, as henchman to a new sort of chieftain, Henry Erskine, in the domestic 'Outer-House,' could hand him a shilling 'for the sight of his Bear.' Doubtless the man was laughed at, and often heard himself laughed at for his Johnsonism. To be envied is the grand and sole aim of vulgar vanity; to be filled with good things is that of sensuality: for Johnson perhaps no man living *envied* poor Bozzy; and of good things (except himself paid for them) there was no vestige in that acquaintanceship. Had nothing other or better than vanity and sensuality been there, Johnson and Boswell had never come together, or had soon and finally separated again.

In fact, the so copious terrestrial Dross that welters chaotically, as the outer sphere of this man's character, does but render for us more remarkable, more touching, the celestial spark of goodness, of light, and Reverence for Wisdom, which dwelt in the interior, and could struggle through such encumbrances, and in some degree illuminate and beautify them. There is much lying yet undeveloped in the love of Boswell for Johnson. A cheering proof, in a time which else utterly wanted and still wants such, that living Wisdom is quite *infinitely* precious to man, is the symbol of the Godlike to him, which even weak eyes may discern; that Loyalty, Discipleship, all that was ever meant by *Hero-worship*, lives perennially in the human bosom, and waits, even in these dead days, only for occasions to unfold it; and inspire all men with it, and again make the world alive! James Boswell we can regard as a practical witness (or real *martyr*) to this high, everlasting truth. A wonderful martyr, if you will; and in a time which made such martyrdom doubly wonderful: yet the time and its martyr perhaps suited each other. For a decrepit, death-sick Era, when CANT had first decisively opened her poison-breathing lips to proclaim that God-worship and Mammon-worship were one and the same, that Life was a *Lie*, and the Earth Beelzebub's, which the *Supreme Quack* should inherit; and so all things were fallen into the yellow leaf, and fast hastening to noisome corruption: for such an Era, perhaps no better Prophet than a parti-colored Zany-Prophet, concealing (from himself and others) his prophetic significance in such unexpected vestures,—was deserved, or would have been in place. A precious medicine lay hidden in floods of coarsest, most composite treacle: the world swallowed the treacle, for it suited the world's palate; and now, after half a century, may the medicine also begin to show itself! James Boswell belonged, in his corrupti-

ble part, to the lowest classes of mankind ; a foolish, inflated creature, swimming in an element of self-conceit : but in his corruptible there dwelt an incorruptible, all the more impressive and indubitable for the strange lodging it had taken.

Consider, too, with what force, diligence, and vivacity, he has rendered back, all this which, in Johnson's neighborhood, his 'open sense' had so eagerly and freely taken in. That loose-flowing, careless-looking Work of his is as a picture by one of Nature's own Artists ; the best possible resemblance of a Reality ; like the very image thereof in a clear mirror. Which indeed it was : let but the mirror be *clear*, this is the great point ; the picture must and will be genuine. How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by love, and the recognition and vision which love can lend, epitomizes nightly the words of Wisdom, the deeds and aspects of Wisdom, and so, by little and little, unconsciously works together for us a whole *Johnsoniad* ; a more free, perfect, sunlit, and spirit-speaking likeness, than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man ! Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equalled : indeed, in many senses, this also is a kind of Heroic Poem. The fit *Odyssey* of our unheroic age was to be written, not sung ; of a Thinker, not of a Fighter ; and (for want of a Homer) by the first open soul that might offer, — looked such even through the organs of a Boswell. We do the man's intellectual endowment great wrong, if we measure it by its mere logical outcome ; though here, too, there is not wanting a light ingenuity, a figurativeness, and fanciful sport, with glimpses of insight far deeper than the common. But Boswell's grand intellectual talent was (as such ever is) an *unconscious* one, of far higher reach and significance than Logic ; and showed itself in the whole, not in parts. Here again we have that old saying verified, 'The heart sees farther than the head.'

Thus does poor Bozzy stand out to us as an ill-assorted, glaring mixture of the highest and the lowest. What, indeed, is man's life generally but a kind of beast-godhood ; the god in us triumphing more and more over the beast ; striving more and more to subdue it under his feet ? Did not the Ancients, in their wise, perennially significant way, figure Nature itself, their sacred All, or PAN, as a portentous commingling of these two discords ; as musical, humane, oracular in its upper part, yet ending below in the cloven hairy feet of a goat ? The union of melodious, celestial Freewill and Reason, with foul Irrationality and Lust ; in which, nevertheless, dwelt a mysterious unspeakable Fear and half-mad *panic* Awe ; as for mortals there well might ! And is not man a microcosm, or epitomized mirror of that same Universe ; or, rather, is not that Universe even Himself, the reflex of his own fearful and wonderful being, ' the waste fantasy of his own dream ? ' No wonder that man, that each man, and James Boswell like the others, should resemble it ! The peculiarity in his case was the unusual defect of amalgamation and subordination : the highest lay side by side with the lowest ; not morally combined with it and spiritually transfiguring it ; but tumbling in half-mechanical juxtaposition with it, and from time to time, as the mad alternation chanced, irradiating it, or eclipsed by it.

The world, as we said, has been but unjust to him ; discerning only the outer terrestrial and often sordid mass ; without eye, as it generally is, for his inner divine secret ; and thus figuring him nowise as a god Pan, but simply of the bestial species, like the cattle on a thousand hills. Nay, sometimes a strange enough hypothesis has been started of him ; as if it were in virtue even of these same bad qualities that he did his good work ; as if it were the very fact of his being among the worst men in this world that had enabled him to write one of the best books therein ! Falser

hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. *Bad* is by its nature negative, and can do *nothing*; whatsoever enables us to *do* anything is by its very nature *good*. Alas, that there should be teachers in Israel, or even learners, to whom this world-ancient fact is still problematical, or even deniable! Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent, above all, of his Love and childlike Open-mindedness. His sneaking sycophancies, his greediness and forwardness, whatever was bestial and earthy in him, are so many blemishes in his Book, which still disturb us in its clearness: wholly hindrances, not helps. Towards Johnson, however, his feeling was not Sycophancy, which is the lowest, but Reverence, which is the highest of human feelings. None but a *reverent* man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's: if such worship for real God-made superiors showed itself also as worship for apparent Tailor-made superiors, even as hollow, interested mouth-worship for such, — the case, in this composite human nature of ours, was not miraculous, the more was the pity! But for ourselves, let every one of us cling to this last article of Faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worth the name: That neither James Boswell's good Book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is, or can be performed by any man in virtue of his *badness*, but always and solely in spite thereof.

As for the Book itself, questionless the universal favor entertained for it is well merited. In worth as a Book we have rated it beyond any other product of the eighteenth century: all Johnson's own Writings, laborious and in their kind genuine above most, stand on a quite inferior level to it; already, indeed, they are becoming obsolete for this

generation ; and for some future generation, may be valuable chiefly as Prolegomena and expository Scholia to this *Johnsoniad* of Boswell. Which of us but remembers, as one of the sunny spots in his existence, the day when he opened these airy volumes, fascinating him by a true natural-magic ! It was as if the curtains of the Past were drawn aside, and we looked mysteriously into a kindred country, where dwelt our Fathers ; inexpressibly dear to us, but which had seemed for ever hidden from our eyes. For the dead Night had engulfed it ; all was gone, vanished as if it had not been. Nevertheless, wondrously given back to us, there once more it lay ; all bright, lucid, blooming ; a little island of Creation amid the circumambient Void. There it still lies ; like a thing stationary, imperishable, over which changeful Time were now accumulating itself in vain, and could not, any longer, harm it, or hide it.

If we examine by what charm it is that men are still held to this *Life of Johnson*, now when so much else has been forgotten, the main part of the answer will perhaps be found in that speculation 'on the import of *Reality*,' communicated to the world, last Month, in this Magazine. The *Johnsoniad* of Boswell turns on objects that in very deed existed ; it is all *true*. So far other in melodiousness of tone, it vies with the *Odyssey* or surpasses it, in this one point : to us these read pages, as those chanted hexameters were to the first Greek hearers, are in the fullest, deepest sense, wholly *credible*. All the wit and wisdom, lying embalmed in Boswell's Book, plenteous as these are, could not have saved it. Far more scientific *instruction* (mere excitement and enlightenment of the *thinking power*) can be found in twenty other works of that time, which make but a quite secondary impression on us. The other works of that time, however, fall under one of two classes : Either they are professedly Didactic ; and, in that way, mere

Abstractions, Philosophic Diagrams, incapable of interesting us much otherwise than as *Euclid's Elements* may do: Or else, with all their vivacity, and pictorial richness of color, *they are Fictions and not Realities*. Deep, truly, as Herr Sauerteig urges, is the force of this consideration: The thing here stated is a fact; these figures, that local habitation, are not shadow but substance. In virtue of such advantages, see how a very Boswell may become Poetical!

Critics insist much on the Poet that he should communicate an 'Infinite' to his delineation; that by intensity of conception, by that gift of 'transcendental Thought,' which is fitly named *genius*, and inspiration, he should *inform* the Finite with a certain Infinite of significance; or as they sometimes say, ennoble the Actual into Idealness. They are right in their precept; they mean rightly. But in cases like this of the *Johnsoniad* (such is the dark grandeur of that 'Time-element,' wherein man's soul here below lives imprisoned), the Poet's task is, as it were, done to his hand: Time itself, which is the outer veil of Eternity, invests, of its own accord, with an authentic, felt 'infinite,' whatsoever it has once embraced in its mysterious folds. Consider all that lies in that one word, *Past!* What a pathetic, sacred, in every sense *poetic*, meaning is implied in it; a meaning growing ever the clearer, the farther we recede in Time, — the *more* of that same Past we have to look through! — On which ground indeed must Sauerteig have built, and not without plausibility, in that strange thesis of his: 'that History after all is the true Poetry; that Reality if rightly interpreted is grander than Fiction; nay, that even in the right interpretation of Reality and History does genuine Poetry consist.'

Thus for *Boswell's Life of Johnson* has Time done, is Time still doing, what no ornament of Art or Artifice could have done for it. Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling

James *were*, and *are not*. Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre Tavern still stands in Fleet Street: but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, potbellied Landlord; its rosy-faced, assiduous Landlady, with all her shining brass-pans, waxed tables, well-filled larder-shelves; her cooks, and bootjacks, and errand-boys, and watery-mouthed hangers-on? Gone! Gone! The becking waiter, that with wreathed smiles, went to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their 'supper of the gods,' has long since pocketed his last sixpence; and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The Bottles they drank out of are all broken, the Chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt; the very Knives and Forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the indiscriminate clay. All, all, has vanished; in very deed and truth, like that baseless fabric of Prospero's air-vision. Of the Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain there: of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain; and these also decaying (were they of adamant), only slower. The mysterious River of Existence rushes on: a new Billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever round the old embankments; but the former Billow with *its* loud, mad eddyings, where is it? — Where! — Now this Book of Boswell's, this is precisely a Revocation of the Edict of Destiny; so that Time shall not utterly, not so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us. A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past: they who are gone are still here; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they yet speak. There it shines, that little miraculously lamp-lit Pathway; shedding its feebler and feebler twilight into the boundless dark Oblivion, for all that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us: on which

miraculous little Pathway we can still travel, and see wonders.

It is not speaking with exaggeration, but with strict measured sobriety, to say that this Book of Boswell's will give us more real insight into the *History of England* during those days than twenty other Books, falsely entitled 'Histories,' which take to themselves that special aim. What good is it to me though innumerable Smolletts and Belshams keep dinning in my ears that a man named George the Third was born and bred up, and a man named George the Second died; that Walpole, and the Pelhams, and Chatham, and Rockingham, and Shelburne, and North, with their Coalition or their Separation Ministries, all ousted one another; and vehemently scrambled for 'the thing they called the Rudder of Government, but which was in reality the Spigot of Taxation'? That debates were held, and infinite jarring and jargoning took place; and road-bills and enclosure-bills, and game-bills and India-bills, and Laws which no man can number, which happily few men needed to trouble their heads with beyond the passing moment, were enacted, and printed by the King's Stationer? That he who sat in Chancery, and rayed out speculation from the Woolsack, was now a man that squinted, now a man that did not squint? To the hungry and thirsty mind all this avails next to nothing. These men and these things, we indeed know, did swim, by strength or by specific levity (as apples or as horse-dung), on the top of the current: but is it by painfully noting the courses, eddyings, and bobbings hither and thither of such drift-articles, that you will unfold to me the nature of the current itself; of that mighty-rolling, loud-roaring, Life-current, bottomless as the foundations of the Universe, mysterious as its Author? The thing I want to see is not Redbook Lists, and Court Calendars, and Parliamentary Registers, but the LIFE OF MAN in England: what men

did, thought, suffered, enjoyed; the form, especially the spirit, of their terrestrial existence, its outward environment, its inward principle; *how* and *what* it was; whence it proceeded, whither it was tending.

Mournful, in truth, is it to behold what the business called 'History,' in these so enlightened and illuminated times, still continues to be. Can you gather from it, read till your eyes go out, any dimmest shadow of an answer to that great question: How men lived and had their being; were it but economically, as what wages they got, and what they bought with these? Unhappily you cannot. History will throw no light on any such matter. At the point where living memory fails, it is all darkness; Mr. Senior and Mr. Sadler must still debate this simplest of all elements in the condition of the Past: Whether men were better off, in their mere larders and pantries, or were worse off than now! History, as it stands all bound up in gilt volumes, is but a shade more instructive than the wooden volumes of a Backgammon-board. How my Prime Minister was appointed is of less moment to me than How my House Servant was hired. In these days, ten ordinary Histories of Kings and Courtiers were well exchanged against the tenth part of one good History of Booksellers.

For example, I would fain know the History of Scotland: who can tell it me? 'Robertson,' cry innumerable voices; 'Robertson against the world.' I open Robertson; and find there, through long ages too confused for narrative, and fit only to be presented in the way of epitome and distilled essence, a cunning answer and hypothesis, not to this question: By whom, and by what means, when and how, was this fair broad Scotland, with its Arts and Manufactures, Temples, Schools, Institutions, Poetry, Spirit, National Character, created and made arable, verdant, peculiar, great, here as I can see some fair section of it lying, kind and

strong (like some Bacchus-tamed Lion), from the Castle-hill of Edinburgh? — but to this other question: How did the King keep himself alive in those old days; and restrain so many Butcher-Barons and ravenous Henchmen from utterly extirpating one another, so that killing went on in some sort of moderation? In the one little Letter of Æneas Sylvius, from old Scotland, there is more of History than in all this. — At length, however, we come to a luminous age, interesting enough; to the age of the Reformation. All Scotland is awakened to a second higher life: the Spirit of the Highest stirs in every bosom, agitates every bosom; Scotland is convulsed, fermenting, struggling to body itself forth anew. To the herdsman, among his cattle in remote woods; to the craftsman, in his rude, heath-thatched workshop, among his rude guild-brethren; to the great and to the little, a new light has arisen: in town and hamlet groups are gathered, with eloquent looks, and governed or ungovernable tongues; the great and the little go forth together to do battle for the Lord against the mighty. We ask, with breathless eagerness: How was it; how went it on? Let us understand it, let us see it, and know it! — In reply, is handed us a really graceful, and most dainty little Scandalous Chronicle (as for some Journal of Fashion) of two persons: Mary Stuart, a Beauty, but over lightheaded; and Henry Darnley, a Booby, who had fine legs. How these first courted, billed and cooed, according to nature; then pouted, fretted, grew utterly enraged, and blew one another up with gunpowder: this, and not the History of Scotland, is what we goodnaturedly read. Nay, by other hands, something like a horseload of other Books have been written to prove that it was the Beauty who blew up the Booby, and that it was not she. Who or what it was, the thing once for all *being* so effectually done, concerns us little. To know Scotland, at that great epoch, were a valuable

increase of knowledge : to know poor Darnley, and see him with burning candle, from centre to skin, were no increase of knowledge at all. — Thus is History written.

Hence, indeed, comes it that History, which should be 'the essence of innumerable Biographies,' will tell us, question it as we like, less than one genuine Biography may do, pleasantly and of its own accord ! The time is approaching when History will be attempted on quite other principles ; when the Court, the Senate, and Battle-field, receding more and more into the background, the Temple, the Workshop, and Social Hearth, will advance more and more into the foreground ; and History will not content itself with shaping some answer to that question : How were men *taxed* and *kept quiet* then ? but will seek to answer this other infinitely wider and higher question : How and what *were men* then ? Not our Government only, or the '*House* wherein our life was led,' but the *Life* itself we led there, will be inquired into. Of which latter it may be found that Government, in any modern sense of the word, is after all but a secondary condition : in the mere sense of *Taxation* and *Keeping quiet*, a small, almost a pitiful one. — Meanwhile let us welcome such Boswells, each in his degree, as bring us any genuine contribution, were it never so inadequate, so inconsiderable.

An exception was early taken against this *Life of Johnson*, and all similar enterprises, which we here recommend ; and has been transmitted from critic to critic, and repeated in their several dialects, uninterruptedly, ever since : That such jottings down of careless conversation are an infringement of social privacy ; a crime against our highest Freedom, the Freedom of man's intercourse with man. To this accusation, which we have read and heard oftener than enough, might it not be well for once to offer the flattest contradiction, and plea of *Not at all guilty* ? Not that con-

versation is noted down, but that conversation should not deserve noting down, is the evil. Doubtless, if conversation be falsely recorded, then is it simply a Lie; and worthy of being swept, with all despatch, to the Father of Lies. But if, on the other hand, conversation can be authentically recorded, and any one is ready for the task, let him by all means proceed with it; let conversation be kept in remembrance to the latest date possible. Nay, should the consciousness that a man may be among us 'taking notes' tend, in any measure, to restrict those floods of idle insincere *speech*, with which the *thought* of mankind is well nigh drowned, — were it other than the most indubitable benefit? He who speaks honestly cares not, needs not care, though his words be preserved to remotest time: for him who speaks *dishonestly*, the fittest of all punishments seems to be this same, which the nature of the case provides. The dishonest speaker, not he only who purposely utters falsehoods, but he who does not purposely, and with sincere heart, utter Truth, and Truth alone; who babbles he knows not what, and has clapped no bridle on his tongue, but lets it run racket, ejecting chatter and futility, — is among the most indubitable malefactors omitted, or inserted, in the Criminal Calendar. To him that will well consider it, idle speaking is precisely the beginning of all Hollowness, Halfness, *Infidelity* (want of Faithfulness); the genial atmosphere in which rank weeds of every kind attain the mastery over noble fruits in man's life, and utterly choke them out: one of the most crying maladies of these days, and to be testified against, and in all ways to the uttermost withstood. Wise, of a wisdom far beyond our shallow depth, was that old precept; *Watch thy tongue*; out of it are the issues of Life! 'Man is properly an *incarnated word*:' the *word* that he speaks is the *man* himself. Were eyes put into our head, that we might *see*; or only that we might fancy, and

plausibly pretend, we had *seen*? Was the tongue suspended there, that it might tell truly what we had seen, and make man the soul's-brother of man; or only that it might utter vain sounds, jargon, soul-confusing, and so *divide* man, as by enchanted walls of Darkness, from union with man? Thou who wearest that cunning, Heaven-made organ, a Tongue, think well of this. Speak not, I passionately entreat thee, till thy thought have silently matured itself, till thou have other than mad and mad-making noises to emit: *hold thy tongue* (thou hast it a-holding) till *some* meaning lie behind, to set it wagging. Consider the significance of SILENCE: it is boundless, never by meditating to be exhausted; unspeakably profitable to thee! Cease that chaotic hubbub, wherein thy own soul runs to waste, to confused suicidal dislocation and stupor: out of Silence comes thy strength. 'Speech is silvern, Silence is golden; Speech is human, Silence is divine.' Fool! thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there with ass-skin and black-lead to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is harmless? Nothing dies, nothing can die. No idlest word thou speakest but is a seed cast into Time, and grows through all Eternity! The Recording Angel, consider it well, is no fable, but the truest of truths: the paper tablets thou canst burn; of the 'iron leaf' there is no burning.—Truly, if we can permit God Almighty to note down our conversation, thinking it good enough for Him,—any poor Boswell need not scruple to work his will of it.

Leaving now this our English *Odyssey*, with its Singer and Scholiast, let us come to the *Ulysses*; that great Samuel Johnson himself, the far-experienced, 'much-enduring man,' whose labors and pilgrimage are here sung. A full-length image of his Existence has been preserved for us: and he, perhaps of all living Englishmen, was the one who

best deserved that honor. For if it is true and now almost proverbial, that 'the Life of the lowest mortal, if faithfully recorded, would be interesting to the highest;' how much more when the mortal in question was already distinguished in fortune and natural quality, so that his thinkings and doings were not significant of himself only, but of large masses of mankind! 'There is not a man whom I meet on the streets,' says one, 'but I could like, were it otherwise convenient, to know his Biography:' nevertheless, could an enlightened curiosity be so far gratified, it must be owned the Biography of most ought to be, in an extreme degree, *summary*. In this world, there is so wonderfully little self-subsistence among men; next to no originality (though never absolutely *none*): one Life is too servilely the copy of another; and so in whole thousands of them you find little that is properly new; nothing but the old song sung by a new voice, with better or worse execution, here and there an ornamental quaver, and false notes enough: but the fundamental tune is ever the same; and for the *words*, these, all that they meant stands written generally on the Churchyard-stone: *Natus sum: esuriebam, quærebam; nunc repletus requiesco*. Mankind sail their Life-voyage in huge fleets, following some single whale-fishing or herring-fishing Commodore: the log-book of each differs not, in essential purport, from that of any other; nay the most have no legible log-book (reflection, observation not being among their talents); keep no reckoning, only *keep in sight* of the flagship, — and fish. Read the Commodore's Papers (know *his* Life); and even your lover of that street Biography will have learned the most of what he sought after.

Or, the servile *imitancy*, and yet also a nobler relationship and mysterious union to one another which lies in such imitancy, of Mankind might be illustrated under the differ-

ent figure (itself nowise *original*) of a Flock of Sheep. Sheep go in flocks for three reasons: First, because they are of a gregarious temper, and *love* to be together: Secondly, because of their cowardice; they are afraid to be left alone: Thirdly, because the common run of them are dull of sight, to a proverb, and can have no choice in roads; sheep can in fact *see* nothing; in a celestial Luminary, and a scoured pewter Tankard, would discern only that both dazzled them, and were of unspeakable glory. How like their fellow-creatures of the human species! Men, too, as was from the first maintained here, are gregarious: then surely faint-hearted enough, trembling to be left by themselves: above all, dull-sighted, down to the verge of utter blindness. Thus are we seen ever running in torrents, and mobs, if we run at all; and after what foolish scoured Tankards, mistaking them for Suns! Foolish Turnip-lanterns likewise, to all appearance supernatural, keep whole nations quaking, their hair on end. Neither know we, except by blind habit, where the good pastures lie: solely when the sweet grass is between our teeth, we know it, and chew it; also when grass is bitter and scant, we know it, — and bleat and butt: these last two facts we know of a truth, and in very deed. — Thus do Men and Sheep play their parts on this Nether Earth; wandering restlessly in large masses, they know not whither; for most part, each following his neighbor, and his own nose.

Nevertheless, not always; look better, you shall find certain that do, in some small degree, *know whither*. Sheep have their Bell-wether; some ram of the folds, endued with more valor, with clearer vision than other sheep; he leads them through the wolds, by height and hollow, to the woods and water-courses, for covert or for pleasant provender; courageously marching, and if need be, leaping, and with hoof and horn doing battle, in the van: him they courage-

ously, and with assured heart, follow. Touching it is, as every herdsman will inform you, with what chivalrous devotedness these woolly Hosts adhere to their Wether; and rush after him, through good report and through bad report, were it into safe shelters and green thymy nooks, or into asphaltic lakes and the jaws of devouring lions. Ever also must we recall that fact which we owe Jean Paul's quick eye: 'If you hold a stick before the Wether, so that he, by necessity, leaps in passing you, and then withdraw your stick, the Flock will nevertheless all leap as he did; and the thousandth sheep shall be found impetuously vaulting over air, as the first did over an otherwise impassable barrier.' Reader, wouldst thou understand Society, ponder well those ovine proceedings; thou wilt find them all curiously significant.

Now if sheep always, how much more must men always, have their Chief, their Guide! Man, too, is by nature quite thoroughly *gregarious*: nay, ever he struggles to be something more, to be *social*; not even when Society has become impossible, does that deep-seated tendency and effort forsake him. Man, as if by miraculous magic, imparts his Thoughts, his Mood of mind to man; an unspeakable communion binds all past, present, and future men into one indissoluble whole, almost into one living individual. Of which high, mysterious Truth, this disposition to *imitate*, to lead and be led, this impossibility *not* to imitate, is the most constant, and one of the simplest manifestations. To 'imitate!' which of us all can measure the significance that lies in that one word? By virtue of which the infant Man, born at Woolsthorpe, grows up not to be a hairy Savage, and chewer of Acorns, but an Isaac Newton, and Discoverer of Solar Systems!—Thus both in a celestial and terrestrial sense, are we a *Flock*, such as there is no other: nay, looking away from the base and ludicrous to the sublime and sacred

side of the matter (since in every matter there are two sides), have not we also a SHEPHERD, 'if we will but hear his voice?' Of those stupid multitudes there is no one but has an immortal Soul within him; a reflex, and living image of God's whole Universe: strangely, from its dim environment, the light of the Highest looks through him; — for which reason, indeed, it is that we claim a brotherhood with him, and so love to know his History, and come into clearer and clearer union with all that he feels, and says, and does.

However, the chief thing to be noted was this: Amid those dull millions, who, as a dull flock, roll hither and thither, whithersoever they are led, and seem all sightless and slavish, accomplishing, attempting little save what the animal instinct (in its somewhat higher kind) might teach (to keep themselves and their young ones alive), — are scattered here and there superior natures, whose eye is not destitute of free vision, nor their heart of free volition. These latter, therefore, examine and determine, not what others do, but what it is right to do; towards which, and which only, will they, with such force as is given them, resolutely endeavor: for if the Machine, living or inanimate, is merely *fed*, or desires to be fed, and so *works*; the Person can *will*, and so *do*. These are properly our Men, our Great Men; the guides of the dull host, — which follows them as by an irrevocable decree. They are the chosen of the world: they had this rare faculty not only of 'supposing' and 'inclining to think,' but of *knowing* and *believing*; the nature of their being was, that they lived not by Hearsay but by clear Vision; while others hovered and swam along, in the grand Vanity-fair of the World, blinded by the mere 'Shows of things,' these saw into the Things themselves, and could walk as men having an eternal load-star, and with their feet on sure paths. Thus was there a *Reality* in their existence; something of a perennial char-

acter; in virtue of which indeed it is that the memory of them is perennial. Whoso belongs only to his own age, and reverences only *its* gilt Popinjays or soot-smear'd Mumbojumbos, must needs die with it: though he have been crowned seven times in the Capitol, or seventy and seven times, and Rumor have blown his praises to all the four winds, deafening every ear therewith, — it avails not; there was nothing universal, nothing eternal in him; he must fade away, even as the Popinjay-gildings and Scarecrow-apparel, which he could not see through. The great man does, in good truth, belong to his own age; nay, more so than any other man; being properly the synopsis and epitome of such age with its interests and influences: but belongs likewise to all ages, otherwise he is not great. What was transitory in him passes away; and an immortal part remains, the significance of which is in strict speech inexhaustible, — as that of every *real* object is. Aloft, conspicuous, on his enduring basis, he stands there, serene, unaltering; silently addresses to every new generation a new lesson and monition. Well is his Life worth writing, worth interpreting; and ever, in the new dialect of new times, of re-writing and re-interpreting.

Of such chosen men was Samuel Johnson: not ranking among the highest, or even the high; yet distinctly admitted into that sacred band; whose existence was no idle Dream, but a Reality which he transacted *awake*; nowise a Clothes-horse and Patent Digester, but a genuine Man. By nature he was gifted for the noblest of earthly tasks, that of Priest-hood, and Guidance of mankind; by destiny, moreover, he was appointed to this task, and did actually, according to strength, fulfil the same: so that always the question, *How; in what spirit; under what shape?* remains for us to be asked and answered concerning him. For as the highest Gospel was a Biography, so is the Life of every good man

still an indubitable Gospel, and preaches to the eye and heart and whole man, that Devils even must believe and tremble, these gladdest tidings: 'Man is heaven-born; not the thrall of Circumstances, of Necessity, but the victorious subduer thereof: behold how he can become the "Announcer of himself and of his Freedom;" and is ever what the Thinker has named him, "the Messiah of Nature!"' — Yes, Reader, all this that thou hast so often heard about 'force of circumstances,' 'the creature of the time,' 'balancing of motives,' and who knows what melancholy stuff to the like purport, wherein thou, as in a nightmare Dream, sittest paralyzed, and hast no force left, — was in very truth, if Johnson and waking men are to be credited, little other than a hag-ridden vision of death-sleep; some *half-fact*, more fatal at times than a whole falsehood. Shake it off; awake; up and be doing, even as it is given thee!

The Contradiction which yawns wide enough in every Life, which it is the meaning and task of Life to reconcile, was in Johnson's wider than in most. Seldom, for any man, has the contrast between the ethereal heavenward side of things, and the dark sordid earthward, been more glaring: whether we look at Nature's work with him or Fortune's, from first to last, heterogeneity, as of sunbeams and miry clay, is on all hands manifest. Whereby indeed, only this was declared, That *much Life* had been given him; many things to triumph over, a great work to *do*. Happily also he did it; better than the most.

Nature had given him a high, keen-visionsed, almost poetic soul; yet withal imprisoned it in an inert, unsightly body: he that could never rest had not limbs that would move with him, but only roll and waddle: the inward eye, all-penetrating, all-embracing, must look through bodily windows that were dim, half-blinded; he so loved men, and 'never once *saw* the human face divine!' Not less did he prize the

love of men ; he was eminently social ; the approbation of his fellows was dear to him, 'valuable,' as he owned, 'if from the meanest of human beings : ' yet the first impression he produced on every man was to be one of aversion, almost of disgust. By Nature it was farther ordered that the imperious Johnson should be born poor : the ruler-soul, strong in its native royalty, generous, uncontrollable, like the lion of the woods, was to be housed, then, in such a dwelling-place : of Disfigurement, Disease, and lastly of a Poverty which itself made him the servant of servants. Thus was the born King likewise a born Slave : the divine spirit of Music must awake imprisoned amid dull-croaking universal Discords ; the Ariel finds himself encased in the coarse hulls of a Caliban. So is it more or less, we know (and thou, O Reader, knowest and feelest even now), with all men : yet with the fewest men in any such degree as with Johnson.

Fortune, moreover, which had so managed his first appearance in the world, lets not her hand lie idle, or turn the other way, but works unweariedly in the same spirit, while he is journeying through the world. What such a mind, stamped of Nature's noblest metal, though in so ungainly a die, was specially and best of all fitted for, might still be a question. To none of the world's few Incorporated Guilds could he have adjusted himself without difficulty, without distortion ; in none been a Guild-Brother well at ease. Perhaps, if we look to the strictly practical nature of his faculty, to the strength, decision, method that manifests itself in him, we may say that his calling was rather towards Active than Speculative life ; that as Statesman (in the higher, now obsolete sense), Lawgiver, Ruler ; in short, as Doer of the Work, he had shone even more than as Speaker of the Word. His honesty of heart, his courageous temper, the value he set on things outward and material,

might have made him a King among Kings. Had the golden age of those new French Prophets, when it shall be : *A chacun selon sa capacité ; à chaque capacité selon ses œuvres*, but arrived ! Indeed even in our brazen and Birmingham-lacker age, he himself regretted that he had not become a Lawyer, and risen to be Chancellor, which he might well have done. However, it was otherwise appointed. To no man does Fortune throw open all the kingdoms of this world, and say : It is thine ; choose where thou wilt dwell ! To the most she opens hardly the smallest cranny or doghutch, and says, not without asperity : There, that is thine while thou canst keep it ; nestle thyself there, and bless Heaven ! Alas, men must fit themselves into many things : some forty years ago, for instance, the noblest and ablest Man in all the British lands might be seen not swaying the royal sceptre, or the pontiff's censer, on the pinnacle of the World, but gauging ale-tubs in the little burgh of Dumfries ! Johnson came a little nearer the mark than Burns : but with him too, ' Strength was mournfully denied its arena ; ' he too had to fight Fortune at strange odds, all his life long.

Johnson's disposition for *royalty* (had the Fates so ordered it) is well seen in early boyhood. ' His favorites,' says Boswell, ' used to receive very liberal assistance from him ; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while he sat upon his back, and one on each side supported him ; and thus was he borne triumphant.' The purfly, sand-blind lubber and blubber, with his open mouth, and face of bruised honeycomb ; yet already dominant, imperial, irresistible ! Not in the ' King's-chair ' (of human arms) as we see, do his three satellites carry him

along : rather on the *Tyrant's-saddle*, the back of his fellow-creature, must he ride prosperous ! — The child is father of the man. He who had seen fifty years into coming Time, would have felt that little spectacle of mischievous school-boys to be a great one. For us, who look back on it, and what followed it, now from afar, there arise questions enough : How looked these urchins ? What jackets and galligaskins had they ; felt headgear, or of dogskin leather ? What was old Lichfield doing then ; what thinking ? — and so on, through the whole series of Corporal Trim's 'auxiliary verbs.' A picture of it all fashions itself together ; — only unhappily we have no brush, and no fingers.

Boyhood is now past ; the ferula of Pedagogue waves harmless, in the distance : Samuel has struggled up to uncouth bulk and youthhood, wrestling with Disease and Poverty, all the way ; which two continue still his companions. At College we see little of him ; yet thus much, that things went not well. A rugged wild-man of the desert, awakened to the feeling of himself ; proud as the proudest, poor as the poorest ; stoically shut up, silently enduring the incurable : what a world of blackest gloom, with sun-gleams, and pale tearful moon-gleams, and flickerings of a celestial and an infernal splendor, was this that now opened for him ! But the weather is wintry ; and the toes of the man are looking through his shoes. His muddy features grow of a purple and sea-green color ; a flood of black indignation mantling beneath. A truculent, raw-boned figure ! Meat he has probably little ; hope he has less : his feet, as we said, have come into brotherhood with the cold mire.

'Shall I be particular,' inquires Sir John Hawkins, 'and relate a circumstance of his distress, that cannot be imputed to him as an effect of his own extravagance or irregularity, and consequently reflects no disgrace on his memory ? He had scarce any change of raiment, and, in a short time after Corbet left him, but one pair

of shoes, and those so old that his feet were seen through them : a gentleman of his college, the father of an eminent clergyman now living, directed a servitor one morning to place a new pair at the door of Johnson's chamber; who seeing them upon his first going out, so far forgot himself and the spirit which must have actuated his unknown benefactor, that, with all the indignation of an insulted man, he threw them away.'

How exceedingly surprising! — The Rev. Dr. Hall remarks: 'As far as we can judge from a cursory view of the weekly account in the buttery books, Johnson appears to have lived as well as other commoners and scholars.' Alas! such 'cursory view of the buttery books,' now from the safe distance of a century, in the safe chair of a College Mastership, is one thing; the continual view of the empty (or locked) buttery itself was quite a different thing. But hear our Knight, how he farther discourses. 'Johnson,' quoth Sir John, 'could not at this early period of his life divest himself of an idea that poverty was disgraceful; and was very severe in his censures of that economy in both our Universities, which exacted at meals the attendance of poor scholars, under the several denominations of Servitors in the one and Sizars in the other: he thought that the scholar's, like the Christian life, levelled all distinctions of rank and worldly preëminence; but in this he was *mistaken*: civil polity,' &c. &c. — Too true! It is man's lot to err.

However, Destiny, in all ways, means to prove the mistaken Samuel, and see what stuff is in him. He must leave these butteries of Oxford, Want like an armed man compelling him; retreat into his father's mean home; and there abandon himself for a season to inaction, disappointment, shame, and nervous melancholy nigh run mad: he is probably the wretchedest man in wide England. In all ways, he too must 'become perfect through *suffering*.' — High thoughts have visited him; his College Exercises have been

praised beyond the walls of College; Pope himself has seen that *Translation*, and approved of it: Samuel had whispered to himself: I too am 'one and somewhat.' False thoughts; that leave only misery behind! The fever-fire of Ambition is too painfully extinguished (but not cured) in the frost-bath of Poverty. Johnson has knocked at the gate, as one having a right; but there was no opening: the world lies all encircled as with brass; nowhere can he find or force the smallest entrance. An ushership at Market Bosworth, and 'a disagreement between him and Sir Wolstan Dixie, the patron of the school,' yields him bread of affliction and water of affliction; but so bitter, that unassisted human nature cannot swallow them. Young Samson will grind no more in the Philistine mill of Bosworth; quits hold of Sir Wolstan, and the 'domestic chaplaincy, so far at least as to say grace at table,' and also to be 'treated with what he represented as intolerable harshness;' and so, after 'some months of such complicated misery,' feeling doubtless that there are worse things in the world than quick death by Famine, 'relinquishes a situation, which all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even horror.' Men like Johnson are properly called the Forlorn Hope of the World: judge whether his hope was forlorn or not, by this Letter to a dull oily Printer, who called himself *Sylvanus Urban*:

'Sir, — As you appear no less sensible than your readers, of the defect of your poetical article, you will not be displeased if (in order to the improvement of it) I communicate to you the sentiments of a person who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.

'His opinion is that the public would,' &c. &c.

'If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me in two posts, what the conditions are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer (for a Prize Poem) gives me no

reason to distrust your generosity. If you engage in any literary projects besides this paper, I have other designs to impart.'

Reader, the generous person, to whom this Letter goes addressed, is 'Mr. Edmund Cave, at St. John's Gate, London;' the addresser of it is Samuel Johnson, in Birmingham, Warwickshire.

Nevertheless, Life rallies in the man; reasserts its right to be *lived*, even to be enjoyed. 'Better a small bush,' say the Scotch, 'than no shelter:' Johnson learns to be contented with humble human things; and is there not already an actually realized human Existence, all stirring and living on every hand of him? Go thou and do likewise! In Birmingham itself, with his own purchased goose-quill, he can earn 'five pounds;' nay, finally, the choicest terrestrial good: a Friend, who will be Wife to him! Johnson's marriage with the good Widow Porter has been treated with ridicule by many mortals, who apparently had no understanding thereof. That the purblind, seamy-faced Wildman, stalking lonely, woe-stricken, like some Irish Gallowglass with peeled club, whose speech no man knew, whose look all men both laughed at and shuddered at, should find any brave female heart, to acknowledge, at first sight and hearing of him, 'This is the most sensible man I ever met with;' and then, with generous courage, to take him to itself, and say, Be thou mine; be thou warmed here, and thawed to life! — in all this, in the kind Widow's love and pity for him, in Johnson's love and gratitude, there is actually no matter for ridicule. Their wedded life, as is the common lot, was made up of drizzle and dry weather; but innocence and worth dwelt in it; and when death had ended it, a certain sacredness: Johnson's deathless affection for his Tetty was always venerable and noble. However, be this as it might, Johnson is now minded to wed; and will

live by the trade of Pedagogy, for by this also may life be kept in. Let the world therefore take notice: '*At Edial near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded, and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by SAMUEL JOHNSON.*' Had this Edial enterprise prospered, how different might the issue have been! Johnson had lived a life of unnoticed nobleness, or swoln into some amorphous Dr. Parr, of no avail to us; Bozzy would have dwindled into official insignificance, or risen by some other elevation; old Auchinleck had never been afflicted with 'ane that keepest a schule,' or obliged to violate hospitality by a 'Cromwell do? God, sir, he gart kings ken that there was a *lith* in their neck!' But the Edial enterprise did not prosper; Destiny had other work appointed for Samuel Johnson;—and young gentlemen got board where they could elsewhere find it. This man was to become a Teacher of grown gentlemen, in the most surprising way; a Man of Letters, and Ruler of the British Nation for some time,—not of their bodies merely, but of their minds, not *over* them, but *in* them.

The career of Literature could not, in Johnson's day, any more than now, be said to lie along the shores of a Pactolus: whatever else might be gathered there, gold-dust was no-wise the chief produce. The world, from the times of Socrates, St. Paul, and far earlier, has always had its Teachers; and always treated them in a peculiar way. A shrewd Town-clerk (not of Ephesus), once, in founding a Burgh-Seminary, when the question came, How the Schoolmasters should be maintained? delivered this brief counsel: 'D—n them, keep them *poor*!' Considerable wisdom may lie in this aphorism. At all events, we see, the world has acted on it long, and indeed improved on it,—putting many a Schoolmaster of its great Burgh-Seminary to a death, which even *cost* it something. The world, it is true, had for some

time been too busy to go out of its way, and *put* any Author to death; however, the old sentence pronounced against them was found to be pretty sufficient. The first Writers (being Monks) were sworn to a vow of Poverty; the modern Authors had no need to swear to it. This was the epoch when an Otway could still die of hunger: not to speak of your innumerable Scrogginses, whom 'the Muse found stretched beneath a rug,' with 'rusty grate unconscious of a fire,' stocking-nightcap, sanded floor, and all the other es-cutcheons of the craft, time out of mind the heirlooms of Authorship. Scroggins, however, seems to have been but an idler; not at all so diligent as worthy Mr. Boyce, whom we might have seen *sitting up* in bed with his wearing-apparel of Blanket about him, and a hole slit in the same, that his hand might be at liberty to work in its vocation. The worst was, that too frequently a blackguard recklessness of temper ensued, incapable of turning to account what good the gods even here had provided: your Boyces acted on some stoico-epicurean principle of *carpe diem*, as men do in bombarded towns, and seasons of raging pestilence; — and so had lost not only their life, and presence of mind, but their status as persons of respectability. The trade of Author was about one of its lowest ebbs, when Johnson embarked on it.

Accordingly we find no mention of Illuminations in the city of London, when this same Ruler of the British nation arrived in it: no cannon-salvoes are fired; no flourish of drums and trumpets greets his appearance on the scene. He enters quite quietly, with some copper halfpence in his pocket; creeps into lodgings in Exeter Street, Strand; and has a Coronation Pontiff also, of not less peculiar equipment, whom, with all submissiveness, he must wait upon, in his Vatican of St. John's Gate. This is the dull oily Printer alluded to above.

'Cave's temper,' says our Knight Hawkins, 'was phlegmatic: though he assumed, as the publisher of the Magazine, the name of Sylvanus Urban, he had few of those qualities that constitute urbanity. Judge of his want of them by this question, which he once put to an author: "Mr. —, I hear you have just published a pamphlet, and am told there is a very good paragraph in it upon the subject of music: did you write that yourself?" His discernment was also slow; and as he had already at his command some writers of prose and verse, who, in the language of Booksellers, are called good hands, he was the backwarder in making advances, or courting an intimacy with Johnson. Upon the first approach of a stranger, his practice was to continue sitting; a posture in which he was ever to be found, and for a few minutes to continue silent: if at any time he was inclined to begin the discourse, it was generally by putting a leaf of the Magazine, then in the press, into the hand of his visitor, and asking his opinion of it. * * *

"He was so incompetent a judge of Johnson's abilities, that meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendor of some of those luminaries in Literature, who favored him with their correspondence, he told him that if he would, in the evening, be at a certain alehouse in the neighborhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne and another or two of those illustrious contributors: Johnson accepted the invitation; and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horseman's coat, and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified.' — *Hawkins*, 46-50.

In fact, if we look seriously into the condition of Authorship at that period, we shall find that Johnson had undertaken one of the ruggedest of all possible enterprises; that here as elsewhere Fortune had given him unspeakable Contradictions to reconcile. For a man of Johnson's stamp, the Problem was twofold: *First*, not only as the humble but indispensable condition of all else, to keep himself, if so might be, *alive*; but *secondly*, to keep himself alive by

speaking forth the *Truth* that was in him, and speaking it *truly*, that is, in the clearest and fittest utterance the Heavens had enabled him to give it, let the Earth say to this what she liked. Of which twofold Problem if it be hard to solve either member separately, how incalculably more so to solve it, when both are conjoined, and work with endless complication into one another! He that finds himself already *kept alive* can sometimes (unhappily not always) speak a little truth; he that finds himself able and willing, to all lengths, to *speak lies*, may, by watching how the wind sits, scrape together a livelihood, sometimes of great splendor: he, again, who finds himself provided with *neither* endowment, has but a ticklish game to play, and shall have praises if he win it. Let us look a little at both faces of the matter; and see what front they then offered our Adventurer, what front he offered them.

At the time of Johnson's appearance on the field, Literature, in many senses, was in a transitional state; chiefly in this sense, as respects the pecuniary subsistence of its cultivators. It was in the very act of passing from the protection of Patrons into that of the Public; no longer to supply its necessities by laudatory Dedications to the Great, but by judicious Bargains with the Booksellers. This happy change has been much sung and celebrated; many a 'lord of the lion heart and eagle eye' looking back with scorn enough on the bygone system of Dependency: so that now it were perhaps well to consider, for a moment, what good might also be in it, what gratitude we owe it. That a good was in it, admits not of doubt. Whatsoever has existed has had its value: without some truth and worth lying in it, the thing could not have hung together, and been the organ and sustenance, and method of action, for men that reasoned and were alive. Translate a Falsehood which is wholly false into Practice, the result comes out *zero*; there

is no fruit or issue to be derived from it. That in an age, when a Nobleman was still noble, still with his wealth the protector of worthy and humane things, and still venerated as such, a poor Man of Genius, his brother in nobleness, should, with unfeigned reverence, address him and say : ' I have found Wisdom here, and would fain proclaim it abroad ; wilt thou, of thy abundance, afford me the means ? ' — in all this there was no baseness ; it was wholly an honest proposal, which a free man might make, and a free man listen to. So might a Tasso, with a *Gerusalemme* in his hand or in his head, speak to a Duke of Ferrara ; so might a Shakspeare to his Southampton ; and Continental Artists generally to their rich Protectors, — in some countries, down almost to these days. It was only when the reverence became *feigned*, that baseness entered into the transaction on both sides ; and, indeed, flourished there with rapid luxuriance, till that became disgraceful for a Dryden, which a Shakspeare could once practise without offence.

Neither, it is very true, was the new way of Bookseller Mecænasship worthless ; which opened itself at this juncture, for the most important of all transport-trades, now when the old way had become too miry and impassable. Remark, moreover, how this second sort of Mecænasship, after carrying us through nearly a century of Literary Time, appears now to have wellnigh discharged *its* function also ; and to be working pretty rapidly towards some *third* method, the exact conditions of which are yet nowise visible. Thus all things have their end ; and we should part with them all, not in anger but in peace. The Bookseller System, during its peculiar century, the whole of the eighteenth, did carry us handsomely along ; and many good Works it has left us, and many good Men it maintained : if it is now expiring by PUFFERY, as the Patronage System did by FLATTEY (for *Lying* is ever the forerunner of

Death, nay is itself Death), let us not forget its benefits ; how it nursed Literature through boyhood and school-years, as Patronage had wrapped it in soft swaddling-bands ; — till now we see it about to put on the *toga virilis*, could it but *find* any such !

There is tolerable travelling on the beaten road, run how it may ; only on the new road, not yet levelled and paved, and on the old road, all broken into ruts and quagmires, is the travelling bad or impracticable. The difficulty lies always in the *transition* from one method to another. In which state it was that Johnson now found Literature ; and out of which, let us also say, he manfully carried it. What remarkable mortal *first paid copyright* in England we have not ascertained ; perhaps for almost a century before, some scarce visible or ponderable pittance of wages had occasionally been yielded by the Seller of Books to the Writer of them : the original Covenant, stipulating to produce *Paradise Lost* on the one hand, and *Five Pounds Sterling* on the other, still lies (we have been told), in black-on-white, for inspection and purchase by the curious, at a Bookshop in Chancery Lane. Thus had the matter gone on, in a mixed confused way, for some threescore years ; — as ever, in such things, the old system *overlaps* the new, by some generation or two, and only dies quite out when the new has got a complete organization, and weather-worthy surface of its own. Among the first authors, the very first of any significance, who lived by the day's wages of his craft, and composedly faced the world on that basis, was Samuel Johnson.

At the time of Johnson's appearance, there were still two ways, on which an Author might attempt proceeding : there were the Mecænases proper in the West End of London ; and the Mecænases virtual of St. John's Gate and Paternoster Row. To a considerate man it might seem uncertain

which method were preferable : neither had very high attractions ; the Patron's aid was now wellnigh *necessarily* polluted by sycophancy, before it could come to hand ; the Bookseller's was deformed with greedy stupidity, not to say entire wooden-headedness and disgust (so that an Osborne even required to be knocked down, by an author of spirit), and could barely keep the thread of life together. The one was the wages of suffering and poverty ; the other, unless you gave strict heed to it, the wages of sin. In time, Johnson had opportunity of looking into both methods, and ascertaining what they were ; but found, at first trial, that the former would in no wise do for him. Listen, once again, to that far-famed Blast of Doom, proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield, and, through him, of the listening world, that Patronage should be no more !

'Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door ; during which time I have been pushing on my Work* through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance,† one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor.

'The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

'Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been

* The *English Dictionary*.

† Were time and printer's space of no value, it were easy to wash away certain foolish soot-stains dropped here as 'Notes ;' especially two : the one on this word (and on Boswell's Note to it) ; the other on the paragraph which follows. Let 'ED.' look a second time ; he will find that Johnson's sacred regard for *Truth* is the only thing to be 'noted,' in the former case ; also, in the latter, that this of 'Love's being a native of the rocks' actually *has* a 'meaning.'

kind : but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary and cannot impart it ; till I am known and do not want it. I hope, it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations, where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

' Having carried on my Work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning ; I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less : for I have long been awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

' My Lord, your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,
' SAM. JOHNSON.'

And thus must the rebellious ' Sam. Johnson ' turn him to the Bookselling guild, and the wondrous chaos of ' Author by trade ; ' and, though ushered into it only by that dull oily Printer, ' with loose horseman's coat, and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore,' and only as subaltern to some commanding-officer ' Browne, sitting amid tobacco-smoke at the head of a long table in the alehouse at Clerkenwell,' — gird himself together for the warfare ; having no alternative !

Little less contradictory was that other branch of the two-fold Problem now set before Johnson : the speaking forth of *Truth*. Nay, taken by itself, it had in those days become so complex as to puzzle strongest heads, with nothing else imposed on them for solution ; and even to turn high heads of that sort into mere hollow *vizards*, speaking neither truth nor falsehood, nor anything but what the Prompter and Player (*ὑποκριτής*) put into them. Alas ! for poor Johnson, Contradiction abounded ; in spirituals and in temporals, within and without. Born with the strongest unconquerable love of just Insight, he must begin to live and learn in a scene where Prejudice flourishes with rank luxuriance. England was all confused enough, sightless and yet restless,

take it where you would ; but figure the best intellect in England nursed up to manhood in the idol-cavern of a poor Tradesman's house, in the cathedral city of Lichfield ! What is Truth ? said jesting Pilate ; What is Truth ? might earnest Johnson much more emphatically say. Truth, no longer, like the Phœnix, in rainbow plumage, 'poured, from her glittering beak, such tones of sweetest melody as took captive every ear : ' the Phœnix (waxing old) had well-nigh ceased her singing, and empty wearisome Cuckoos, and doleful monotonous Owls, innumerable Jays also, and twittering Sparrows on the housetop, pretended they were repeating her.

It was wholly a divided age, that of Johnson ; Unity existed nowhere, in its Heaven, or in its Earth. Society, through every fibre, was rent asunder : all things, it was then becoming visible, but could not then be understood, were moving onwards, with an impulse received ages before, yet now first with a decisive rapidity, towards that great chaotic gulf, where, whether in the shape of French Revolutions, Reform Bills, or what shape soever, bloody or bloodless, the descent and engulfment assume, we now see them weltering and boiling. Already Cant, as once before hinted, had begun to play its wonderful part (for the hour was come) : two ghastly Apparitions, unreal *simulacra* both, HYPOCRISY and ATHEISM are already, in silence, parting the world. Opinion and Action, which should live together as wedded pair, 'one flesh,' more properly as Soul and Body, have commenced their open quarrel, and are suing for a separate maintenance, — as if they could exist separately. To the earnest mind, in any position, firm footing and a life of Truth was becoming daily more difficult : in Johnson's position, it was more difficult than in almost any other.

If, as for a devout nature was inevitable and indispensable,

he looked up to Religion, as to the pole-star of his voyage, already there was no *fixed* pole-star any longer visible ; but two stars, a whole constellation of stars, each proclaiming itself as the true. There was the red portentous comet-star of Infidelity ; the dimmer and dimmer-burning fixed-star (uncertain now whether not an atmospheric *meteor*) of Orthodoxy : which of these to choose ? The keener intellects of Europe had, almost without exception, ranged themselves under the former : for some half century, it had been the general effort of European Speculation to proclaim that Destruction of Falsehood was the only Truth ; daily had Denial waxed stronger and stronger, Belief sunk more and more into decay. From our Bolingbrokes and Tolands, the skeptical fever had passed into France, into Scotland ; and already it smouldered, far and wide, secretly eating out the heart of England. Bayle had played his part ; Voltaire, on a wider theatre, was playing his, — Johnson's senior by some fifteen years : Hume and Johnson were children of the same year. To this keener order of intellects did Johnson's indisputably belong : was he to join them ? Was he to oppose them ? A complicated question : for, alas ! the Church itself is no longer, even to him, wholly of true adamant, but of adamant and baked mud conjoined : the zealously Devout must find his Church tottering ; and pause amazed to see, instead of inspired Priest, many a swine-feeding Trulliber ministering at her altar. It is not the least curious of the incoherences which Johnson had to reconcile, that, though by nature contemptuous and incredulous, he was, at that time of day, to find his safety and glory in defending, with his whole might, the traditions of the elders.

Not less perplexingly intricate, and on both sides hollow or questionable, was the aspect of Politics. Whigs struggling blindly forward, Tories holding blindly back ;

each with some forecast of a half truth ; neither with any forecast of the whole ! Admire here this other Contradiction in the life of Johnson : that, though the most ungovernable, and in practice the most independent of men, he must be a Jacobite, and worshipper of the Divine Right. In politics also there are Irreconcilables enough for him. As, indeed, how could it be otherwise ? For when Religion is torn asunder, and the very heart of man's existence set against itself, then, in all subordinate departments there must needs be hollowness, incoherence. The English Nation had rebelled against a Tyrant ; and, by the hands of religious tyrannicides, exacted stern vengeance of him : Democracy had risen iron-sinewed, and 'like an infant Hercules, strangled serpents in its cradle.' But as yet none knew the meaning or extent of the phenomenon : Europe was not ripe for it ; not to be ripened for it, but by the culture and various experience of another century and half. And now, when the King-killers were all swept away, and a milder *second* picture was painted over the canvass of the *first*, and betitled 'Glorious Revolution,' who doubted but the catastrophe was over, the whole business finished, and Democracy gone to its long sleep ? Yet was it like a business finished and not finished ; a lingering uneasiness dwelt in all minds : the deep-lying, resistless Tendency, which had still to be *obeyed*, could no longer be *recognised* ; thus was there half-ness, insincerity, uncertainty in men's ways ; instead of heroic Puritans and heroic Cavaliers, came now a dawdling set of argumentative Whigs, and a dawdling set of deaf-eared Tories ; each half-foolish, each half-false. The Whigs were false and without basis ; inasmuch as their whole object was Resistance, Criticism, Demolition, — they knew not why, or towards what issue. In Whiggism, ever since a Charles and his Jeffries had ceased to meddle with it, and to have any Russel or Sidney to meddle with, there

could be no divineness of character; not till, in these latter days, it took the figure of a thorough-going, all-defying Radicalism, was there any solid footing for it to stand on. Of the like uncertain, half-hollow nature had Toryism become, in Johnson's time; preaching forth indeed an everlasting truth, the duty of Loyalty; yet now (ever since the final expulsion of the Stuarts) having no *Person* but only an *Office* to be loyal to, no living *Soul* to worship, but only a dead velvet-cushioned *Chair*. Its attitude, therefore, was stiff-necked refusal to move; as that of Whiggism was clamorous command to move,—let rhyme and reason, on both hands, say to it what they might. The consequence was: Immeasurable floods of contentious jargon, tending nowhither; false conviction; false resistance to conviction; decay (ultimately to become decease) of whatsoever was once understood by the words, *Principle*, or *Honesty* of heart; the louder and louder triumph of *Half-ness* and *Plausibility* over *Whole-ness* and *Truth*;—at last, this all-overshadowing efflorescence of QUACKERY, which we now see, with all its deadening and killing fruits, in all its innumerable branches, down to the lowest. How, between these jarring extremes, wherein the rotten lay so inextricably intermingled with the sound, and as yet no eye could see through the ulterior meaning of the matter, was a faithful and true man to adjust himself?

That Johnson, in spite of all drawbacks, adopted the Conservative side; stationed himself as the unyielding opponent of Innovation, resolute to hold fast the form of sound words, could not but increase, in no small measure, the difficulties he had to strive with. We mean, the *moral* difficulties; for in *economical* respects, it might be pretty equally balanced; the Tory servant of the Public had perhaps about the same chance of promotion as the Whig: and all the promotion Johnson aimed at was the privilege

to live. But, for what, though unavowed, was no less indispensable, for his peace of conscience, and the clear ascertainment and feeling of his Duty as an inhabitant of God's world, the case was hereby rendered much more complex. To resist Innovation is easy enough on one condition: that you resist Inquiry. This is, and was, the common expedient of your common Conservatives; but it would not do for Johnson: he was a zealous recommender and practiser of Inquiry; once for all, could not and would not believe, much less speak and act, a Falsehood; the *form* of sound words, which he held fast, must have a *meaning* in it. Here lay the difficulty: to behold a portentous mixture of True and False, and feel that he must dwell and fight there; yet to love and defend only the True. How worship, when you cannot and will not be an idolater; yet cannot help discerning that the Symbol of your Divinity has half become idolatrous? This was the question, which Johnson, the man both of clear eye and devout believing heart, must answer,—at peril of his life. The Whig or Skeptic, on the other hand, had a much simpler part to play. To him only the idolatrous side of things, nowise the divine one, lay visible: not *worship*, therefore, nay in the strict sense not heart-honesty, only at most lip- and hand-honesty, is required of him. What spiritual force is his, he can conscientiously employ in the work of cavilling, of pulling down what is False. For the rest, that there is or can be any Truth of a higher than sensual nature, has not occurred to him. The utmost, therefore, that he as man has to aim at, is **RESPECTABILITY**, the suffrages of his fellow-men. Such suffrages he may weigh as well as count; or count only: according as he is a Burke, or a Wilkes. But beyond these there lies nothing divine for him; these attained, all is attained. Thus is his whole world distinct and rounded

in ; a clear goal is set before him ; a firm path, rougher or smoother ; at worst a firm region wherein to seek a path : let him gird up his loins, and travel on without misgivings ! For the honest Conservative, again, nothing is distinct, nothing rounded in : RESPECTABILITY can nowise be his highest Godhead ; not one aim, but two conflicting aims to be continually reconciled by him, has he to strive after. A difficult position, as we said ; which accordingly the most did, even in those days, but half defend, — by the surrender, namely, of their own too cumbersome *honesty*, or even *understanding* ; after which the completest defence was worth little. Into this difficult position Johnson, nevertheless, threw himself : found it indeed full of difficulties ; yet held it out manfully, as an honest-hearted, open-sighted man, while the life was in him.

Such was that same 'twofold Problem' set before Samuel Johnson. Consider all these moral difficulties ; and add to them the fearful aggravation, which lay in that other circumstance, that he needed a continual appeal to the Public, must continually produce a certain impression and conviction on the Public ; that if he did not, he ceased to have 'provision for the day that was passing over him,' he could not any longer live ! How a vulgar character, once launched into this wild element ; driven onwards by Fear and Famine ; without other aim than to clutch what Provender (of Enjoyment in any kind) he could get, always if possible keeping *quite* clear of the Gallows and Pillory (that is to say, minding heedfully both 'person' and 'character'), — would have floated hither and thither in it ; and contrived to eat some three repasts daily, and wear some three suits yearly, and then to depart, and disappear, having consumed his last ration : all this might be worth knowing, but were in itself a trivial knowledge. How a noble man, resolute for the Truth, to whom Shams and Lies were once for all

an abomination, — was to act in it: *here* lay the mystery. By what methods, by what gifts of eye and hand, does a heroic Samuel Johnson, now when cast forth into that waste Chaos of Authorship, maddest of things, a mingled Phlegethon and Fleet-ditch, with its floating lumber, and sea-kra-kens, and mud-spectres, — shape himself a voyage; of the *transient* driftwood, and the *enduring* iron, build him a seaworthy Life-boat, and sail therein, undrowned, unpolluted, through the roaring 'mother of dead dogs,' onwards to an eternal Landmark, and City that hath foundations? This high question is even the one answered in Boswell's Book; which Book we, therefore not so falsely, have named a *Heroic Poem*; for in it there lies the whole argument of such. Glory to our brave Samuel! He accomplished this wonderful Problem; and now through long generations, we point to him, and say: Here also was a Man; let the world once more have assurance of a Man!

Had there been in Johnson, now when afloat on that confusion worse confounded of grandeur and squalor, no light but an earthly outward one, he too must have made shipwreck. With his diseased body, and vehement voracious heart, how easy for him to become a *carpe-diem* Philosopher, like the rest, and live and die as miserably as any Boyce of that Brotherhood! But happily there was a higher light for him; shining as a lamp to his path; which, in all paths, would teach him to act and walk not as a fool, but as wise in those evil days also, 'redeeming the time.' Under dimmer or clearer manifestations, a Truth had been revealed to him: I also am a Man; even in this unutterable element of Authorship, I may live as beseems a Man! That Wrong is not only different from Right, but that it is in strict scientific terms, *infinitely* different; even as the gaining of the whole world set against the losing of one's own soul, or (as Johnson had it) a Heaven set against a

Hell; that in all situations (out of the Pit of Tophet), wherein a living Man has stood or can stand, there is actually a Prize of quite *infinite* value placed within his reach, namely a *Duty* for him to do: this highest Gospel, which forms the basis and worth of all other Gospels whatsoever, had been revealed to Samuel Johnson; and the man had believed it, and laid it faithfully to heart. Such knowledge of the *transcendental*, immeasurable character of Duty, we call the basis of all Gospels, the essence of all Religion: he who with his whole soul knows not this, as yet knows nothing, as yet *is* properly nothing.

This, happily for him, Johnson was one of those that knew: under a certain authentic Symbol, it stood for ever present to his eyes: a Symbol; indeed, waxing old as doth a garment; yet which had guided forward, as their Banner and celestial Pillar of Fire, innumerable saints and witnesses, the fathers of our modern world; and for him also had still a sacred significance. It does not appear that, at any time, Johnson was what we call irreligious: but in his sorrows and isolation, when hope died away, and only a long vista of suffering and toil lay before him to the end, then first did Religion shine forth in its meek, everlasting clearness; even as the stars do in black night, which in the daytime and dusk, were hidden by inferior lights. How a true man, in the midst of errors and uncertainties, shall work out for himself a sure Life-truth; and adjusting the transient to the eternal, amid the fragments of ruined Temples build up, with toil and pain, a little Altar for himself; and worship there; how Samuel Johnson, in the era of Voltaire, can purify and fortify his soul, and hold real communion with the Highest, 'in the Church of St. Clement Danes: ' this too stands all unfolded in his Biography, and is among the most touching and memorable things there; a thing to be looked at with pity, admiration, awe. Johnson's Relig-

ion was as the light of life to him ; without it, his heart was all sick, dark, and had no guidance left.

He is now enlisted, or impressed, into that unspeakable shoe-black seraph Army of Authors ; but can feel hereby that he fights under a celestial flag, and will quit him like a man. The first grand requisite, an assured heart, he therefore has : what his outward equipments and accoutrements are is the next question ; an important, though inferior one. His intellectual stock, intrinsically viewed, is perhaps inconsiderable : the furnishings of an English School and English University ; good knowledge of the Latin tongue, a more uncertain one of Greek : this is a rather slender stock of Education wherewith to front the world. But then it is to be remembered that his world was England ; that such was the culture England commonly supplied and expected. Besides Johnson has been a voracious reader, though a desultory one, and oftenest in strange scholastic, too obsolete Libraries ; he has also rubbed shoulders with the press of actual Life, for some thirty years now : views or hallucinations of innumerable things are weltering to and fro in him. Above all, be his weapons what they may, he has an arm that can wield them. Nature has given him her choicest gift : an open eye and heart. He will look on the world, wheresoever he can catch a glimpse of it, with eager curiosity : to the last, we find this a striking characteristic of him ; for all human interests he has a sense ; the meanest handicraftsman could interest him, even in extreme age, by speaking of his craft : the ways of men are all interesting to him ; any human thing, that he did not know, he wished to know. Reflection, moreover, Meditation, was what he practised incessantly, with or without his will : for the mind of the man was earnest, deep as well as humane. Thus would the world, such fragments of it as he could survey, form itself,

or continually tend to form itself, into a coherent Whole ; on any and on all phases of which, his vote and voice must be well worth listening to. As a Speaker of the Word, he will speak real words ; no idle jargon, or hollow triviality will issue from him. His aim too is clear, attainable, that of *working for his wages* : let him *do* this honestly, and all else will follow of its own accord.

With such omens, into such a warfare, did Johnson go forth. A rugged, hungry Kerne, or Gallowglass, as we called him : yet indomitable ; in whom lay the true spirit of a Soldier. With giant's force he toils, since such is his appointment, were it but at hewing of wood and drawing of water for old sedentary bushy-wigged Cave ; distinguishes himself by mere quantity, if there is to be no other distinction. He can write all things ; frosty Latin verses, if these are the saleable commodity ; Book-prefaces, Political Philippics, Review Articles, Parliamentary Debates : all things he does rapidly ; still more surprising, all things he does thoroughly and well. How he sits there, in his rough-hewn, amorphous bulk, in that upper-room at St. John's Gate, and trundles off sheet after sheet of those Senate-of-Lilliput Debates, to the clamorous Printer's Devils waiting for them, with insatiable throat, down stairs ; himself perhaps *impransus* all the while ! Admire also the greatness of Literature ; how a grain of mustard-seed cast into its Nile-waters, shall settle in the teeming mould, and be found, one day, as a Tree, in whose branches all the fowls of heaven may lodge. Was it not so with these Lilliput Debates ? In that small project and act, began the stupendous FOURTH ESTATE ; whose wide world-embracing influences what eye can take in ; in whose boughs are there not already fowls of strange feather lodged ? Such things, and far stranger, were done in that wondrous old Portal, even in latter times. And then figure

Samuel dining 'behind the screen,' from a trencher covertly handed in to him, at a preconcerted nod from the 'great bushy wig;' Samuel too ragged to show face, yet 'made a happy man of' by hearing his praise spoken. If to Johnson himself, then much more to us, may that St. John's Gate be a place we can 'never pass without veneration.'*

* All Johnson's places of resort and abode are venerable, and now indeed to the many as well as to the few; for his name has become great; and, as we must often with a kind of sad admiration recognise, there is, even to the rudest man, no greatness so venerable as intellectual, as spiritual greatness; nay properly there is no other venerable at all. For example, what soul-subduing magic, for the very clown or craftsman of our England, lies in the word 'Scholar!' 'He is a Scholar:' he is a man *wiser* than we; of a wisdom to us *boundless*, infinite: who shall speak his worth! Such things, we say, fill us with a certain pathetic admiration of defaced and obstructed yet glorious man; archangel though in ruins,—or rather, though in *rubbish*, of encumbrances and mud-incrustations, which also are not to be perpetual.

Nevertheless, in this mad-whirling all-forgetting London, the haunts of the mighty that were, can seldom without a strange difficulty be discovered. Will any man, for instance, tell us which *bricks* it was in Lincoln's Inn Buildings, that Ben Jonson's hand and trowel laid? No man, it is to be feared,—and also grumbled at. With Samuel Johnson may it prove otherwise! A Gentleman of the British Museum is said to have made drawings of all his residences: the blessing of Old Mortality be upon him! We ourselves, not without labor and risk, lately discovered GOUGH SQUARE, between Fleet Street and Holborn (adjoining both to BOLT COURT and JOHNSON'S COURT); and, on the second day of search, the very House there, wherein the *English Dictionary* was composed. It is the first or corner house on the right hand, as you enter through the arched way from the North-west. The actual occupant, an elderly, well-washed, decent-looking man, invited us to enter; and courteously undertook to be *cicerone*; though in his memory lay nothing but the foolishest jumble and hallucination. It is a stout old-fashioned, oak-balustraded house: 'I have spent many a pound and penny on it since then,' said the worthy Landlord: 'here, you

Poverty, Distress, and as yet Obscurity, are his companions : so poor is he that his Wife must leave him, and seek shelter among other relations ; Johnson's household has accommodation for one inmate only. To all his ever-varying, ever-recurring troubles, moreover, must be added this continual one of ill health, and its concomitant depressiveness : a galling load, which would have crushed most common mortals into desperation, is his appointed ballast and life-burden ; he ' could not remember the day he had passed free from pain.' Nevertheless, Life, as we said before, is always Life : a healthy soul, imprison it as you will, in squalid garrets, shabby coat, bodily sickness, or whatever else, will assert its heaven-granted indefeasible Freedom, its right to conquer difficulties, to do work, even to feel gladness. Johnson does not whine over his existence, but manfully makes the most and best of it. ' He said, a man might live in a garret at eighteen-pence a-week ; few people would inquire where he lodged ; and if they did, it was easy to say, " Sir, I am to be found at such a place." By spending threepence in a coffee-house, he might be for some hours every day in very good company ; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean-shirt-day* he went abroad, and paid visits.' Think by whom, and of whom this was uttered, and ask then, Whether there is more pathos in it than in

see, this Bedroom was the Doctor's study ; that was the garden ' (a plot of delved ground somewhat larger than a bed-quilt) ' where he walked for exercise ; these three garret Bedrooms ' (where his three Copyists sat and wrote) ' were the place he kept his — *Pupils* in ! ' *Tempus edax rerum !* Yet *ferax* also : for our friend now added, with a wistful look, which strove to seem merely historical : ' I let it all in Lodgings, to respectable gentlemen ; by the quarter, or the month ; it's all one to me.' — ' To me also,' whispered the Ghost of Samuel, as we went pensively our ways.

a whole circulating-library of *Giaours* and *Harolds*, or less pathos? On another occasion, 'when Dr. Johnson, one day, read his own Satire, in which the life of a scholar is painted with the various obstructions thrown in his way to fortune and to fame, he burst into a passion of tears: Mr. Thrale's family and Mr. Scott only were present, who, in a jocose way, clapped him on the back, and said, "What's all this, my dear sir? Why you and I and *Hercules*, you know, were all troubled with *melancholy*." He was a very large man, and made out the triumvirate with Johnson and *Hercules* comically enough.' These were sweet tears; the sweet victorious remembrance lay in them of toils indeed frightful, yet never flinched from, and now triumphed over. 'One day it shall delight you to remember labor done!'—Neither, though Johnson is obscure and poor, need the highest enjoyment of existence, that of heart freely communing with heart, be denied him. Savage and he wander homeless through the streets; without bed, yet not without friendly converse; such another conversation not, it is like, producible in the proudest drawing-room of London. Nor, under the void Night, upon the hard pavement, are their own woes the only topic: nowise; they 'will stand by their country,' the two 'Back-woods-men' of the Brick Desert!

Of all outward evils Obscurity is perhaps in itself the least. To Johnson, as to a healthy-minded man, the fantastic article, sold or given under the title of *Fame*, had little or no value but its intrinsic one. He prized it as the means of getting him employment and good wages; scarcely as anything more. His light and guidance came from a loftier source; of which, in honest aversion to all hypocrisy or pretentious talk, he spoke not to men; nay, perhaps, being of a *healthy* mind, had never spoken to himself. We reckon it a striking fact in Johnson's history, this carelessness of his to Fame. Most authors speak of their 'Fame' as if it

were a quite priceless matter; the grand ultimatum, and heavenly Constantine's-Banner they had to follow, and conquer under. — Thy 'Fame!' Unhappy mortal, where will it and thou both be in some fifty years? Shakspeare himself has lasted but two hundred; Homer (partly by accident) three thousand: and does not already an ETERNITY encircle every *Me* and every *Thee*? Cease, then, to sit feverishly hatching on that 'Fame' of thine; and flapping, and shrieking with fierce hisses, like brood-goose on her last egg, if man shall or dare approach it! Quarrel not with me, hate me not, my Brother: make what thou canst of thy egg, and welcome: God knows, I will not steal it; I believe it to be *addle*. — Johnson, for his part, was no man to be killed 'by a review;' concerning which matter, it was said by a benevolent person: 'If any author *can* be reviewed to death, let it be, with all convenient despatch, *done*.' Johnson thankfully receives any word spoken in his favor; is nowise disobligened by a lampoon, but will look at it, if pointed out to him, and show how it might have been done better: the lampoon itself is indeed *nothing*, a soap-bubble that, next moment, will become a drop of sour suds; but in the meanwhile, if it do anything, it keeps him more in the world's eye, and the next *bargain* will be all the richer: 'Sir, if they should cease to talk of me, I must starve.' Sound heart and understanding head! these fail no man, not even a man of Letters.

Obscurity, however, was, in Johnson's case, whether a light or heavy evil, likely to be no lasting one. He is animated by the spirit of a true *workman*, resolute to do his work well; and he *does* his work well; all his work, that of writing, that of living. A man of this stamp is unhappily not so common in the literary or in any other department of the world, that he can continue always unnoticed. By slow degrees, Johnson emerges; loëming, at first, huge and dim

in the eye of an observant few; at last disclosed, in his real proportions, to the eye of the whole world, and encircled with a 'light-nimbus' of glory, so that whoso is not blind must and shall behold him. By slow degrees, we said; for this also is notable; slow but sure: as his fame waxes not by exaggerated clamor of what he *seems* to be, but by better and better insight of what he *is*, so it will last and stand wearing, being genuine. Thus indeed is it always, or nearly always, with true fame. The heavenly Luminary rises amid vapors: star-gazers enough must scan it, with critical telescopes; it makes no blazing, the world can either look at it, or forbear looking at it; not till after a time and times, does its celestial eternal nature become indubitable. Pleasant, on the other hand, is the blazing of a Tarbarrel; the crowd dance merrily round it, with loud huzzaing, universal three-times-three, and, like Homer's peasants, 'bless the useful light:' but unhappily it so soon ends in darkness, foul choking smoke, and is kicked into the gutters, a nameless imbroglio of charred staves, pitch-cinders, and *vomissement du Diable!*

But indeed, from of old, Johnson has enjoyed all or nearly all that Fame can yield any man: the respect, the obedience of those that are about him and inferior to him; of those whose opinion alone can have any forcible impression on him. A little circle gathers round the Wise man; which gradually enlarges as the report thereof spreads, and more can come to see, and to believe; for Wisdom is precious, and of irresistible attraction to all. 'An inspired-idiot,' Goldsmith, hangs strangely about him; though, as Hawkins says, 'he loved not Johnson, but rather envied him for his parts; and once entreated a friend to desist from praising him, "for in doing so," said he, "you harrow up my very soul!"' Yet on the whole, there is no evil in the 'gooseberry-fool;' but rather much good; of a finer,

if of a weaker, sort than Johnson's ; and all the more genuine that he himself could never become *conscious* of it, — though unhappily never cease *attempting* to become so : the Author of the genuine *Vicar of Wakefield*, will be, will be, must needs fly towards such a mass of genuine Manhood ; and Dr. Minor keep gyrating round Dr. Major, alternately attracted and repelled. Then there is the chivalrous Topham Beauclerk, with his sharp wit, and gallant, courtly ways : there is Bennet Langton, an orthodox gentleman, and worthy ; though Johnson once laughed, louder almost than mortal, at his last will and testament ; and ' could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till he got without the Temple-gate ; then burst into such a fit of laughter that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion ; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot-pavement, and sent forth peals so loud that, in the silence of the night, his voice seemed to resound from Temple-bar to Fleetditch ! ' Lastly comes his solid-thinking solid-feeding Thrale, the well-beloved man ; with *Thralia*, a bright papilionaceous creature, whom the elephant loved to play with, and wave to and fro upon his trunk. Not to speak of a reverent Bozzy, for what need is there farther ? — Or of the spiritual Luminaries, with tongue or pen, who made that age remarkable ; or of Highland Lairds drinking, in fierce usquebaugh, ' Your health, Tdoctor Shonson ! ' — still less of many such as that poor ' Mr. F. Lewis, ' older in date, of whose birth, death, and whole terrestrial *res gesta*, this only, and strange enough this actually, survives : ' Sir, he lived in London, and hung loose upon society ! ' *stat PARVI neminis umbra*. —

In his fifty-third year, he is beneficed, by the royal bounty, with a Pension of three hundred pounds. Loud clamor is always more or less insane : but probably the insanest of all loud clamors in the eighteenth century, was this that

was raised about Johnson's Pension. Men seem to be led by the noses : but in reality, it is by the ears, — as some ancient slaves were, who had their ears bored ; or as some modern quadrupeds may be, whose ears are long. Very falsely was it said, ' Names do not change Things ; ' Names do change Things ; nay for most part they are the only substance, which mankind can discern in Things. The whole sum that Johnson, during the remaining twenty-two years of his life, drew from the public funds of England, would have supported some Supreme Priest for about half as many weeks ; it amounts very nearly to the revenue of our poorest Church-Overseer for one twelvemonth. Of secular Administrators of Provinces, and Horse-subduers, and Game-destroyers, we shall not so much as speak : but who were the Primates of England, and the Primates of all England, during Johnson's days ? No man has remembered. Again, is the Primate of all England something, or is he nothing ? If something, then what but the man who, in the supreme degree, teaches and spiritually edifies, and leads towards Heaven by guiding wisely through the Earth, the living souls that inhabit England ? We touch here upon deep matters ; which but remotely concern us, and might lead us into still deeper : clear, in the meanwhile, it is that the true Spiritual Edifier and Soul's-Father of all England was, and till very lately continued to be, the man named Samuel Johnson, — whom this scot-and-lot-paying world cackled reproachfully to see remunerated like a Supervisor of Excise !

If Destiny had beaten hard on poor Samuel, and did never cease to visit him too roughly, yet the last section of his Life might be pronounced victorious, and on the whole happy. He was not Idle ; but now no longer goaded on by want ; the light which had shone irradiating the dark haunts of Poverty, now illuminates the circles of Wealth,

of a certain culture and elegant intelligence ; he who had once been admitted to speak with Edmund Cave and Tobacco Browne, now admits a Reynolds and a Burke to speak with him. Loving friends are there ; Listeners, even Answerers : the fruit of his long labors lies round him in fair legible Writings, of Philosophy, Eloquence, Morality, Philology ; some excellent, all worthy and genuine Works ; for which too, a deep, earnest murmur of thanks reaches him from all ends of his Fatherland. Nay there are works of Goodness, of undying Mercy, which even he has possessed the power to do : ' What I gave I have ; what I spent I had ! ' Early friends had long sunk into the grave ; yet in his soul they ever lived, fresh and clear, with soft pious breathings towards them, not without a still hope of one day meeting them again in purer union. Such was Johnson's Life : the victorious Battle of a free, true Man. Finally he died the death of the free and true : a dark cloud of Death, solemn, and not untinged with haloes of immortal Hope ' took him away,' and our eyes could no longer behold him ; but can still behold the trace and impress of his courageous, honest spirit, deep-legible in the World's Business, wheresoever he walked and was.

To estimate the quantity of Work that Johnson performed, how much poorer the World were had it wanted him, can, as in all such cases, never be accurately done ; cannot, till after some longer space, be approximately done. All work is as seed sown ; it grows and spreads, and sows itself anew, and so, in endless palingenesia, lives and works. To Johnson's Writings, good and solid, and still profitable as they are, we have already rated his Life and Conversation as superior. By the one and by the other, who shall compute what effects have been produced, and are still, and into deep Time, producing ?

So much, however, we can already see : It is now some three quarters of a century that Johnson has been the Prophet of the English ; the man by whose light the English people, in public and in private, more than by any other man's, have guided their existence. Higher light than that immediately *practical* one ; higher virtue than an honest PRUDENCE, he could not then communicate ; nor perhaps could they have received : such light, such virtue, however, he did communicate. How to thread this labyrinthic Time, the fallen and falling Ruin of Times ; to silence vain Scruples, hold firm to the last the fragments of old Belief, and with earnest eye still discern some glimpses of a true path, and go forward thereon, ' in a world where there is much to be done, and little to be known : ' this is what Samuel Johnson, by act and word, taught his nation, what his nation received and learned of him, more than of any other. We can view him as the preserver and transmitter of whatsoever was genuine in the spirit of Toryism ; which genuine spirit, it is now becoming manifest, must again embody itself in all new forms of Society, be what they may, that are to exist, and have continuance — elsewhere than on Paper. The *last* in many things, Johnson was the last genuine Tory ; the last of Englishmen who, with strong voice, and wholly-believing heart, preached the Doctrine of Standing still ; who, without selfishness or slavishness, revered the existing Powers, and could assert the privileges of rank, though himself poor, neglected, and plebeian ; who had heart-devoutness with heart-hatred of cant, was orthodox-religious with his eyes open ; and in all things and everywhere spoke out in plain English, from a soul wherein jesuitism could find no harbor, and with the front and tone not of a diplomatist but of a man.

This last of the Tories was Johnson : not Burke, as is often said ; Burke was essentially a Whig, and only, on

reaching the verge of the chasm towards which Whiggism from the first was inevitably leading, recoiled; and, like a man vehement rather than earnest, a resplendent far-sighted Rhetorician rather than a deep sure Thinker, recoiled with no measure, convulsively, and damaging what he drove back with him.

In a world which exists by the balance of Antagonisms, the respective merit of the Conservator and the Innovator must ever remain debateable. Great, in the meanwhile, and undoubted, for both sides, is the merit of him who, in a day of Change, walks wisely, honestly. Johnson's aim was in itself an impossible one: this of stemming the eternal Flood of Time; of clutching all things, and anchoring them down, and saying, *Move not!*—how could it, or should it, ever have success? The strongest man can but retard the current partially and for a short hour. Yet even in such shortest retardation, may not an inestimable value lie? If England has escaped the blood-bath of a French Revolution; and may yet, in virtue of this delay and of the experience it has given, work out her deliverance calmly into a new Era, let Samuel Johnson, beyond all contemporary or succeeding men, have the praise for it. We said above that he was appointed to be Ruler of the British nation for a season: whoso will look beyond the surface, into the heart of the world's movements, may find that all Pitt Administrations, and Continental Subsidies, and Waterloo victories, rested on the possibility of making England, yet a little while, *Toryish*, Loyal to the Old; and this again on the anterior reality, that the Wise had found such Loyalty still practicable, and recommendable. England had its Hume, as France had its Voltaires and Diderots; but the Johnson was peculiar to us.

If we ask now by what endowment it mainly was that

Johnson realized such a Life for himself and others ; what quality of character the main phenomena of his Life may be most naturally deduced from, and his other qualities most naturally subordinated to, in our conception of him, perhaps the answer were : The quality of Courage, of Valor ; that Johnson was a Brave Man. The Courage that can go forth, once and away, to Chalk-Farm, and have itself shot, and snuffed out, with decency, is nowise wholly what we mean here. Such Courage we indeed esteem an exceeding small matter ; capable of coexisting with a life full of falsehood, feebleness, poltroonery, and despicability. Nay oftener it is Cowardice rather that produces the result : for consider, Is the Chalk-Farm Pistoleer inspired with any reasonable Belief and Determination ; or is he hounded on by haggard indefinable Fear, — how he will be cut at public places, and ‘ plucked geese of the neighborhood ’ will wag their tongues at him a plucked goose ? If he go then, and be shot without shrieking, or audible uproar, it is well for him : nevertheless there is nothing amazing in it. Courage to manage all this has not perhaps been denied to any man, or to any woman. Thus, do not recruiting sergeants drum through the streets of manufacturing towns, and collect ragged losels enough ; every one of whom, if once dressed in red, and trained a little, will receive fire cheerfully for the small sum of one shilling *per diem*, and have the soul blown out of him at last, with perfect propriety. The Courage that dares only *die*, is on the whole no sublime affair ; necessary indeed, yet universal ; pitiful when it begins to parade itself. On this Globe of ours, there are some thirty-six persons that manifest it, seldom with the smallest failure, during every second of time. Nay look at Newgate : do not the offscourings of Creation, when condemned to the gallows, as if they were not men but vermin, walk thither with decency, and even

to the scowls and hootings of the whole Universe give their stern good-night in silence? What is to be undergone only once, we may undergo; what must be, comes almost of its own accord. Considered as Duellist, what a poor figure does the fiercest Irish Whiskerando make, compared with any English Game-cock, such as you may buy for fifteen-pence!

The Courage we desire and prize is not the Courage to die decently, but to live manfully. This, when by God's grace it has been given, lies deep in the soul; like genial heat, fosters all other virtues and gifts; without it they could not live. In spite of our innumerable Waterloos and Peterloos, and such campaigning as there has been, this Courage we allude to, and call the only true one, is perhaps rarer in these last ages, than it has been in any other since the Saxon Invasion under Hengist. Altogether extinct it can never be among men; otherwise the species Man were no longer for this world: here and there, in all times, under various guises, men are sent hither not only to demonstrate but exhibit it, and testify, as from heart to heart, that it is still possible, still practicable.

Johnson, in the eighteenth century, and as Man of Letters, was one of such; and, in good truth, 'the bravest of the brave.' What mortal could have more to war with? Yet, as we saw, he yielded not, faltered not; he fought, and even, such was his blessedness, prevailed. Whoso will understand what it is to have a man's heart, may find that, since the time of John Milton, no braver heart had beat in any English bosom than Samuel Johnson now bore. Observe too that he never called himself brave, never felt himself to be so; the more completely *was* so. No Giant Despair, no Golgotha-Death-dance or Sorcerer's-Sabbath of 'Literary Life in London,' appals this pilgrim; he works resolutely for deliverance; in still defiance, steps stoutly

along. The thing that is given him to do he can make himself do; what is to be endured he can endure in silence.

How the great soul of old Samuel, consuming daily his own bitter unalleviable allotment of misery and toil, shows beside the poor flimsy little soul of young Boswell; one day flaunting in the ring of vanity, tarrying by the wine-cup, and crying, Aha, the wine is red; the next day deploring his downpressed, night-shaded, quite poor estate; and thinking it unkind that the whole movement of the Universe should go on, while *his* digestive-apparatus had stopped! We reckon Johnson's 'talent of silence' to be among his great and too rare gifts. Where there is nothing farther to be done, there shall nothing farther be said: like his own poor blind Welshwoman, he accomplished somewhat, and also 'endured fifty years of wretchedness with unshaken fortitude.' How grim was Life to him; a sick Prison-house and Doubting-castle! 'His great business,' he would profess, 'was to escape from himself.' Yet towards all this he has taken his position and resolution; can dismiss it all 'with frigid indifference, having little to hope or to fear.' Friends are stupid and pusillanimous and parsimonious; 'wearied of his stay, yet offended at his departure:' it is the manner of the world. 'By popular delusion,' remarks he with a gigantic calmness, 'illiterate writers will rise into renown:' it is portion of the History of English Literature: a perennial thing, this same popular delusion; and will—alter the character of the Language.

Closely connected with this quality of Valor, partly as springing from it, partly as protected by it, are the more recognisable qualities of Truthfulness in word and thought, and Honesty in action. There is a reciprocity of influence here: for as the realizing of Truthfulness and Honesty is the Life-light and great aim of Valor, so without Valor they cannot, in anywise, be realized. Now, in spite of all

practical shortcomings, no one that sees into the significance of Johnson, will say that his prime object was not Truth. In conversation, doubtless, you may observe him, on occasion, fighting as if for victory;—and must pardon these ebulliences of a careless hour, which were not without temptation and provocation. Remark likewise two things; that such prize-arguings were ever on merely superficial debatable questions; and then that they were argued generally by the fair laws of battle, and logic-fence, by one cunning in that same. If their purpose was excusable, their effect was harmless, perhaps beneficial: that of taming noisy mediocrity, and showing it another side of a debateable matter; to see *both* sides of which was, for the first time, to see the Truth of it. In his Writings themselves, are errors enough, crabbed prepossessions enough, yet these also of a quite extraneous and accidental nature; nowhere a wilful shutting of the eyes to the Truth. Nay, is there not everywhere a heartfelt discernment, singular, almost admirable, if we consider through what confused conflicting lights and hallucinations it had to be attained, of the highest everlasting Truth, and beginning of all Truths: this namely, that man is ever, and even in the age of Wilkes and Whitfield, a Revelation of God to man; and lives, moves, and has his being in Truth only; is either true, or, in strict speech, *is* not at all?

Quite spotless, on the other hand, is Johnson's love of Truth, if we look at it as expressed in Practice, as what we have named Honesty of action. 'Clear your mind of Cant;' *clear* it, throw Cant utterly away: such was his emphatic, repeated precept; and did not he himself faithfully conform to it? The Life of this man has been, as it were, turned inside out, and examined with microscopes by friend and foe; yet was there no Lie found in him. His Doings and Writings are not *shows* but *performances*: you

may weigh them in the balance, and they will stand weight. Not a line, not a sentence is dishonestly done, is other than it pretends to be. Alas! and he wrote not out of inward inspiration, but to earn his wages: and with that grand perennial tide of 'popular delusion' flowing by; in whose waters he nevertheless refused to fish, to whose rich oyster-beds the dive was too muddy for him. Observe, again, with what innate hatred of Cant, he takes for himself, and offers to others, the lowest possible view of his business, which he followed with such nobleness. Motive for writing he had none, as he often said, but money; and yet he wrote so. Into the region of Poetic Art he indeed never rose; there was no *ideal* without him avowing itself in his work: the nobler was that unavowed *ideal* which lay within him, and commanded saying, Work out thy Artisan-ship in the spirit of an Artist! They who talk loudest about the dignity of Art, and fancy that they too are Artistic guild-brethren, and of the Celestials,—let them consider well what manner of man this was, who felt himself to be only a hired day-laborer. A laborer that was worthy of his hire; that has labored not as an eye-servant, but as one found faithful! Neither was Johnson in those days perhaps wholly a unique. Time was when, for money, you might have ware: and needed not, in all departments, in that of the Epic Poem, in that of the Blacking Bottle, to rest content with the mere *persuasion* that you had ware. It was a happier time. But as yet the seventh Apocalyptic Bladder (of PUFFERY) had not been rent open,—to whirl and grind, as in a West-Indian Tornado, all earthly trades and things into wreck, and dust, and consummation,—and regeneration. Be it quickly, since it must be!—

That Mercy can dwell only with Valor, is an old sentiment or proposition; which, in Johnson, again receives confirmation. Few men on record have had a more mer-

ciful, tenderly affectionate nature than old Samuel. He was called the Bear; and did indeed too often look, and roar, like one; being forced to it in his own defence: yet within that shaggy exterior of his, there beat a heart warm as a mother's, soft as a little child's. Nay generally, his very roaring was but the anger of affection: the rage of a Bear, if you will; but of a Bear bereaved of her whelps. Touch his Religion, glance at the Church of England, or the Divine Right; and he was upon you! These things were his Symbols of all that was good, and precious for men; his very Ark of the Covenant: whose laid hand on them tore asunder his heart of hearts. Not out of hatred to the opponent, but of love to the thing opposed, did Johnson grow cruel, fiercely contradictory: this is an important distinction; never to be forgotten in our censure of his conversational outrages. But observe also with what humanity, what openness of love, he can attach himself to all things: to a blind old woman, to a Doctor Levett, to a Cat 'Hodge.' 'His thoughts in the latter part of his life were frequently employed on his deceased friends; he often muttered these or such-like sentences: "Poor man! and then he died."' How he patiently converts his poor home into a Lazaretto; endures, for long years, the contradiction of the miserable and unreasonable; with him unconnected, save that they had no other to yield them refuge! Generous old man! Worldly possession he has little; yet of this he gives freely; from his own hard-earned shilling, the half-pence for the poor, that 'waited his coming out,' are not withheld: the poor 'waited the coming out' of one not quite so poor! A Sterne can write sentimentalities on Dead Asses: Johnson has a rough voice; but he finds the wretched Daughter of Vice fallen down in the streets; carries her home, on his own shoulders, and like a good Samaritan, gives help to the help-needing, worthy or unworthy. Ought not Charity,

even in that sense, to cover a multitude of Sins? No Penny-a-week Committee-Lady, no manager of Soup-Kitchens, dancer at Charity Balls, was this rugged, stern-visaged man: but where, in all England, could there have been found another soul so full of Pity, a hand so heavenlike bounteous as his? The widow's mite, we know, was greater than all the other gifts.

Perhaps it is this divine feeling of Affection, throughout manifested, that principally attracts us towards Johnson. A true brother of men is he; and filial lover of the Earth; who, with little bright spots of Attachment, 'where lives and works some loved one,' has beautified 'this rough solitary Earth into a peopled garden.' Lichfield, with its mostly dull and limited inhabitants, is to the last one of the sunny islets for him: *Salve magna parens!* Or read those Letters on his Mother's death: what a genuine solemn grief and pity lies recorded there; a looking back into the Past, unspeakably mournful, unspeakably tender. And yet calm, sublime; for he must now act, not look: his venerated Mother has been taken from him; but he must now write a *Rasselas* to defray her interment! Again in this little incident, recorded in his Book of Devotion, are not the tones of sacred Sorrow and Greatness deeper than in many a blank-verse Tragedy;—as, indeed, 'the fifth act of a Tragedy' (though unrhymed) does 'lie in every death-bed, were it a peasant's, and of straw:'

'Sunday, October 18, 1767. Yesterday, at about ten in the morning, I took my leave for ever of my dear old friend, Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.

'I desired all to withdraw; then told her that we were to part for ever; that as Christians, we should part with prayer; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She

expressed great desire to hear me; and held up her poor hands as she lay in bed, with great fervor, while I prayed kneeling by her. * * *

'I then kissed her. She told me that to part was the greatest pain she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes, and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed and parted; I humbly hope, to meet again, and to part no more.'

Tears trickling down the granite rock: a soft well of Pity springs within! Still more tragical is this other scene: 'Johnson mentioned that he could not in general accuse himself of having been an undutiful son. "Once indeed," said he, "I was disobedient: I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter market. Pride was the source of that refusal, and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault." — But by what method? — What method was now possible? Hear it; the words are again given as his own, though here evidently by a less capable reporter:

'Madam, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure in the morning, but I was compelled to it by conscience. Fifty years ago, Madam, on this day, I committed a breach of filial piety. My father had been in the habit of attending Uttoxeter market, and opening a stall there for the sale of his Books. Confined by indisposition, he desired me, that day, to go and attend the stall in his place. My pride prevented me; I gave my father a refusal — And now to-day I have been at Uttoxeter; I went into the market, at the time of business, uncovered my head, and stood with it bare, for an hour, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory.'

Who does not figure to himself this spectacle, amid the 'rainy weather, and the sneers,' or wonder, 'of the bystanders?' The memory of old Michael Johnson, rising

from the far distance ; sad-beckoning in the 'moonlight of memory : ' how he had toiled faithfully hither and thither ; patiently among the lowest of the low ; been buffeted and beaten down, yet ever risen again, ever tried it anew — And oh ! when the wearied old man, as Bookseller, or Hawker, or Tinker, or whatsoever it was that Fate had reduced him to, begged help of *thee* for one day, — how savage, diabolic, was that mean Vanity, which answered, No ! He sleeps now ; after life's fitful fever, he sleeps : but thou, O Merciless, how now wilt thou still the sting of that remembrance ? — The picture of Samuel Johnson standing bareheaded in the market there, is one of the grandest and saddest we can paint. 'Repentance ! Repentance !' he proclaims, as with passionate sobs : but only to the ear of Heaven, if Heaven will give him audience : the earthly ear, and heart, that should have heard it, are now closed, unresponsive for ever.

That this so keen-loving, soft-trembling Affectionateness, the inmost essence of his being, must have looked forth, in one form or another, through Johnson's whole character, practical and intellectual, modifying both, is not to be doubted. Yet through what singular distortions and superstitions, moping melancholies, blind habits, whims about 'entering with the right foot,' and 'touching every post as he walked along ;' and all the other mad chaotic lumber of a brain that, with sun-clear intellect, hovered for ever on the verge of insanity, — must that same inmost essence have looked forth ; unrecognisable to all but the most observant ! Accordingly it was not recognised ; Johnson passed not for a fine nature, but for a dull, almost brutal one. Might not, for example, the first-fruit of such a Lovingness, coupled with his quick Insight, have been expected to be a peculiarly courteous demeanor as man among men ? In Johnson's 'Politeness,' which he often, to the wonder of

some, asserted to be great, there was indeed somewhat that needed explanation. Nevertheless, if he insisted always on handing-lady-visitors to their carriage; though with the certainty of collecting a mob of gazers in Fleet Street, — as might well be, the beau having on, by way of court dress, 'his rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes for slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose: ' — in all this we can see the spirit of true Politeness, only shining through a strange medium. Thus again, in his apartments, at one time, there were unfortunately no chairs. 'A gentleman who frequently visited him whilst writing his *Idlers*, constantly found him at his desk, sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he remarked that Johnson never forgot its defect; but would either hold it in his hand, or place it with great composure against some support; taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor,' — who meanwhile, we suppose, sat upon folios, or in the sartorial fashion. 'It was remarkable in Johnson,' continues Miss Reynolds ('Renny dear'), 'that no external circumstances ever prompted him to make any apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence. Whether this was the effect of philosophic pride, or of some partial notion of his respecting high breeding, is doubtful.' That it *was*, for one thing, the effect of genuine Politeness, is nowise doubtful. Not of the Pharisaical Brummellian Politeness, which would suffer crucifixion rather than ask twice for soup: but the noble universal Politeness of a man, that knows the dignity of men, and feels his own; such as may be seen in the patriarchal bearing of an Indian Sachem; such as Johnson himself exhibited, when a sudden chance brought him into dialogue with his King. To us, with our view of the man, it nowise appears 'strange' that he should have boasted himself cunning in the laws of

Politeness ; nor 'stranger still,' habitually attentive to practise them.

More legibly is this influence of the Loving heart to be traced in his intellectual character. What, indeed, is the beginning of intellect, the first inducement to the exercise thereof, but attraction towards somewhat, *affection* for it ? Thus too, who ever saw, or will see, any true talent, not to speak of genius, the foundation of which is not goodness, love ? From Johnson's strength of Affection, we deduce many of his intellectual peculiarities ; especially that threatening array of perversions, known under the name of 'Johnson's Prejudices.' Looking well into the root from which these sprung, we have long ceased to view them with hostility, can pardon and reverently pity them. Consider with what force early-imbibed opinions must have clung to a soul of this Affection. Those evil-famed Prejudices of his, that Jacobitism, Church-of-Englandism, hatred of the Scotch, belief in Witches, and such like, what were they but the ordinary beliefs of well-doing, well-meaning provincial Englishmen in that day ? First gathered by his Father's hearth ; round the kind 'country fires' of native Staffordshire ; they grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength : they were hallowed by fondest sacred recollections ; to part with them was parting with his heart's blood. If the man who has no strength of Affection, strength of Belief, have no strength of Prejudice, let him thank heaven for it, but to himself take small thanks.

Melancholy it was, indeed, that the noble Johnson could not work himself loose from these adhesions ; that he could only purify them, and wear them with some nobleness. Yet let us understand how they grew out from the very centre of his being : nay, moreover, how they came to cohere in him with what formed the business and worth of

his Life, the sum of his whole Spiritual Endeavor. For it is on the same ground that he became throughout an Edifier and Repairer, not, as the others of his make were, a Puller-down; that in an age of universal Skepticism, England was still to produce its Believer. Mark too his candor even here; while a Dr. Adams, with placid surprise, asks, 'Have we not evidence enough of the soul's immortality?' Johnson answers, 'I wish for more.' But the truth is, in Prejudice, as in all things, Johnson was the product of England; one of those *good* yeomen whose limbs were made in England: alas, the last of *such* Invincibles, their day being now done! His culture is wholly English; that not of a Thinker but of a 'Scholar:': his interests are wholly English, he sees and knows nothing but England; he is the John Bull of Spiritual Europe: let him live, love him, as he was and could not but be! Pitiably it is, no doubt, that a Samuel Johnson must confute Hume's irreligious Philosophy by some 'story from a Clergyman of the Bishohrick of Durham;': should see nothing in the great Frederick but 'Voltaire's lackey;': in Voltaire himself but a man *acerrimi ingenii, paucarum literarum*; in Rousseau but one worthy to be hanged; and in the universal, long-prepared, inevitable Tendency of European Thought but a greensick milkmaid's crotchet of (for variety's sake) 'milking the Bull.' Our good, dear John! Observe too what it is that he sees in the city of Paris: no feeblest glimpse of those D'Alemberts and Diderots, or of the strange questionable work they did; solely some Benedictine Priests, to talk kitchen-latin with them about *Editioes Principes*. 'Monsheer Nongtongpaw!' — Our dear, foolish John; yet is there a lion's heart within him! — Pitiably all these things were, we say; yet nowise inexcusable; nay, as basis or as foil to much else that was in Johnson, almost venerable. Ought we not, indeed, to honor England, and English Institutions and Way of Life, that

they could still equip such a man; could furnish him in heart and head to be a Samuel Johnson, and yet to love them, and unyieldingly fight for them? What truth and living vigor must such Institutions once have had, when, in the middle of the Eighteenth century, there was still enough left in them for this!

It is worthy of note that, in our little British Isle, the two grand Antagonisms of Europe should have stood embodied, under their very highest concentration, in two men produced simultaneously among ourselves. Samuel Johnson and David Hume, as was observed, were children of the same year: through life they were spectators of the same Life-movement; often inhabitants of the same city. Greater contrast, in all things, between two great men, could not be. Hume, well-born, competently provided for, whole in body and mind, of his own determination forces a way into Literature: Johnson, poor, moonstruck, diseased, forlorn, is forced into it 'with the bayonet of necessity at his back.' And what a part did they severally play there! As Johnson became the father of all succeeding Tories; so was Hume the father of all succeeding Whigs, for his own Jacobitism was but an accident, as worthy to be named Prejudice as any of Johnson's. Again, if Johnson's culture was exclusively English; Hume's, in Scotland, became European; — for which reason too we find his influence spread deeply over all quarters of Europe, traceable deeply in all speculation, French, German, as well as domestic; while Johnson's name, out of England, is hardly anywhere to be met with. In spiritual stature they are almost equal; both great, among the greatest: yet how unlike in likeness! Hume has the widest methodising, comprehensive eye; Johnson the keenest for perspicacity and minute detail: so had, perhaps chiefly, their education ordered it. Neither of the two rose into Poetry; yet both to some approx-

imation thereof: Hume to something of an Epic clearness and method, as in his delineation of the Commonwealth Wars; Johnson to many a deep Lyric tone of plaintiveness, and impetuous graceful power, scattered over his fugitive compositions. Both, rather to the general surprise, had a certain rugged Humor shining through their earnestness: the indication, indeed, that they *were* earnest men, and had *subdued* their wild world into a kind of temporary home, and safe dwelling. Both were, by principle and habit, Stoics: yet Johnson with the greater merit, for he alone had very much to triumph over; farther, he alone ennobled his Stoicism into Devotion. To Johnson Life was as a Prison, to be endured with heroic faith: to Hume it was little more than a foolish Bartholomew-Fair Show-booth, with the foolish crowdings and elbowings of which it was not worth while to quarrel; the whole would break up, and be at liberty, so *soon*. Both realized the highest task of Manhood, that of living like men; each died not unfitly, in his way: Hume as one, with factitious, half-false gaiety, taking leave of what was itself wholly but a Lie: Johnson as one, with awe-struck, yet resolute and piously expectant heart, taking leave of a Reality, to enter a Reality still higher. Johnson had the harder problem of it, from first to last: whether, with some hesitation, we can admit that he was intrinsically the better-gifted, — may remain undecided.

These two men now rest; the one in Westminster Abbey here; the other in the Calton Hill Churchyard of Edinburgh. Through Life they did not meet: as contrasts, 'like in unlike,' love each other; so might they two have loved, and communed kindly, — had not the terrestrial dross and darkness, that was in them, withstood! One day, their spirits, what Truth was in each, will be found working, living in harmony and free union, even here below. They were the two half-men of their time: whoso should com-

bine the intrepid Candor, and decisive scientific Clearness of Hume, with the Reverence, the Love, and devout Humility of Johnson, were the whole man of a new time. Till such whole man arrive for us, and the distracted time admit of such, might the Heavens but bless poor England with half-men worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of these, resembling these even from afar! Be both attentively regarded, let the true Effort of both prosper;—and for the present, both take our affectionate farewell!

DEATH OF GOETHE.

[New Monthly Magazine, 1832.]

IN the obituary of these days stands one article of quite peculiar import; the time, the place, and particulars of which will have to be often repeated, and re-written, and continue in remembrance many centuries: this, namely, that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe died at Weimar, on the 22d March, 1832. It was about eleven in the morning; 'he expired,' says the record, 'without any apparent suffering, having, a few minutes previously, called for paper for the purpose of writing, and expressed his delight at the arrival of spring.' A beautiful death; like that of a soldier found faithful at his post, and in the cold hand his arms still grasped! The Poet's last words are a greeting of the new-awakened earth; his last movement is to work at his appointed task. Beautiful; what we might call a Classic sacred death; if it were not rather an Elijah-translation,—in a chariot, not of fire and terror, but of hope and soft vernal sunbeams! It was at Frankfort on the Mayn, on the 28th of August, 1749, that this man entered the world—and now, gently welcoming the birth day of his eighty-second spring, he closes his eyes, and takes farewell.

So then, our greatest has departed. That melody of life, with its cunning tones, which took captive ear and heart, has gone silent; the heavenly force that dwelt here victorious over so much, is here no longer; thus far, not farther, by speech and by act, shall the wise man utter himself forth. The End! What solemn meaning lies in that sound, as it peals mournfully through the soul, when a living friend has

passed away! All now is closed, irrevocable; the change-ful life-picture, growing daily into new coherence, under new touches and hues, has suddenly become completed and unchangeable; there as it lay, it is dipped, from this moment, in the æther of the Heavens, and shines transfigured, to endure even so—for ever, Time and Time's Empire; stern, wide devouring, yet not without their grandeur! The week-day man, who was one of us, has put on the garment of Eternity, and become radiant and triumphant; the present is all at once the past; Hope is suddenly cut away, and only the backward vistas of Memory remain, shone on by a light that proceeds not from this earthly sun.

The death of Goethe, even for the many hearts that personally loved him, is not a thing to be lamented over; is to be viewed, in his own spirit, as a thing full of greatness and sacredness. 'For all men it is appointed once to die.' To this man the full measure of a man's life had been granted, and a course and task such as to only a few in the whole generations of the world; what else could we hope or require but that now he should be called hence and have leave to depart, 'having finished the work that was given him to do?' If his course, as we may say of him more justly than of any other, was like the Sun's, so also was his going down. For, indeed, as the material Sun is the eye and revealer of all things, so is Poetry, so is the World-Poet in a spiritual sense. Goethe's life, too, if we examine it, is well represented in that emblem of a solar Day. Beautifully rose our summer sun, gorgeous in the red fervid East, scattering the spectres and sickly damps (of both of which there were enough to scatter)—strong, benignant in his noon-day clearness, walking triumphant through the upper realms; and now, mark also how he sets! *So Stirbt ein Held: anbetungsvoll!* 'So dies a hero; sight to be worshipped.'

And yet, when the inanimate, material sun has sunk and

disappeared, it will happen that we stand to gaze into the still glowing West; and here rise great, pale, motionless clouds, like coulisses or curtains, to close the flame-theatre within; and then, in that death-pause of the Day, an unspeakable feeling will come over us; it is as if the poor sounds of Time, those hammerings of tired Labor on his anvils, those voices of simple men, had become awful and supernatural; as if in listening, we could hear them 'mingle with the ever pealing tone of old Eternity.' In such moments the secrets of Life lie opener to us; mysterious things flit over the soul; Life itself seems holier, wonderful, and fearful. How much more when our sunset was of a living sun; and *its* bright countenance and shining return to us, not on the morrow, but 'no more again, at all, for ever!' In such a scene, silence, as over the mysterious great, is for him that has some feeling thereof, the fittest mood. Nevertheless by silence, the distant is not brought into communion: the feeling of each is without response from the bosom of his brother. There are now, what some years ago there were not, English hearts that know something of what those three words, 'Death of Goethe,' mean; to such men, among their many thoughts on the event, which are not to be translated into speech, may these few, through that imperfect medium, prove acceptable.

'Death,' says the Philosopher, 'is a commingling of Eternity with Time; in the death of a good man, Eternity is seen looking through Time.' With such a sublimity here offered to eye and heart, it is not unnatural to look with new earnestness before and behind, and ask, what space in those years and æons of computed Time, this man with his activity may influence; what relation to the world of change and mortality, which the earthly name Life, he who is even now called to the Immortals has borne and may bear.

Goethe, it is commonly said, made a new era in Litera-

ture; a Poetic era began with him, the end or ulterior tendencies of which are yet nowise generally visible. This common saying is a true one, and true with a far deeper meaning than, to the most, it conveys. Were the Poet but a sweet sound and singer, solacing the ear of the idle with pleasant songs, and the new Poet one who could sing his idle, pleasant song, to a new air, we should account him a small matter, and his performance small. But this man, it is not unknown to many, was a Poet in such a sense as the late generations have witnessed no other; as it is, in this generation, a kind of distinction to believe in the existence of, in the possibility of. The true Poet is ever, as of old, the Seer; whose eye has been gifted to discern the godlike mystery of God's universe, and decipher some new lines of its celestial writing; we can still call him a *Vates* and Seer; for he *sees* into this greatest of secrets 'the open secret;' hidden things become clear; how the future (both resting on Eternity) is but another phasis of the present; thereby are his words in very truth prophetic; what he has spoken shall be done.

It begins now to be everywhere surmised that the real Force, which in this world all things must obey, is Insight, Spiritual Vision, and Determination. The Thought is parent of the Deed, nay, is living soul of it, and last and continual, as well as first mover of it; is the foundation, and beginning, and essence, therefore, of man's whole existence here below. In this sense, it has been said, the WORD of man (the uttered thoughts of man) is still a magic formula, whereby he rules the world. Do not the winds and waters, and all tumultuous powers, inanimate and animate, obey him? A poor, quite mechanical, Magician speaks.—and fire-winged ships cross the ocean at his bidding. Or mark, above all, that 'raging of the nations,' wholly in contention, desperation, and dark chaotic fury; how the meek voice of a Hebrew Martyr and

Redeemer stills it into order, and a savage Earth becomes kind and beautiful, and the 'habitation of horrid cruelty' a temple of peace. The true sovereign of the world, who moulds the world like soft wax, according to his pleasure, is he who lovingly *sees* into the world; the 'inspired Thinker,' whom in these days we name Poet. The true sovereign is the Wise Man.

However, as the Moon, which can heave up the Atlantic, sends not in her obedient billows at once, but gradually; and, for example, the Tide, which swells to-day on our shores, and washes every creek, rose in the bosom of the great ocean (astronomers assure us) eight and forty hours ago; and indeed all world-movements, by nature deep, are by nature calm, and flow and swell onwards with a certain majestic slowness — so, too, with the impulse of a Great Man, and the effect he has to manifest on other men. To such an one we may grant some generation or two before the celestial impulse he impressed on the world will universally proclaim itself, and become (like the working of the moon) if still not intelligible, yet palpable, to all men; some generation or two more, wherein it has to grow, and expand, and envelop all things, before it can reach its acme; and thereafter mingling with other movements and new impulses, at length cease to require a specific observation or designation. Longer or shorter such period may be, according to the nature of the impulse itself, and of the elements it works in; according, above all, as the impulse was intrinsically great and deep-reaching, or only wide-spread, superficial, and transient. Thus, if David Hume is at this hour pontiff of the world, and rules most hearts, and guides most tongues, (the hearts and tongues, even in those that in vain rebel against him,) there are, nevertheless, symptoms that his task draws towards completion; and now in the distance his successor becomes visible. On the other hand, we have seen a

Napoleon, like some gunpowder force (with which sort he, indeed, was appointed chiefly to work) explode his whole virtue suddenly, and thunder himself out and silent, in a space of five and twenty years. While again, for a man of true greatness, working with spiritual implements, two centuries is no uncommon period ; nay, on this Earth of ours, there have been men whose impulse had not completed its development till after fifteen hundred years, and might, perhaps, be seen still individually subsistent after two thousand.

But, as was once written, ' though our clock strikes when there is a change from hour to hour, no hammer in the horologe of time peals through the universe to proclaim that there is a change from era to era.' The true beginning is oftenest unnoticed, and unnoticeable. Thus do men go wrong in their reckoning ; and grope hither and thither, not knowing where they are, in what course their history runs. Within this last century, for instance, with its wild doings and destroyings, what hope, grounded in miscalculation, ending in disappointment ! How many world-famous victories were gained and lost, dynasties founded and subverted, revolutions accomplished, constitutions sworn to ; and ever the ' new era ' was come, was coming, yet still it came not, but the time continued sick ! Alas, all these were but spasmodic convulsions of the death-sick time ; the crisis of cure and regeneration to the time was not there indicated. The real new era was when a Wise Man came into the world, with clearness of vision and greatness of soul to accomplish this old high enterprise, amid these new difficulties, yet again : A Life of Wisdom. Such a man became, by Heaven's preappointment, in very deed, the Redeemer of the time. Did he not bear the curse of the time ? He was filled full with its skepticism, bitterness, hollowness, and thousandfold contradictions, till his heart was like to break ; but he subdued all this, rose victorious over this, and manifoldly by word

and act showed others that come after, how to do the like. Honor to him who first, 'through the impassable, paves a road!' Such indeed is the task of every great man; nay, of every good man in one or the other sphere, since goodness is greatness, and the good man, high or humble, is ever a martyr, and a 'spiritual hero that ventures forward into the gulf for our deliverance.' The gulf into which this man ventured, which he tamed and rendered habitable, was the greatest and most perilous of all, wherein truly all others lie included: *The whole distracted Existence of man is an age of unbelief.* Whoso lives, whoso with earnest mind studies to live wisely in that mad element, may yet know, perhaps, too well, what an enterprise was here; and for the chosen of our time, who could prevail in that same, have the higher reverence, and a gratitude such as belong to no other.

How far he prevailed in it, and by what means, with what endurances and achievements, will in due season be estimated; those volumes called *Goethe's Works*, will receive no further addition or alteration; and the record of his whole spiritual Endeavor lies written there,—were the man or men but ready who could read it rightly! A glorious record; wherein he that would understand himself and his environment, and struggles for escape out of darkness into light, as for the one thing needful, will long thankfully study. For the whole chaotic time, what it has suffered, attained, and striven after, stands imaged there; interpreted, ennobled into poetic clearness. From the passionate longings and wailings of 'Werter' spoken as from the heart of all Europe; onwards through the wild unearthly melody of 'Faust' (like the spirit song of falling worlds;) to that serenely smiling wisdom of 'Meisters Lehrjahre,' and the 'German Hafiz'—what an interval; and all enfolded in an ethereal music, as from unknown spheres, harmoniously uni-

ting all! A long interval; and wide as well as long; for this was a universal man. History, Science, Art, human Activity under every aspect; the laws of light in his 'Farbenlehre;' the laws of wild Italian life in his 'Benvenuto Cellini;'—nothing escaped him, nothing that he did not look into, that he did not see into. Consider too the genuineness of whatsoever he did; his hearty, idiomatic way; simplicity with loftiness, and nobleness, and aerial grace.— Pure works of art, completed with an antique Grecian polish as 'Torquato Tasso,' as 'Iphigenie,' Proverbs; 'Xenien;' Patriarchal Sayings, which, since the Hebrew Scriptures were closed, we know not where to match; in whose homely depths lie often the materials for volumes.

To measure and estimate all this, as we said, the time is not come; a century hence will be the fitter time. He who investigates it best will find its meaning greatest, and be the readiest to acknowledge that it transcends him.— Let the reader have *seen*, before he attempts to *oversee*. A poor reader, in the meanwhile were he, who discerned not here the authentic rudiments of that same New Era, whereof we have so often had false warning. Wondrously, the wrecks and pulverized rubbish of ancient things, institutions, religions, forgotten noblenesses, made alive again by the breath of Genius, lie here in new coherence and incipient union, the spirit of Art working creative through the mass; that *chaos*, into which the eighteenth century with its wild war of hypocrites and skeptics had reduced the Past, begins here to be once more a *world*.— This, the highest that can be said of written books, is to be said of these; there is in them a new time, the prophecy and beginning of a new time. The corner stone of a new social edifice for mankind is laid there; firmly, as before, on the natural rock, far extending traces of a ground-plan we can also see, which future centuries may go on to enlarge, amend, and

work into reality. These sayings seem strange to some ; nevertheless they are not empty exaggerations, but expressions, in their way, of a belief, which is not now of yesterday ; perhaps when Goethe has been read and meditated for another generation, they will not seem so strange.

Precious is the new light of knowledge which our teacher conquers for us ; yet small to the new light of Love which also we derive from him ; the most important element of any man's performance is the life he has accomplished. Under the intellectual union of man and man, which works by precept, lies a holier union of affection, working by example ; the influences of which latter, mystic, deep-reaching, all-embracing, can still less be computed. For Love is ever the beginning of Knowledge, as fire is of light ; works also more in the manner of *fire*. That Goethe was a great teacher of men means already that he was a good man ; that he himself learned ; in the school of experience had striven and proved victorious. To how many hearers languishing, nigh dead, in the airless dungeon of Unbelief (a true vacuum and nonentity) has the assurance that there was such a man, that such a man was still possible, come like tidings of great joy ! He who would learn to reconcile Reverence with clearness, to deny and defy what is false, yet believe and worship what is true ; amid raging factions, bent on what is either altogether empty or has substance in it only for a day, which stormfully convulse and tear hither and thither a distracted, expiring system of society, to adjust himself aright ; and, working for the world, and in the world, keep himself unspotted from the world, — let him look here. This man, we may say, became morally great, by being in his own age what in some other ages many might have been ; a genuine man. His grand excellency was this, that he was genuine. As his primary faculty, the foundation of all others, was Intellect, depth and force of

Vision, so his primary virtue was Justice, was the courage to be just. A giant's strength we admired in him; yet, strength ennobled into softest mildness; even like that 'silent rock-bound strength of a world,' on whose bosom, that rests on the adamant, grow flowers. The greatest of hearts was also the bravest: fearless, unwearied, peacefully invincible. A completed man; the trembling sensibility, the wild enthusiasm of a Mignon, can assort with the scornful world-mockery of a Mephistophiles; and each side of many-sided life receives its due from him.

Goethe reckoned Schiller happy that he died young, in the full vigor of his days: that he could 'figure him as a youth for ever.' To himself a different, higher destiny was appointed. Through all the changes of man's life, onwards to its extreme verge he was to go; and through them all nobly. In youth, flatterings of fortune, uninterrupted outward prosperity cannot corrupt him; a wise observer must remark, 'only a Goethe, at the sum of earthly happiness, can keep his Phœnix-wings unsinged.' — Through manhood, in the most complex relation, as poet, courtier, politician, man of business, man of speculation; in the middle of revolutions and counter-revolutions, outward and spiritual; with the world loudly for him, with the world loudly or silently against him; in all seasons and situations, he holds equally on his way. Old age itself, which is called dark and feeble, he was to render lovely; who that looked upon him there, venerable in himself, and in the world's reverence, ever the clearer, the purer, but could have prayed that he too were such an old man? And did not the kind Heavens continue kind, and grant to a career so glorious, the worthiest end?

Such was Goethe's life; such has his departure been — he sleeps now beside his Schiller and his Carl August: so had the Prince willed it, that between these two should be his own final rest. In life they were united, in death they

are not divided. The unwearied Workman now rests from his labors ; the fruit of these is left growing, and to grow. His earthly years have been numbered and ended : but of his activity (for it stood rooted in the Eternal) there is no end: All that we mean by the higher Literature of Germany, which is the higher Literature of Europe, already gathers round this man, as its creator ; of which grand object, dawning mysterious on a world that hoped not for it, who is there that can assume the significance and far-reaching influences ? The Literature of Europe will pass away ; Europe itself, the Earth itself will pass away : this little life-boat of an Earth, with its noisy crew of Mankind, and all their troubled History, will one day have vanished, faded like a cloud-speck from the azure of the All ! What then is man ? What then is man ? He endures but for an hour, and is crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the working of a faithful man is there already (as all faith, from the beginning, gives assurance) a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of TIME ; that triumphs over Time, and *is*, and will be, when Time shall be no more.

And now we turn back into the world, withdrawing from this new made grave. The man whom we love lies there : but glorious, worthy ; and his spirit yet lives in us with an authentic life. Could each here vow to do his little task, even as the Departed did his great one ; in the manner of a true man, not for a Day, but for Eternity ! To live, as he counselled and commanded, not commodiously in the Reputable, the Plausible, the Half, but resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the True :

‘ Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben ! ’

GOETHE'S WORKS.*

[Foreign Quarterly Review, 1832.]

It is now four years since we specially invited attention to this Book ; first in an essay on the graceful little fantasy-piece of *Helena*, then in a more general one on the merits and workings of Goethe himself : since which time two important things have happened in reference to it ; for the publication, advancing with successful regularity, reached its fortieth and last volume in 1830 ; and now, still more emphatically to conclude both this ' completed final edition,' and all other editions, endeavors and attainments of one in whose hands lay so much, come tidings that the venerable man has been recalled from our earth, and of his long labors and high faithful stewardship we have had what was appointed us.

The greatest epoch in a man's life is not always his death ; yet for bystanders, such as contemporaries, it is always the most noticeable. All other epochs are transition-points from one visible condition to another visible ; the days of their occurrence are like any other days, from which only the clearer-sighted will distinguish them ; bridges they are, over which the smooth highway runs continuous, as if no Rubicon were there. But the day in a mortal's destinies which is like no other, is his death-day : here too is a transition, what we may call a bridge, as at other epochs ; but now from the keystone onwards half the arch rests on invisibility ; this is a transition out of visible Time into invisible Eternity.

* *Goethes Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand*, (Goethe's Works. Completed, final Edition,) 40 voll. Stuttgart and Tübingen. 1827 - 30.

Since death, as the palpable revelation (not to be overlooked by the dullest) of the mystery of wonder, and depth, and fear, which everywhere from beginning to ending through its whole course and movement lies under life, is in any case so great, we find it not unnatural that hereby a new look of greatness, a new interest should be impressed on whatsoever has preceded it and led to it; that even towards some man, whose history did not then first become significant, the world should turn, at his departure, with a quite peculiar earnestness, and now seriously ask itself a question, perhaps never seriously asked before, What the purport and character of his presence here was; now when he has gone hence, and is not present here, and will remain absent for evermore. It is the conclusion that crowns the work; much more the irreversible conclusion wherein all is concluded: thus is there no life so mean but a death will make it memorable.

At all lykewakes, accordingly, the doings and endurances of the Departed are the theme: rude souls, rude tongues grow eloquently busy with him; a whole septuagint of bel-dames are striving to render, in such dialect as they have, the small bible, or apocrypha, of his existence, for the general perusal. The least famous of mankind will for once become public, and have his name printed, and read not without interest: in the Newspaper obituaries; on some frail memorial, under which he has crept to sleep. Foolish lovesick girls know that there is one method to impress the obdurate false Lovelace, and wring his bosom; the method of drowning: foolish ruined dandies, whom the tailor will no longer trust, and the world turning on its heel is about forgetting, can recal it to attention by report of pistol; and so, in a worthless death, if in a worthless life no more, regain the topgallant of renown, — for one day. Death is ever a sublimity, and supernatural wonder, were there no other left:

the last act of a most strange drama, which is not dramatic but has now become real ; wherein, miraculously, Furies, god-missioned, have in actual person risen from the abyss, and do verily dance there in that terror of all terrors, and wave their dusky-glaring torches, and shake their serpent-hair ! Out of which heart-thrilling, so authentically tragic fifth act there goes, as we said, a new meaning over all the other four ; making them likewise tragic and authentic, and memorable in some measure, were they formerly the sorriest pickle-herring farce.

But above all, when a Great Man dies, then has the time come for putting us in mind that he was alive : biographies and biographic sketches, criticisms, characters, anecdotes, reminiscences, issue forth as from opened springing fountains ; the world, with a passion whetted by impossibility, will yet a while retain, yet a while speak with, though only to the unanswering echos, what it has lost without remedy : thus is the last event of life often the loudest ; and real spiritual *Apparitions* (who have been named Men), as false imaginary ones are fabled to do, vanish in thunder.

For ourselves, as regards the great Goethe, if not seeking to be foremost in this natural movement, neither do we shun to mingle in it. The life and ways of such men as he, are, in all seasons, a matter profitable to contemplate, to speak of : if in this death-season, long with a sad reverence looked forward to, there has little increase of light, little change of feeling arisen for the writer, a readier attention, nay a certain expectance, from some readers is call sufficient. Innumerable meditations and disquisitions on this subject must yet pass through the minds of men ; on all sides must it be taken up, by various observers, by successive generations, and ever a new light may evolve itself : why should not this observer, on this side, set down what he partially has seen into, and the necessary process thereby be forwarded ; at any rate, continued ?

A continental Humorist, of deep-piercing, resolute, though strangely perverse faculty, whose works are as yet but sparingly if at all cited in English literature, has written a chapter, somewhat in the nondescript manner of metaphysico-rhetorical, homiletic-exegetic rhapsody, on the *Greatness of Great Men*; which topic we agree with him in reckoning one of the most pregnant. The time, indeed, is come when much that was once found visibly subsistent Without must anew be sought for Within; many a human feeling, indestructible and to man's well-being indispensable, which once manifested itself in expressive forms to the Sense, now lies hidden in the *formless* depths of the Spirit, or at best struggles out obscurely in forms become superannuated, altogether inexpressive, and unrecognisable; from which paralysed imprisoned state, often the best effort of the thinker is required, and moreover were well applied, to deliver it. For if the Present is to be the 'living sum-total of the whole Past,' nothing that ever lived in the Past must be let wholly die; whatsoever was done, whatsoever was said or written aforetime, was done and written for our edification. In such state of imprisonment, paralysis and unrecognisable defacement, as compared with its condition in the old ages, lies this our feeling towards great men; wherein, and in the much else that belongs to it, some of the deepest human interests will be found involved. A few words from Herr Professor Teufelsdröckh, if they help to set this preliminary matter in a clearer light, may be worth translating here. Let us first remark with him, however, 'how wonderful in all cases, great or little, is the importance of man to man;'

'Deny it as he will,' says Teufelsdröckh, 'man reverently loves man, and daily by action evidences his belief in the divineness of man. What a more than regal mystery encircles the poorest of living souls for us! The highest is not independent of him; his suffrage has value: could the highest monarch convince himself

that the humblest beggar with sincere mind despised him, no serried ranks of halberdiers and body-guards could shut out some little twinge of pain; some emanation from the low had pierced into the bosom of the high. Of a truth, men are mystically united; a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one.

‘Thus too has that fierce false hunting after Popularity, which you often wonder at, and laugh at, a basis on something true: nay, under the other aspect, what is that wonderful spirit of Interference, were it but manifested as the paltriest scandal and tea-table backbiting, other than inversely or directly, a heartfelt indestructible sympathy of man with man? Hatred itself is but an inverse love. The philosopher’s wife complained to the philosopher that certain two-legged animals without feathers spake evil of him, spitefully criticised his goings out and comings in; wherein she too failed not of her share: “Light of my life,” answered the philosopher, “it is their love of us, unknown to themselves, and taking a foolish shape; thank them for it, and do thou love them more wisely. Were we mere steam-engines working here under this roof-tree, they would scorn to speak of us once in a twelve-month.” The last stage of human perversion, it has been said, is when sympathy corrupts itself into envy; and the indestructible interest we take in men’s doings has become a joy over their faults and misfortunes: this is the last and lowest stage; lower than this we cannot go: the absolute petrefaction of indifference is not attainable on this side total death.

‘And now,’ continues the Professor, ‘rising from these lowest tea-table regions of human communion into the higher and highest, is there not still in the world’s demeanor towards Great Men, enough to make the old practice of *Hero-worship* intelligible, nay significant? Simpleton! I tell thee *Hero-worship* still continues; it is the only creed which never and nowhere grows or can grow obsolete. For always and everywhere this remains a true saying: *Il y a dans le cœur humain un fibre religieux*. Man always worships something; always he sees the Infinite shadowed forth in something finite; and indeed can and must so see it in *any* finite thing, once tempt him well to *fix* his eyes thereon. Yes, in practice, be it in theory or not, we are all Supernaturalists; and have an infinite happiness or an infinite woe not only waiting us hereafter, but

looking out on us through any pitifullest present good or evil ;— as, for example, on a high poetic Byron through his lameness ; as on all young souls through their first lovesuit ; as on older souls, still more foolishly, through many a lawsuit, paper-battle, political horse-race or ass-race. Atheism, it has been said, is impossible ; and truly, if we will consider it, no Atheist denies a Divinity, but only some NAME (*Nomen, Numen*) of a Divinity : the God is still present there, working in that benighted heart, were it only as a god of darkness. Thousands of stern Sansculottes, to seek no other instance, go chaunting martyr hymns to their guillotine : these spurn at the name of a God ; yet worship one (as hapless “Proselytes without the Gate,”) under the new pseudonym of Freedom. What indeed is all this that is called political fanaticism, revolutionary madness, force of hatred, force of love, and so forth ; but merely under new designations, that same wondrous, wonder-working reflex from the Infinite, which in all times has given the Finite its empyrean or tartarean hue, thereby its blessedness or cursedness, its marketable worth or unworth ?

‘ Remark, however, as illustrative of several things, and more to the purpose here, that man does in strict speech always remain the clearest symbol of the Divinity to man. Friend Novalis, the devoutest heart I knew, and of purest depth, has not scrupled to call man what the Divine Man is called in Scripture, a “Revelation in the Flesh.” “There is but one temple in the world,” says he, “and that is the body of man. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body.” In which notable words, a reader that meditates them, may find such meaning and scientific accuracy as will surprise him.

‘ The ages of superstition, it appears to be sufficiently known, are behind us. To no man, were he never so heroic, are shrines any more built, and vows offered as to one having supernatural power. The sphere of the TRANSCENDENTAL cannot now, by that avenue of heroic worth, of eloquent wisdom, or by any other avenue, be so easily reached. The worth that in these days could transcend all estimate or survey, and lead men willingly captive into infinite admiration, into worship, is still waited for (with little hope) from the unseen Time. All that can be said to offer itself

in that kind, at present, is some slight household devotion (*Haus-Andacht*), whereby this or the other enthusiast, privately in all quietness, can love his hero or sage without measure, and idealize, and, so in a sense, idolize him; — which practice, as man is by necessity an idol-worshipper (no offence in him so long as *idol* means accurately *vision*, clear *symbol*), and all wicked idolatry is but a *more* idolatrous worship, may be excusable, in certain cases, praiseworthy. Be this as it will, let the curious eye gratify itself in observing how the old antediluvian feeling still, though now struggling out so imperfectly, and forced into unexpected shapes, asserts its existence in the newest man: and the Chaldeans or old Persians, with their Zerdusht, differ only in vesture and dialect from the French, with their Voltaire *étouffé sous des roses*.*

This, doubtless, is a wonderful phraseology, but referable, as the Professor urges, to that capacious reservoir and convenience, 'the nature of the time:.' 'A time,' says he, 'when, as in some Destruction of a Roman Empire, wrecks of old things are everywhere confusedly jumbled with rudiments of new; so that, till once the mixture and amalgamation be complete, and even have long continued complete and universally apparent, no grammatical *langue d'oc* or *langue d'oui* can establish itself, but only some barbarous mixed *lingua rustica*, more like a jargon than a language, must prevail; and thus the deepest matters be either barbarously spoken of, or wholly omitted and lost sight of, which were still worse.' But to let the homily proceed:

'Consider at any rate,' continues he elsewhere, 'under how many categories, down to the most impertinent, the world inquires concerning Great Men, and never wearies striving to represent to itself their whole structure, aspect, procedure, outward and inward! Blame not the world for such minutest curiosity about its great ones: this comes of the world's old-established necessity to

* *Die Kleider: ihr Werden und Wirken.* Von D. TEUFELADRECK, Weissnichtwo. Stillschweign'sche Buchhandlung, 1830.

worship: and, indeed, whom but its great ones, that "like celestial fire-pillars go before it on the march," ought it to worship? Blame not even that mistaken worship of sham great ones, that are not celestial fire-pillars, but terrestrial glass-lanterns with wick and tallow, under no guidance but a stupid fatuous one; of which worship the litanies, and gossip-homilies are, in some quarters of the globe, so inexpressibly uninteresting. Blame it not; pity it rather, with a certain loving respect.

‘Man is never, let me assure thee, altogether a clothes-horse; under the clothes there is always a body and a soul. The Count von Bügeleisen, so idolized by our fashionable classes, is not, as the English Swift asserts, created wholly by the Tailor; but partially, also, by the supernatural Powers. His beautifully cut apparel, and graceful expensive tackle and environment of all kinds, are but the symbols of a beauty and gracefulness, supposed to be inherent in the Count himself; under which predicament come also our reverence for his counthood, and in good part that other notable phenomenon of his being worshipped, because he is worshipped, of one idolater, sheep-like, running after him, because many have already run. Nay, on what other principle but this latter hast thou, O reader (if thou be not one of a thousand), read, for example, thy *Homer*, and found some real joy therein? All these things, I say, the apparel, the counthood, the existing popularity, and whatever else can combine there, are symbols;—bank notes, which, whether there be gold behind them, or only bankruptcy and empty drawers, pass current for gold. But how, now, could they so pass, if gold itself were not prized, and believed and known to be somewhere extant? Produce the actual gold visibly, and mark how, in these distrustful days, your most accredited bank-paper stagnates in the market! No holy Alliance, though plush and gilding and genealogical parchment, to the utmost that the time yields, be hung round it, can gain for itself a dominion in the heart of any man; some thirty or forty millions of men's hearts being, on the other hand, subdued into loyal reverence by a Corsican Lieutenant of Artillery. Such is the difference between God-creation and Tailor-creation. Great is the Tailor, but not the greatest. So, too, in matters spiritual, what avails it that a man be Doctor of the Sorbonne, Doctor of Laws,

of Both Laws, and can cover half a square foot in pica-type with the list of his fellowships, arranged as equilateral triangle, at the vertex an "&c." over and above, and with the parchment of his diplomas could thatch the whole street he lives in: What avails it? The man is but an owl; of prepossessing gravity indeed; much respected by simple neighbors; but to whose sorrowful hootings no creature hastens, eager to listen. While, again, let but some riding gauger arrive under cloud of night at a Scottish inn, and word be whispered that it is Robert Burns; in few instants all beds and truckle-beds, from garret to cellar, are left vacant, and gentle and simple, with open eyes and erect ears, are gathered together.'

Whereby, at least, from amid this questionable *lingua*, 'more like a jargon than a language,' so much may have become apparent: What unspeakable importance the world attaches, has ever attached (expressing the same by all possible methods), and will ever attach, to its great men. Deep and venerable, whether looked at in the Teufelsdröck manner or otherwise, is this love of men for great men, this their exclusive admiration of great men; a quality of vast significance, if we consider it well; for, as in its origin it reaches up into the highest and even holiest provinces of man's nature, so, in his practical history it will be found to play the most surprising part. Does not, for one example, the fact of such a temper indestructibly existing in all men, point out man as an essentially governable and teachable creature, and for ever refute that calumny of his being by nature insubordinate, prone to rebellion? Men seldom, or rather never for a length of time and deliberately, rebel against anything that does not deserve rebelling against. Ready, ever zealous is the obedience and devotedness they show to the great, to the really high; prostrating their whole possession and self, body, heart, soul, and spirit, under the feet of whatsoever is authentically above them. Nay, in most times, it is rather a slavish devotedness to those who

only seem and pretend to be above them that constitutes their fault.

But why seek special instances? Is not Love, from of old, known to be the beginning of all things? And what is admiration of the great but love of the truly loveable? The first product of love is *imitation*, that all-important peculiar gift of man, whereby Mankind is not only held socially together in the present time, but connected in like union with the past and the future; so that the attainment of the innumerable Departed can be conveyed down to the Living, and transmitted with increase to the Unborn. Now great men, in particular spiritually great men (for all men have a spirit to guide, though all have not kingdoms to govern and battles to fight), are the men universally imitated and learned of, the glass in which whole generations survey and shape themselves.

Thus is the Great Man of an age, beyond comparison, the most important phenomenon therein; all other phenomena, were they Waterloo Victories, Constitutions of the year One, glorious revolutions, new births of the golden age in what sort you will, are small and trivial. Alas, all these pass away, and are left extinct behind, like the tar-barrels they were celebrated with, and the new-born golden age proves always to be still-born: neither is there, was there, or will there be any other golden age possible, save only in this: in new increase of worth and wisdom;—that is to say, therefore, in the new arrival among us of wise and worthy men. Such arrivals are the great occurrences, though unnoticed ones; all else that can occur, in what kind soever, is but the *road*, up hill or down hill, rougher or smoother; nowise the *power* that will nerve us for travelling forward thereon. So little comparatively can forethought or the cunningest mechanical precontrivance do for a nation, for a world! Ever must we wait on the bounty of Time, and

see what leader shall be born for us, and whither he will lead. Thus too, in defect of great men, noted men become important: the Noted Man of an age is the emblem and living summary of the Ideal which that age has fashioned for itself: show me the noted man of an age, you show me the age that produced him. Such figures walk in the van, for great good, or for great evil; if not leading, then driven and still farther misleading. The apotheosis of Beau Brummel has marred many a pretty youth; landed him not at any *goal* where oak garlands, earned by faithful labor and valor, carry men to the immortal gods; but, by a fatal inversion, at the King's Bench *gaol*, where he that has never sowed shall not any longer reap, still less any longer burn his barn, but scrape himself with potsherds among the ashes thereof, and consider with all deliberation 'what he wanted, and what he wants.'

To enlighten this principle of reverence for the great, to teach us reverence, and whom we are to revere and admire, should ever be a chief aim of Education (indeed it is herein that instruction properly both begins and ends); and in these late ages, perhaps more than ever, so indispensable is now our need of clear reverence, so inexpressibly poor our supply. 'Clear reverence!' it was once responded to a seeker of light: 'all want it, perhaps thou thyself.' What wretched idols, of Leeds cloth, stuffed out with bran of one kind or other, do men either worship, or being tired of worshipping (so expensively without fruit), rend in pieces and kick out of doors, amid loud shouting and crowing, what they call 'tremendous cheers,' as if the feat were miraculous! In private life, as in public, delusion in this sort does its work; the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.

'For alas!' cries Teufelsdröck on this occasion, 'though in susceptible hearts it is felt that a great man is unspeakably great, the specific marks of him are mournfully mistaken: thus must innu-

merable pilgrims journey, in toil and hope, to shrines where there is no healing. On the fairer half of the creation, above all, such error presses hard. Women are born worshippers; in their good little hearts lies the most craving relish for greatness: it is even said, each chooses her husband on the hypothesis of his being a great man — in his way. The good creatures, yet the foolish! For their choices, no insight, or next to none, being vouchsafed them, are unutterable. Yet how touching also to see, for example, Parisian ladies of quality, all rustling in silks and laces, visit the condemned-cell of a fierce Cartouche, and in silver accents, and with the looks of angels, beg locks of hair from him; as from the greatest, were it only in the profession of highwayman! Still more fatal is that other mistake, the commonest of all, whereby the devotional youth, seeking for a great man to worship, finds such within his own worthy-person, and proceeds with all zeal to worship *there*. Unhappy enough! to realize, in an age of such gas-light illumination, this basest superstition of the ages of Egyptian darkness.

‘Remark, however, not without emotion, that of all rituals, and divine services, and ordinances ever instituted for the worship of any god, this of Self-worship is the ritual most faithfully observed. Trouble enough has the Hindoo devotee, with his washings, and cookings, and perplexed formularies, tying him up at every function of his existence: but is it greater trouble than that of his German self-worshipping brother; is it trouble even by the devoutest Fakir, so honestly undertaken and fulfilled? I answer, No; for the German’s heart is in it. The German worshipper, for whom does he work, and scheme, and struggle, and fight, at his rising up and lying down, in all times and places, but for his god only? Can he escape from that divine presence of Self; can his heart waver, or his had wax faint in that sacred service? The Hebrew Jonah, prophet as he was, rather than take a message to Nineveh, took ship to Tarshish, hoping to hide there from his Sender; but in what ship-hull or whale’s belly, shall the madder German Jonah cherish hope of hiding from — Himself! Consider too the temples he builds, and the services of (shoulder-knotted) priests he ordains and maintains; the smoking sacrifices, thrice a day or oftener, with perhaps a psalmist or two, of broken-winded laureats and

literators, if such are to be had. Nor are his votive gifts wanting, of rings, and jewels, and gold embroideries, such as our Lady of Loretto might grow yellower to look upon. A toilsome, perpetual worship, heroically gone through: and then with what issue? Alas, with the worst. The old Egyptian leek-worshipper had, it is to be hoped, seasons of light and faith: his leek-god seems to smile on him; he is humbled, and in humility exalted, before the majesty of something, were it only that of germinative Physical Nature, seen through a germinating, not unnourishing potherb. The Self-worshipper, again, has no seasons of light, which are not of blue sulphur-light; hungry, envious pride, not humility in any sort, is the ashy fruit of his worship; his self-god growls on him with the perpetual wolf-cry, Give! Give! and your devout Byron, as the Frau Hunt, with a wise simplicity (*geistreich naïv*), once said, "must sit sulking like a great schoolboy, in pet because they have given him a plain bun and not a spiced one." — His bun was a life-rent of God's universe, with the tasks it offered, and the tools to do them with; *à priori*, one might have fancied it could be put up with for once.

After which wondrous glimpses into the Teufelsdreck Homily on the *Greatness of Great Men*, it may now be high time to proceed with the matter more in hand; and remark that our own much calumniated age, so fruitful in noted men, is also not without its great. In noted men, undoubtedly enough, we surpass all ages since the creation of the world; and from two plain causes: First, that there has been a French Revolution, and that there is now pretty rapidly proceeding a European Revolution; whereby everything, as in the Term-day of a great city, when all mortals are removing, has been, so to speak, set out into the street; and many a foolish vessel of dishonor, unnoticed, and worth no notice in its own dark corner, has become universally recognisable when once mounted on the summit of some furniture-wagon, and tottering there — (as committee-president, or other head-director), with what is put under it, slowly onwards to its new lodging and arrangement, itself, alas,

hardly to get thither without *breakage*. Secondly, that the Printing Press, with stitched and loose leaves, has now come into full action; and makes, as it were, a sort of universal day-light, for removal and revolution, and everything else, to proceed in, far more commodiously, yet also far more conspicuously. A complaint has accordingly been heard that famous men abound, that we are quite overrun with famous men: however, the remedy lies in the disease itself; crowded succession already means quick oblivion. For wagon after wagon rolls off, and either arrives or is over-set; and so, in either case, the vessel of dishonor, which, at worst, we saw only in crossing some street, will afflict us no more.

Of great men, among so many millions of noted men, it is computed that in our time there have been two; one in the practical, another in the speculative province: Napoleon Buonaparte and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In which dual number, inconsiderable as it is, our time may, perhaps, specially pride itself, and take precedence of many others; in particular, reckon itself the flower-time of the whole last century and half. Every age will, no doubt, have its superior man or men; but one so superior as to take rank among the high of all ages; this is what we call a great man; this rarely makes his appearance, such bounty of nature and accident must combine to produce and unfold him. Of Napoleon and his works all ends of the world have heard; for *such* a host marched not in silence through the frightened deep: few heads there are in this Planet which have not formed to themselves some featured or featureless image of him; his history has been written about, on the great scale and on the small, some millions of times, and still remains to be written: one of our highest literary problems. For such a 'light-nimbus' of glory and renown encircled the man; the environment he walked in was itself so stupen-

dous, that the eye grew dazzled and mistook his proportions ; or quite turned away from him in pain and temporary blindness. Thus even among the clear-sighted there is no unanimity about Napoleon ; and only here and there does his own greatness begin to be interpreted, and accurately separated from the mere greatness of his fame and fortune.

Goethe, again, though of longer continuance in the world, and intrinsically of much more unquestionable greatness, and even importance there, could not be so noted by the world : for if the explosion of powder-mines and artillery-parks naturally attracts every eye and ear ; the approach of a new-created star (dawning on us in new-created radiance, from the eternal Deeps !) though *this*, and not the artillery-parks, is to shape our destiny and *rule* the lower earth, is notable at first only to certain star-gazers and weather-prophets. Among ourselves, especially, Goethe had little recognition : indeed, it was only of late that his existence, as a man and not as a mere sound, became authentically known to us ; and some shadow of his high endowments and endeavors, and of the high meaning that might lie therein, arose in the general mind of England, even of intelligent England. Five years ago, to rank him with Napoleon, like him as rising unattainable beyond his class, like him and more than he of quite peculiar moment to all Europe, would have seemed a wonderful procedure ; candor even, and enlightened liberality, to grant him place beside this and the other home-born ready-writer, blessed with that special privilege of ' English cultivation,' and able thereby to write novels, heart-captivating, heart-rending, or of enchaining interest.

Since which time, however, let us say, the progress of clearer apprehension has been rapid and satisfactory : innumerable unmusical voices have already fallen silent on this matter ; for in fowls of every feather, even in the pertest

choughs and thievish magpies, there dwells a singular reverence of the eagle; no Dullness is so courageous, but if you once show it any gleam of a heavenly Resplendence, it will, at lowest, shut its eyes and say nothing. So fares it here with the 'old established British critic;' who, indeed, in these days of ours, begins to be strangely situated; so many new things rising on his horizon, black indefinable shapes, magical or not; the old brickfield (where he kneaded insufficient marketable bricks) all stirring under his feet; preternatural, mad-making tones in the earth and air;—with all which what shall an old-established British critic and brickmaker do, but, at wisest, put his hands in his pockets and, with the face and heart of a British mastiff, though amid dismal enough forebodings, see what it will turn to?

In the younger, more hopeful minds, again, in most minds that can be considered as in a state of growth, German literature is taking its due place: in such, and in generations of other such that are to follow them, some thankful appreciation of the greatest in German literature cannot fail; at all events this feeling that he is great and the greatest, whereby appreciation, and, what alone is of much value, appropriation, first becomes rightly possible. To forward such on their way towards appropriating what excellence this man realized and created for them, somewhat has already been done, yet not much; much still waits to be done. The field, indeed, is large: there are forty volumes of the most significant Writing that has been produced for the last two centuries; there is the whole long Life and heroic Character of him who produced them; all this to expatiate over and enquire into; in both which departments the deepest thinker, and most far-sighted, may find scope enough.

Nevertheless, in these days of the ten-pound franchise, when all the world (perceiving now, like the Irish innkeeper, that 'death and destruction are just coming in') will have

itself represented in parliament ; and the wits of so many are gone in this direction to gather wool, and must needs return more or less shorn ; it were foolish to invite either young or old into great depths of thought on such a remote matter ; the tendency of which is neither for the Reform Bill nor against it, but quietly *through* it and beyond it ; no-wise to prescribe this or that mode of *electing* members, but only to produce a few members *worth* electing. Not for many years (who knows how many !) in these harassed, hand-to-mouth circumstances, can the world's bleared eyes open themselves to study the true import of such topics ; of this topic the highest of such. As things actually stand, some quite cursory glances, and considerations close on the surface, to remind a few (unelected, unelective) parties interested, that it lies over for study, are all that can be attempted here : could we, by any method, in any measure, disclose for such the wondrous wonder-working *element* it hovers in, the *light* it is to be studied and inquired after in, what is needfullest at present were accomplished.

One class of considerations, near enough the surface, we avoid ; all that partakes of an elegiac character. True enough, nothing can be *done* or suffered, but there is something to be *said*, wisely or unwisely. The departure of our Greatest contemporary Man could not be other than a great event ; fitted to awaken, in all who with understanding beheld it, feeling sad, but high and sacred, of mortality and immortality, of mourning and of triumph ; far lookings into the Past and into the Future ; so many changes, fearful and wonderful, of fleeting Time ; glimpses too of the Eternity these rest on, which knows no change. At the present date and distance, however, all this pertains not to us ; has been uttered elsewhere, or may be left for utterance there. Let us consider the Exequies as past ; that the high Rogus, with its sweet scented wood, amid the wail of music eloquent to

speechless hearts, has flamed aloft, heaven-kissing, in sight of all the Greeks ; and that now the ashes of the Hero are gathered into their urn, and the host has marched onwards to new victories and new toils ; ever to be mindful of the dead, not to mourn for him any more. The host of the Greeks, in this case, was all thinking Europe : whether their funeral games were appropriate and worthy we stop not to inquire ; the time, in regard to such things, is empty or ill provided, and this was what the time could conveniently do. All canonization and solemn cremation are gone by ; and as yet nothing suitable, nothing that does not border upon parody, has appeared in their room. A Bentham bequeaths his remains to be lectured over in a school of anatomy ; and perhaps, even in this way, finds, as chief of the Utilitarians, a really nobler funeral than any other, which the prosaic age, rich only in crapes and hollow scutcheons (of timber as of words), could have afforded him.

The matter in hand being *Goethe's Works*, and the greatest work of every man, or rather the summary and net amount of all his works, being the Life he has led, we ask, as the first question : — How it went with Goethe in that matter ; what was the practical basis, of want and fulfilment, of joy and sorrow, from which his spiritual productions grew forth ; the characters of which they must more or less legibly bear ? In which sense, those Volumes entitled by him *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, wherein his personal history, what he has thought fit to make known of it, stands delineated, will long be valuable. A noble commentary, instructive in many ways, lies opened there, and yearly increasing in worth and interest ; which all readers, now when the true quality of it is ascertained, will rejoice that circumstances induced and allowed him to write : for surely if old Cellini's counsel have any propriety, it is doubly proper in this case ; the autobiographic practice he recommends (of which the

last century in particular has seen so many worthy and worthless examples) was never so much in place as here. 'All men, of what rank soever,' thus counsels the brave Benvenuto, 'who have accomplished aught virtuous or virtuous-like, should, provided they be conscious of really good purposes, write down their own life; nevertheless, not put hand to so worthy an enterprise till after they have reached the age of forty.' All which ukase-regulations Goethe had abundantly fulfilled — the last as abundantly as any, for he had now reached the age of sixty-two.

'This year, 1811,' says he, 'distinguishes itself for me by persevering outward activity. The *Life of Philip Hackert* went to press; the papers committed to me all carefully elaborated as the case required. By this task I was once more attracted to the South: the occurrences which, at that period, had befallen me there, in Hackert's company or neighborhood became alive in the imagination; I had cause to ask Why this which I was doing for another should not be attempted for myself? I turned, accordingly, before completion of that volume, to my own earliest personal history; and, in truth, found here that I had delayed too long.' The work should have been undertaken while my mother yet lived; thereby had I got nigher those scenes of childhood, and been, by her great strength of memory, transported into the midst of them. Now, however, must these vanished apparitions be recalled by my own help; and, first, with labor, many an incitement to recollection, like a necessary magic-apparatus be devised. To represent the development of a child who had grown to be remarkable, how this exhibited itself under given circumstances, and yet how in general it could content the student of human nature and his views: such was the thing I had to do.

'In this sense, unpretendingly enough, to a work treated, with anxious fidelity, I gave the name *Wahrheit und Dichtung* (Truth and Fiction); deeply convinced that man, in immediate Presence, still more in Remembrance, fashions and models the external world according to his own peculiarities.

'The business, as, with historical studying, and otherwise re-

calling of places and persons, I had much time to spend on it, busied me wheresoever I went or stood, at home and abroad, to such a degree that my actual condition became like a secondary matter; though again, on all hands, when summoned outwards by occasion, I with full force and undivided sense proved myself present.' — *Werke* xxxii. 62.

These Volumes, with what other supplementary matter has been added to them (the rather as Goethe's was a life of manifold relation, of the widest connexion with important or elevated persons, not to be carelessly laid before the world, and he had the rare good fortune of arranging all things that regarded even his posthumous concernment with the existing generation, according to his own deliberate judgment), are perhaps likely to be, for a long time, our only authentic reference. By the last will of the deceased, it would seem, all his papers and effects are to lie exactly as they are, till after another twenty years.

Looking now into these magically-recalled scenes of childhood and manhood, the student of human nature will, under all manner of shapes, from first to last, note one thing: The singularly complex Possibility offered from without, yet along with it the deep never-failing Force from within, whereby all this is conquered and realized. It was as if accident and primary endowment had conspired to produce a character on the great scale; a will is cast abroad into the widest, wildest element, and gifted also in an extreme degree, to prevail over this, to fashion this to its own form: in which subordinating and self-fashioning of its circumstances, a character properly consists. In external situations, it is true, in occurrences such as could be recited in the Newspapers, Goethe's existence is not more complex than other men's; outwardly rather a pacific smooth existence: but in his inward specialities and depth of faculty

and temper, in his position spiritual and temporal towards the world as it was and the world as he could have wished it, the observant eye may discern complexity, perplexity enough; an extent of data greater, perhaps, than had lain in any life-problem for some centuries. And now, as mentioned, the force for solving this was, in like manner, granted him in extraordinary measure; so that we must say, his possibilities were faithfully and with wonderful success turned into acquisitions; and this man fought the good fight, not only victorious, as all true men are, but victorious without damage, and with an ever-increasing strength for new victory, as only great and happy men are. Not wounds and loss (beyond fast-healing, skin-deep wounds) has the unconquerable to suffer; only ever-enduring toil; weariness — from which, after rest, he will rise stronger than before.

Good fortune, what the world calls good fortune, awaits him from beginning to end; but also a far deeper felicity than this. Such worldly gifts of good fortune are what we called possibilities: happy he that can rule over them; but *doubly* unhappy he that cannot. Only in virtue of good guidance does that same good fortune prove good. Wealth, health, fiery light with Proteus manysidedness of mind, peace, honor, length of days: with all this you may make no Goethe, but only some Voltaire; with the most that was fortuitous in all this, make only some short-lived, unhappy, unprofitable Byron.

At no period of the World's History can a gifted man be born when he will not find enough to do; in no circumstances come into life but there will be contradictions for him to reconcile, difficulties which it will task his whole strength to surmount, if his whole strength suffice. Everywhere the human soul stands between a hemisphere of light and another of darkness; on the confines of two everlastingly hostile empires, Necessity and Freewill. A pious adage says, 'the

back is made for the burden : ' we might with no less truth invert it, and say, the burden was made for the back. Nay, so perverse is the nature of man, it has in all times been found that an external allotment superior to the common was more dangerous than one inferior ; thus for a hundred that can bear adversity, there is hardly one that can bear prosperity.

Of riches, in particular, as of the grossest species of prosperity the perils are recorded by all moralists ; and ever, as of old, must the sad observation from time to time occur : ' Easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle ! ' Riches in a cultured community are the strangest of things : a power all-moving, yet which any the most powerless and skillless can *put* in motion ; they are the *readiest* of possibilities ; the readiest to become a great blessing or a great curse. ' Beneath gold thrones and mountains,' says Jean Paul, ' who knows how many giant spirits lie entombed ! ' The first fruit of riches, especially for the man born rich, is to teach him faith in them, and all but hide from him that there is any other faith : thus is he trained up in the miserable eye-service of what is called Honor, Respectability ; instead of a man we have but a *gigman*, — one who ' always kept a gig,' two-wheeled or four-wheeled. Consider too what this same gigmanhood issues in ; consider that first and most stupendous of gigmen, Phaeton, the son of Sol, who drove the brightest of all conceivable gigs, yet with the sorrowfullest result. Alas, Phaeton was his father's heir ; born to attain the highest fortune without earning it : he had *built* no sun-chariot (could not build the simplest wheelbarrow), but could and would insist on *driving* one ; and so broke his own stiff neck, sent gig and horses spinning through infinite space, and set the universe on fire ! — Or, to speak in more modest figures, Poverty, we may say, surrounds a man with ready-

made barriers, which, if they mournfully gall and hamper, do at least prescribe for him and force on him a sort of course and goal; a safe and beaten though a circuitous course; great part of his guidance is secure against fatal error, is withdrawn from his control. The rich, again, has his whole life to guide, without goal or barrier, save of his own choosing; and, tempted as we have seen, is too likely to guide it ill; often, instead of walking straight forward, as he might, does but, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick; in which process, it is clear, not the adamantine circle of Necessity whereon the World is built, but only his own limb-bones must go to pieces!—Truly, in plain prose, if we bethink us what a road many a Byron and Mirabeau, especially in these latter generations, have gone, it is proof of an uncommon inward wealth in Goethe, that the outward wealth, whether of money or other happiness which Fortune offered him, did in no case exceed the power of Nature to appropriate and wholesomely assimilate; that all outward blessedness grew to inward strength, and produced only blessed effects for him. Those 'gold mountains' of Jean Paul, to the giant that *can* rise above them are excellent, both fortified and speculative, heights; and do in fact become a *throne*, where happily they have not been a *tomb*.

Goethe's childhood is throughout of riant, joyful character: kind plenty, in every sense, security, affection, manifold excitement, instruction, encircles him: wholly an element of sun and azure, wherein the young spirit, awakening and attaining, can on all hands richly unfold itself. A beautiful boy, of earnest, lucid, serenely deep nature, with the peaceful completeness yet infinite incessant expansiveness of a boy, has, in the fittest environment begun to *be*: beautiful he looks and moves; rapid, gracefully prompt, like the son of Maia; wise, noble, like Latona's son: nay

(as all men may *now* see) he is, in very truth, a miniature incipient world-poet; of all heavenly figures the beautifullest we know of that can visit this lower earth. Lovely enough shine for us those young years in old Teutonic Frankfort; mirrored in the far remembrance of the Self-historian, real yet ideal, they are among our most genuine poetic Idyls. No smallest matter is too small for us, when we think *who* it was that did it or suffered it. The little long-clothed urchin, mercurial enough with all his stillness, can throw a whole cargo of new-marketed crockery, piece by piece, from the balcony into the street (once the feat is suggested to him); and comically shatters cheap delf-ware with the same right hand, which tragically wrote and hurled forth the demonic scorn of Mephistophiles, or as 'right hand' of Faust, 'smote the universe to ruins.' Neither smile more than enough (if thou be wise) that the grey-haired all-experienced man remembers how the boy walked on the Mayn bridge, and 'liked to look at the bright weathercock' on the barrier there. That foolish piece of gilt wood, there glittering sun-lit, with its reflex wavering in the Mayn waters, is awakening quite another glitter in the young gifted soul: is not this foolish sun-lit splendor also, now when there is an *eye* to behold it, one of Nature's doings? The eye of the young seer is here through the paltriest chink, looking into the infinite Splendors of Nature, — where, one day, himself is to enter and dwell.

Goethe's mother appears to have been the more gifted of the parents; a woman of altogether genial character, great spiritual faculty and worth; whom the son, at an after time, put old family friends in mind of. It is gratifying for us that she lived to witness his maturity in works and honors; to know that the little infant she had nursed was grown to be a mighty man, the first man of his nation and time. In the father, as prosperous citizen of Frankfort, skilled in many

things, improved by travel, by studies both practical and ornamental; decorated with some diplomatic title, but passing, among his books, paintings, collections and household possessions, social or intellectual, spiritual or material, a quite undiplomatic independent life, we become acquainted with a German (not country) but city *gentleman* of the last century; a character scarcely ever familiar in our Islands; now perhaps almost obsolete among the Germans too. A positive, methodical man, sound-headed, honest-hearted, sharp-tempered; with an uncommon share of volition, among other things, so that scarcely any obstacle would turn him back, but whatsoever he could not mount over he would struggle round, and in any case *be* at the end of his journey: many or all of whose good qualities passed also over by inheritance; and, in fairer combination, on nobler objects, to the whole world's profit, were seen a second time in action.

Family incidents; house-buildings, or rebuildings; arrivals, departures; in any case, new-year's-days and birthdays, are not wanting: nor city-incidents; many-colored tumult of Frankfort fairs; Kaisers' coronations, expected and witnessed; or that glorious ceremonial of the yearly *Pfeiffgericht*, wherein the grandfather himself plays so imperial a part. World incidents too roll forth their billows into the remotest creek, and alter the current there. The Earthquake of Lisbon hurls the little Frankfort boy into wondrous depths of another sort; enunciating dark theological problems, which no theology of his will solve. Direction, instruction, in like manner, awaits him in the Great Frederic's Seven Years' War; especially in that long billeting of King's Lieutenant Comte de Thorane, with his serjeants and adjutants, with his painters and picture-easels, his quick precision and decision, his 'dry gallantry' and stately Spanish bearing; — though collisions with the 'house

father,' whose German house-stairs (though he silently endures the inevitable) were not new-built to be made a French highway of; who besides loves not the French, but the great invincible Fritz they are striving to beat down. Think, for example, of that singular congratulation on the victory at Bergen:

'So then, at last, after a restless Passion-week, Passion-Friday, 1759, arrived. A deep stillness announced the approaching storm. We children were forbidden to leave the house; our father had no rest, and went out. The battle began; I mounted to the top story, where the field, indeed, was still out of my sight, but the thunder of the cannon and the volleys of the small arms could be fully discerned. After some hours, we saw the first tokens of the battle, in a row of wagons, whereon wounded men, in all sorts of sorrowful dismemberment and gesture, were driven softly past us to the Liebfrauen-Kloster, which had been changed into a hospital. The compassion of the citizens forthwith awoke. Beer, wine, bread, money were given to such as had still power of receiving. But when, ere long, wounded and captive Germans also were noticed in that train, the pity had no limits; it seemed as if each were bent to strip himself of whatever moveable thing he had, to aid his countrymen therewith in their extremity.

'The prisoners, meanwhile, were the symptom of a battle unprosperous for the Allies. My father, in his partiality, quite certain that these would gain, had the passionate rashness to go out to meet the expected visitors; not reflecting that the beaten side would in that case have to run over him. He went first into his garden, at the Friedberg Gate, where he found all quiet and solitary; then ventured forth to the Bornheim Heath, where soon, however, various scattered outrunners and baggage-men came in sight, who took the satisfaction, as they passed, of shooting at the boundary-stones, and sent our eager wanderer the reverberated lead singing about his ears. He reckoned it wiser, therefore, to come back; and learned on some inquiry, what the sound of the firing might already have taught him, that for the French all went well, and no retreat was thought of. Arriving home full of black humor, he quite, at sight of his wounded and pris-

oner countrymen, lost all composure. From him also many a gift went out for the passing wagons, but only Germans were to taste of it; which arrangement, as Fate had so huddled friends and foes together, could not always be adhered to.

'Our mother, and we children, who had from the first built upon the Count's word, and so passed a tolerably quiet day, were greatly rejoiced, and our mother doubly comforted, as she that morning, on questioning the oracle of her jewel box by the scratch of a needle, had obtained a most consolatory answer not only for the present but for the future. We wished our father a similar belief and disposition; we flattered him what we could, we entreated him to take some food, which he had forborne all day; he refused our caresses and every enjoyment, and retired to his room. Our joy in the meanwhile, was not disturbed; the business was over: the King's Lieutenant, who to-day, contrary to custom, had been on horseback, at length returned; his presence at home was more needful than ever. We sprang out to meet him, kissed his hands, testified our joy. It seemed to please him greatly. "Well!" said he, with more softness than usual, "I am glad too for your sake, dear children." He ordered us sweetmeats, sweet wine, everything the best, and went to his chamber, where already a mass of importuners, solicitors, petitioners, were crowded.

'We held now a dainty collation; deplored our good father, who could not participate therein, and pressed our mother to bring him down; she, however, knew better, and how uncheering such gifts would be to him. Meanwhile she had put some supper in order, and would fain have sent him up a little to his room; but such irregularity was a thing he never suffered, not in extremest cases; so the sweet gifts being once put aside, she set about entreating him to come down in his usual way. He yielded at last, unwillingly, and little did we know what mischief we were making ready. The stairs ran free through the whole house, past the door of every anti-chamber. Our father, in descending, had to pass the Count's apartments. His anti-chamber was so full of people that he had at length resolved to come out, and dispatch several at once; and this happened, alas, just at the instant our father was passing down. The Count stept cheerfully out, saluted

him and said: "You will congratulate us and yourself that this dangerous affair has gone off so happily." — "Not at all!" replied my father, with grim emphasis: "I wish they had chased you to the Devil, had I myself gone too." The Count held in for a moment, then burst forth with fury: "You shall repent this! You shall not" —

Father Goethe, however, has 'in the meanwhile quietly descended,' and sat down to sup, much cheerfuller than formerly; he little caring, 'we little knowing, in what questionable way he had rolled the stone from his heart,' and how official friends must interfere and secret negotiations enough go on, to keep him out of military prison, and worse things that might have befallen there. On all which may we be permitted once again to make the simple reflection: What a plagued and plaguing world, with its battles and bombardments, wars and rumors of war (which sow or reap no ear of corn for any man), this is! The boy, who here watches the musket-vollies and cannon-thunders of the great Fritz, shall, as man, witness the siege of Mentz; fly with Brunswick Dukes before Doumouriez and his Sansculottes, through a country champed into one red world of mud, 'like Pharaoh' (for the carriage too breaks down), 'through the Red Sea;' and finally become involved in the universal fire-consummation of Napoleon, and by skill defend himself from hurt therein! —

The father, with occasional subsidiary private tutors, is his son's schoolmaster; a somewhat pedantic pedagogue, with ambition enough and faithful good will, but more of rigor than of insight; who, however, works on a subject that he *cannot* spoil. Languages, to the number of six or seven, with whatsoever pertains to them; histories, syllabuses, knowledges-made-easy; not to speak of dancing, drawing, music, or, in due time, riding and fencing: all is taken in with boundless appetite and aptitude; all is but fuel,

injudiciously piled, and of wet quality, yet under which works an unquenchable Greek-fire that will feed itself therewith, that will one day make it *all* clear and glowing. The paternal grandmother, recollected as a 'pale, thin, ever white and clean dressed figure,' provides the children many a satisfaction; and at length, on some festive night the crowning one of a puppet-show: whereupon ensues a long course of theatrical speculations and practisings, somewhat as delineated, for another party, in the first book of *Meister's Apprenticeship*; in which work, indeed, especially in the earlier portion of it, some shadow of the author's personal experience and culture is more than once traceable. Thus Meister's desperate burnt-offering of his young 'Poems on various Occasions,' was the image of a reality which took place in Leipsic, made desperately enough, 'on the kitchen hearth, the thick smoke from which, flowing through the whole house, filled our good landlady with alarm.'

Old 'Imperial Freetown' Frankfort is not without its notabilities, tragic or comic; in any case, impressive and didactic. The young heart is filled with boding to look into the *Juden-gasse* (Jew-gate), where squalid painful Hebrews are banished to scour old clothes, and in hate, and greed, and Old-Hebrew obstinacy and implacability, work out a wonderful prophetic existence, as 'a people terrible from the beginning;' manages, however, to get admittance to their synagogue, and see a wedding and a circumcision. On its spike, aloft on one of the steeples, grins, for the last two hundred years, the bleached skull of a malefactor and traitor; properly, indeed, not so much a traitor, as a Radical whose Reform Bill could not be carried through. The future book-writer also, on one occasion, sees the execution of a book; how the huge printed reams rustle in the flames, are stirred up with oven-forks, and fly half-charred aloft, the sport of winds; from which half-charred leaves, diligently

picked up, he pieces himself a copy together, as did many others, and with double earnestness reads it.

As little is the old Freetown deficient in notable men ; all accessible to a grandson of the Schultheiss,* who besides is a youth like no other. Of which originals, curious enough, and long since 'vanished from the sale-catalogues,' take only these two specimens :

'Von Reineck, of an old-noble house ; able, downright, but stiff-necked ; a lean black-brown man, whom I never saw smile. The misfortune befel him that his only daughter was carried off by a friend of the family. He prosecuted his son-in-law with the most vehement suit ; and as the courts, in their formality, would neither fast enough, nor with force enough obey his vengeance, he fell out with them ; and there arose quarrel on quarrel, process on process. He withdrew himself wholly into his house and the adjoining garden, lived in a spacious but melancholy under-room, where for many years no brush of a painter, perhaps scarcely the besom of a maid, had got admittance. Me he would willingly endure ; had specially recommended me to his younger son. His oldest friends, who knew how to humor him, his men of business and agents he often had at table : and on such occasions failed not to invite me. His board was well furnished, his buffet still better. His guests, however, had one torment, a large stove smoking out of many cracks. One of the most intimate ventured once to take notice of it, and ask the host whether he could stand such an inconvenience the whole winter. He answered, like a second Timon, and Heautontimorumenos : "Would to God this were the worst mischief of those that plague me !". Not till late would he be persuaded to admit daughter and grandson to his sight : the son-in-law was never more to show face before him.

'On this brave and unfortunate man my presence had a kind effect ; for as he gladly spoke with me, in particular instructed me

* *Schultheiss* is the title of the chief magistrate in some free-towns and republics, for instance, in Berne. It seems to derive itself from *Schuld-heissen*, and may mean the teller of duty, him by whom what *should* be is *hight*.

on political and state concerns, he seemed himself to feel assuaged and cheered. Accordingly, the few old friends who still kept about him, would often make use of me when they wished to soothe his indignant humor, and persuade him to any recreation. In fact he now more than once went out with us, and viewed the neighborhood again, on which, for so many years, he had not turned an eye.' * * *

'Hofrath Huisgen, not a native of Frankfort; of the Reformed religion, and thus incapable of public office, of advocacy among the rest, which latter, however, as a man much trusted for juristic talent, he, under another's signature, contrived quite calmly to practise, as well in Frankfort as in the Imperial Courts, — might be about sixty when I happened to have writing lessons along with his son, and so came into the house. His figure was large; tall without being bony, broad without corpulency. His face, deformed not only by small-pox, but wanting one of the eyes, you could not look on, for the first time, without apprehension. On his bald head he wore always a perfectly white bell-shaped cap, (*Glockenmütze*) tied at top with a ribbon. His night-gowns, of calamanco or damask, were always as if new washed. He inhabited a most cheerful suite of rooms on the ground floor in the *Allee*, and the neatness of everything about him corresponded to it. The high order of his books, papers, maps, made a pleasant impression. His son, Heinrich Sebastian, who afterwards became known by various writings on Art, promised little in his youth. Good-natured but heavy, not rude yet artless, and without wish to instruct himself, he sought rather to avoid his father, as from his mother he could get whatever he wanted. I, on the other hand, came more and more into intimacy with the master the more I knew of him. As he meddled with none but important law-cases, he had time enough to amuse and occupy himself with other things. I had not long been about him, and listened to his doctrine, till I came to observe that in respect of God and the World he stood on the opposition side. One of his pet books was, *Agrippa de Vanitate Scientiarum*; this he particularly recommended me to read, and did therewith set my young brain, for a while, into considerable tumult. I, in the joy of youth, was inclined to a sort of optimism, and with God or the Gods had now tolerably adjusted

myself again ; for, by a series of years, I had got to experience that there is many a balance against evil, that misfortunes are things one recovers from, that in dangers one finds deliverance and does not always break his neck. On what men did and tried, moreover, I looked with tolerance, and found much praiseworthy which my old gentleman would nowise be content with. Nay, once, as he had been depicting me the world not a little on the crabbed side, I noticed in him that he meant still to finish with a trump-card. He shut, as in such cases his wont was, the blind left eye close ; looked with the other broad out ; and said, in a snuffling voice : “ *Auch in Gott entdeck' ich Fehler.* ”

Of a gentler character is the reminiscence of the maternal grandfather, old Schultheiss Textor ; with his gift of prophetic dreaming, ‘ which endowment none of his descendants inherited ; ’ with his kind, mild ways ; there as he glides about in his garden, at evening, ‘ in black velvet cap,’ trimming ‘ the finer sort of fruit-trees,’ with aid of those antique embroidered gloves or gauntlets, yearly handed him at the *Pfeiffergericht* : a soft, spirit-looking figure ; the farthest out-post of the Past, which behind him melts into dim vapor. In Frau von Klestenberg, a religious associate of the mother’s, we become acquainted with the *Schöne Seele* (Fair Saint) of *Meister* ; she, at an after period, studied to convert her *Philo*, but only very partially succeeded. Let us notice also, as a token for good, how the young universal spirit takes pleasure in the workshops of handicraftsmen, and loves to understand their methods of laboring and of living :

‘ My father had early accustomed me to manage little matters for him. In particular, it was often my commission to stir up the craftsmen he employed ; who were too apt to loiter with him ; as he wanted to have all accurately done, and finally for prompt payment to have the price moderated. I came, in this way, into almost all manner of work-shops ; and as it lay in my nature to shape myself into the circumstances of others, to feel every

species of human existence, and with satisfaction participate therein, I spent many pleasant hours in such places; grew to understand the procedure of each, and what of joy and of sorrow, advantage or drawback, the indispensable conditions of this or that way of life brought with them. * * * The household economy of the various crafts, which took its figure and color from the occupation of each, was also silently an object of attention; and so unfolded, so confirmed itself in me the feeling of the equality, if not of all men, yet of all men's situations; existence by itself appearing as the head condition, all the rest as indifferent and accidental.'

And so, amid manifold instructive influences, has the boy grown out of boyhood; when now a new figure enters on the scene, bringing far higher revelations:

'As at last the wine was failing, one of them called the maid; but instead of her there came a maiden of uncommon, and to see her in this environment, of incredible beauty. "What is it?" said she, after kindly giving us good-evening: "the maid is ill and gone to bed: can I serve you?" — "Our wine is done," said one, "couldst thou get us a couple of bottles over the way, it were very good of thee." — "Do it, Gretchen," said another, "it is but a cat's leap." — "Surely!" said she; took a couple of empty bottles from the table, and hastened out. Her figure, when she turned away from you, was almost prettier than before. The little cap sat so neat on the little head, which a slim neck so gracefully united with back and shoulders. Everything about her seemed select; and you could follow the whole form more calmly, as attention was not now attracted and arrested by the true still eyes and the lovely mouth alone.'

It is at the very threshold of youth that this episode of Gretchen (*Margarete, Mar-g'ret'-kin*) occurs; the young critic of slim necks and true still eyes shall now know something of natural magic, and the importance of one mortal to another; the wild-flowing bottomless sea of human Passion, glorious in Auroral light (which, alas, may become infernal lightning), unveils itself a little to him. A graceful little

episode we reckon it ; and Gretchen better than most first loves : wholly an innocent, wise, dainty maiden ; pure and poor, — who vanishes from us here ; but, we trust, in some quiet nook of the Rhineland, became wife and mother, and was the joy and sorrow of some brave man's heart, — according as it is appointed. To the boy himself it ended painfully, almost fatally, had not sickness come to his deliverance ; and here too he may experience how 'a shadow chases us in all manner of sunshine,' and in this *What-d'ye-call-it* of Existence the tragic element is not wanting. The name of Gretchen, not her story, which had nothing in it of that guilt and terror, has been made world-famous in the play of *Faust*. —

Leipsic University has the honor of matriculating him. The name of his 'propitious mother' she may boast of, but not of the reality : alas, in these days, the University of the Universe is the only propitious mother of such ; all other propitious mothers are but unpropitious superannuated dry-nurses fallen bedrid, from whom the famished nurseling has to *steal* even bread and water, if he will not die ; whom for most part he soon takes leave of, giving perhaps (as in Gibbon's case), for farewell thanks, some rough tweak of the nose ; and rushes desperate into the wide world an orphan. The time is advancing, slower or faster, when the bedrid dry-nurse will de cease, and be succeeded by a walking and stirring wet one. Goethe's employments and culture at Leipsic lay in quite other groves than the academic : he listened to the Ciceronian Ernesti with eagerness, but the life-giving word flowed not from his mouth ; to the sacerdotal, eclectic-sentimental Gellert (the divinity of all tea-table moral philosophers of both sexes) ; witnessed 'the pure soul, the genuine will of the noble man,' heard 'his admonitions, warnings, and entreaties, uttered in a somewhat hollow and melancholy tone,' — and then the Frenchman

say to it all, *Laissez le faire, il nous forme des dupes*. 'In logic it seemed to me very strange that I must now take up those spiritual operations which from of old I had executed with the utmost convenience, and tatter them asunder, insulate, and as if destroy them, that their right employment might become plain to me. Of the Thing, of the World, of God, I fancied I knew almost about as much as the Doctor himself; and he seemed to me, in more than one place, to hobble dreadfully (*gewaltig zu hapern*).'

However, he studies to some profit with the Painter Oeser; hears, one day, at the door, with horror, that there is no lesson, for news of Winkelmann's assassination have come. With the ancient Gottsched, too, he has an interview: alas, it is a young Zeus come to dethrone old Saturn, whose time in the literary heaven is nigh run; for on Olympus itself, one Demiurgus passeth away and another cometh. Gottsched had introduced the reign of *water*, in all shapes liquid and solid, and long gloriously presided over the same; but now there is enough of it, and the 'rayless majesty' (had he been prophetic) here beheld the rayed one, before whom he was to melt away:

'We announced ourselves. The servant led us into a large room, and said his master would come immediately. Whether we misinterpreted a motion he made I cannot say; at any rate, we fancied he had beckoned us to advance into an adjoining chamber. We did advance, and to a singular scene; for, at the same moment, Gottsched, the huge broad gigantic man, entered from the opposite door, in green damask nightgown, lined with red taffeta; but his enormous head was bald and without covering. This, however, was the very want to be now supplied: for the servant came springing in at a side-door, with a full-bottomed wig on his hand (the locks fell down to his elbow), and held it out, with terrified gesture, to his master. Gottsched, without uttering the smallest complaint, lifted the head-gear with his left hand from the servant's arm; and very deftly swinging it up to its place

on the head, at the same time, with his right hand, gave the poor man a box on the ear, which, as is seen in comedies, dashed him spinning out of the apartment; whereupon the respectable-looking Patriarch quite gravely desired us to be seated, and with proper dignity went through a tolerably long discourse.'

In which discourse, however, it is likely, little edification for the young inquirer could lie. Already by multifarious discourings and readings he has convinced himself, to his despair, of the watery condition of the Gottschedic world, and how 'the *Noachide* (Noabeid) of Bodmer is a true symbol of the deluge that has swelled up round the German Parnassus,' and in literature as in philosophy there is neither landmark nor loadstar. Here, too, he resumes his inquiries about religion, falls into 'black scruples' about most things, and in 'the bald and feeble deliverances' propounded him, has sorry comfort. Outward things, moreover, go not as they should: the copious philosophic harlequinades of that wag *Beyrish*, 'with the long nose,' unsettle rather than settle; as do, in many ways, other wise and foolish mortals of both sexes: matters grow worse and worse. He falls sick, becomes wretched enough; yet unfolds withal 'an audacious humor which feels itself superior to the moment, not only fears no danger, but even wilfully courts it.' And thus, somewhat in a wrecked state, he quits his propitious mother, and returns home.

Nevertheless let there be no reflections: he must now in earnest get forward with his Law, and on to Strasburg to complete himself therein; so has the paternal judgment arranged it. A lawyer, the thing in these latter days called Lawyer, of a man in whom ever bounteous Nature has sent us a Poet for the World! O blind mortals, blind over what lies closest to us, what we have the truest wish to see! In this young colt that caprioles there in young lustihood, and snuffs the wind with an 'audacious humor,' rather dangerous-

looking, no Sleswick Dobbin, to rise to dromedary stature, and draw three tons avoirdupois (of street-mud or whatever else), has been vouchsafed ; but a winged miraculous Pegasus to carry us to the heavens ! — Whereon too (if we consider it) many a heroic Bellerophon shall, in times coming, mount, and destroy Chimæras, and deliver afflicted nations on the lower earth.

Meanwhile, be this as it may, the youth is gone to Strasburg to prepare for the *examen rigorosum* ; though, as it turned out, for quite a different than the Law one. Confusion enough is in his head and heart ; poetic objects too have taken root there, and will not rest till they have worked themselves into form. ‘These,’ says he, ‘were Götz von Berlichingen and Faust. The written Life of the former had seized my inmost soul. The figure of a rude well-meaning self-helper, in wild anarchic time, excited my deepest sympathy. The impressive puppet-show Fable of the other sounded and hummed through me many-toned enough.’ — ‘Let us withdraw, however,’ subjoins he, ‘into the free air, to the high broad platform of the Minster ; as if the time were still here, when we young ones often rendezvoused thither to salute, with full rummers, the sinking sun.’ They had good telescopes with them ; ‘and one friend after another searched out the spot in the distance which had become the dearest to him ; neither was I without a little eyemark of the like, which, though it rose not conspicuous in the landscape, drew me to it beyond all else with a kindly magic.’ This alludes, we perceive, to that Alsatian Vicar of Wakefield, and his daughter the fair Frederike ; concerning which matter a word may not be useless here. Exception has been taken by certain tender souls, of the all-for-love sort, against Goethe’s conduct in this matter. He flirted with his blooming blue-eyed Alsatian, she with him, innocently enough, thoughtlessly enough, till they both came to

love each other ; and then, when the marrying point began to grow visible in the distance, he stopt short, and would no farther. Adieu, he cried, and waved his lily hand. ' The good Frederike was weeping ; I too was sick enough at heart.' Whereupon arises the question : Is Goethe a bad man ; or is he not a bad man ? Alas, worthy souls ! if this world were all a wedding dance, and *thou shalt* never come into collision with *thou wilt*, what a new improved time we had of it ! It is man's miserable lot, in the meanwhile to eat and labor as well as wed ; alas, how often, like Corporal Trim, does he spend the whole night ; one moment dividing the world into two halves with his fair Beguine ; next moment remembering that he has only a knapsack and fifteen florins to divide with any one ! Besides, you do not consider that our dear Frederike, whom we too could weep for if it served, had a sound German heart within her stays ; had furthermore abundance of *work* to do, and not even leisure to die of love ; above all, that at this period, in the country parts of Alsatia, there were no circulating library novels.

With regard to the false one's cruelty of temper, who, if we remember, saw a ghost in broad noon that day he rode away from her, let us, on the other hand, hear Jung Stilling, for he also had experience thereof at this very date. Poor Jung, a sort of German Dominie Sampson, awkward, honest, irascible, ' in old-fashioned clothes and bag-wig,' who had been several things, charcoal-burner, and, in repeated alternation, tailor and school-master, was now come to Strasburg to study medicine ; with purse long-necked, yet with head that had brains in it, and heart full of trust in God. A pious soul, who if he did afterwards write books on the Nature of Departed Spirits, also restored to sight (by his skill in eye-operations) above *two thousand poor blind persons*, without fee or reward, even supporting many of them in the hospital at his own expense.

'There dined,' says he, 'at this table about twenty people, whom the two comrades saw one after the other enter. One especially, with large bright eyes, magnificent brow, and fine stature, walked (*muthig*) gallantly in. He drew Herr Troost's and Stilling's eyes on him; Herr Troost said, "that must be a superior man." Stilling assented, yet thought they would both have much vexation from him, as he looked like one of your wild fellows. This did Stilling infer from the frank style which the student had assumed; but here he was far mistaken. They found, meanwhile, that this distinguished individual was named Herr Goethe.

'Herr Troost whispered to Stilling, "Here it were best one sat seven days silent." Stilling felt this truth; they sat silent, therefore, and no one particularly minded them, except that Goethe now and then hurled over (*herüberwä'zte*) a look: he sat opposite Stilling, and had the government of the table without aiming at it.

'Herr Troost was neat, and dressed in the fashion; Stilling likewise tolerably so. He had a dark brown coat with fustian under garments: only that a scratch-wig also remained to him, which, among his bag-wigs, he would wear out. This he had put on one day, and came therewith to dinner. Nobody took notice of it except Herr Waldberg of Vienna. That gentleman looked at him, and as he had already heard that Stilling was greatly taken up about religion, he began, and asked him, Whether he thought Adam in Paradise had worn a scratch-wig? All laughed heartily, except Salzman, Goethe, and Troost, these did not laugh. In Stilling wrath rose and burnt, and he answered: "Be ashamed of this jest; such a trivial thing is not worth laughing at!" But Goethe struck in and added: "Try a man first whether he deserves mockery. It is devil-like to fall upon an honest-hearted person who has injured nobody, and make sport of him!" From that time Herr Goethe took up Stilling, visited him, liked him, made friendship and brothership with him, and strove by all opportunities to do him kindness. Pity that so few are acquainted with this noble man in respect of his heart!'

* *Stilling's Wanderschaft*. Berlin and Leipsic. 1778.

Here, indeed, may be the place to mention, that this noble man, in respect of his heart, and goodness and badness, is not altogether easy to get acquainted with; that innumerable persons, of the man-milliner, parish-clerk, and circulating-library sort, will find him a hard nut to crack. Hear in what questionable manner, so early as the year 1773, he expresses himself towards Herr Sulzer, whose beautiful hypothesis, that 'Nature meant, by the constant influx of satisfactions streaming in upon us, to fashion our minds, on the whole, to softness and sensibility,' he will not leave a leg to stand on. '*On the whole,*' says he, 'she does no such thing; she rather, God be thanked, hardens her genuine children against the pains and evils she incessantly prepares for them; so that we name him the happiest man who is the strongest to make front against evil, to put it aside from him, and in defiance of it go the road of his own will.' 'Man's art in all situations is to fortify himself against Nature, to avoid her thousand-fold ills, and only to enjoy his measure of the good; till at length he manages to include the whole circulation of his true and factitious wants in a palace, and fix as far as possible all scattered beauty and felicity within his glass walls, where accordingly he grows ever the weaker, takes to "joys of the soul," and his powers, roused to their natural exertion by no contradiction, melt away into' (*horresco referens*)—'Virtue, Benevolence, Sensibility!' In Goethe's Writings, too, we all know the moral lesson is seldom so easily educed as one would wish. Alas, how seldom is he so direct in tendency as his own plain-spoken moralist at Plundersweilern :

'Dear Christian people, one and all,
When will you cease your sinning?
Else can your comfort be but small,
Good hap scarce have beginning :

For Vice is hurtful unto man,
In Virtue lies his surest plan,'

or, to give it in the original words, the emphasis of which no foreign idiom can imitate :

'*Die Tugend ist das höchste Gut,
Das Laster Weh dem Menschen thut!*'

In which emphatic couplet, does there not, as the critics say in other cases, lie the essence of whole volumes, such as we have read ? —

Goethe's far most important relation in Strasburg was the accidental temporary one with Herder ; which issued, indeed, in a more permanent, though at no time an altogether intimate one. Herder, with much to give, had always something to require ; living with him seems never to have been wholly a sinecure. Goethe and he moreover were fundamentally different, not to say discordant ; neither could the humor of the latter be peculiarly sweetened by his actual business in Strasburg, that of undergoing a surgical operation on ' the lachrymatory duct,' and, above all, an unsuccessful one :

'He was attending the prince of Holstein-Eutin, who labored under mental distresses, on a course of travel ; and had arrived with him at Strasburg. Our society, so soon as his presence there was known, felt a strong wish to get near him ; which happiness, quite unexpectedly and by chance, befel me first. I had gone to the *Inn zum Geist*, visiting I forget what stranger of rank. Just at the bottom of the stairs I came upon a man, like myself about to ascend, whom by his look I could take to be a clergyman. His powdered hair was fastened up into a round lock, the black coat also distinguished him ; still more a long black silk mantle, the end of which he had gathered together and stuck into his pocket. This in some measure surprising, yet on the whole gallant and pleasing figure, of whom I had already heard speak, left me no doubt but it was the famed Traveller ; and my address

soon convinced him that he was known to me. He asked my name, which could be of no significance to him; however, my openness seemed to give pleasure, for he replied to it in friendly style, and as we stept up stairs forthwith showed himself ready for a lively communication. Our visit also was to the same party; and before separating I begged permission to wait upon himself, which he kindly enough accorded me. I delayed not to make repeated use of this preferment; and was the longer the more attracted towards him. He had something softish in his manner, which was fit and dignified, without strictly being bred. A round face; a fine brow; a somewhat short blunt nose; a somewhat projected, yet highly characteristic, pleasant, amiable mouth. Under black eye-brows, a pair of coal-black eyes, which failed not of their effect, though one of them was wont to be red and inflamed.'

With this gifted man, by five years his senior, whose writings had already given him a name, and announced the much that lay in him, the open-hearted disciple could manifoldly communicate, learning and enduring. Ere long, under that 'softish manner,' there disclosed itself a 'counter-pulse' of causticity, of ungentle, almost noisy banter; the blunt nose was too often curled in an adunco-suspensive manner. Whatsoever of self-complacency, of acquired attachment and insight, of self-sufficiency well or ill grounded, lay in the youth, was exposed, we can fancy, to the severest trial. In Herder too, as in an expressive microcosm, he might see imaged the whole wild world of German literature, of European Thought; its old workings and mis-workings, its best recent tendencies and efforts; what its past and actual wasteness, perplexity, confusion worse confounded, was. In all which, moreover, the bantered, yet imperturbably inquiring brave young man had quite other than a theoretic interest, being himself minded to dwell there. It is easy to conceive that Herder's presence, stirring up in that fashion so many new and old matters, would mightily aggra-

vate the former 'fermentation ;' and thereby, it is true, unintentionally or not, forward the same towards clearness.

In fact, with the hastiest glance over the then position of the world spiritual, we shall find that as Disorder is never wanting, (and for the young spiritual hero, who is there only to destroy Disorder and make it order, can least of all be wanting,) so, at the present juncture, it specially abounded. Why dwell on this often delineated Epoch? Over all Europe the reign of Earnestness had now wholly dwindled into that of Dilettantism. The voice of a certain modern 'closet logic,' which called itself, and could not but call itself, Philosophy, had gone forth, saying, Let there be darkness, and there was darkness. No divinity any longer dwelt in the world ; and as men cannot do without a divinity, a sort of terrestrial upholstery one had been got together, and named TASTE, with medallic virtuosi and picture cognoscenti, and enlightened letter and belles-lettres men enough for priests. To which worship, with its stunted formularies and hungry results, must the earnest mind, like the hollow and shallow one, adjust itself, as best might be. To a new man, no doubt, the Earth is always new, never wholly without interest. Knowledge, were it only that of dead languages, or of dead actions, the foreign tradition of what others had acquired and done, was still to be searched after ; fame might be enjoyed if procurable ; above all, the culinary and brewing arts remained in pristine completeness, their results could be relished with pristine vigor. Life lumbered along, better or worse, in pitiful discontent, not yet in decisive desperation, as through a dim day of languor, sultry and sunless. Already too on the horizon might be seen clouds, might be heard murmurs, which by and by proved themselves of an electric character, and were to cool and clear that same sultriness in wondrous deluges.

To a man standing in the midst of German literature, and

looking out thither for his highest good, the view was troubled perhaps with various peculiar perplexities. For two centuries, German literature had lain in the sere leaf. The Luther, 'whose words were half battles,' and such half battles as could shake and overset half Europe with their cannonading, had long since gone to sleep; and all other words were but the miserable bickering of (theological) camp-suttlers in quarrel over the stripping of the slain. Ulrich Hutten slept silent, in the little island of the Zurich Lake; the weary and heavy-laden had wiped the sweat from his brow, and laid him down to rest there: the valiant, fire-tempered heart, with all its woes and loves and loving indignations, mouldered, cold, forgotten; with such a pulse no new heart rose to beat. The tamer Opitzes and Flemmings of a succeeding era had, in like manner, long fallen obsolete. One unhappy generation after another of pedants, 'rhizophagous,' living on roots, Greek or Hebrew; of farce-writers, gallant-verse writers, journalists, and other jugglers of non-descript sort wandered in nomadic wise, whither provender was to be had; among whom, if a passionate Gunther go with some emphasis to ruin; if an illuminated Thomasius, earlier than the general herd, deny witchcraft, we are to esteem it a felicity. This too, however, has passed; and now, in manifold enigmatical signs, a new Time announces itself. Well-born Hagedorns, munificent Gleims have again rendered the character of Author honorable; the polish of correct, assiduous Rabeners and Ramlers have smoothed away the old impurities; a pious Klopstock, to the general enthusiasm, rises anew into something of seraphic music, though by methods wherein he can have no follower; the brave spirit of a Lessing pierces, in many a life-giving ray, through the dark inertness: Germany has risen to a level with Europe, is henceforth participant of all European influences; nay it is now appointed, though not yet ascer-

tained that Germany is to be the leader of spiritual Europe. A deep movement agitates the universal mind of Germany, though-as yet no one sees towards what issue; only that heavings and eddyings, confused, conflicting tendencies, work unquietly everywhere; the movement is begun and will not stop, but the course of it is yet far from ascertained. Even to the young man now looking on with such anxious intensity had this very task been allotted: To find it a course and set it flowing thereon.

Whoever will represent this confused revolutionary condition of all things, has but to fancy how it would act on the most susceptible and comprehensive of living minds; what a Chaos he had taken in, and was dimly struggling to body forth into a Creation. Add to which his so confused, contradictory, personal condition; appointed by a positive father to be practitioner of Law,* by a still more positive mother (old Nature herself) to be practitioner of Wisdom, and Captain of spiritual Europe; we have confusion enough for him, doubts economic and doubts theologic, doubts moral and æsthetical, a whole world of confusion and doubt.

Nevertheless to the young Strasburg student the gods had given their most precious gift, which is worth all others, without which all others are worth nothing; a seeing eye and a faithful loving heart:

*'Er hatt' ein Auge treu und klug,
Und war auch liebevoll genug,
Zu schauen manches klar und rein,
Und wieder alles gut zu machen sein;
Hatt' auch eine Zunge die sich ergross,
Und leicht und fein in Worte floss;
Dess thaten die Musen sich erfreun,
Wollten ihn zum Meistersänger weihn.'**

* *Hans Sachsens Poetische Sendung* (Goethe's Werke, XIII.); a beautiful piece (a very *Huns Sachs beautified*, both in character and style), which we wish there was any possibility of translating.

A mind of all-piercing vision, of sunny strength, not made to ray out darker darkness, but to bring warm sunlight, all purifying, all uniting. A clear, invincible mind, and 'consecrated to be Master-singer' in quite another guild than that Nürnberg one.

His first literary productions fall in his twenty-third year; *Werter*, the most celebrated of these, in his twenty-fifth. Of which wonderful Book, and its now recognised character as poetic (and prophetic) utterance of the World's Despair, it is needless to repeat what has elsewhere been written. This and *Götz von Berlichingen*, which also, as a poetic looking back into the past, was a word for the world, have produced incalculable effects; — which now, indeed, however some departing echo of them may linger in the wrecks of our own Moss-trooper and Satanic Schools, do at length all happily lie behind us. Some trifling incidents at Wetzlar, and the suicide of an unhappy acquaintance were the means of 'crystalizing' that wondrous, perilous stuff, which the young heart oppressively held dissolved in it, into this world-famous, and as it proved world-medicative *Werter*. He had gone to Wetzlar with an eye still to Law; which now, however, was abandoned, never to be resumed. Thus did he too, 'like Saul the son of Kish, go out to seek his father's asses, and instead thereof find a kingdom.'

With the completion of these two Works (a completion in every sense, for they were not only emitted, but speedily also demitted, and seen over, and left behind), commences what we can specially call his Life, his activity as Man. The outward particulars of it, from this point where his own Narrative ends, have been briefly summed up in these terms:

'In 1776, the Heir-apparent of Weimar was passing through Frankfort, on which occasion, by the intervention of some friends,

he waited upon Goethe. The visit must have been mutually agreeable; for a short time afterwards the young author was invited to court; apparently to contribute his assistance in various literary institutions and arrangements then proceeding or contemplated; and in pursuance of this honorable call, he accordingly settled at Weimar, with the title of *Legationsrath*, and the actual dignity of a place in the *Collegium* (Council). The connexion begun under such favorable auspices, and ever afterwards continued under the like or better, has been productive of important consequences, not only to Weimar but to all Germany. The noble purpose undertaken by the Duchess Amelia was zealously forwarded by the young Duke on his accession; under whose influence, supported and directed by his new Councillor, this inconsiderable state has gained for itself a fairer distinction than any of its larger, richer, or more warlike neighbors. By degrees whatever was brightest in the genius of Germany had been gathered to this little court; a classical theatre was under the superintendence of Goethe and Schiller; here Wieland taught and sung; in the pulpit was Herder; and possessing such a four, the small town of Weimar, some five-and-twenty years ago, might challenge the proudest capital of the world to match it in intellectual wealth. Occupied so profitably to his country, and honorably to himself, Goethe continued rising in favor with his Prince; by degrees a political was added to his literary trust; in 1779 he became Privy Councillor; President in 1782; and at length after his return from Italy, where he had spent two years in varied studies and observation, he was appointed Minister; a post which he only a few years ago resigned, on his final retirement from public affairs.'

Notable enough that little Weimar should, in this particular, have brought back, as it were, an old Italian Commonwealth into the nineteenth century! For the Petrarcas and Bocaccios, though revered as Poets, were not supposed to have lost their wits as men; but could be employed in the highest services of the state, not only as fit, but as the fittest, to discharge these. Very different with us, where Diplomats and Governors can be picked up from the highways, or chosen in the manner of blindman's buff

(the first figure you clutch, say rather that clutches *you*, will make a governor); and, even in extraordinary times, it is thought much if a Milton can become Latin Clerk under some Bulstrode Whitelock, and be called 'one Mr. Milton.' As if the poet, with his poetry were no other than a pleasant mountebank, with faculty of a certain ground-and-lofty tumbling which would amuse; for which you must throw him a few coins, a little flattery, otherwise he would not amuse you with it. As if there were any talent whatsoever; above all, as if there were any talent of Poetry (by the consent of all ages the highest talent, and sometimes pricelessly high), the first foundation of which were not even these two things (properly but one thing): intellectual Perspicacity, with force and honesty of Will. Which two, do they not, in their simplest quite naked form, constitute the very equipment a Man of Business needs; the very implements whereby *all* business, from that of the delver and ditcher to that of the legislator and imperator, is accomplished; as in their noblest concentration they are still the moving faculty of the Artist and Prophet!

To Goethe himself, this connexion with Weimar opened the happiest course of life, which probably the age he lived in could have yielded him. Moderation yet abundance; elegance without luxury or sumptuosity: Art enough to give a heavenly firmament to his existence; Business enough to give it a solid earth. In his multifarious duties, he comes in contact with all manner of men; gains experience, and tolerance of all men's ways. A faculty like his, which could master the highest spiritual problems, and conquer Evil Spirits in their own domain, was not likely to be foiled by such when they put on the simpler shape of material clay. The greatest of Poets is also the skilfullest of Managers: the little terrestrial Weimar trust committed to him prospers; and one sees with a sort of smile, in which may lie a deep

seriousness, how the Jena Museums, University arrangements, Weimar Art-exhibitions and Palace-buildings, are guided smoothly on, by a hand which could have worthily swayed imperial sceptres. The world, could it entrust its imperial sceptres to such hands, were blessed : nay to this man, without the world's consent given or asked, a still higher function *had* been committed. But on the whole, we name his external life happy, among the happiest, in this, that a noble princely Courtesy could dwell in it based on the worship, by speech and practice, of Truth only (for his victory, as we said above, was so complete, as almost to hide that there had been a struggle), and the worldly could praise him as the most agreeable of men, and the spiritual as the highest and clearest ; but happy above all, in this, that it forwarded him, as no other could have done, in his inward life, the good or evil hap of which was alone of permanent importance.

The inward life of Goethe, onwards from this epoch, lies nobly recorded in the long series of his Writings. Of these, meanwhile, the great bulk of our English world has nowise yet got to such understanding and mastery, that we could, with much hope of profit, go into a critical examination of their merits and characteristics. Such a task can stand over till the day for it arrive ; be it in this generation, or the next, or after the next. What has been elsewhere already set forth suffices the present want, or needs only to be repeated and enforced ; the expositor of German things must say, with judicious Zanga in the play : ' First recover that, then shalt thou know more.' A glance over the grand outlines of the matter, and more especially under the aspect : suitable to these days, can alone be in place here.

In *Goethe's Works*, chronologically arranged, we see this above all things : A mind working itself into clearer and

clearer freedom ; gaining a more and more perfect dominion of its world. The pestilential fever of Skepticism runs through its stages : but happily it ends and disappears at the last stage, not in death, not in chronic malady (the commonest way), but in clearer, henceforth invulnerable health. *Werter* we called the voice of the world's despair : passionate, uncontrollable is this voice ; not yet melodious and supreme, — as nevertheless we at length hear it in the wild apocalyptic *Faust* : like a death-song of departing worlds ; no voice of joyful ' morning stars singing together ' over a Creation ; but of red nigh-extinguished midnight stars, in spherul swan-melody, proclaiming : It is ended !

What follows, in the next period, we might, for want of a fitter term, call Pagan or Ethnic in character ; meaning thereby an anthropomorphic character, akin to that of old Greece and Rome. *Wilhelm Meister* is of that stamp : warm, hearty, sunny human Endeavor ; a free recognition of Life in its depth, variety, and majesty ; as yet no Divinity recognised there. The famed *Venetian Epigrams* are of the like Old-Ethnic tone : musical, joyfully strong ; true, yet not the whole truth, and sometimes in their blunt realism, jarring on the sense. As in this, oftener cited, perhaps, by a certain class of wise men, than the due proportion demanded :

' Why so bustleth the People and crieth ? Would find itself victual,
Children too would beget, feed on the best may be had :
Mark in thy notebooks, Traveller, this, and at home go do likewise ;
Farther reacheth no man, make he what stretching he will.'

Doubt, reduced into Denial, now lies prostrate under foot : the fire has done its work, an old world is in ashes ; but the smoke and the flame are blown away, and a sun again shines clear over the ruin, to raise therefrom a new nobler verdure and flowerage. Till at length, in the third or final period, melodious Reverence becomes triumphant ; a deep all-

pervading Faith, with mild voice, grave as gay, speaks forth to us in a *Meisters Wanderjahre*, in a *West-Östlicher Divan*; in many a little *Zahme Xenie*, and true-hearted little rhyme, 'which,' it has been said, 'for pregnancy and genial significance, except in the Hebrew Scriptures, you will nowhere match.' As here, striking in almost at a venture :

'Like as a Star,
That maketh not haste,
That taketh not rest,
Be each one fulfilling
His god-given Hest.' *

* *Wie das Gestirn,
Ohne Hast,
Aber ohne Rast,
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.*

So stands it in the original ; hereby, however, hangs a tale :

'A fact,' says one of our fellow laborers in this German vineyard, 'has but now come to our knowledge, which we take pleasure and pride in stating. Fifteen Englishmen, entertaining that high consideration for the good Goethe, which the labors and high deserts of a long life usefully employed so richly merit from all mankind, have presented him with a highly wrought Seal, as a token of their veneration. We must pass over the description of the gift, for it would be too elaborate ;' suffice it to say, that amid tasteful carving and emblematic embossing enough, stood these words engraven on a gold belt, on the four sides respectively : *To the German Master : From friends in England : 28th August : 1831* ; finally, that the impression was a star encircled with a serpent-of-eternity, and this motto : *Ohne Hast Aber Ohne Rast*.

'The following is the letter which accompanied it :

" *To the Poet Goethe, on the 28th of August, 1831.*

" Sir, — Among the friends whom this so interesting Anniversary calls round you, may we 'English friends,' in thought and symbolically, since personally it is impossible, present ourselves to offer

Or this small Couplet, which the reader, if he will, may substitute for whole horse-loads of *Essays on the Origin of Evil*; a spiritual manufacture which in these enlightened times ought ere now to have gone out of fashion :

“What shall I teach thee, the foremost thing?”

Couldst teach me off my own Shadow to spring!’

Or the pathetic picturesqueness of this :

‘A rampart-breach is every Day,
Which many mortals are storming:
Fall in the gap who may,
Of the slain no heap is forming.’

you our affectionate congratulations. We hope you will do us the honor to accept this little Birth-Day Gift, which, as a true testimony of our feelings, may not be without value.

“We said to ourselves: As it is always the highest duty and pleasure to show reverence to whom reverence is due, and our chief, perhaps our only benefactor is he who by act and word instructs us in wisdom, — so we, undersigned, feeling towards the Poet Goethe as the spiritually taught towards their spiritual teacher, are desirous to express that sentiment openly and in common; for which end we have determined to solicit his acceptance of a small English gift, proceeding from us all equally, on his approaching birth-day; that so, while the venerable man still dwells among us, some memorial of the gratitude we owe him, and think the whole world owes him, may not be wanting.

“And thus our little tribute, perhaps among the purest that men could offer to man, now stands in visible shape, and begs to be received. May it be welcome, and speak permanently of a most close relation, though wide seas flow between the parties!

“We pray that many years may be added to a life so glorious, that all happiness may be yours, and strength given to complete your high task, even as it has hitherto proceeded, like a star, without haste, yet without rest.

“We remain, Sir, your friends and Servants,

FIFTEEN ENGLISHMEN.”

‘The wonderful old man, to whom distant and unknown friends had paid such homage, could not but be moved at sentiments ex-

*'Eine Bresche ist jeder Tag.
Die viele Menschen erstürmen ;
Wer da auch fallen mag,
Die Todten sich niemals thürmen.'*

In such spirit, and with an eye that takes in all provinces of human Thought, Feeling, and Activity, does the Poet stand forth as the true prophet of his time; victorious over its contradiction, possessor of its wealth; embodying the nobleness of the past into a new whole, into a new vital nobleness for the present and the future. Antique nobleness in all kinds, yet worn with new clearness; the spirit of it is preserved and again revealed in shape, when the former shape and vesture had become old (as vestures do), and was dead and cast forth; and we mourned as if the spirit too were gone. This, we are aware, is a high saying; applicable to no other man living, or that has lived for some two centuries; ranks Goethe, not only as the highest man of his time, but as a man of universal Time, important for all generations — one of the landmarks in the History of Men.

pressed in such terms. We hear that he values the token highly, and has condescended to return the following lines for answer: —

“DEN FUNFZEHN ENGLISCHEN FREUNDEN.

*Worte die der Dichter spricht,
Treu, in heimischen Bezirken,
Wirken gleich, doch weiss er nicht
Ob sie in die Ferne wirken.*

*Britten! habt sie aufgefasst:
'Thätigen Sinn, das Thun gezügelt;
Stetig Streben ohne Hast;'
Und so wollt Ihr denn besiegelt!*

“Weimar, d. 23ten August, 1831.”

GOETHE.”

(*Fraser's Magazine*, XXII. 447.)

And thus, as it chanced, was the poet's last birth-day celebrated by an outward ceremony of a peculiar kind; wherein, too, it is to be hoped, might lie some inward meaning and sincerity.

Thus, from our point of view, does Goethe rise on us as the Uniter, and victorious Reconciler, of the distracted clashing elements of the most distracted and divided age, that the world has witnessed since the Introduction of the Christian Religion; to which old chaotic Era, of world-confusion and world-refusion, of blackest darkness, succeeded by a dawn of light and nobler 'dayspring from on high,' this wondrous Era of ours is, indeed, often likened. To the faithful heart let no era be a desperate one! It is ever the nature of Darkness to be followed by a new nobler Light; nay, to produce such. The woes and contradictions of an Atheistic time; of a world sunk in wickedness and baseness and unbelief, wherein also physical wretchedness, the disorganization and broken-heartedness of whole classes struggling in ignorance and pain will not fail: all this, the view of all this, falls like a Sphinx-question on every new-born earnest heart, a life-and-death entanglement for every earnest heart to deliver itself from, and the world from. Of Wisdom cometh Strength: only when there is 'no vision' do the people perish. But, by natural vicissitude, the age of *Persiflage* goes out, and that of earnest unconquerable Endeavor must come in: for the ashes of the old fire will not warm men anew; the new generation is too desolate to indulge in mockery, — unless, perhaps, in bitter suicidal mockery of itself! Thus after Voltaires enough have laughed and sniffed at what is false, appear some Turgots to ask what is true. Wo to the land where, in these seasons, no prophet arises; but only censors, satirists, and embittered desperadoes, to make the evil worse; at best but to accelerate a consummation, which in accelerating they have aggravated! Old Europe had its Tacitus and Juvenal; but these availed not. New Europe too has had its Mirabeaus, and Byrons, and Napoleons, and innumerable red-flaming meteors, shaking pestilence from their hair; and earthquakes

and deluges, and Chaos come again; but the clear Star, day's harbinger (*Phosphoros*, the bringer of *light*), had not yet been recognised.

That in Goethe there lay Force to educe reconciliation out of such contradiction as man is now born into, marks him as the Strong One of his time; the true *Earl*, though now with quite other weapons than those old steel *Jarls* were used to! Such reconciliation of contradictions, indeed, is the task of every man: the weakest reconciles somewhat; reduces old chaotic elements into new higher order; ever, according to faculty and endeavor, brings good out of evil. Consider now what faculty and endeavor must belong to the highest of such tasks, which virtually includes all others whatsoever! The thing that was given this man to reconcile (to begin reconciling and teach us how to reconcile), was the inward spiritual chaos; the centre of all other confusions, outward and inward: he was to close the Abyss out of which such manifold destruction, moral, intellectual, social, was proceeding.

The greatness of his Endowment, manifested in such a work, has long been plain to all men. That it belongs to the highest class of human endowments, entitling the wearer thereof, who so nobly used it, to the appellation in its strictest sense, of Great Man, — is also becoming plain. A giant strength of Character is to be traced here; mild and kindly and calm, even as strength ever is. In the midst of so much spasmodic Byronism, bellowing till its windpipe is cracked, how very different looks *this* symptom of strength: 'He appeared to aim at pushing away from him everything that did not hang upon his individual will.' 'In his own imper-turbable firmness of character, he had grown into the habit of *never contradicting any one*. On the contrary, he listened with a friendly air to every one's opinion, and would himself elucidate and strengthen it by instances and reasons

of his own. All who did not know him fancied that he thought as they did; for he was possessed of a preponderating intellect, and could transport himself into the mental state of any man and imitate his manner of conceiving.* Beloved brethren, who wish to be strong! Had not the man, who could take this smooth method of it, more strength in him than any teeth-grinding, glass-eyed 'lone Caloyer' you have yet fallen in with? Consider your ways; consider first, Whether you cannot do with being *weak*! If the answer still prove negative, consider, secondly, what strength actually is, and where you are to try for it. A certain strong man, of former time, fought stoutly at Lepanto; worked stoutly as Algerine slave; stoutly delivered himself from such working, with stout cheerfulness endured famine and nakedness and the world's ingratitude; and, sitting in jail, with the one arm left him, wrote our joyfullest, and all but our deepest, modern book, and named it *Don Quixote*: this was a genuine strong man. A strong man, of recent time, fights little for any good cause anywhere; works weakly as an English lord; weakly delivers himself from such working; with weak despondency endures the cackling of plucked geese at St. James's; and, sitting in sunny Italy, in his coach-and-four, at a distance of two thousand miles from them, writes, over many reams of paper, the following sentence, with variations: *Saw ever the world one greater or unhappier?* this was a sham strong man. Choose ye. —

Of Goethe's spiritual Endowment, looked at on the Intellectual side, we have (as indeed lies in the nature of things, for moral and intellectual are fundamentally one and the same) to pronounce a similar opinion; that it is great among the very greatest. As the first gift of all, may be discerned here utmost Clearness, all-piercing faculty of Vision;

* *Wilhelm Meister*. Book vi.

whereto, as we ever find it, all other gifts are superadded ; nay, properly they are but other forms of the same gift. A nobler power of insight than this of Goethe you in vain look for, since Shakspeare passed away. In fact, there is much every way, here in particular, that these two minds have in common. Shakspeare too does not look *at* a thing, but into it, through it ; so that he constructively comprehends it, can take it asunder, and put it together again ; the thing melts, as it were, into light under his eye, and anew *creates* itself before him. That is to say, he is a Thinker in the highest of all senses : he is a Poet. For Goethe, as for Shakspeare, the world lies all translucent, all *fasible* (we might call it), encircled with WONDER ; the Natural in reality the Supernatural, for to the seer's eyes both become one. What are the *Hamlets* and *Tempests*, the *Fausts* and *Mignons*, but glimpses accorded us into this translucent, wonder-encircled world ; revelations of the mystery of all mysteries, Man's Life as it actually is ?

Under other secondary aspects, the poetical faculty of the two will still be found cognate. Goethe is full of *figurativeness* ; this grand light-giving Intellect, as all such are, is an imaginative one, — and in a quite other sense than most of our unhappy Imaginatives will imagine. Gall the Craniologist declared him to be a born *Volksredner* (popular orator), both by the figure of his brow, and what was still more decisive, because 'he could not speak but a figure came.' Gall saw what was high as his own nose reached,

'High as the nose doth reach, all clear !

What higher lies, they ask : Is it here ?'

A far different figurativeness was this of Goethe than popular oratory has work for. In figures of the popular-oratory kind, Goethe, throughout his Writings at least, is nowise the most copious man known to us, though on a stricter scrutiny we may find him the richest. Of your

ready-made, colored-paper metaphors, such as can be sewed or plastered on the surface, by way of giving an ornamental finish to the rag-web already woven, we speak not; there is not one such to be discovered in all his Works. But even in the use of genuine metaphors, that are not haberdashery ornament, but the genuine new vesture of new thoughts, he yields to lower men (for example, to Jean Paul); that is to say, in fact, he is more master of the *common* language, and can oftener make *it* serve him. Goethe's figurativeness lies in the very centre of his being; manifests itself as the constructing of the inward elements of a thought, as the *vital* embodiment of it: such figures as those of Goethe you will look for through all modern literature, and except here and there in Shakspeare, nowhere find a trace of. Again, it is the same faculty in higher exercise, that enables the poet to construct a Character. Here too Shakspeare and Goethe, unlike innumerable others, are *vital*; their construction begins at the *heart* and flows outward as the life-streams do; fashioning the *surface*, as it were, spontaneously. Those Macbeths and Falstaffs, accordingly, these Fausts and Philinas have a verisimilitude and life that separates them from all other fictions of late ages. All others, in comparison, have more or less the nature of hollow vizards, constructed from without inwards, painted *like*, and deceptively put in motion. Many years ago on finishing our first perusal of *Wilhelm Meister*, with a very mixed sentiment in other respects, we could not but feel that here lay more insight into the elements of human nature, and a more poetically perfect combining of these than in all the other fictitious literature of our generation.

Neither, as an additional similarity (for the great is ever like itself) let the majestic Calmness of both be omitted; their perfect tolerance for all men and all things. This too proceeds from the same source, perfect clearness of vision:

he who comprehends an object cannot hate it, has already begun to love it. In respect of style, no less than of character, this calmness and graceful smooth-flowing softness is again characteristic of both ; though in Goethe the quality is more complete, having been matured by far more assiduous study. Goethe's style is perhaps to be reckoned the most excellent that our modern world, in any language, can exhibit. ' Even to a foreigner,' says one, ' it is full of character and secondary meanings ; polished, yet vernacular and cordial, it sounds like the dialect of wise, antique-minded, true-hearted men : in poetry, brief, sharp, simple, and expressive : in prose, perhaps, still more pleasing ; for it is at once concise and full, rich, clear, unpretending, and melodious ; and the sense, not presented in alternating flashes, piece after piece revealed and withdrawn, rises before us as in continuous dawning, and stands at last simultaneously complete, and bathed in the mellowest and ruddiest sunshine. It brings to mind what the prose of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Browne, would have been, had they written under the good without the bad influences of that French precision, which has polished and attenuated, trimmed and impoverished all modern languages ; made our meaning clear, and too often shallow as well as clear.' *

Finally, as Shakspeare is to be considered as the greater nature of the two, on the other hand we must admit him to have been the less cultivated, and much the more careless. What Shakspeare *could* have done we nowhere discover. A careless mortal, open to the Universe and its influences, not caring strenuously to open himself ; who, Prometheus-like, will scale Heaven (if it so must be), and is satisfied if he therewith pay the rent of his London Playhouse ; who, had the Warwickshire Justice let him hunt deer unmolested,

* *German Romance*, iv.

might, for many years more, have lived quiet on the green earth without such aerial journeys : an unparalleled mortal. In the great Goethe, again, we see a man through life at his utmost strain ; a man that, as he says himself, 'struggled toughly ;' laid hold of all things, under all aspects, scientific or poetic ; engaged passionately with the deepest interests of man's existence, in the most complex age of man's history. What Shakspeare's thoughts on 'God, Nature, Art,' would have been, especially had he lived to number fourscore years, were curious to know : Goethe's, delivered in many-toned melody, as the apocalypse of our era, are here for us to know.

Such was the noble talent entrusted to this man ; such the noble employment he made thereof. We can call him, once more, 'a clear and universal man ;' we can say that, in his universality, as thinker, as singer, as worker, he lived a life of antique nobleness under these new conditions ; and, in so living, is alone in all Europe ; the foremost, whom others are to learn from and follow. In which great act, or rather great sum total of many acts, who shall compute what treasure of new strengthening, of faith become hope and vision, lies secured for all ! The question, Can man still live in devoutness, yet without blindness or contraction ; in unconquerable steadfastness for the right, yet without tumultuous exasperation against the wrong ; as an antique worthy, yet with the expansion and increased endowment of a modern ? is no longer a question, but has become a certainty, and ocularly-visible fact.

We have looked at Goethe, as we engaged to do, 'on *this* side,' and with the eyes of 'this generation ;' that is to say, chiefly as a world-changer, and benignant spiritual revolutionist : for in our present so astonishing condition of 'progress of the species,' such is the category under which we

must try all things, wisdom itself. And, indeed, under this aspect too, Goethe's Life and Works are doubtless of incalculable value, and worthy our most earnest study; for his Spiritual History is, as it were, the ideal emblem of all true men's in these days; the goal of Manhood, which he attained, we too in our degree have to aim at; let us mark well the road he fashioned for himself, and in the dim weltering chaos rejoice to find a paved way.

Here, moreover, another word of explanation is perhaps worth adding. We mean in regard to the controversy agitated (as about many things pertaining to Goethe) about his Political Creed and practice, whether he was Ministerial or in Opposition? Let the political admirer of Goethe be at ease: Goethe was both, and also neither! The 'rotten white-washed (*gebrechliche übertünchte*) condition of society' was plainer to few eyes than to his, sadder to few hearts than to his. Listen to the Epigrammatist at Venice:

'To this stithy I liken the land, the hammer its ruler,
And the people that plate, beaten between them that writhes:
-Wo to the plate, when nothing but wilful bruises on bruises
Hit at random; and made, cometh no Kettle to view!'

But, alas, what is to be done?

'No Apostle-of-Liberty much to my heart ever found I;
License, each for himself, this was at bottom their want.
Liberator of many! first dare to be Servant of many:
What a business is that, would'st thou know it, go try!'

Let the following also be recommended to all inordinate worshippers of Septennials, Triennials, Elective Franchise, and the Shameful parts of the Constitution; and let each be a little tolerant of his neighbor's 'festoon,' and rejoice that he has himself found out *Freedom*, — a thing much wanted:

'Walls I can see tumbled down, walls I see also a-building;
Here sit prisoners, there likewise do prisoners sit:

Is the world then itself a huge prison? Free only the madman,
His chains knitting still up into some graceful festoon?

So that for the Poet what remains but to leave Conservative and Destructive pulling one another's locks and ears off, as they will and can (the ulterior issue being long since indubitable enough); and, for his own part, strive day and night to forward the small suffering remnant of *Productives*, of those who, in true manful endeavor, were it under despotism or under sansculottism, create somewhat, — with whom, alone, in the end, does the hope of the world lie. Go thou and do likewise! Art thou *called* to politics, work therein, as this man would have done, like a real and not an imaginary workman. Understand well, meanwhile, that to no man is his political constitution 'a life, but only a house wherein his life is led:' and hast thou a nobler task than such *house-pargeting* and *smoke-doctoring*, and pulling down of ancient rotten rat-inhabited walls, leave such to the proper craftsman; honor the higher Artist, and good-humoredly say with him:

'All this is neither my coat nor my cake,
Why fill my hand with other men's charges?
The fishes swim at ease in the lake,
And take no thought of the barges.'

Goethe's political practice, or rather no-practice, except that of self-defence, is a part of his conduct quite inseparably coherent with the rest; a thing we could recommend to universal study, that the spirit of it might be understood by all men, and by all men imitated.

Nevertheless it is nowise alone on this revolutionary or 'progress-of-the-species' side that Goethe has significance; his Life and Work is no painted show but a solid reality, and may be looked at with profit on all sides, from all imaginable points of view. Perennial, as a possession for ever, Goethe's History and Writings abide there; a thousand-

voiced 'Melody of Wisdom,' which he that has ears may hear. What the experience of the most complexly-situated, deep-searching, every way *far-experienced* man has yielded him of insight, lies written for all men here. He who was of compass to know and feel more than any other man, this is the record of his knowledge and feeling. 'The deepest heart, the highest head to scan' was not beyond his faculty; thus, then, did he scan and interpret: let many generations listen, according to their want; let the generation which has no need of listening, and nothing new to learn there, esteem itself a happy one.

To us, meanwhile, to all that wander in darkness and seek light, as the one thing needful, be this possession reckoned among our choicest blessings and distinctions. *Colite talem virum*; learn of him, imitate, emulate him! So did he catch the Music of the Universe, and unfold it into clearness, and in authentic celestial tones bring it home to the hearts of men, from amid that soul-confusing Babylonish hubbub of this our new Tower-of-Babel era! For now, too, as in that old time, had men said to themselves: Come, let us build a tower which shall reach to heaven; and by our steam-engines, and logic-engines, and skilful mechanism and manipulation, vanquish not only Physical Nature, but the divine Spirit of Nature, and scale the empyrean itself. Wherefore they must needs again be stricken with confusion of tongues (or of printing-presses), and *dispersed*,—to other work; wherein also let us hope, their hammers and trowels shall better avail them.—

Of Goethe, with a feeling such as can be due to no other man, we now take farewell: *vixit, vivit*.

CORN-LAW RHYMES.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1832.]

SMELFUNGUS REDIVIVUS, throwing down his critical assaying-balance, some years ago, and taking leave of the Belles-Lettres function, expressed himself in this abrupt way : ' The end having come, it is fit that we end. Poetry having ceased to be read, or published, or written, how can it continue to be reviewed ? With your Lake Schools, and Border-Thief Schools, and Cockney and Satanic Schools, there has been enough to do ; and now, all these Schools having burnt or smouldered themselves out, and left nothing but a wide-spread wreck of ashes, dust, and cinders, — or perhaps dying embers, kicked to and fro under the feet of innumerable women and children in the Magazines, and at best blown here and there into transient sputters, with vapor enough, so as to form what you might name a boundless Green-sick, or New-Sentimental, or Sleep-Awake School, — what remains but to adjust ourselves to circumstances ? Urge me not,' continues the able Editor, suddenly changing his figure, ' with considerations that Poetry, as the inward voice of Life, must be perennial, only dead in one form to become alive in another ; that this still abundant deluge of Metre, seeing there must needs be fractions of Poetry floating scattered in it, ought still to be net-fished, at all events,

* 1. Corn-Law Rhymes. Third Edition. 8vo. London, 1831.

2. Love ; a Poem. By the Author of Corn-Law Rhymes. Third Edition. 8vo. London, 1831.

3. The Village Patriarch ; a Poem. By the Author of Corn-Law Rhymes. 12mo. London, 1831.

surveyed and taken note of: the survey of English Metre, at this epoch, perhaps transcends the human faculties; to hire out the reading of it, by estimate, at a remunerative rate per page, would, in few Quarters, reduce the cash-box of any extant 'Review to the verge of insolvency.'

What our distinguished contemporary has said remains said. Far be it from us to censure or counsel any able Editor; to draw aside the Editorial veil, and, officiously prying into his interior mysteries, impugn the laws he walks by! For Editors, as for others, there are times of perplexity, wherein the cunning of the wisest will scantily suffice his own wants, say nothing of his neighbor's.

To us, on our side, meanwhile, it remains clear that Poetry, or were it but Metre, should nowise be altogether neglected. Surely it is the Reviewer's trade to sit watching, not only the tillage, crop-rotation, marketings, and good or evil husbandry of the Economic Earth, but also the weather-symptoms of the Literary Heaven, on which those former so much depend: if any promising or threatening meteoric phenomenon make its appearance, and he proclaim not tidings thereof, it is at his peril. Farther, be it considered how, in this singular poetic epoch, a small matter constitutes a novelty. If the whole welkin hang overcast in drizzly dinginess, the feeblest light-gleam, or speck of blue, cannot pass unheeded.

The Works of this Corn-Law Rhymer we might liken rather to some little fraction of a rainbow: hues of joy and harmony, painted out of troublous tears. No round full bow, indeed; gloriously spanning the heavens; shone on by the full sun; and, with seven-striped, gold-crimson border (as is in some sort the office of Poetry) dividing Black from Brilliant: not such; alas, still far from it! Yet, in very truth, a little prismatic blush, glowing genuine among the wet clouds; which proceeds, if you will, from a sun cloud-

hidden, yet indicates that a sun does shine, and above those vapors, a whole azure vault and celestial firmament stretch serene.

Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that here we have once more got sight of a Book calling itself Poetry, yet which actually is a kind of Book, and no empty paste-board Case, and simulacrum or 'ghost-defunct' of a Book, such as is too often palmed on the world, and handed over Booksellers' counters, with a demand of real money for it, as if it too were a reality. The speaker here is of that singular class, who have something to say; whereby, though delivering himself in verse, and in these days, he does not deliver himself wholly in jargon, but articulately, and with a certain degree of meaning, that has been *believed*, and therefore is again believable.

To some the wonder and interest will be heightened by another circumstance: that the speaker in question is not school-learned, or even furnished with pecuniary capital; is, indeed, a quite unmoneyed, russet-coated speaker; nothing or little other than a Sheffield worker in brass and iron, who describes himself as 'one of the lower, little removed above the lowest class.' Be of what class he may, the man is provided, as we can perceive, with a rational god-created soul; which too has fashioned itself into some clearness, some self-subsistence, and can actually see and know with its own organs; and in rugged substantial English, nay, with tones of poetic melody, utter forth what it has seen.

It used to be said that lions do not paint, that poor men do not write; but the case is altering now. Here is a voice coming from the deep Cyclopean forges, where Labor, in real soot and sweat, beats with his thousand hammers 'the red son of the furnace;' doing personal battle with Necessity, and her dark brute Powers, to make them reasonable and serviceable; an intelligible voice from the hitherto Mute and

Irrational, to tell us at first hand how it is with him, what in very deed is the theorem of the world and of himself, which he, in those dim depths of his, in that wearied head of his, has put together. To which voice, in several respects significant enough, let good ear be given.

Here too be it premised, that nowise under the category of 'Uneducated Poets,' or in any fashion of dilettante patronage, can our Sheffield friend be produced. His position is unsuitable for that : so is ours. Genius, which the French lady declared to be of no sex, is much more certainly of no rank ; neither when 'the spark of Nature's fire' has been imparted, should Education take high airs in her artificial light, — which is too often but phosphorescence and putrescence. In fact, it now begins to be suspected here and there, that this same aristocratic recognition, which looks down with an obliging smile from its throne, of bound Volumes and gold Ingots, and admits that it is wonderfully well for one of the uneducated classes, may be getting out of place. There are unhappy times in the world's history, when he that is the least educated will chiefly have to say that he is the least perverted ; and with the multitude of false eye-glasses, convex, concave, green, even yellow, has not lost the natural use of his eyes. For a generation that reads Cobbett's Prose, and Burns's Poetry, it need be no miracle that here also is a man who can handle both pen and hammer like a man.

Nevertheless, this serene-highness attitude and temper is so frequent perhaps it were good to turn the tables for a moment, and see what look it has under that reverse aspect. How were it if we surmised, that for a man gifted with natural vigor, with a man's character to be developed in him, more especially if in the way of Literature, as Thinker and Writer, it is actually, in these strange days no special misfortune to be trained up among the Uneducated classes,

and not among the Educated ; but rather of two misfortunes the smaller ?

For all men doubtless obstructions abound ; spiritual growth must be hampered and stunted, and has to struggle through with difficulty, if it do not wholly stop. We may grant too that, for a mediocre character, the continual training and tutoring, from language-masters, dancing-masters, posture-masters of all sorts, hired and volunteer, which a high rank in any time and country assures, there will be produced a certain superiority, or at worst, air of superiority, over the corresponding mediocre character of low rank : thus we perceive the vulgar Do-nothing, as contrasted with the vulgar Drudge, is in general a much prettier man ; with a wider perhaps clearer outlook into the distance ; in innumerable superficial matters, however it may be when we go deeper, he has a manifest advantage. But with the man of uncommon character, again, in whom a germ of irrepressible Force has been implanted, and *will* unfold itself into some sort of freedom, —altogether the reverse may hold. For such germs, too, there is, undoubtedly enough, a proper soil where they will grow best, and an improper one where they will grow worst. True also, where there is a will, there is a way ; where a genius has been given, a possibility, a certainty of its growing is also given. Yet often it seems as if the injudicious gardening and manuring were worse than none at all ; and killed what the inclemencies of blind chance would have spared. We find accordingly that few Frederics or Napoleons, indeed none since the Great Alexander, who unfortunately drank himself to death too soon for proving what lay in him, were nursed up with an eye to their vocation : mostly with an eye quite the other way, in the midst of isolation and pain, destitution and contradiction. Nay, in our own times, have we not seen two men of genius, a Byron and a Burns ; they both, by man-

date of Nature, struggle and must struggle towards clear Manhood, stormfully enough, for the space of six-and-thirty years ; yet only the gifted Ploughman can partially prevail therein : the gifted Peer must toil and strive, and shoot out in wild efforts, yet die at last in Boyhood, with the promise of his Manhood still but announcing itself in the distance. Truly, as was once written, 'it is only the artichoke that will not grow except in gardens ; the acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the wilderness, yet on the wild soil it nourishes itself, and rises to be an oak.' All woodmen, moreover, will tell you that fat manure is the ruin of your oak ; likewise that the thinner and wilder your soil, the tougher, more iron-textured is your timber, — though, unhappily, also, the smaller. So too with the spirits of men : they become pure from their errors, by suffering for them ; he who has battled, were it only with Poverty and hard toil, will be found stronger, more expert, than he who could stay at home from the battle, concealed among the Provision-wagons, or even not unwatchfully 'abiding by the stuff.' In which sense, an observer, not without experience of our time, has said : 'Had I a man of clearly developed character (clear, sincere within its limits), of insight, courage, and real applicable force of head and of heart, to search for ; and not a man of luxuriously distorted character, with haughtiness for courage, and for insight and applicable force, speculation and plausible show of force, — it were rather among the lower than among the higher classes that I should look for him.'

A hard saying, indeed, seems this same : that he, whose other wants were all beforehand supplied ; to whose capabilities no problem was presented except even this, How to cultivate them to best advantage, should attain less real culture than he whose first grand problem and obligation was nowise spiritual culture, but hard labor for his daily bread !

Sad enough must the perversion be where preparations of such magnitude issue in abortion ; and a so sumptuous Art with all its appliances can accomplish nothing, not so much as necessitous Nature would of herself have supplied ! Nevertheless, so pregnant is Life with evil as with good ; to such height in an age rich, plethorically overgrown with means, can means be accumulated in the wrong place, and immeasurably aggravate wrong tendencies, instead of righting them, this sad and strange result may actually turn out to have been realized.

But what, after all, is meant by *uneducated*, in a time when Books have come into the world ; come to be household furniture in every habitation of the civilized world ? In the poorest cottage are Books ; is one Book, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light, and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is Deepest in him ; wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the Mystery of Existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed ; if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result. ' In Books lie the creative Phoenix-ashes of the whole Past.' All that men have devised, discovered, done, felt, or imagined, lies recorded in Books ; wherein whoso has learned the mystery of spelling printed letters, may find it, and appropriate it.

Nay, what indeed is all this ? As if it were by universities and libraries and lecture-rooms, that man's Education, what we can call Education, were accomplished ; solely, or mainly, by instilling the dead letter and record of other men's Force, that the living Force of a new man were to be awakened, enkindled, and purified into victorious clearness ! Foolish Pedant, that sittest there compassionately descanting on the Learning of Shakspeare ! Shakspeare had pen-

etrated into innumerable things; far into Nature with her divine Splendors and infernal Terrors, her Ariel Melodies, and mystic mandragora Moans; far into man's workings with Nature, into man's Art and Artifice; Shakspeare knew (*kenned*, which in those days still partially meant *can-ned*) innumerable things; what men are, and what the world is, and how and what men aim at there, from the Dame Quickly of modern Eastcheap to the Cæsar of ancient Rome, over many countries, over many centuries: of all this he had the clearest understanding and constructive comprehension; all this was his Learning and Insight; what now is thine? Insight into none of those things; perhaps, strictly considered, into no thing whatever: solely into thy own sheepskin diplomas, fat academic honors, into vocables and alphabetic letters, and but a little way into these! — The grand result of schooling is a mind with just vision to discern, with free force to do: the grand schoolmaster is Practice.

And now, when *kenning* and *can-ning* have become two altogether different words; and this, the first principle of human culture, the foundation-stone of all but false imaginary culture, that men must, before every other thing, be trained to *do* somewhat, has been, for some generations, laid quietly on the shelf, with such result as we see, — consider what advantage those same uneducated Working classes have over the educated Unworking classes, in one particular; herein, namely, that they must *work*. To work! What incalculable sources of cultivation lie in that process, in that attempt; how it lays hold of the whole man, not of a small theoretical calculating fraction of him, but of the whole practical, doing and daring and enduring man; thereby to awaken dormant faculties, root out old errors, at every step! He that has done nothing has known nothing. Vain is it to sit scheming and plausibly discoursing: up and be doing! If thy knowledge be real, put it forth from thee:

grapple with real Nature ; try thy theories there, and see how they hold out. Do one thing, for the first time in thy life do a thing ; a new light will rise to thee on the doing of all things whatsoever. Truly, a boundless significance lies in work : whereby the humblest craftsman comes to attain much, which is of indispensable use, but which he who is of no craft, were he never so high, runs the risk of missing. Once turn to Practice, Error and Truth will no longer consort together : the result of Error involves you in the square-root of a negative quantity ; try to *extract* it, or any earthly substance or sustenance from it, if you will ! The honorable Member can discover that ' there is a reaction,' and believe it, and wearisomely reason on it, in spite of all men, while he so pleases, for still his wine and his oil will not fail him : but the sooty Brazier, who discovered that brass was green-cheese, has to act on his discovery ; finds therefore, that, singular as it may seem, brass cannot be masticated for dinner, green-cheese will not beat into fireproof dishes : that such discovery, therefore, has no legs to stand on, and must even be let fall. Now, take this principle of difference through the entire lives of two men, and calculate what it will amount to ! Necessity, moreover, which we here see as the mother of Accuracy, is well known as the mother of Invention. He who wants everything, must know many things, do many things, to procure even a few : different enough with him, whose indispensable knowledge is this only, that a finger will pull the bell !

So that, for all men who live, we may conclude, this Life of Man is a school, wherein the naturally foolish will continue foolish though you bray him in a mortar, but the naturally wise will gather wisdom under every disadvantage. What, meanwhile, must be the condition of an Era, when the highest advantages there become perverted into drawbacks ; when, if you take two men of genius, and put the

one between the handles of a plough, and mount the other between the painted coronets of a coach-and-four, and bid them both move along, the former shall arrive a Burns, the latter a Byron : two men of talent, and put the one into a Printer's chapel, full of lampblack, tyrannous usage, hard toil, and the other into Oxford universities, with lexicons and libraries, and hired expositors and sumptuous endowments, the former shall come out a Dr. Franklin, the latter a Dr. Parr ! —

However, we are not here to write an Essay on Education, or sing *misereres* over a 'world in its dotage ;' but simply to say that our Corn-Law Rhymer, educated or uneducated as Nature and Art have made him, asks not the smallest patronage or compassion for his rhymes, professes not the smallest contrition for them. Nowise in such attitude does he present himself ; not supplicatory, deprecatory, but sturdy, defiant, almost menacing. Wherefore, indeed, should he supplicate or deprecate ? It is out of the abundance of the heart that he has spoken ; praise or blame cannot make it truer or falsier than it already is. By the grace of God this man is sufficient for himself ; by his skill in metallurgy, can beat out a toilsome but a manful living, go how it may ; has arrived too at that singular audacity of believing what he knows, and acting on it, or writing on it, or thinking on it, without leave asked of any one : there shall he stand, and work, with head and with hand, for himself and the world ; blown about by no wind of doctrine ; frightened at no Reviewer's shadow ; having, in his time, looked substances enough in the face, and remained unfrightened.

What is left, therefore, but to take what he brings, and as he brings it ? Let us be thankful, were it only for the day of small things. Something it is that we have lived to welcome once more a sweet Singer wearing the likeness of

a Man. In humble guise, it is true, and of stature more or less marred in its development ; yet not without a genial robustness, strength and valor built on honesty and love ; on the whole, a genuine man, with somewhat of the eye and speech and bearing that beseems a man. To whom all other genuine men, how different soever in subordinate particulars, can gladly hold out the right hand of fellowship.

The great excellence of our Rhymer, be it understood then, we take to consist even in this, often hinted-at already, that he *is genuine*. Here is an earnest, truth-speaking man ; no theorizer, sentimentalizer, but a practical man of work and endeavor, man of sufferance and endurance. The thing that he speaks is not a hearsay, but a thing which he has himself known, and by experience become assured of. He has used his eyes for seeing ; uses his tongue for declaring what he has seen. His voice, therefore, among the many noises of our Planet, will deserve its place better than the most ; will be well worth some attention. Whom else should we attend to but such ? The man who speaks with some half shadow of a Belief, and supposes, and inclines to think ; and considers not with undivided soul, what is true, but only what is plausible, and will find audience and recompense ; do we not meet him at every street-turning, on all highways and byways ; is he not stale, unprofitable, ineffectual, wholly grown a weariness of the flesh ? So rare is his opposite in any rank of Literature, or of Life, so very rare, that even in the lowest he is precious. The authentic insight and experience of any human soul, were it but insight and experience in hewing of wood and drawing of water, is real knowledge, a real possession and acquirement, how small soever : *palabra*, again, were it a supreme pontiff's, is wind merely, and nothing, or less than nothing. To a considerable degree, this man, we say, has

worked himself loose from cant, and conjectural halfness, idle pretences and hallucinations, into a condition of Sincerity. Wherein, perhaps, as above argued, his hard social environment, and fortune to be 'a workman born,' which brought so many other retardations with it, may have forwarded and accelerated him.

That a man, Workman, or Idleman, encompassed, as in these days, with persons in a state of willing or unwilling Insincerity, and necessitated, as man is to learn whatever he does traditionally learn by *imitating* these, should nevertheless shake off Insincerity, and struggle out from that dim pestiferous marsh-atmosphere, into a clearer and purer height, — betokens in him a certain originality; in which rare gift Force of all kinds is presupposed. To our Rhymer, accordingly, as hinted more than once, vision and determination have not been denied: a rugged, homegrown understanding is in him; whereby, in his own way, he has mastered this and that, and looked into various things, in general honestly and to purpose, sometimes deeply, piercingly, and with a Seer's eye. Strong thoughts are not wanting, beautiful thoughts; strong and beautiful expressions of thought. As traceable for instance in this new illustration of an old argument, the mischief of Commercial Restrictions:

'These, O ye quacks, these are your remedies:

Alms for the Rich, a bread-tax for the Poor!

Soul-purchased harvests on the indigent moor!—

Thus the winged victor of a hundred fights,

The warrior Ship, bows low her banner'd head,

When through her planks the seaborn reptile bites

Its deadly way; — and sinks in ocean's bed,

Vanquish'd by worms. What then? The worms were fed.—

Will not God smite thee black, thou whited wall?

Thy law is lifeless, and thy law a lie,

Or Nature is a dream unnatural:

Look on the clouds, the streams, the earth, the sky ;
 Lo all is interchange and harmony !
 Where is the gorgeous pomp which, yester morn,
 Curtain'd yon Orb, with amber, fold on fold ?
 Behold it in the blue of Rivelin, borne
 To feed the all-feeding sea ! the molten gold
 Is flowing pale in Loxley's waters cold,
 To kindle into beauty tree and flower,
 And wake to verdant life hill, vale, and plain.
 Cloud trades with river, and exchange is power :
 But should the clouds, the streams, the winds disdain
 Harmonious intercourse, nor dew nor rain
 Would forest-crown the mountains : airless day
 Would blast on Kinderscout the heathy glow ;
 No purple green would meeken into grey
 O'er Don at eve ; no sound of river's flow
 Disturb the Sepulchre of all below.'

Nature and the doings of men have not passed by this man unheeded, like the endless cloud-rack in dull weather ; or lightly heeded, like a theatric phantasmagoria ; but earnestly inquired into, like a thing of reality ; reverently loved and worshipped, as a thing with divine significance in its reality, glimpses of which divineness he has caught and laid to heart. For his vision, as was said, partakes of the genuinely Poetical ; he is not a Rhymer and Speaker only, but, in some genuine sense, something of a Poet.

Farther we must admit him, what indeed is already herein admitted, to be, if clear-sighted, also brave-hearted. A troublous element is his ; a Life of painfulness, toil, insecurity, scarcity, yet he fronts it like a man ; yields not to it, tames into some subjection, some order ; its wild fearful dinning and tumult, as of a devouring Chaos, becomes a sort of wild war-music for him ; wherein too are passages of beauty, of melodious melting softness, of lightness and briskness, even of joy. The stout heart is also a warm and

kind one; Affection dwells with Danger, all the holier and the lovelier for such stern environment. A working man is this; yet, as we said, a man: in his sort, a courageous, much loving, faithfully enduring and endeavoring man.

What such a one, so gifted and so placed, shall say to a Time like ours; how he will fashion himself into peace, or war, or armed neutrality, with the world and his fellow men, and work out his course in joy and grief, in victory and defeat, is a question worth asking: which in these three little Volumes partly receives answer. He has turned, as all thinkers up to a very high and rare order in these days must do, into Politics; is a Reformer, at least a stern Complainer, Radical to the heart: his poetic melody takes an elegiaco-tragical character; much of him is converted into Hostility, and grim, hardly-suppressed Indignation, such as Right long denied, Hope long deferred, may awaken in the kindest heart. Not yet as a rebel against anything does he stand; but as a free man, and the spokesman of free men, not far from rebelling against much; with sorrowful appealing dew, yet also with incipient lightning, in his eyes; whom it were not desirable to provoke into rebellion. He says in Vulcanic dialect, his feelings have been *hammered* till they are *cold-short*; so they will no longer bend; 'they snap, and fly off,'—in the face of the hammerer. Not unnatural, though lamentable! Nevertheless, under all disguises of the Radical, the Poet is still recognisable: a certain music breathes through all dissonances, as the prophecy and ground-tone of returning harmony; the man, as we said, is of a poetical nature.

To his Political Philosophy there is perhaps no great importance attachable. He feels, as all men that live must do, the disorganization, and hard-grinding, unequal pressure of the Social Affairs; but sees into it only a very little farther

than far inferior men do. The frightful condition of a Time, when public and private Principle, as the word was once understood, having gone out of sight, and Self-interest being left to plot, and struggle, and scramble, as it could and would, Difficulties had accumulated till they were no longer to be borne, and the spirit that should have fronted and conquered them seemed to have forsaken the world ; — when the Rich, as the utmost they could resolve on, had ceased to govern, and the Poor, in their fast-accumulating numbers, and ever-widening complexities, had ceased to be able to do without governing ; and now the plan of ‘ Competition ’ and ‘ *Laissez-faire* ’ was, on every side, approaching its consummation ; and each bound up in the circle of his own wants and perils, stood grimly distrustful of his neighbor, and the distracted Common-weal was a Common-woe, and to all men it became apparent that the end was drawing nigh : — all this black aspect of Ruin and Decay, visible enough, experimentally known to our Sheffield friend, he calls by the name of ‘ Corn-Law,’ and expects to be in good part delivered from, were the accursed Bread-tax repealed.

In this system of political Doctrine, even as here so emphatically set forth, there is not much of novelty. Radicals we have many ; loud enough on this and other grievances ; the removal of which is to be the one thing needful. The deep, wide flood of Bitterness, and Hope becoming hopeless, lies acrid, corrosive in every bosom ; and flows fiercely enough through any orifice Accident may open : through Law Reform, Legislative Reform, Poor Laws, want of Poor Laws, Tithes, Game Laws, or, as we see here, Corn Laws. Whereby indeed only this becomes clear, that a deep, wide flood of evil does exist and corrode ; from which, in all ways, blindly and seeingly, men seek deliverance, and cannot rest till they find it ; least of all till they know what part and proportion of it is to be found. But with us foolish sons of

Adam this is ever the way ; some evil that lies nearest us, be it a chronic sickness, or but a smoky chimney, is ever the acme and sum-total of all evil : the black hydra that shuts us out from a Promised Land : and so, in poor Mr. Shandy's fashion, must we ' shift from trouble to trouble, and from side to side ; button up one cause of vexation, and unbutton another.'

Thus for our keen-hearted singer, and sufferer, has ' the Bread-tax,' in itself a considerable but no immeasurable smoke-pillar, swoln out to be a world-embracing Darkness, that darkens and suffocates the whole Earth, and has blotted out the heavenly stars. Into the merit of the Corn Laws, which has often been discussed, in fit season, by competent hands, we do not enter here ; least of all in the way of argument, in the way of blame, towards one who, if he read such merit with some emphasis ' on the scantier trenchers of his children,' may well be pardoned. That the ' Bread-tax,' with various other taxes, may ere long be altered and abrogated, and the Corn Trade become as free as the poorest ' bread-taxed drudge ' could wish ' it, or the richest satrap bread-tax-fed ' could fear it, seems no extravagant hypothesis : would that the mad Time could, by such simple hellebore-dose, be healed ! Alas, for the diseases of a ' world lying in wickedness,' in heart-sickness and atrophy, quite another alcahest is needed ;—a long, painful course of medicine and regimen, surgery and physic, not yet specified or indicated in the Royal-College Books !

But if there is little novelty in our friend's Political Philosophy, there is some in his political Feeling and Poetry. The peculiarity of this Radical, is, that with all his stormful destructiveness, he combines a decided loyalty and faith. If he despise and trample under foot on the one hand, he exalts and reverences on the other : the ' landed pauper in his coach-and-four ' rolls all the more glaringly, contrasted

with the 'Róckingham and Savilles' of the past, with the 'Lansdowns and Fitzwilliams,' many a 'Wentworth's lord,' still 'a blessing' to the present. This man, indeed, has in him the root of all reverence,—a principle of Religion. He believes in a Godhead, not with the lips only, but apparently with the heart; who, as has been written, and often felt, 'reveals Himself in Parents, in all true Teachers, and Rulers,'—as in false Teachers and Rulers quite Another may be revealed! Our Rhymer, it would seem, is no Methodist: far enough from it. He makes 'the Ranter,' in his hot-headed way, exclaim over

'The Hundred Popes of England's Jesuitry;'

and adds, by way of note, in his own person, some still stronger sayings: How 'this baneful corporation,' 'dismal as its Reign of Terror is, and long-armed its Holy Inquisition, must condescend to learn and teach what is useful, or go where all nuisances go.' As little perhaps is he a Churchman; the 'Cadi-Dervish' being nowise to his mind. Scarcely, however, if at all, does he show aversion to the Church as Church; or, among his many griefs, touch upon Tithes as one. But, in any case, the black colors of-Life, even as here painted, and brooded over, do not hide from him that a God is the Author and Sustainer thereof; that God's world, if made a House of Imprisonment, can also be a House of Prayer; wherein for the weary and heavy-laden, Pity and Hope are not altogether cut away.

It is chiefly in virtue of this inward temper of heart, with the clear disposition and adjustment which for all else results therefrom, that our Radical attains to be Poetical; that the harsh groanings, contentions, upbraidings, of one who unhappily has felt constrained to adopt such mode of utterance, become ennobled into something of music. If a land of bondage, this is still his Father's land, and the bondage

endures not for ever. As worshipper and believer, the captive can look with seeing eye : the aspect of the Infinite Universe still fills him with an Infinite feeling ; his chains, were it but for moments, fall away ; he soars free aloft, and the sunny regions of Poesy and Freedom gleam golden afar on the widened horizon. Gleanings we say, prophetic dawnings from those far regions, spring up for him ; nay, beams of actual radiance. In his ruggedness, and dim contractedness (rather of place than of organ), he is not without touches of a feeling and vision, which, even in the stricter sense, is to be named poetical.

One deeply poetical idea, above all others, seems to have taken hold of him : the idea of TIME. As was natural to a poetic soul, with few objects of Art in its environment, and driven inward, rather than invited outward, for occupation. This deep mystery of ever-flowing Time ; ' bringing forth,' and as the Ancients wisely fabled, ' devouring ' what it has brought forth ; rushing on, *iz* us, yet above us, all uncontrollable by us ; and under it, dimly visible athwart it, the bottomless Eternal ; — this is, indeed, what we may call the primary idea of Poetry ; the first that introduces itself into the poetic mind. As here :

'The bee shall seek to settle on his hand,
 But from the vacant bench haste to the moor,
 Mourning the last of England's high-soul'd Poor,
 And bid the mountains weep for Enoch Wray.
 And for themselves, — albeit of things that last
 Unalter'd most ; for they shall pass away
 Like Enoch, though their iron roots seem fast,
 Bound to the eternal future as the past :
 The Patriarch died ; and they shall be no more !
 Yes, and the sailless worlds, which navigate
 The unutterable Deep that hath no shore,
 Will lose their starry splendor soon or late,
 Like tapers, quench'd by Him, whose will is fate !

Yes, and the Angel of Eternity,
 Who numbers worlds and writes their names in light,
 One day, O Earth, will look in vain for thee,
 And start and stop in his unerring flight,
 And with his wings of sorrow and affright,
 Veil his impassion'd brow and heavenly tears !'

And not the first idea only, but the greatest, properly the parent of all others. For if it can rise in the remotest ages, in the rudest states of culture, wherever an 'inspired thinker' happens to exist, it connects itself still with all great things; with the highest results of new Philosophy, as of primeval Theology; and for the Poet, in particular, is as the life-element wherein alone his conceptions can take poetic form, and the whole world become miraculous and magical.

' We are such stuff
 As Dreams are made of: and our little life
 Is rounded with a Sleep !'

Figure that, believe that, O Reader; then say whether the *Arabian Tales* seem wonderful! — 'Rounded with a sleep (*mit Schlaf umgeben*)!' says Jean Paul; 'these three words created whole volumes in me.'

To turn now on our worthy Rhymer, who has brought us so much, and stingily insist on his errors and shortcomings, were no honest procedure. We had the whole poetical encyclopædia to draw upon, and say commodiously, Such and such an item is *not* here; of which encyclopædia the highest genius can fill but a portion. With much merit, far from common in his time, he is not without something of the faults of his time. We praised him for originality; yet is there a certain remainder of imitation in him; a tang of the Circulating Libraries, as in Sancho's wine, with its key and thong, there was a tang of iron and leather. To be reminded of Crabbe, with his truthful severity of style, in such a place,

we cannot object ; but what if there were a slight bravura dash of the fair tuneful Hemans ? Still more, what have we to do with Byron, and his fierce vociferous mouthings, whether 'passionate,' or not passionate and only theatrical ? King Cambyses' vein is, after all, but a worthless one ; no vein for a wise man. Strength, if that be the thing aimed at, does not manifest itself in spasms, but in stout bearing of burdens. Our Author says, 'It is too bad to exalt into a hero the coxcomb who would have gone into hysterics if a tailor had laughed at him.' Walk not in his footsteps, then, we say, whether as hero or as singer ; repent a little, for example, over somewhat in that fuliginous, blue-flaming, pitch-and-sulphur 'Dream of Enoch Wray,' and write the next otherwise.

We mean no imitation in a bad palpable sense ; only that there is a tone of such occasionally audible ; which ought to be removed ; — of which, in any case, we make not much. Imitation is a leaning on something foreign ; incompleteness of individual development, defect of free utterance. From the same source, spring most of our Author's faults ; in particular, his worst, which after all is intrinsically a defect of manner. He has little or no Humor. Without Humor of character he cannot well be ; but it has not yet got to utterance. Thus, where he has mean things to deal with, he knows not how to deal with them ; oftenest deals with them more or less meanly. In his vituperative prose Notes, he seems embarrassed ; and but ill hides his embarrassment, under an air of predetermined sarcasm, of knowing briskness, almost of vulgar pertness. He says, he cannot help it ; he is poor, hard-worked, and 'soot is soot.' True, indeed ; yet there is no connexion between Poverty and Discourtesy ; which latter originates in Dulness alone. Courtesy is the due of Man to Man ; not of suit of clothes to suit of clothes. He who could master so many

things, and make even Corn-Laws rhyme, we require of him this farther thing, — a bearing worthy of himself, and of the order he belongs to, — the highest and most ancient of all orders, that of Manhood. A pert snappishness is no manner for a brave man; and then the manner so soon influences the matter; a far worse result. Let him speak wise things, and speak them wisely; which latter may be done in many dialects, grave and gay, only in the snappish seldom or never.

The truth is, as might have been expected, there is still much lying in him to be developed; the hope of which development it were rather sad to abandon. Why, for example, should not his view of the world, his knowledge of what is and has been in the world, indefinitely extend itself? Were he merely the 'uneducated Poet,' we should say, he had read largely; as he is not such, we say, Read still more, much more largely. Books enough there are in England, and of quite another weight and worth than that circulating-library sort; may be procured too, may be read, even by a hard-worked man; for what man (either in God's service or the Devil's, as himself chooses it) is not hard-worked? But here again, where there is a will there is a way. True, our friend is no longer in his teens; yet still, as would seem, in the vigor of his years: we hope too that his mind is not finally shut in, but of the improvable and enlargeable sort. If Alfieri (also kept busy enough, with horse-breaking and what not) learned Greek after he was fifty, why is the Corn-Law Rhymer too old to learn?

However, be in the future what there may, our Rhymer has already done what was much more difficult, and better than reading printed books; — looked into the great prophetic-manuscript Book of Existence, and read little passages there. Here, for example, is a sentence tolerably spelled:

'Where toils the Mill by ancient woods embraced,
 Hark, how the cold steel screams in hissing fire!
 Blind Enoch sees the Grinder's wheel no more,
 Couch'd beneath rocks and forests, that admire
 Their beauty in the waters, ere they roar
 Dash'd in white foam the swift circumference o'er.
 There draws the Grinder his laborious breath;
 There coughing at his deadly trade he bends:
 Born to die young, he fears nor man nor death;
 Scorning the future, what he earns he spends;
 Debauch and riot are his bosom friends.'
 'Behold his failings! Hath he virtues too?
 He is no Pauper, blackguard though he be:
 Full well he knows what minds combined can do,
 Full well maintains his birthright: he is free,
 And, frown for frown, outstares monopoly.
 Yet Abraham and Elliot both in vain
 Bid science on his cheek prolong the bloom:
 He *will* not live! He seems in haste to gain
 The undisturb'd asylum of the tomb,
 And, old at two-and-thirty, meets his doom!'

Or this, 'of Jem, the rogue avowed,

'Whose trade is Poaching! Honest Jem works not,
 Begs not, but thrives by plundering beggars here.
 Wise as a lord, and quite as good a shot,
 He, like his betters, lives in hate and fear,
 And feeds on partridge because bread is dear.
 Sire of six sons apprenticed to the jail;
 He prowls in arms, the Tory of the night;
 With them he shares his battles and his ale,
 With him they feel the majesty of might,
 No Despot better knows that Power is Right.
 Mark his unpauidish sneer, his lordly frown;
 Hark how he calls the beadle and stunky liars;
 See how magnificently he breaks down
 His neighbor's fence, if so his will requires,
 And how his struttle emulates the squire's!'

‘Jem rises with the Moon; but when she sinks;
 Homeward with sack-like pockets, and quick heels,
 Hungry as boroughmongering gowl, he slinks.
*He reads not, writes not, thinks not; scarcely feels;
 Steals all he gets; serves Hell with all he steals!*’

It is rustic, rude existence; barren moors, with the smoke of Forges rising over the waste expanse. Alas, no Arcadia; but the actual dwelling-place of actual toil-grimed sons of Tubalcain: yet are there blossoms and the wild natural fragrance of gorse and broom; yet has the Craftsman pauses in his toil; the Craftsman too has an inheritance in Earth; and even in Heaven.

‘Light! All is not corrupt, for thou art pure,
 Unchanged and changeless. Though frail man is vile,
 Thou look’st on him; serene, sublime, secure,
 Yet, like thy Father, with a pitying smile.
 Even on this wintry day, as marble cold,
 Angels might quit their home to visit thee,
 And match their plumage with thy mantle roll’d
 Beneath God’s Throne, o’er billows of a sea
 Whose isles are Worlds, whose bounds Infinity.
 Why then is Enoch absent from my side?
 I miss the rustle of his silver hair;
 A guide no more, I seem to want a guide,
 While Enoch journeys to the house of prayer;
 Ah, ne’er came Sabbath-day but he was there!
 Lo, how, like him, erect and strong, tho’ grey,
 Yon village tower time-touch’d to God appeals!
 And hark! the chimes of morning die away:
 Hark! to the heart the solemn sweetness steals,
 Like the heart’s voice, unfelt by none who feels
 That God is Love, that Man is living Dust;
 Unfelt by none whom ties of brotherhood
 Link to his kind; by none who puts his trust
 In nought of Earth that hath survived the flood,
 Save those mute charities, by which the good
 Strengthen poor worms, and serve their Maker best.

'Hail Sabbath! Day of mercy, peace, and rest!
 Thou o'er loud cities throw'st a noiseless spell,
 The hammer there, the wheel, the saw molest
 Pale Thought no more: o'er Trade's contentious hell
 Meek Quiet spreads her wings invisible.
 And when thou com'st, less silent are the fields,
 Thro' whose sweet paths the toil-freed townsman steals.
 To him the very air a banquet yields.
 Envious he watches the poised hawk that wheels
 His flight on chainless winds. Each cloud reveals
 A paradise of beauty to his eye.
 His little Boys are with him, seeking flowers,
 Or chasing the too-venturous gilded fly.
 So by the daisy's side he spends the hours,
 Renewing friendship with the budding bowers:
 And while might, beauty, good without alloy,
 Are mirror'd in his children's happy eyes,—
 In His great Temple offering thankful joy
 To Him, the infinitely Great and Wise,
 With soul attuned to Nature's harmonies,
 Serene and cheerful as a sporting child,—
 His heart refuses to believe that man
 Could turn into a hell the blooming wild,
 The blissful country where his childhood ran
 A race with infant rivers, ere began —'

— 'King-humbling' bread-tax, 'blind Misrule,' and enough else.

And so our Corn-Law Rhymer plays his part. In this wise, does he indite and act his Drama of Life, which for him is all too Domestic-Tragical. It is said, 'the good actor soon makes us forget the bad theatre, were it but a barn; while, again, nothing renders so apparent the badness of the bad actor as a theatre of peculiar excellence.' How much more in a theatre and drama such as these of Life itself? One other item, however, we must note in that ill-decorated Sheffield theatre: the back-scene and bottom-decoration of

it all ; which is no other than a Workhouse. Alas, the Workhouse is the bourne whither all these actors and workers are bound ; whence none that has once passed it returns ! A bodeful sound, like the rustle of approaching world-devouring tornadoes, quivers through their whole existence ; and the voice of it is, Pauperism ! The thanksgiving they offer up to Heaven is, that they are not yet Paupers ; the earnest cry of their prayer is, that ‘ God would shield them from the bitterness of Parish Pay.’

Mournful enough, that a white European Man must pray wistfully for what the horse he drives is sure of, — That the strain of his whole faculties may not fail to earn him food and lodging. Mournful that a gallant manly spirit, with an eye to discern the world, a heart to reverence it, a hand cunning and willing to labor in it, must be haunted with such a fear. The grim end of it all, Beggary ! A soul loathing, what true souls ever loathe, Dependence, help from the unworthy to help ; yet sucked into the world-whirlpool, — able to do no other : the highest in man’s heart struggling vainly against the lowest in man’s destiny ! In good truth, if many a sickly and sulky Byron, or Byronlet, glooming over the woes of existence, and how unworthy God’s Universe is to have so distinguished a resident, could transport himself into the patched coat and sooty apron of a Sheffield Blacksmith, made with as strange faculties and feelings as he, made by God Almighty all one as he was, — it would throw a light on much for him.

Meanwhile, is it not frightful as well as mournful to consider how the wide-spread evil is spreading wider and wider ? Most persons, who have had eyes to look with, may have verified, in their own circle, the statement of this Sheffield Eye-witness, and ‘ from their own knowledge and observation fearlessly declare that the little master-manufacturer,’ that the working man generally, ‘ is in a much worse con-

dition than he was in 'twenty-five years ago.' Unhappily, the fact is too plain; the reason and scientific necessity of it is too plain. In this state of things, every new man is a new misfortune; every new market a new complexity; the chapter of chances grows ever more incalculable; the hungry gamesters (whose stake is their life) are ever increasing in numbers; the world-movement rolls on: by what method shall the weak and help-needing, who has none to help him, withstand it? Alas, how many brave hearts, ground to pieces in that unequal battle, have already sunk; in every sinking heart, a Tragedy, less famous than that of the Sons of Atreus; wherein, however, if no 'kingly house,' yet a manly house went to the dust, and a whole manly 'lineage was swept away.' Must it grow worse and worse till the last brave heart is broken in England; and this same 'brave Peasantry' has become a kennel of wild-howling ravenous Paupers? God be thanked! There is some feeble shadow of hopes that the change may have begun while it was yet time. You may lift the pressure from the free man's shoulders, and bid him go forth rejoicing; but lift the slave's burden, he will only wallow the more composedly in his sloth: a nation of degraded men cannot be raised up, except by what we rightly name a miracle.

Under which point of view also, these little Volumes, indicating such a character in such a place, are not without significance. One faint symptom perhaps that clearness will return, that there is a possibility of its return. It is as if from that Gehenna of Manufacturing Radicalism, from amid its loud roaring and cursing, whereby nothing became feasible, nothing knowable, except this only, that misery and malady existed there, we heard now some manful tone of reason and determination, wherein alone can there be profit, or promise of deliverance. In this Corn-Law Rhymer we seem to trace something of the antique spirit; a spirit which

had long become invisible among our working as among other classes ; which here, perhaps almost for the first time, reveals itself in an altogether modern political vesture. 'The Pariahs of the Isle of Woe,' as he passionately names them, are no longer Pariahs if they have become Men. Here is one man of their tribe ; in several respects a true man ; who has abjured Hypocrisy and Servility, yet not therewith trodden Religion and Loyalty under foot ; not without justness of insight, devoutness, peaceable heroism of resolve ; who, in all circumstances, even in these strange ones, will be found quitting himself like a man. One such that has found a voice : who knows how many mute but not inactive brethren he may have in his own and in all other ranks ? Seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal ! These are the men, wheresoever found, who are to stand forth in England's evil day, on whom the hope of England rests. For it has been often said, and must often be said again, that all Reform except a moral one will prove unavailing. Political Reform, pressingly enough wanted, can indeed root out the weeds (gross deep-fixed lazy dock-weeds, poisonous obscene hemlocks, ineffectual spurry in abundance) ; but it leaves the ground *empty*, — ready either for noble fruits, or for new worse tares ! And how else is a Moral Reform to be looked for but in this way, that more and more Good Men are, by a bountiful Providence, sent hither to disseminate Goodness ; literally to *sow* it, as in seeds shaken abroad by the living tree ? For such, in all ages and places, is the nature of a Good Man ; he is ever a mystic creative centre of Goodness ; his influence, if we consider it, is not to be measured ; for his works do not die, but being of Eternity, are eternal ; and in new transformation, and ever-wider diffusion, endure, living and life-giving. Thou who exclaimest over the horrors and baseness of the Time, and how Diogenes would now need *two* lanterns in

daylight, think of this ; over the Time thou hast no power : to redeem a World sunk in dishonesty has not been given thee ; solely over one man therein thou hast a quite absolute uncontrollable power ; him redeem, him make honest ; it will be something, it will be much, and thy life and labor not in vain.

We have given no epitomized abstract of these little Books, such as is the Reviewer's wont : we would gladly persuade many a reader, high and low, who takes interest not in rhyme only, but in reason, and the condition of his fellow-man to purchase and peruse them for himself. It is proof of an innate love of worth, and how willingly the Public, did not thousand-voiced Puffery so confuse it, would have to do with substances, and not with deceptive shadows, that these Volumes carry 'Third Edition' marked on them, — on all of them but the newest whose fate with the reading world we yet know not ; which, however, seems to deserve not worse but better than either of its fore-runners.

Nay, it appears to us as if in this humble chant of the *Village Patriarch* might be traced rudiments of a truly great idea ; great though all undeveloped. The Rhapsody of 'Enoch Wray' is, in its nature, and unconscious tendency, Epic ; a whole world lies shadowed in it. What we might call an inarticulate, half-audible Epic ! The main figure is a blind aged man ; himself a ruin, and encircled with the ruin of a whole Era. Sad and great does that image of a universal Dissolution hover visible as a poetic background. Good old Enoch ! He could do so much, was so wise, so valiant. No Ilion had he destroyed ; yet somewhat he had built up : where the Mill stands noisy by its cataract, making corn into bread for men, it was Enoch that reared it, and made the rude rocks send it water ;

where the mountain Torrent now boils in vain, and is mere passing music to the traveller, it was Enoch's cunning that spanned it with that strong Arch, grim, time-defying. Where Enoch's hand or mind has been, Disorder has become Order; Chaos has receded some little handbreadth; must give up some new handbreadth of his realm. Enoch too has seen his followers fall round him (by stress of hardship, and the arrows of the gods), has performed funeral games for them, and raised sandstone memorials, and carved his *Abiit ad Plures* thereon, with his own hand. The living chronicle and epitome of a whole century; when he departs, a whole century will become dead, historical.

Rudiments of an Epic, we say; and of the true Epic of our Time, — were the genius but arrived that could sing it! Not 'Arms and the Man;' 'Tools and the Man,' that were now our Epic. What indeed are Tools, from the Hammer and Plummet of Enoch Wray to this Pen we now write with, but Arms, wherewith to do battle against UNREASON without or within, and smite in pieces not miserable fellow men, but the Arch Enemy that makes us all miserable; henceforth the only legitimate battle!

Which Epic, as we granted, is here altogether imperfectly sung; scarcely a few notes thereof brought freely out: nevertheless with indication, with prediction that it will be sung. Such is the purport and merit of the *Village Patriarch*; it struggles towards a noble utterance, which however it can nowise find. Old Enoch is from the first speechless, heard of rather than heard or seen; at best, mute, motionless like a stone-pillar of his own carving. Indeed, to find fit utterance for such meaning as lies struggling here is a problem, to which the highest poetic minds may long be content to accomplish only approximate solutions. Meanwhile, our honest Rhymer, with no guide but the instinct of a clear natural talent, has created and adjusted somewhat,

not without vitality of union: has avoided somewhat, the road to which lay open enough. His *Village Patriarch*, for example, though of an elegiac strain, is not wholly lachrymose, not without touches of rugged gayety;—is like Life itself, with tears and toil, with laughter and rude play, such as metallurgic Yorkshire sees it:—in which sense, that wondrous Courtship of the sharp-tempered, oft-widowed Alice Green may pass, questionable, yet with a certain air of soot-stained genuineness. And so has, not a Picture, indeed, yet a sort of genial Study or Cartoon come together for him: and may endure there, after some flary oil-daubings, which we have seen framed with gilding, and hung up in proud galleries, have become rags and rubbish.

To one class of readers especially, such Books as these ought to be interesting;—to the highest, that is to say, the richest class. Among our Aristocracy, there are men, we trust there are many men, who feel that they also are workmen, born to toil, ever in their great Taskmaster's eye, faithfully with heart and head for those that with heart and hand do, under the same great Taskmaster, toil for them;—who have even this noblest and hardest work set before them—To deliver out of that Egyptian bondage to Wretchedness, and Ignorance, and Sin, the hardhanded millions, of whom this hardhanded, earnest witness, and writer, is here representative. To such men his writing will be as a Document, which they will lovingly interpret: what is dark and exasperated and acrid, in their humble Brother, they for themselves will enlighten and sweeten; taking thankfully what is the real purport of his message, and laying it earnestly to heart. Might an instructive relation and interchange between High and Low, at length ground itself, and more and more perfect itself, to the unspeakable profit of all parties; for if all parties are to love and help one another, the first step towards this is, that all thoroughly understand

one another. To such rich men an authentic message from the hearts of poor men, from the heart of one poor man, will be welcome.

To another class of our Aristocracy, again, who unhappily feel rather that they are *not* workmen; and profess not so much to bear any burden, as to be themselves, with utmost attainable *steadiness*, and if possible, *gracefulness*, borne, — such a phenomenon as this of the Sheffield Corn-Law Rhymer, with a Manchester Detrosier, and much else, pointing the same way, will be quite unwelcome; indeed, to the clearer-sighted, astonishing and alarming. It indicates that they find themselves, as Napoleon was wont to say, ‘in a new position;’ — a position wonderful enough; of extreme singularity; to which, in the whole course of History, there is perhaps but one case in some measure parallel. The case alluded to stands recorded in the *Book of Numbers*: the case of Balaam the son of Beor. Truly, if we consider it, there are few passages more notable and pregnant in their way, than this of Balaam. The Midianitish Soothsayer (Truth-speaker, or as we should now say, Counsel-giver and Senator) is journeying forth, as he has from of old quite prosperously done, in the way of his vocation; not so much to ‘curse the people of the Lord,’ as to earn for himself a comfortable penny by such means as are possible and expedient; something, it is hoped, midway between cursing and blessing; which shall not, except in case of necessity, be either a curse or a blessing, or anything so much as a Nothing that will look like a Something and bring wages in. For the man is not dishonest; far from it: still less is he honest; but above all things, he is, has been, and will be, respectable. Did calumny ever dare to fasten itself on the fair fame of Balaam? In his whole walk and conversation, has he not shown consistency enough; ever doing and speaking the thing that was decent; with

proper spirit, maintaining his status : so that friend and opponent must often compliment him, and defy the spiteful world to say, Herein art thou a Knave ? And now as he jogs along, in official comfort, with brave official retinue, his heart filled with good things, his head with schemes for the suppression of Vice, and the Cause of civil and religious Liberty all over the world ; — consider what a spasm, and life-clutching, ice-taloned pang, must have shot through the brain and pericardium of Balaam, when his Ass not only on the sudden stood stock-still, defying spur and cudgel, but — *began to talk*, and that in a reasonable manner ! Did not his face, elongating, collapse, and tremor occupy his joints ? For the thin crust of Respectability has cracked asunder ; and a bottomless preternatural Inane yawns under him instead. Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness ! the spirit-stirring Vote, ear-piercing Hear ; the big Speech that makes ambition virtue ; soft Palm-greasing first of raptures, and Cheers that emulate sphere-music : Balaam's occupation's gone ! —

As for our stout Corn-Law Rhymer, what can we say by way of valediction but this, — Well done ; come again, doing better ? Advices enough there were ; but all lie included under one, — To keep his eyes open, and do honestly whatsoever his hand shall find to do. We have praised him for sincerity ; let him become more and more sincere ; casting out all remnants of Hearsay, Imitation, ephemeral Speculation ; resolutely '*clearing* his mind of Cant.' We advised a wider course of reading : would he forgive us if we now suggested the question, Whether Rhyme is the only dialect he can write in ; whether Rhyme is, after all, the natural or fittest dialect for him ? In good Prose, which differs inconceivably from bad Prose, what may not be written, what may not be read ; from a Waverley Novel, to an Arabic Koran, to an English Bible ! Rhyme

has plain advantages ; which, however, are often purchased too dear. If the inward thought *can* speak itself and not sing itself, let it, especially in these quite unmusical days, do the former. In any case, if the inward Thought do not sing itself, that singing of the outward Phrase is a timber-toned, false matter we could well dispense with. Will our Rhymer consider himself, then ; and decide for what is actually best. Rhyme, up to this hour, never seems altogether obedient to him ; and disobedient Rhyme, — who would ride on it that had once learned walking ?

He takes amiss that some friends have admonished him to quit Politics : we will not repeat that admonition. Let him, on this as on all other matters, take solemn counsel with his own Socrates'-Demon ; such as dwells in every mortal ; such as he is a happy mortal who can hear the voice of, follow the behests of, like an unalterable law. At the same time, we could truly wish to see such a mind as his engaged rather in considering what, in his own sphere, could be *done*, than what, in his own or other spheres, ought to be *destroyed* ; rather in producing or preserving the True, than in mangling and slashing asunder the False. Let him be at ease : the False is already dead, or lives only with a mock life. The death-sentence of the False was of old, from the first beginning of it, written in Heaven ; and is now proclaimed in the Earth, and read aloud at all market-crosses ; nor are innumerable volunteer tipstaves and headsmen wanting to execute the same : for which needful service men inferior to him may suffice. Why should the heart of the Corn-Law Rhymer be troubled ? Spite of ' Bread-tax,' he and his brave children, who will emulate their sire, have yet bread : the Workhouse, as we rejoice to fancy, has receded into the safe distance ; and is now quite shut out from his poetic pleasure-ground. Why should he afflict himself with devices of ' Boroughmongering gowls,' or the rage of the

Heathen imagining a vain thing? This matter, which he calls Corn-Law, will not have completed itself, adjusted itself into clearness, for the space of a century or two: nay after twenty centuries, what will there, or can there be for the son of Adam but Work, Work, two hands quite *full* of Work! Meanwhile, is not the Corn-Law Rhymer already a king, though a belligerent one; king of his own mind and faculty; and what man in the long run is king of more? Not one in the thousand, even among sceptred kings, of so much. Be diligent in business, then; fervent in spirit. Above all things, lay aside anger, uncharitableness, hatred, noisy tumult; avoid them, as worse than Pestilence, worse than 'Bread-tax' itself:

For it well beseemeth kings, all mortals it beseemeth well,
To possess their souls in patience, and await what can betide.

DIDEROT.*

[Edinburgh Review, 1832.]

M. R. G.

THE *Acts* of the *Christian Apostles*, on which, as we may say, the world has, now for eighteen centuries, had its foundation, are written in so small a compass, that they can be read in one little hour. The *Acts* of the *French Philosophes*, the importance of which is already fast exhausting itself, lie recorded in whole acres of typography, and would furnish reading for a lifetime. Nor is the stock, as we see, yet anywise complete, or within computable distance of completion. Here are Four quite new Octavos, recording the labors, voyages, victories, amours, and indigestions of the Apostle Denis: it is but a year or two since a new contribution on Voltaire came before us; since Jean Jacques had a new *Life* written for him; and then of those *Feuilles de Grimm*, what incalculable masses may yet lie dormant in the Petersburg Library, waiting only to be awakened and let slip! — Reading for a lifetime? Thomas Parr might begin reading in long-clothes, and stop in his last hundred and fiftieth year without having ended. And then, as to when the process of addition will cease, and the *Acts* and *Epistles* of the Parisian Church of Antichrist will have completed themselves; except in so far as the quantity of paper writ-

* 1. *Mémoires, Correspondance, et Ouvrages inédits de Diderot; publiés d'après les manuscrits confiés, en mourant, par l'auteur à Grimm.* 4 tom. 8vo. Paris, 1831.

2. *Ceuvres de Denis Diderot; précédées de Mémoires historiques et philosophiques sur sa Vie et ses Ouvrages, par J. A. Naigeon,* 22 tom. 8vo. Paris, 1821.

ten on, or even manufactured, in those days, being finite and not infinite, the business one day or other must cease, and the Antichristian Canon close for the last time,— we yet know nothing.

Meanwhile, let us nowise be understood as lamenting this stupendous copiousness, but rather as viewing it historically with patience, and indeed with satisfaction. Memoirs, so long as they are true, how stupid soever, can hardly be accumulated in excess. The stupider they are, let them simply be the sooner cast into the oven; if true they will always instruct more or less, were it only in the way of confirmation and répetition; and, what is of vast moment, they do not *mis*-instruct. Day after day looking at the high destinies which yet await Literature, which Literature will ere long address herself with more decisiveness than ever to fulfil, it grows clearer to us that the proper task of Literature lies in the domain of BELIEF; within which 'Poetic Fiction,' as it is charitably named, will have to take a quite new figure, if allowed a settlement there. Whereby were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of Novel-writers, and such like, must (in a new generation) gradually do one of two things: either retire into nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes; or else, what were far better, sweep their Novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake them with such faculty as they have to understand and record what is *true*,— of which, surely, there is, and will for ever be, a whole Infinitude unknown to us, of infinite importance to us! Poetry, it will more and more come to be understood, is nothing but higher Knowledge; and the only genuine Romance (for grown persons) Reality. The Thinker is the Poet, the Seer: let him who *sees* write down according to his gift of sight; if deep and with inspired vision, then creatively, poetically; if common, and with only uninspired, every-

day vision, let him at least be faithful in this and write *Memoirs*.

On us still so near at hand, that Eighteenth century in Paris presenting itself nowise as portion of the magic web of Universal History, but only as the confused and ravelled mass of threads and thrums, ycleped *Memoirs*, in process of *being* woven into such, — imposes a rather complex relation. Of which, however, as of all such, the leading rules may be happily comprised in this very plain one, prescribed by Nature herself: to search in them, so far as they seem worthy, for whatsoever can help us forward on our own path, were it in the shape of intellectual instruction, of moral edification, nay of mere solacement and amusement. The Bourbons, indeed, took a shorter method (the like of which has been often recommended elsewhere): they shut up and hid the *graves* of the Philosophes, hoping that their lives and writings might likewise thereby go out of sight, and out of mind; and thus the whole business would be, so to speak, *suppressed*. Foolish Bourbons! These things were not done in a corner, but on high places, before the anxious eyes of all mankind: hidden they can in nowise be: to conquer them, to resist them, our first indispensable preliminary is to see and comprehend them. To us, indeed, as their immediate successors, the right comprehension of them is of prime necessity; for, sent of God or of the Devil, they have plainly enough gone before us, and left us such and such a world: it is on ground of their tillage, with the stubble of their harvest standing on it, that we now have to plough. Before all things then, let us understand what ground it is; what manner of men and husbandmen these were. For which reason, be all authentic *Philosophe-Memoirs* welcome, each in its kind! For which reason, let us now, without the smallest reluctance, penetrate into this wondrous Gospel ac-

ording to Denis Diderot, and expatiate there to see whether it will yield us aught.

In any phenomenon, one of the most important moments is the *end*. Now this epoch of the Eighteenth or Philosophic-century was properly the End; the End of a Social System which for above a thousand years had been building itself together, and, after that, had begun, for some centuries, (as human things all do,) to moulder down. The mouldering down of a Social System is no cheerful business either to form part of, or to look at: however, at length, in the course of it, there comes a time when the mouldering changes into a rushing; active hands drive in their wedges, set to their crowbars; there is a comfortable appearance of work going on. Instead of here and there a stone falling out, here and there a handful of dust, whole masses tumble down, whole clouds and whirlwinds of dust: torches too are applied, and the rotten easily takes fire: so what with flame-whirlwind, what with dust-whirlwind, and the crush of falling towers, the concern grows eminently interesting; and our assiduous craftsmen can encourage one another with *Vivats*, and cries of *Speed the work*. Add to this, that of all laborers, no one can see such rapid extensive fruit of his labor as the Destroyer can and does: it will not seem unreasonable that measuring from effect to cause, he should esteem his labor as the best and greatest; and a Voltaire, for example, be by his guild-brethren and apprentices confidently accounted 'not only the greatest man of this age, but of all past ages, and perhaps the greatest that Nature could produce.' Worthy old Nature! She goes on producing whatsoever is needful in each season of her course; and produces, with perfect composure, that Encyclopedist opinion, that she can produce no more.

Such a torch-and-crowbar period, of quick rushing down

and conflagration, was this of the *Siècle de Louis Quinze*; when the Social System having all fallen into rottenness, rain-holes, and noisome decay, the shivering natives resolved to cheer their dull abode by the questionable step of setting it on fire. Questionable we call their manner of procedure; the thing itself, as all men may now see, was inevitable; one way or other, whether by prior burning or milder methods, the old house must needs be new-built. We behold the business of pulling down, or at least of assorting the rubbish, still go resolutely on, all over Europe: here and there some traces of new foundation, of new building up, may now also, to the eye of Hope, disclose themselves.

To get acquainted with Denis Diderot and his life were to see the significant epitome of all this, as it works on the thinking and acting soul of a man, fashions for him a singular element of existence, gives himself therein a peculiar hue and figure. Unhappily, after all that has been written, the matter still is not luminous: to us strangers, much in that foreign economy, and method of working and living, remains obscure; much in the man himself, and his inward nature and structure. But, indeed, it is several years since the present Reviewer gave up the idea of what could be called *understanding* any Man whatever, even himself. Every Man, within that inconsiderable figure of his, contains a whole Spirit-kingdom and Reflex of the ALL; and, though to the eye but some six standard feet in size, reaches downwards and upwards, unsurveyable, fading into the regions of Immensity and of Eternity. Life everywhere, as woven on that stupendous ever-marvellous 'Loom of Time,' may be said to fashion itself of a woof of light indeed, yet on a warp of mystic darkness: only He that created it can understand it. As to this Diderot, had we once got so far that we could, in the faintest degree, personate him; take upon ourselves his character and his environment of circumstan-

ces, and act his Life over again, in that small Private-Theatre of ours (under our own Hat), with moderate illusiveness and histrionic effect, — *that* were what, in conformity with common speech, we should name *understanding* him, and could be abundantly content with.

In his manner of appearance before the world, Diderot has been, perhaps to an extreme degree, unfortunate. His literary productions were invariably dashed off in hottest haste, and left generally (on the waste of Accident) with an ostrich-like indifference. He had to live, in France, in the sour days of a *Journal des Trevoux*; of a suspicious, decaying Sorbonne. He was too poor to set foreign presses, at Kehl or elsewhere, in motion; too headlong and quick of temper to seek help from those that could: thus must he, if his pen was not to lie idle, write much of which there was no publishing. His Papers accordingly are found flying about, like Sibyl's leaves, in all corners of the world: for many years no tolerable Collection of his Writings was attempted; to this day there is none that in any sense can be called perfect. Two spurious, surreptitious Amsterdam Editions, 'or rather formless, blundering Agglomerations,' were all that the world saw during his life. Diderot did not hear of these for several years, and then only, it is said, 'with peals of laughter,' and no other practical step whatever. Of the four that have since been printed, (or reprinted for Naigeon's, of 1798, is the great original,) no one so much as pretends either to be complete, or selected on any system. Brière's, the latest, of which alone we have much personal knowledge, is a well-printed book, perhaps better worth buying than any of the others; yet without arrangement, without coherence, purport; often lamentably in need of commentary; on the whole, in reference to the wants and specialities of this time, as good as *unedited*. Brière seems, indeed, to have hired some person, or thing, to play the part

of Editor; or rather more things than one, for they sign themselves Editors in the plural number; and from time to time, throughout the work, some asterisk attracts us to the bottom of the leaf, and to some printed matter subscribed 'EDIT*': but unhappily the journey is for most part in vain; in the course of a volume or two, we learn too well that nothing is to be gained there; that the Note, whatever it professedly treat of, will, in strict logical speech, mean only as much as to say: 'Reader! thou perceivest that we Editors, to the number of at least two, are alive, and if we had any information would impart it to thee. — EDIT*.' For the rest, these 'EDIT*.' are polite people; and with this uncertainty (as to their being persons or things) clearly before them, continue, to all appearance, in moderately good spirits.

One service they, or Brière for them (if, indeed, Brière is not himself they, as we sometimes surmise), have accomplished for us: sought out and printed the long-looked-for, long-lost *Life of Diderot* by Nageon. The lovers of biography had for years sorrowed over this concealed Manuscript, with a wistfulness from which hope had nigh fled. A certain Nageon, the beloved disciple of Diderot, had (if his own word, in his own editorial Preface, was to be credited) written a *Life* of him; and, alas! whither was it now vanished? Surely all that was dark in Denis the Fatalist had there been illuminated; nay, was there not, probably, a glorious 'Light-street' carried through that whole Literary Eighteenth Century? And was not Diderot, long belauded as 'the most encyclopedical head that perhaps ever existed,' now to show himself as such in, — the new Practical Encyclopedia, philosophic, economic, speculative, digestive, of LIFE — in three score and ten Years, or Volumes? Diderot too was known as the vividest, noblest talker of his time: considering all that Boswell, with his slender opportunities, had made of Johnson, what was there we had not a right to expect!

By Brière's endeavor, as we said, the concealed Manuscript of Naigeon now lies, as published Volume, on this desk. Alas! a written *life*, too like many an acted life, where hope is one thing, fulfilment quite another! Perhaps, indeed, of all biographies ever put together by the hand of man, this of Naigeon's is the most uninteresting. Foolish Naigeon! We wanted to see and know how it stood with the bodily man, the clothed, boarded, bedded, working, and warfaring Denis Diderot, in that Paris of his; how he looked and lived, what he did, what he said: had the foolish Biographer so much as told us what color his stockings were! Of all this, beyond a date or two, not a syllable, not a hint! nothing but a dull, sulky, snuffing, droning, interminable lecture on Atheistic Philosophy; how Diderot came upon Atheism, how he taught it, how true it is, how inexpressibly important. Singular enough, the zeal of *the devil's* house hath eaten Naigeon up. A man of coarse, mechanical, perhaps intrinsically rather feeble intellect; and then, with the vehemence of some pulpit-drumming 'Gowkthrapple,' or 'precious Mr. Jabesh Rentowel,' — only that *his* kirk is of the *other* complexion! Yet must he too see himself in a wholly backsliding world, where much theism and other scandal still rules; and many times Gowkthrapple Naigeon be tempted to weep by the streams of Babel. Withal, however, he is *wooden*; thoroughly mechanical, as if Vaucanson himself had made him; and that singularly tempers his fury. — Let the reader, finally, admire the bounteous produce of this Earth, and how one element bears nothing but the other matches it: here have we not the truest *odium theologicum*, working quite *demonologically*, in a worshipper of the Everlasting Nothing! So much for Naigeon; what we looked for from him, and what we have got.

Must Diderot then be given up to oblivion, or remembered not as Man, but merely as Philosophic-Atheistic Logic-Mill?

Did not Diderot live, as well as think? An amateur reporter in some of the Biographical Dictionaries, declares that he heard him talk one day, in nightgown and slippers, for the space of two hours, concerning earth, sea, and air, with a fulgorous impetuosity almost beyond human, rising from height to height, and at length finish the climax by 'dashing his nightcap against the wall.' Most readers will admit this to be biography; we, alas, must say, it comprises nearly all about the Man Diderot that hitherto would abide with us.

Here, however, comes 'Paulin, Publishing-Bookseller,' with a quite new contribution: a long series of Letters, extending over fifteen years; unhappily only love-letters, and from a married sexagenarian; yet still letters from his own hand. Amid these insipid floods of *tendresse*, *sensibilité*, and so forth, rapid, like long-decanted small-beer, many a curious biographic trait comes to light; indeed, we can hereby see more of the individual Diderot, and his environment, and method of procedure there, than by all the other books that have yet been published of him. Forgetting or conquering the species of nausea that such a business, on the first announcement of it, may occasion, and in many of the details of it cannot but confirm, the biographic reader will find this well worth looking into. Nay, is it not something, of itself, to see that Spectacle of the Philosophe in Love, or, at least, zealously endeavoring to fancy himself so? For scientific purposes a considerable tedium, of 'noble sentiment' (and even worse things) can be undergone. How the most encyclopedical head that perhaps ever existed, now on the borders of his grand climacteric, and already, provided with wife and child, comports himself in that trying circumstance of preternuptial (and, indeed, at such age, and with so many 'indigestions,' almost preternatural) devotion to the queens of this earth, may, by the curious in science, (who have nerves for it), be here seen. There is besides a lively *Me-*

noir of him by Mademoiselle Diderot, though too brief, and not very true-looking. Finally, in one large Volume, his *Dream of d'Alembert*, greatly regretted and commented upon by Naigeon; which we could have done without. For its bulk, that little *Memoir* is the best of the whole. Unfortunately, as hinted, Mademoiselle, resolute of all things to be *piquante*, writes, or rather *thinks*, in a smart, antithetic manner, nowise the fittest for clearness or credibility: without suspicion of voluntary falsehood, there is no appearance that this is a camera-lucida picture, or a portrait drawn by legitimate rules of art. Such resolution to be piquant is the besetting sin of innumerable persons of both sexes, and wofully mars any use there might otherwise be in their writing or their speaking. It is, or was, the fault specially imputed to the French: in a woman and Frenchwoman, who besides has much to tell us, it must even be borne with. And now, from these diverse scattered materials, let us try how coherent a figure of Denis Diderot, and his earthly Pilgrimage and Performance, we can piece together.

In the ancient Town of Langres, in the month of October, 1713, it begins. Fancy Langres, aloft on its hill top, amid Roman ruins, nigh the sources of the Saone and of the Marne, with its coarse substantial houses, and fifteen thousand inhabitants, mostly engaged in knife-grinding; and one of the quickest, clearest, most volatile, and susceptible little figures of that century, just landed in the World there. In this French Sheffield, Diderot's Father was a Cutler, master of his craft; a much-respected and respect-worthy man; one of those ancient craftsmen (now, alas! nearly departed from the earth, and sought, with little effect, by idyllists, among the 'Scottish peasantry,' and elsewhere) who, in the school of practice, have learned not only skill of hand, but the far harder skill of head and of heart; whose whole

knowledge and virtue, being by necessity a knowledge and virtue to do somewhat, is true, and has stood trial : humble modern patriarchs, brave, wise, simple ; of worth rude, but unperturbed, like genuine unwrought silver, native from the mine ! Diderot loved his father, as he well might, and regrets on several occasions that he was painted in holiday clothes, and not in the workday costume of his trade, ‘ with apron and grinder’s-wheel, and spectacles pushed up,’— even as he lived and labored, and honestly made good for himself the small section of the Universe he pretended to occupy. A man of strictest veracity and integrity was this ancient master ; of great insight and patient discretion, so that he was often chosen as umpire and adviser ; of great humanity, so that one day crowds of poor were to ‘ follow him with tears to his long home.’ An outspoken Langres neighbor gratified the now fatherless Philosopher with this saying— ‘ Ah, Monsieur Diderot, you are a famous man, but you will never be your father’s equal.’ Truly, of all the wonderful illustrious persons that come to view in the biographic part of these six-and-twenty Volumes, it is a question whether this old Langres Cutler is not the worthiest ; to us no other suggests himself whose worth can be admitted, without lamentable pollutions and defacements to be deducted from it. The Mother also was a loving-hearted, just woman : so Diderot might account himself well-born ; and it is a credit to the man that he always (and sometimes in the circle of kings and empresses) gratefully did so.

The Jesuits were his schoolmasters : at the age of twelve the encyclopedical head was ‘ tonsured.’ He was quick in seizing, strong in remembering and arranging ; otherwise flighty enough ; fond of sport, and from time to time getting into trouble. One grand event, significant of all this, he has himself commemorated : his Daughter records it in these terms.

'He had chanced to have a quarrel with his comrades: it had been serious enough to bring on him a sentence of exclusion from college on some day of public examination and distribution of prizes. The idea of passing this important time at home, and grieving his parents, was intolerable: he proceeded to the college-gate; the porter refused him admittance; he presses in while some crowd is entering, and sets off running at full speed; the porter gets at him with a sort of pike he carried, and wounds him in the side: the boy will not be driven back; arrives, takes the place that belonged to him: prizes of all sorts, for composition, for memory, for poetry, he obtains them all. No doubt he had deserved them; since even the resolution to punish him could not withstand the sense of justice in his superiors. Several volumes, a number of garlands had fallen to his lot; being too weak to carry them all, he put the garlands round his neck, and, with his arms full of books, returned home. His mother was at the door; and saw him coming through the public square in this equipment, and surrounded by his schoolfellows: one should be a mother to conceive what she must have felt. He was feasted, he was caressed: but next Sunday, in dressing him for church, a considerable wound was found on him, of which he had not so much as thought of complaining.'

'One of the sweetest moments of my life,' writes Diderot himself, of this same business, with a slight variation, 'was more than thirty years ago, and I remember it like yesterday, when my Father saw me coming home from the college, with my arms full of prizes that I had carried off, and my shoulders with the garlands they had given me, which, being too big for my brow, had let my head slip through them. Noticing me at a distance, he threw down his work, hastened to the door to meet me, and could not help weeping. It is a fine sight, a true man and rigorous falling to weep!'

Mademoiselle, in her quick-sparkling way, informs us, nevertheless, that the school-victor, getting tired of pedagogic admonitions and inflictions, whereof there were many, said 'one morning' to his father, 'that he meant to give up school!' — 'Thou hadst rather be a cutler, then?' — 'With all my heart.' — They handed him an apron, and he placed

himself beside his father. He spoiled whatever he laid hands on, penknives, whittles, blades of all kinds. It went on for four or five days ; at the end of which he rose, proceeded to his room, got his books there, and returned to college, — and having, it would appear, in this simple manner sown his college wild-oats, never stirred from it again.

To the Reverend Fathers, it seemed that Denis would make an excellent Jesuit ; wherefore they set about coaxing and courting, with intent to crimp him. Here, in some minds, a certain comfortable reflection on the diabolic cunning and assiduity of these Holy Fathers, now happily all dissolved and expelled, will suggest itself. Along with which may another melancholy reflection no less be in place : namely, that these Devil-serving Jesuits should have shown a skill and zeal in their teaching vocation, such as no Heaven-serving body, of what complexion soever, anywhere on our earth now exhibits. To decipher the talent of a young vague Capability, who must one day be a man and a Reality ; to take him by the hand, and train him to a spiritual trade, and set him up in it, with tools, shop, and goodwill, were doing him in most cases an unspeakable service, — on this one proviso, it is true, that the trade be a just and honest one ; in which proviso surely there should lie no hindrance to such service, but rather a help. Nay, could many a poor Dermody, Hazlitt, Heron, Derrick, and such like, have been trained to be a good Jesuit, were it greatly worse than to have lived painfully as a bad Nothing-at-all ? But indeed, as was said, the Jesuits are dissolved ; and Corporations of all sorts have perished (from corpulence) ; and now, instead of the seven corporate selfish spirits, we have the one-and-thirty millions of discorporate selfish ; and the rule, *Man, mind thyself*, makes a jumble and a scramble, and crushing press (with dead-pressed figures, and dismembered limbs enough) ; into whose dark chaotic depths (for human

Life is ever unfathomable) one shudders to look. Loneliest of all, weakest and worst-bested, in that world-scramble, is the extraordinary figure known in these times as Man of Letters ! It appears to be indubitable that this state of matters will alter and improve itself, — in a century or two. But to return :

‘The Jesuits,’ thus sparkles Mademoiselle, ‘employed the temptation, which is always so seductive, of travelling and of liberty ; they persuaded the youth to quit his home, and set forth with a Jesuit, to whom he was attached. Denis had a friend, a cousin of his own age ; he entrusted his secret to him, wishing that he should accompany them. But the cousin, a tamer and discreeter personage, discovered the whole project to the father ; the day of departure, the hour, all was betrayed. My grandfather kept the strictest silence ; but before going to sleep he carried off the keys of the street-door ; and at midnight, hearing his son descend, he presented himself before him, with the question, ‘Whither bound, at such an hour?’ ‘To Paris,’ replied the young man, ‘where I am to join the Jesuits.’ — ‘That will not be to-night ; but your desires shall be fulfilled : let us in the first place go to sleep.’

‘Next morning his father engaged two places in the public conveyance, and carried him to Paris, to the College d’Harcourt. He settled the terms of his little establishment, and bade his son good-b’ye. But the worthy man loved his child too well to leave him without being quite satisfied about his situation : he had the constancy to stay a fortnight longer, killing the time, and dying of tedium, in an inn, without seeing the sole object he was delaying for. At the end, he proceeded to the College ; and my father has often told me that this proof of tenderness would have made him go to the end of the world, if the old man had required it. “Friend,” said he, “I am come to know if your health keeps good ; if you are content with your superiors, with your diet, with others, and with yourself. If you are not well, if you are not happy, we will go back again to your mother. If you like better to remain here, I have but to speak a word with you, to embrace you, and give you my blessing.” The youth assured him that he was perfectly content, that he liked his new abode very much. My grandfather then

took leave of him, and went to the Principal, to know if he was satisfied with his pupil.'

On which side also the answer proving favorable, the worthy father returned home. Denis saw little more of him; never again resided under his roof, though for many years, and to the last, a proper intercourse was kept up; not, as appears, without a visit or two on the son's part, and certainly with the most unwearied, prudent superintendance and assistance on the father's. Indeed, it was a worthy family, that of the Diderots; and a fair degree of natural affection must be numbered among the virtues of our Philosophe. Those scenes about rural Langres, and the old homely way of life there, as delineated fictitiously in the *Entretien d'un Père avec ses Enfants*, and now more fully, as matter of fact, in this just-published *Correspondance*, are of a most innocent, cheerful, peacefully-secluded character; more pleasing, we might almost say more poetical, than could elsewhere be gathered out of Diderot's whole Writings. Denis was the eldest of the family, and much looked up to, with all his short-comings: there was a Brother, who became a clergyman; and a truehearted, sharpwitted Sister, who remained unmarried, and at times tried to live in partnership with this latter, — rather unsuccessfully. The Clergyman being a conscientious, even straight-laced man, and Denis such as we know, they had, naturally enough, their own difficulties to keep on brotherly terms; and indeed, at length, abandoned the task as hopeless. The Abbé stood rigorous by his Breviary, from time to time addressing solemn monitions to the lost Philosophe, who also went on his way. He is somewhat snarled at by the Denisian side of the house for this; but surely without ground: it was his virtue rather; at lowest his destiny. The true Priest, who could, or should, look peaceably on an *Encyclopédie*, is yet perhaps

waited for in the world ; and of all false things, is not a false Priest the falsest ?

Meanwhile Denis, at the College d'Harcourt, learns additional Greek and Mathematics, and quite loses taste for the Jesuit career. Mad pranks enough he played, we doubt not ; followed by reprimands. He made several friends, however ; got intimate with the Abbé Bernis, poet at that time ; afterwards Cardinal. ' They used to dine together, for six sous a-piece, at the neighboring *Traiteur's* ; and I have often heard him vaunt the gayety of these repasts.'

' His studies being finished,' continues Mademoiselle, ' his father wrote to M. Clement de Ris, a Procureur at Paris, and his countryman, to take him as boarder, that he might study Jurisprudence and the Laws. He continued here two years ; but the business of *actes* and *inventaires* had few charms for him. All the time he could steal from the office-desk was employed in prosecuting Latin and Greek, in which he thought himself still imperfect ; Mathematics, which he to the last continued passionately fond of ; Italian, English, &c. In the end he gave himself up so completely to his taste for letters, that M. Clement thought it right to inform his father how ill the youth was employing his time. My grandfather then expressly commissioned M. Clement to urge and constrain him to make choice of some profession, and once for all to become Doctor, Procureur, or Advocate. My father begged time to think of it ; time was given. At the end of several months these proposals were again laid before him : he answered that the profession of Doctor did not please him, for he could not think of killing any body ; that the Procureur business was too difficult to execute with delicacy ; that he would willingly choose the profession of Advocate, were it not that he felt an invincible repugnance to occupy himself all his life with other people's business. " But," said M. Clement, " what *will* you be then ?" — " On my word, nothing, nothing whatever (*Ma foi, rien, mais rien du tout*). I love study ; I am very happy, very content, and want nothing else."

Here clearly is a youth of spirit, determined to take the world on the broadside, and eat thereof, and be filled. His

decided turn, like that of so many others, is for the trade of sovereign prince, in one shape or other; unhappily, however, the capital and outfit to set it up is wanting. Under which circumstances, nothing remains but to instruct M. Clement de Ris that no board-wages will henceforth be paid, and the young sovereign may, at his earliest convenience, be turned out of doors.

What Denis, perched aloft in his own-hired attic, may have thought of it now, does not appear. The good old Father, in stopping his allowance, had reasonably enough insisted on one of two things: either that he should betake him to some intelligible method of existence, wherein all help should be furnished him; or else return home within the week. Neither of which could Denis think of doing. A similar demand continued to be reiterated for the next ten years, but always with the like none-effect. King Denis, in his furnished attic, with or without money to pay for it, was now living and reigning, like other kings, 'by the grace of God;' and could nowise resolve to abdicate. A sanguineous, vehement, volatile mortal; young, and in so wide an earth, it seemed to him next to impossible but he must find gold-mines there. He lived, while victual was to be got, taking no thought for the morrow. He had books, he had merry company, a whole piping and dancing Paris round him; he could teach Mathematics, he could turn himself so many ways; nay, might not he become a Mathematician one day; a glorified Savant, and strike the stars with his sublime head! Meanwhile he is like to be overtaken by one of the sharpest of human calamities, 'cleanness of teeth.'

'One Shrove Tuesday morning, he rises, gropes in his pocket; he has not wherewith to dine; will not trouble his friends who have not invited him. This day, which in childhood he had so often passed in the middle of relations who adored him, becomes sadder by remembrance: he cannot work; he hopes to dissipate his mel-

ancholy by a walk; goes to the Invalides, to the Courts, to the Bibliothèque du Roi, to the Jardin des Plantes. You may drive away tedium; but you cannot give hunger the slip. He returns to his quarters; on entering he feels unwell; the landlady gives him a little toast and wine; he goes to bed. "That day," he has often said to me, "I swore that, if ever I came to have anything, I would never in my life refuse a poor man help, never condemn my fellow creatures to a day as painful."

That Diderot, during all this period, escaped starvation, is plain enough by the result: but how he specially accomplished that, and the other business of living, remains mostly left to conjecture. Mademoiselle, confined at any rate within narrow limits, continues as usual too intent on sparkling: is *brillante* and *pétillante*, rather than lucent and illuminating. How inferior, for *seeing* with, is your brightest train of fireworks to the humblest farthing candle! Who Diderot's companions, friends, enemies, patrons were, what his way of life was, what the Paris he lived in and from his garret looked down on was, we learn only in hints, dislocated, enigmatic. It is in general to be impressed on us, that young Denis, as a sort of spiritual swashbuckler, who went about conquering Destiny, in light rapier-fence, by way of amusement; or at lowest, in reverses, gracefully insulting her with mock reverences, — lived and acted like no other man; all which being freely admitted, we ask, with small increase of knowledge, How he did act then?

He gave lessons in Mathematics, we find; but with the princeliest indifference as to payment: 'was his scholar lively, and prompt of conception, he sat by him teaching all day; did he chance on a blockhead, he returned not back. They paid him in books, in movables, in linen, in money, or not at all; it was quite the same.' Farther, he made Sermons (to order); as the Devil is said to quote Scripture: a Missionary bespoke half-a-dozen of him (of Denis, that is) for

the Portuguese Colonies, and paid for them very handsomely at fifty crowns each. Once, a family Tutorship came in his way, with tolerable appointments, but likewise with incessant duties: at the end of three months, he waits upon the house-father with this abrupt communication: 'I am come, Monsieur, to request you to seek a new tutor; I cannot remain with you any longer.'—'But, Monsieur Diderot, what is your grievance? Have you too little salary? I will double it. Are you ill-lodged? Choose your apartment. Is your table ill-served? Order your own dinner. All will be cheap to parting with you.'—'Monsieur, look at me: a citron is not so yellow as my face. I am making men of your children; but every day I am becoming a child with them. I feel a hundred times too rich and too well off in your house; yet I must leave it: the object of my wishes is not to live better, but to keep from dying.'

Mademoiselle grants that, if sometimes 'drunk with gaiety,' he was often enough plunged in bitterness; but then a Newtonian problem, a fine thought, or any small godsend of that sort, would instantly cheer him again. The 'gold mines' had not yet come to light. Meanwhile, between him and starvation we can still discern Langres covertly stretching out its hand. Of any Langres man, coming in his way, Denis frankly borrows; and the good old Father refuses not to pay. The Mother is still kinder, at least softer: she sends him direct help, as she can; not by the post, but by a serving-maid, who travelled these sixty leagues on foot; delivered him a small sum from his mother; and, without mentioning it, added all her own savings thereto. This Samaritan journey she performed three times. 'I saw her some years ago,' adds Mademoiselle, 'she spoke of my father with tears; her whole desire was to see him again: sixty years' service had impaired neither her sense nor her sensibility.'

It is granted also that his company was 'sometimes good, sometimes indifferent, not to say bad.' Indeed putting all things together, we can easily fancy that the last sort was the preponderating. It seems probable that Denis, during these ten years of probation, walked chiefly in the subterranean shades of Rascaldom; now swilling from full Circe-goblets, now snuffing with haggard expectancy the hungry wind; always 'sorely flamed on from the neighboring hell.' In some of his fictitious writings, a most intimate acquaintance with the nether-world of Polissons, Escrocs, Filles de Joye, Marouffes, Maquerelles, and their ways of doing, comes to light: among other things (as may be seen in *Jacques le Fataliste*, and elsewhere), a singular theoretic expertness in what is technically named 'raising the wind;' which miracle, indeed Denis himself is expressly (in this *Mémoire*) found once performing, and in a style to require legal cognizance, had not the worthy Father 'sneered at the dupe, and paid.' The dupe here was a proselytizing Abbé, whom the dog glozed with professions of life-weariness and turning monk; which all evaporated, once the money was in his hands. On other occasions, it might turn out otherwise, and the gudgeon-fisher hook some shark of prey.

Literature, except in the way of Sermons for the Portuguese Colonies, or other the like small private dealings, had not yet opened her hospitable bosom to him. Epistles, præcatory and amatory, for such as had more cash than grammar, he may have written; Catalogues also, Indexes, Advertisements, and, in these latter cases, even seen himself in print. But now he ventures forward, with bolder step, towards the interior mysteries, and begins producing Translations from the English. Literature, it is true, was then, as now, the universal free-hospital and Refuge for the Destitute, where all mortals, of what color and kind soever, had

liberty to live, or at least to die : nevertheless, for an enterprising man, its resources at that time were comparatively limited. Newspapers were few ; Reporting existed not, still less the inferior branches, with their fixed rate per line : Packwood and Warren, much more Panckoucke, and Ladvocat, and Colburn, as yet slumbered (the last century of their slumber) in the womb of Chaos ; Fragmentary Panegyric-literature had not yet come into being, therefore could not be paid for. Talent wanted a free staple and workshop, where wages might be certain ; and too often, like virtue, was praised and left starving. Lest the reader overrate the munificence of the literary cornucopia in France at this epoch, let us lead him into a small historical scene, that he may see with his own eyes. Diderot is the historian ; the date too is many years later, when times, if anything, were mended :

‘I had given a poor devil a manuscript to copy. The time he had promised it at having expired, and my man not appearing, I grow uneasy ; set off to hunt him out. I find him in a hole the size of my hand, almost without daylight, not the wretchedest tatter of serge to cover his walls ; two straw-bottom chairs, a flock-bed, the coverlet chiselled with worms, without curtains ; a trunk in a corner of the chimney, rags of all sorts hooked above it ; a little white-iron lamp, with a bottle for pediment to it ; on a deal shelf, a dozen of excellent books. I chatted with him three-quarters of an hour. My gentleman was naked as a worm’ (*nu comme un ver* : it was August) ; ‘lean, dingy, dry, yet serene, complaining of nothing, eating his junk of bread with appetite, and from time to time caressing his beloved, who reclined on that miserable truckle, taking up two-thirds of the room. If I had not known that happiness resides in the soul, my Epictetus of the Rue Hyacinthe might have taught it me.’

Notwithstanding all which, Denis, now in his twenty-ninth year, sees himself necessitated to fall desperately, and over head and ears, in love. It was a virtuous, pure attachment ;

his first of that sort, probably also his last. Readers who would see the business poetically delineated, and what talent Diderot had for such delineations, may read this Scene in the once-noted Drama of the *Père de Famille*. It is known that he drew from the life; and with few embellishments, which too, except in the French Theatre, do not beautify.

‘ACT I.—SCENE VII.

Saint-Albin. Father, you shall know all. Alas! how else can I move you?—The first time I ever saw her was at church. She was on her knees at the foot of the altar, beside an aged woman, whom I took for her mother. Ah father! what modesty, what charms! . . . Her image followed me by day, haunted me by night, left me rest nowhere. I lost my cheerfulness, my health, my peace. I could not live without seeking to find her. . . . She has changed me; I am no longer what I was. From the first moment all shameful desires fade away from my soul; respect and admiration succeed them. Without rebuke or restraint on her part, perhaps before she had raised her eyes on me, I became timid; more so from day to day; and soon I felt as little free to attempt her virtue as her life.

The Father. And who are these women? How do they live?

Saint-Albin. Ah! if you knew it, unhappy as they are! Imagine that their toil begins before day, and often they have to continue it through the night. The mother spins on the wheel; hard coarse cloth is between the soft small fingers of Sophie, and wounds them.* Her eyes, the brightest eyes in this world, are worn at the light of a lamp. She lives in a garret, within four bare walls; a wooden table, a couple of chairs, a truckle-bed, that is their furniture. O Heavens, when ye fashioned such a creature, was this the lot ye destined her!

The Father. And how got you access? Speak me truth.

Saint-Albin. It is incredible what obstacles I had, what I sur-

* The real trade appears to have been a ‘sempstress one in laces and linens;’ the poverty is somewhat exaggerated: otherwise the shadow may be faithful enough.

mounted. Though now lodged there, under the same roof, I at first did not seek to see them: if we met on the stairs, coming up, going down, I saluted them respectfully. At night, when I came home (for all day I was supposed to be at my work), I would go knock gently at their door; ask them for the little services usual among neighbors — as water, fire, light. By degrees they grew accustomed to me; rather took to me. I offered to serve them in little things; for instance, they disliked going out at night; I fetched and carried for them.'

The real truth here is, 'I ordered a set of shirts from them; said I was a Church-licentiate just bound for the Seminary of St. Nicolas, — and, above all, had the tongue of the old serpent.' But to skip much, and finish:

'Yesterday I came as usual: Sophie was alone; she was sitting with her elbows on the table, her head leant on her hand; her work had fallen at her feet. I entered without her hearing me: she sighed. Tears escaped from between her fingers, and ran along her arms. For some time, of late, I had seen her sad. Why was she weeping? What was it that grieved her? What it could no longer be; her labor and my attentions provided against that. Threatened by the only misfortune terrible to me, I did not hesitate: I threw myself at her knees. What was her surprise; Sophie, said I, you weep; what ails you? Do not hide your trouble from me: speak to me; oh speak to me! She spoke not. Her tears continued flowing. Her eyes, where calmness no longer dwelt, but tears and anxiety, bent towards me, then turned away, then turned to me again. She said only, Poor Sergi! unhappy Sophie! — I had laid my face on her knees; I was wetting her apron with my tears.'

In a word, there is nothing for it but marriage. Old Diderot, joyous as he was to see his Son once more, started back in indignation and derision from such a proposal; and young Diderot had to return to Paris, and be forbid the beloved house, and fall sick, and come to the point of death, before the fair one's scruples could be subdued. However, she

sent to get news of him; 'learnt that his room was a perfect dog-kennel, that he lay without nourishment, without attendance, wasted, sad: thereupon she took her resolution: mounted to him, promised to be his wife; and mother and daughter now became his nurses. So soon as he recovered, they went to Saint-Pierre, and were married at midnight (1744)." It only remains to add, that if the Sophie whom he had wedded fell much short of this Sophie whom he delineates, the fault was less in her qualities than in his own unstable fancy: as in youth she was 'tall, beautiful, pious, and wise,' so through a long life she seems to have approved herself a woman of courage, discretion, faithful affection; far too good a wife for such a husband.

'My father was of too jealous a character to let my mother continue a traffic, which obliged her to receive strangers and treat with them: he begged her therefore to give up that business; she was very loath to consent; poverty did not alarm her on her own account, but her mother was old, unlikely to remain with her long, and the fear of not being able to provide for all her wants was afflicting: nevertheless, persuading herself that this sacrifice was for her husband's happiness, she made it. A charwoman looked in daily, to sweep their little lodging, and fetch provisions for the day; my mother managed all the rest. Often when my father dined or supped out, she would dine or sup on bread; and took a great pleasure in the thought that, next day, she could double her little ordinary for him. Coffee was too considerable a luxury for a household of this sort: but she could not think of his wanting it, and every day gave him six sous to go and have his cup, at the Café de la Regence, and see the chess-playing there.

'It was now that he translated the *History of Greece* in three volumes' (by the English Stanyan); 'he sold it for a hundred crowns. This sum brought a sort of supply into the house. * * *

'My mother had been brought to bed of a daughter: she was now big a second time. In spite of her precautions, solitary life, and the pains she had taken to pass off her husband as her brother, his family, in the seclusion of their province, learnt that he was

living with two women. Directly the birth, the morals, the character of my mother became objects of the blackest calumny. He foresaw that discussions by letter would be endless; he found it simpler to put his wife into the stage-coach, and send her to his parents. She had just been delivered of a son; he announced this event to his father, and the departure of my mother. "She set out yesterday," said he, "she will be with you in three days. You will say to her what shall please you, and send her back when you are tired of her." Singular as this sort of explanation was, they determined, in any case, on sending my father's sister to receive her. Their first welcome was more than cold: the evening grew less painful to her; but next morning betimes she went in to her father-in-law; treated him as if he had been her own father; her respect and her caresses charmed the good, sensible old man. Coming down stairs, she began working: refused nothing that could please a family whom she was not afraid of, and wished to be loved by. Her conduct was the only excuse she gave for her husband's choice: her appearance had prepossessed them in her favor; her simplicity, her piety, her talents for household economy secured her their tenderness; they promised her that my father's disinheritment should be revoked. They kept her three months; and sent her back loaded with whatever they could think would be useful or agreeable to her.'

All this is beautiful, told with a graceful simplicity; the beautiful, real-ideal prose-idyl of a Literary Life: but, alas, in the music of your prose-idyl there lurks ever an accursed dissonance (or the players make one); where men are, there will be mischief. 'This journey,' writes Mademoiselle, 'cost my mother many tears.' What will the reader say, when he finds that Monsieur Diderot has, in the interim, taken up with a certain Madame de Puisieux; and welcomes his brave Wife (worthy to have been a true man's) with a heart and bosom henceforth estranged from her! Madame Diderot 'made two journeys to Langres, and both were fatal to her peace.' This affair of the Puisieux, for whom he despicably enough not only burned, but toiled and made

money, kept him busy for some ten years; till at length, finding that she played false, he gave her up; and minor miscellaneous flirtations seem to have succeeded. But, returning from her *second* journey, the much-enduring House-mother finds him in a meridian glory with one Voland, the *un-maiden* Daughter of a 'Financier's Widow;' to whom we owe this present preternuptial *Correspondance*; to whom indeed he mainly devoted himself for the rest of his life, 'parting his time between his study and her;' to his own Wife and household giving little save the trouble of cooking for him, and of painfully, with repressed or irrepressible discontent, keeping up some appearance of terms with him. Alas! alas! and his Puisieux seems to have been a hollow Mercenary (to whose scandalous soul he reckons obscenest of Books fit nutriment); and the Voland an elderly Spinster, with *cœur sensible, cœur honnête, ame tendre et bonne!* And then those old dinings on bread; the six sous spared for his cup of coffee! Foolish Diderot, scarcely pardonable Diderot! A hard saying it is, yet a true one: scoundrelism signifies injustice, and should be left to scoundrels alone. For thy wronged Wife, whom thou hadst sworn far other things to, ever in her afflictions (here so hostilely scanned and written of), a true sympathy will awaken; and sorrow that the patient, or even impatient, endurances of such a woman should be matter of speculation and self-gratulation to such another.

But looking out of doors now, from an indifferently-guided Household, which must have fallen shamefully in pieces, had not a wife been wiser and stronger than her husband, — we find the Philosophe making distinct way with the Bibliopolic world; and likely, in the end, to pick up a kind of living there. The Stanyan's *History of Greece*; the other English-translated, nameless *Medical Dictionary*, are dropped by all editors as worthless: a like fate might,

with little damage, have overtaken the *Essai sur le Merite et la Vertu*, rendered or redacted out of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*. In which redaction, with its Notes, of anxious Orthodoxy (and bottomless Falsehood looking through it), we individually have found nothing, save a confirmation of the old twice-repeated experience, That in Shaftesbury's famed Book there lay, if any meaning, a meaning of such long-windedness, circumvolution, and lubricity, that, like an eel, it must for ever slip through our fingers, and leave us alone among the gravel. One reason may partly be, that Shaftesbury was not only a Skeptic but an Amateur Skeptic; which sort a darker, more earnest, have long since swallowed and abolished. The meaning of a delicate, perfumed, gentlemanly individual standing there, in that war of Titans (hill meeting hill with all its woods), and putting out hand to it — with a pair of tweezers?

However, our Denis has now emerged from the intermediate Hades of Translatorship into the Heaven of perfected Authorship; empties his common-place book of *Pensées Philosophiques* (it is said in the space of four days); writes his metaphysico-Baconian phantasmagories on the *Interpretation de la Nature* (an endless business to 'interpret'); and casts the money-produce of both into the lap of his Scarlet-woman Puisieux. Then forthwith, for the same object, in a shameful fortnight, puts together the beastliest of all past, present, or future dull Novels; a difficult feat, unhappily not an impossible one. If any mortal creature, even a Reviewer, be again compelled to glance into that Book, let him bathe himself in running water, put on change of raiment, and be unclean until the even. As yet the metaphysico-Atheistic *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets*, and *Lettre sur les Aveugles*, which brings glory and a three months' lodging in the Castle of Vincennes, are at years distance in the back-ground. But already by his gilded

tongue, growing repute, and sanguineous, projecting temper, he has persuaded Booksellers to pay off the Abbé Gua, with his lean Version of *Chambers's Dictionary of Arts*, and convert it into an *Encyclopédie*, with himself and D'Alembert for Editors; and is henceforth (from the year of grace 1751) a duly dis-indentured *Man of Letters*, an indisputable and more and more conspicuous member of that surprising guild.

Literature, ever since its appearance in our European world, especially since it emerged out of Cloisters into the open Market-place, and endeavored to make itself room, and gain a subsistence there, has offered the strangest phases, and consciously or unconsciously done the strangest work. Wonderful Ark of the Deluge, where so much that is precious, nay priceless to mankind, floats carelessly onwards through the Chaos of distracted Times, — if so be it may one day find an Ararat to rest on, and see the waters abate! The History of Literature, especially for the last two centuries, is our proper Church History: the other Church during that time, having more and more decayed from its old functions and influence, and ceased to have a history. And now, to look only at the outside of the matter, think of the Tassos and older or later Racines, struggling to raise their office from its pristine abasement of court-jester; and teach and elevate the World, in conjunction with that other quite heteroclite task of solacing and glorifying some *Pullus Jovis*, in plush cloak and other gilt or golden king-tackle, that they in the interim might live thereby! Consider the Shakespeares and Molières, plying a like trade, but on a double material; glad of any royal or noble patronage, but eliciting, as their surer stay, some fractional contribution from the thick-skinned, many-pocketed million. Saumaises, now bully-fighting 'for a hundred gold Jacobuses,' now closeted with Queen Christinas, who blow the fire with their own queenly

mouth, to make a pedant's breakfast ; anon cast forth (being scouted and confuted), and dying of heartbreak, coupled with henpeck. Then the Laws of Copyright, the Quarrels of Authors, the Calamities of Authors ; the Heynes dining on boiled peasecods, the Jean Pauls on water ; the Johnsons bedded and boarded on fourpence-halfpenny a-day. Lastly, the unutterable confusion worse confounded of our present Periodical existence ; when, among other phenomena, a young Fourth Estate (whom all the three elder may try if they can hold) is seen sprawling and staggering tumultuously through the world ; as yet but a huge, raw-boned, lean *calf* ; fast growing, however, to be a Pharaoh's lean cow, — of whom let the fat-kine beware ! All this of the mere exterior, or dwelling-place of Literature, not yet glancing at the internal, at the Doctrines emitted or striven after, will the future Eusebius and Mosheim have to record ; and (in some small degree) explain to us what it means. Unfathomable is its meaning : Life, mankind's Life, ever from its unfathomable fountains, rolls wondrous on, another though the same ; in Literature too, the seeing eye will distinguish Apostles of the Gentiles, Proto and Deutero-martyrs ; still less will the Simon Magus, or Apollonius with the golden thigh be wanting. But all now is on an infinitely *wider scale* ; the elements of it all swim far-scattered, and still only striving towards union ; — whereby, indeed, it happens that to the most, under this new figure, they are unrecognisable.

French Literature, in Diderot's time, presents itself in a certain state of culmination, where causes long prepared are rapidly becoming effects ; and was doubtless in one of its more notable epochs. Under the Economic aspect, in France, as in England, this was the Age of Booksellers ; when, as a Dodsley and Miller could risk capital in an *English Dictionary*, a Lebreton and Briasson could become pur-

veyors and commissariat officers for a French *Encyclopédie*. The world for ever loves Knowledge, and would part its last sixpence in payment thereof : this your Dodsleys and Lebretons well saw ; moreover they could act on it, for as yet PUFFERY was not. Alas, offences must come ; Puffery from the first was inevitable : woe to them, nevertheless, by whom it did come ! Meanwhile, as we said, it slept in Chaos ; the Word of man and tradesman was still partially credible to man. Booksellers were therefore a possible, were even a necessary class of mortals, though a strangely anomalous one ; had they kept from lying, or lied with any sort of moderation, the anomaly might have lasted still longer. For the present, they managed in Paris as elsewhere : the Timber-headed could perceive that for Thought the world would give money ; farther, by mere shopkeeper cunning, that true Thought, as in the end sure to be recognised, and by nature infinitely more durable, was better to deal in than false ; farther, by credible tradition of public consent, that such and such had the talent of furnishing true Thought (say rather *truer*, as the more correct word) : on this hint the Timber-headed spake and bargained. Nay, let us say he bargained, and worked, for most part with industrious assiduity, with patience, suitable prudence ; nay, sometimes with touches of generosity and magnanimity, beautifully irradiating the circumambient mass of greed and dulness. For the rest, the two high contracting parties roughed it out as they could ; so that if Booksellers, in their back parlor Valhalla, drank wine out of the skulls of Authors (as they were fabled to do), Authors, in the front-apartments, from time to time, gave them a Rowland for their Oliver : a Johnson can knock his Osborne on the head, like any other Bull of Bashan ; a Diderot commands his corpulent Pancouke to 'leave the room and go to the devil ;' *allez au diable, sortez de chez moi !*

Under the internal or Doctrinal aspect, again, French Literature, we can see, knew far better what it was about than English. That fable, indeed, first set afloat by some Trevoux Journalist of that period, and which has floated foolishly enough into every European ear since then, of there being an Association specially organized for the destruction of government, religion, society, civility (not to speak of tithes, rents, life, and property), all over the world; which hell-serving Association met at the Baron d'Holbach's, there had its blue-light sederunts, and published Transactions legible to all, — was and remains nothing but a fable. Minute-books, president's hammer, ballot-box, punch-bowl of such Pandemonium have not been produced to the world. The sect of Philosophes existed at Paris, but as other sects do; held together by loosest, informal, unrecognised ties; within which every one, no doubt, followed his own natural objects, of proselytism, of glory, of getting a livelihood. Meanwhile, whether in constituted association or not, French Philosophy resided in the persons of the French Philosophes; and, as a mighty deep-struggling Force, was at work there. Deep-struggling, irrepressible; the subterranean fire, which long heaved unquietly, and shook all things with an ominous motion, was here, we can say, forming itself a decided spiracle; — which, by and by, as French Revolution, became that volcano-crater, world-famous, world-appalling, world-maddening, as yet very far from closed! Fontenelle said, he wished he could live sixty years longer, and see what that universal infidelity, depravity, and dissolution of all ties would turn to. In three-score years Fontenelle might have seen strange things; but not the end of the phenomenon, perhaps, in three hundred.

Why France became such a volcano-crater, what specialties there were in the French national character, and political, moral, intellectual condition, by virtue whereof French

Philosophy there and not elsewhere, then and not sooner or later, evolved itself, — is an inquiry that has been often put, and cheerfully answered; the true answer of which might lead us far. Still deeper than this *Whence* were the question of *Whither*; — with which, also, we intermeddle not here. Enough for us to understand that there verily a Scene of Universal History is being enacted (a little living TIME-picture in the bosom of ETERNITY) — and, with the feeling due in that case, to ask not so much *Why* it is, as *What* it is. Leaving priorities and posteriorities aside, and cause-and-effect to adjust itself elsewhere, conceive so many vivid spirits thrown together into the Europe, into the Paris of that day, and see how they demean themselves, what they work out and attain there.

As the *mystical* enjoyment of an object goes infinitely farther than the *intellectual*, and we can *look* at a picture with delight and profit, after all that we can be *taught* about it is grown poor and wearisome; so here, and by far stronger reason, these light Letters of Diderot to the Voland, again unveiling and *showing* Parisian Life, are worth more to us than many a heavy tome laboriously struggling to explain it. True, we have seen the picture (that same Parisian life-picture) ten times already; but can look at it an eleventh time; nay this, as we said, is not a canvass-picture, but a life-picture, of whose significance there is no end for us. Grudge not the elderly Spinster her existence, then; say not she has lived in vain. For what of History there is, in this Preternuptial Correspondence, should we not endeavor to forgive and forget all else, the *sensibilité* itself? The curtain which had fallen for almost a century is again drawn up; the scene is alive and busy. Figures grown historical are here seen face to face, and again live before us.

A strange theatre that of French Philosophism; a strange dramatic corps! Such another corps for brilliancy and

levity, for gifts and vices, and all manner of sparkling inconsistencies the world is not like to see again. There is Patriarch Voltaire, of all Frenchmen the most French; he whom the French had, as it were, long waited for, 'to produce at once, in a single life, all that French genius most prized and most excelled in;' of him and his wondrous ways, as of one known, we need say little. Instant enough to 'crush the Abomination' (*écraser l'Infame*), he has prosecuted his Jesuit-hunt over many lands and many centuries, in many ways, with an alacrity that has made him dangerous, and endangered him: he now sits at Ferney, withdrawn from the active toils of the chase; cheers on his hunting-dogs mostly from afar: Diderot, a beagle of the first vehemence, he has rather to restrain. That all extant and possible Theology be abolished, will not content the fell Denis, as surely it might have done; the Patriarch must address him a friendly admonition on his Atheism, and make him eat it again.

D'Alembert, too, we may consider as one known; of all the Philosophe fraternity, he who in speech and conduct agrees best with our English notions; an independent, patient, prudent man; of great faculty, especially of great clearness and method; famous in Mathematics; no less so, to the wonder of some, in the intellectual provinces of Literature. A foolish wonder; as if the Thinker could think only on one thing, and not on *any* thing he had a call towards. D'Alembert's *Mélanges*, as the impress of a genuine spirit, in peculiar position and probation, have still instruction for us, both of head and heart. The man lives retired here, in questionable seclusion with his Espinasse; incurs the suspicion of apostasy, because in the *Encyclopédie* he saw no Evangile and celestial Revelation, but only a huge Folio Dictionary; and would not venture life and limb on it, without a 'consideration.' Sad was it to Diderot to see his

fellow-voyager make for port, and disregard signals, when the sea-krakens rose round him! They did not quarrel; were always friendly when they met, but latterly met only at the rate of 'once in the two years.' D'Alembert died when Diderot was on his death-bed: 'My friend,' said the latter to the news-bringer, 'a great light is gone out.'

Hovering in the distance, with woe-struck, minatory air, stern-beckoning, comes Rousseau. Poor Jean Jacques! Alternately deified, and cast to the dogs; a deep-minded, high-minded, even noble, yet wofully misarranged mortal, with all misformations of Nature intensified to the verge of madness by unfavorable Fortune. A lonely man; his life a long soliloquy! The wandering Tiresias of the time; — in whom, however, did lie prophetic meaning, such as none of the others offer. Whereby indeed it might partly be that the world went to such extremes about him; that, long after his departure, we have seen one whole nation worship him, and a Burke, in the name of another, class him with the offscourings of the earth. His true character, with its lofty aspirings and poor performings; and how the spirit of the man worked so wildly, like celestial fire in a thick dark element of chaos, and shot forth ethereal radiance, all-piercing lightning, yet could not illuminate, was quenched and did not conquer: this, with what lies in it, may now be pretty accurately appreciated. Let his history teach all whom it concerns, to '*harden* themselves against the ills which Mother Nature will try them with;' to seek within their own soul what the world must for ever deny them; and say composedly to the Prince of the Power of this lower Earth and Air: Go thou thy way; I go mine!

Rousseau and Diderot were early friends: who has forgotten how Jean Jacques walked to the Castle of Vincennes, where Denis (for heretical Metaphysics, and irreverence to the Strumpetocracy) languishes in durance; and devised his

first Literary Paradox on the road thither? Their Quarrel, which, as a fashionable hero of the time complains, occupied all Paris, is likewise famous enough. The reader recollects that heroical epistle of Diderot to Grimm on that occasion, and the sentence: 'Oh, my friend, let us continue virtuous, for the state of those who have ceased to be so makes me shudder.' But is the reader aware what the fault of him 'who had ceased to be so' was? A series of ravelments and squabbling grudges, 'which,' says Mademoiselle with much simplicity, 'the Devil himself could not understand.' Alas, the Devil well understood it, and Tyrant Grimm too did, who had the ear of Diderot, and poured into it his own unjust, almost abominable spleen. Clean paper need not be soiled with a foul story, where the main actor is only 'Tyran le Blanc;' enough to know that the 'continually virtuous' Tyrant found Diderot 'extremely impressionable;' so poor Jean Jacques must go his ways (with both the scath and the scorn), and among his many woes bear this also. Diderot is not blamable; pitiable rather; for who would be a pipe, which not Fortune only, but any Sycophant may play tunes on?

Of this same Tyrant Grimm, desiring to speak peaceably, we shall say little. The man himself is less remarkable than his fortune. Changed times indeed, since the threadbare German Bursch quitted Ratisbon, with the sound of cat-calls in his ears, the condemned 'Tragedy, Banise,' in his pocket; and fled southward, on a thin travelling-tutorship; — since Rousseau met you, Herr Grimm, 'a young man described as seeking a situation, and whose appearance indicated the pressing necessity he was in of soon finding one!' Of a truth, you have flourished since then, Herr Grimm: his introductions of you to Diderot, to Holbach, to the black-locked D'Epinaÿ, where not only you are wormed in, but he is wormed out, have turned to somewhat; the

Thread-bare has become well-napped, and got ruffles and jewel-rings, and walks abroad in sword and bag-wig, and lackers his brass countenance with rouge, and so (as *Tyras le Blanc*) recommends himself to the fair; and writes Parisian Philosophe-gossip to the Hyperborean Kings, and his 'Grimm's Leaves,' copied 'to the number of twenty,' are bread of life to many; and cringes here, and domineers there; and lives at his ease in the Creation, in an effective *tendresse* with the D'Epinau, husband or custom of the country not objecting! — Poor Börne, the new German flying Sansculotte, feels his mouth water, at Paris, over these flesh-spots of Grimm; reflecting with what heart he too could write 'Leaves,' and be fed thereby. Börne, my friend, those days are done! While Northern Courts were a 'Lunar Versailles,' it was well to have an Uriel stationed in their Sun there; but of all spots in this Universe (hardly excepting Tophet) Paris now is the one we at court could best *dispense* with news from; never more, in these centuries, will a Grimm be missioned thither; never a 'Leaf of Börne' be blown court-wards by any wind. As for the Grimm, we can see that he was a man made to rise in the world: a fair, even handsome outfit of talent, wholly marketable; skill in music, and the like, encyclopedical readiness in all ephemera; saloon-wit, a trenchant, unhesitating head; above all, a heart ever in the right place,—in the market-place, namely, and marked 'for sale to the highest bidder.' Really a methodical, adroit, managing man. By 'hero-worship,' and the cunning appliance of alternate sweet and sullen, he has brought Diderot to be his patient milch-cow, whom he can milk an Essay from, a Volume from, when he lists. Victorious Grimm! He even escaped those same 'horrors of the French Revolution' (with loss of his ruffles); and was seen at the Court of Gotha, sleek and well to live, within the memory of man.

The world has heard of M. le Chevalier de Saint-Lambert; considerable in Literature, in Love, and War. He is here again, singing the frostiest Pastorals; happily, however, only in the distance, and the jingle of his wires soon dies away. Of another Chevalier, worthy Jaucourt, be the name mentioned, and little more: he digs unweariedly, mole-wise, in the Encyclopedic field, catching what he can, and shuns the light. Then there is Helvetius, the well-fed Farmer-general, enlivening his sybaritic life with metaphysic paradoxes. His revelations, *De l'Homme* and *De l'Esprit* breathe the freest Philosophe-spirit, with Philanthropy and Sensibility enough: the greater is our astonishment to find him here so ardent a Preserver of the Game:

'This Madame de Nocé,' writes Diderot, treating of the Bourbonne Hot-springs, 'is a neighbor of Helvetius. She told us, the Philosopher was the unhappiest man in the world on his estates. He is surrounded there by neighbors and peasants who detest him. They break the windows of his mansion, plunder his grounds by night, cut his trees, throw down his walls, tear up his spiked paling. He dare not go to shoot a hare, without a train of people to guard him. You will ask me, how it has come to pass? By a boundless zeal for his game. M. Fagon, his predecessor, used to guard the grounds with two keepers and two guns. Helvetius has twenty-four, and cannot do it. These men have a small premium for every poacher they can catch; and there is no sort of mischief they will not cause to get more and more of these. Besides, they are themselves so many hired poachers. Again, the border of his woods was inhabited by a set of poor people, who had got huts there; he has caused all the huts to be swept away. It is these, and such acts of repeated tyranny, that have raised him enemies of all kinds; and the more insolent, says Madame de Nocé, as they have discovered that the worthy Philosopher is a coward. I would not have his fine estate of Voré as a present, had I to live there in these perpetual alarms. What profits he draws from that mode of management I know not: but he is alone there; he is hated,— he is in fear. Ah! how much wiser was our lady Geoffrin, when

speaking of a lawsuit that tormented her, she said to me, "Get done with my lawsuit; they want money? I have it. Give them money. What better use can I make of my money than to buy peace with it?" In Helvetius's place, I would have said, "They kill me a few hares and rabbits, let them be doing. These poor creatures have no shelter but my forest, let them stay there." I should have reasoned like M. Fagon, and been adored like him.'

Alas! are not Helvetius's preserves, at this hour, all broken up, and lying desecrated? Neither can the others, in what latitude and longitude soever, remain eternally impregnable. But if a Rome was once saved by geese, need we wonder that an England is lost by partridges? We are sons of Eve, who bartered Paradise for an apple.

But to return to Paris and its Philosophe Church-militant. Here is a Marmontel, an active subaltern thereof, who fights in a small way, through the *Mercure*; and, in rose-pink romance-pictures, strives to celebrate the 'moral sublime.' An Abbé Morellet, busy with the Corn Laws, walks in at intervals, stooping, shrunk together, 'as if to get nearer himself' (*pour être plus près de lui-même*). The rogue Galiani alternates between Naples and Paris; Galiani, by good luck, has 'for ever settled the question of the Corn Laws;' an idle fellow otherwise; a spiritual Lazzarone; full of frolics, wanton quips, anti-jesuit *gesta*, and wild Italian humor; the sight of his swart, sharp face is the signal for Laughter,—in which, indeed, the Man himself has unhappily evaporated, leaving no result behind him.

Of the Baron d'Holbach thus much may be said, that both at Paris and at Grandval he gives good dinners. His two or three score volumes of Atheistic Philosophism, which he published (at his own expense), may now be forgotten and even forgiven. A purse open and deep, a heart kindly-disposed, quiet, sociable, or even friendly; these, with excellent wines, gain him a literary elevation, which no thinking

faculty he had could have pretended to. An easy, laconic gentleman ; of grave politeness ; apt to lose temper at play ; yet, on the whole, good-humored, eupeptic, and eupractic : there may he live and let live.

Nor is heaven's last gift to man wanting here ; the natural sovereignty of women. Your Châtelets, Epinays, Espinasses, Geoffrins, Deffands, will play their part too ; there shall, in all senses, be not only Philosophers, but Philosophesses. Strange enough is the figure these women make : good souls, it was a strange world for them. What with metaphysics and flirtation, system of nature, fashion of dress-caps, vanity, curiosity, jealousy, atheism, rheumatism, *traités*, *bouts-rimés*, noble-sentiments, and rouge-pots, — the vehement female intellect sees itself sailing on a chaos, where a wiser might have wavered, if not foundered. For the rest, (as an accurate observer has remarked,) they become a sort of Lady-Presidents in that society ; attain great influence ; and, imparting as well as receiving, communicate to all that is done or said somewhat of their own peculiar tone.

In a world so wide and multifarious, this little band of Philosophes, acting and speaking as they did, had a most various reception to expect ; votes divided to the uttermost. The mass of mankind, busy enough with their own work, of course heeded them only when forced to do it ; these, meanwhile, form the great neutral element, in which the battle has to fight itself ; the two hosts, according to their several success, to recruit themselves. Of the Higher Classes, it appears, the small proportion not wholly occupied in eating and dressing, and therefore open to such a question, are in their favor, — strange as to us it may seem ; the spectacle of a Church pulled down is, in stagnant times, amusing ; nor do the generality, on either side, yet see whither ulteriorly it is tending. The Reading World, which was then more

than now the intelligent, inquiring world, reads eagerly (as it will ever do) whatsoever skilful, sprightly, reasonable-looking word is written for it; enjoying, appropriating the same; perhaps without fixed judgment, or deep care of any kind. Careful enough, fixed enough, on the other hand, is the Jesuit Brotherhood; in these days sick unto death; but only the bitterer and angrier for that. Dangerous are the death-convulsions of an expiring Sorbonne, ever and anon filling Paris with agitation: it behoves your Philosophe to walk warily, and, in many a critical circumstance, to weep with the one cheek, and smile with the other. Nor is Literature itself wholly Philosophe: apart from the Jesuit regulars, in their Trevoux Journals, Sermons, Episcopal Charges, and other camps or casemates, a considerable Guerrilla, or Reviewer force (consisting, as usual, of smugglers, unemployed destitute persons, deserters who have been refused promotion, and other the like broken characters) has organized itself, and maintains a harassing bush-warfare: of these the chieftain is Fréron, once in tolerable repute with the world, had he not, carrying too high a head, struck his foot on stones, and stumbled. By the continual depreciating of talent grown at length undeniable, he has sunk low enough: Voltaire, in the *Ecossaise*, can bring him on the stage, and have him killed by laughter, under the name, sufficiently recognisable, of *Wasp*, (in French, *Frèlon*). Another Empecenador, still more hateful, is Palissot, who has written and got acted a Comedy of *Les Philosophes*, at which the Parisians, spite of its dulness, have also laughed. To laugh at us, the so meritorious us! Heard mankind ever the like? For poor Palissot, had he fallen into Philosophe hands, serious bodily tar-and-feathering might have been apprehended: as it was, they do what the pen, with its gall and copperas, can; invoke Heaven and Earth to witness the treatment of divine Philosophy; — with which view, in particular, friend

Diderot seems to have composed his *Rameau's Nephew*, wherein Palissot and others of his kidney are (figuratively speaking) mauled and mangled, and left not in dog's likeness. So divided was the world, Literary, Courtly, Miscellaneous, on this matter: it was a confused anomalous time.

Among its more notable anomalies may be reckoned the relations of French Philosophism to foreign Crowned Heads. In Prussia there is a Philosophe King; in Russia a Philosophe Empress: the whole North swarms with kinglets and queenlets of the like temper. Nay, as we have seen, they entertain their special ambassador in Philosophedom, their lion's-provider to furnish spiritual Philosophe-provender; and pay him well. The great Frederic, the great Catherine are as nursing-father and nursing-mother to this new Church of Antichrist; in all straits, ready with money, honorable royal asylum, help of every sort, — which, however, except in the money-shape, the wiser of our Philosophes are shy of receiving. Voltaire had tried it in the asylum-shape, and found it unsuitable; D'Alembert and Diderot decline repeating the experiment. What miracles are wrought by the arch-magician Time! Could these Frederics, Catherines, Josephs, have looked forward some three-score years; and beheld the Holy Alliance in conference at Laybach! But so goes the world: kings are not seraphic doctors, with gift of prescience, but only men, with common eyesight, participating in the influences of their generation: kings too, like all mortals, have a certain love of knowledge; still more infallibly, a certain desire of applause; a certain delight in mortifying one another. Thus what is persecuted here finds refuge there; and ever, one way or other, the New works itself out full-formed from under the Old; nay the Old, as in this instance, sits sedulously hatching a cockatrice that will one day devour it.

No less anomalous, confused, and contradictory is the relation of the Philosophes to their own Government. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, their relation to Society being still so undecided; and the Government, which might have endeavored to adjust and preside over this, being itself in a state of anomaly, death-lethargy, and doting decrepitude? The true conduct and position for a French Sovereign towards French Literature, in that country, might have been, though perhaps of all things the most important, one of the most difficult to discover and accomplish. What chance was there that a thick-blooded Louis Quinze, from his *Parc aux Cerfs*, should discover it, should have the faintest inkling of it? His 'peaceable soul' was quite otherwise employed: Minister after Minister must consult his own several insight, his own whim, above all his own ease: and so the whole business, now when we look on it, comes out one of the most botched, piebald, inconsistent, lamentable, and even ludicrous objects in the history of State-craft. Alas, necessity has no law: the statesman, without light, perhaps even without eyes, whom Destiny nevertheless constrains to govern (what is still called governing) his nation in a time of World-Downfall, what shall he do, but if so may be, collect the taxes, prevent (in some degree) murder and arson; and for the rest, wriggle hither and thither, return upon his steps, clout up old rents and open new,—and, on the whole, eat his victuals, and let the devil take it? Of the pass to which Statesmanship had come in respect of Philosophism, let this one fact be evidence instead of a thousand. M. de Malesherbes writes to warn Diderot that next day he will give orders to have all his papers seized.—Impossible! answers Diderot: *juste ciel!* how shall I sort them, where shall I hide them, within four-and-twenty hours? *Send them to me*, answers M. de Malesherbes! Thither accordingly they go, under lock and seal; and the hungry catchpoles find nothing but empty drawers.

The *Encyclopédie* was set forth first 'with approbation' and *Privilège du Roi*; next, it was stopped by Authority; next, the public murmuring, suffered to proceed; then again, positively for the last time, stopped, — and, no whit the less, printed, and written, and circulated, under thin disguises, some hundred and fifty printers working at it with open doors, all Paris knowing of it, only Authority winking hard. Choiseul, in his resolute way, had now shut the eyes of Authority, and kept them shut. Finally, to crown the whole matter, a copy of the prohibited Book lies in the King's private library: and owes favor, and a withdrawal of the prohibition, to the foolish accident:

'One of Louis Fifteenth's domestics told me,' says Voltaire, 'that once, the king his master supping, in private circle (*en petite compagnie*), at Trianon, the conversation turned first on the chase, and from this on gunpowder. Some one said that the best powder was made of sulphur, saltpetre, and charcoal, in equal parts. The Duc de la Vallière, with better knowledge, maintained that for good powder there must be but one part of sulphur, one of charcoal, with five of saltpetre, well filtered, well evaporated, well crystallized.

"It is pleasant," said the Duc de Nivernois, "that we who daily amuse ourselves with killing partridges in the Park of Versailles, and sometimes with killing men, or getting ourselves killed, on the frontiers, should not know what that same work of killing is done with."

"Alas! we are in the like case with all things in this world," answered Madame de Pompadour, "I know not what the rouge I put upon my cheeks is made of; you would bring me to a nonplus, if you asked how the silk hose I wear are manufactured." "'Tis a pity," said the Duc de la Vallière, "that his majesty confiscated our *Dictionnaires Encyclopédiques*, which cost us our hundred pistoles; we should soon find the decision of all our questions there." The King justified the act of confiscation; he had been informed that these twenty-one folio volumes, to be found lying on all ladies' toilettes, were the most pernicious things in the world for the king-

dom of France ; he had resolved to look for himself if this were true, before suffering the book to circulate. Towards the end of the repast, he sends three of his valets to bring him a copy ; they enter, struggling under seven volumes each. The article *powder* is turned up ; the Duc de la Vallière is found to be right : and soon Madame de Pompadour learns the difference between the old *rouge d'Espagne* with which the ladies of Madrid colored their cheeks, and the *rouge des dames* of Paris. She finds that the Greek and Roman ladies painted with a purple extracted from the *murex*, and that consequently our scarlet is the purple of the ancients ; that there is more purple in the *rouge d'Espagne*, and more cochineal in that of France. She learns how stockings are woven ; the stocking-frame described there fills her with amazement. " Ah, what a glorious book ! " cried she. " Sire, did you confiscate this magazine of all useful things, that you might have it wholly to yourself, then, and be the one learned man in your kingdom ? " Each threw himself on the volumes, like the daughters of Lycomedes on the jewels of Ulysses ; each found forthwith whatever he was seeking. Some who had lawsuits were surprised to see the decision of them there. The King reads there all the rights of his crown. " Well, in truth " (*mais vraiment*), said he, " I know not why they said so much ill of the book. " " Ah, Sire, " said the Duc de Nivernois, " does not your majesty see, " &c. &c. '

In such a confused world, under such unheard of circumstances, must friend Diderot ply his editorial labors. No sinecure is it ! Penetrating into all subjects and sciences ; waiting and rummaging in all libraries, laboratories ; nay, for many years, fearlessly diving into all manner of workshops, unscrewing stocking looms, and even working thereon (that the department of *Arts and Trades* might be perfect) ; then seeking out contributors, and flattering them, quickening their laziness, getting payment for them ; quarrelling with Bookseller and Printer ; bearing all miscalculations, misfortunes, misdoings of so many fallible men (for there all at last lands) on his single back : surely this was enough, with-

out having farther to do battle with the beagles of Office, perilously withstand them, expensively sop them, toilsomely elude them! Nevertheless, he perseveres, and will not but persevere;—less, perhaps, with the deliberate courage of a Man, who has compared result and outlay, than with the passionate obstinacy of a Woman, who, having made up her mind, will shrink at no ladder of ropes, but ride with her lover, though all the four Elements gainsay it. At every new concussion from the Powers, he roars; say rather, shrieks, for there is a female shrillness in it; proclaiming, Murder! Robbery! Rape! invoking men and angels; meanwhile proceeds unweariedly with the printing. It is a hostile building up (not of the Holy Temple at Jerusalem, but of the Unholy one, at Paris): thus must Diderot, like Ezra, come to strange extremities; and every workman works with his trowel in one hand, in the other his weapon of war; that so, in spite of all Tiglaths, the work go on, and the top-stone of it be brought out with shouting.

Shouting! Ah! what faint broken quaver is that in the shout; as of a man that shouted with the throat only, and inwardly was bowed down with dispiritment? It is Diderot's faint broken quaver; he is sick and heavy of soul. Scandalous enough: the Goth, Lebreton, loving, as he says, his head better even than his profit, has for years gone privily at dead of night, to the finished Encyclopedic proof-sheets, and there with nefarious pen, scratched out whatever to *him* seemed dangerous; filling up the gap as *he* could, or merely letting it fill itself up. Heaven and Earth! Not only are the finer Philosophe sallies mostly cut out,—but hereby has the work become a sunken, hitching, ungainly mass, little better than a monstrosity. Goth! Hun! sacrilegious Attila of the book-trade! Oh, surely for this treason the hottest of Dante's Purgatory were too temperate. Infamous art thou, Lebreton, to all ages,—that read the *Encyclopédie*;

and Philosophes not yet in swaddling-clothes shall gnash their teeth over thee, and spit upon thy memory. — Lebreton pockets both the abuse and the cash, and sleeps sound in a whole skin. The able Editor could never be said to get the better of it.

Now, however, it is time that, quitting generalities, we go, in this fine autumn weather, to Holbach's at Grandval, where the hardworked, but unwearied Encyclopedist, with plenty of ink and writing paper, is sure to be. Ever in the Holbach household, his arrival is a holiday; if a quarrel spring up, it is only because he will not come, or too soon goes away. A man of social talent, with such a tongue as Diderot's, in a mansion where the only want to be guarded against was that of wit, could not be other than welcome. He composes Articles there, and walks, and dines, and plays cards, and talks; languishingly waits letters from his Voland, copiously writes to her. It is in these copious love-despatches that the whole matter is so graphically painted: we have an Asmodeus' view of the interior life there, and live it over again with him. The Baroness in red silk, tempered with snow-white gauze, is beauty and grace itself; her old Mother is a perfect romp of fifteen, or younger; the house is lively with company: the Baron, as we said, speaks little, but to the purpose; is seen sometimes with his pipe, in dressing gown and red slippers; otherwise the best of landlords. Remarkable figures drop in: generals disabled at Quebec; fashionable gentlemen rusticated in the neighborhood; Abbés, such as Galiani, Raynal, Morellet; perhaps Grimm and his Epinay; other Philosophes and Philosophesses. Guests too of less dignity, acting rather as butts than as bowmen: for it is the part of every one either to have wit, or to be the cause of having it.

Among these latter, omitting many, there is one whom, for country's sake, we must particularize; an ancient per-

sonage, named Hoop (Hope), whom they call *Père Hoop*; by birth a Scotchman. Hoop seems to be a sort of fixture at Grandval, not bowman, therefore butt; and is shot at for his lodging. A most shrivelled, wind-dried, dyspeptic, chill-shivering individual; Professor of Life-weariness; sits dozing there, — dozes there, however, with one eye open. He submits to be called *Mummy*, without a shrug; cowers over the fire, at the warmest corner. Yet is there a certain sardonic subacidity in *Père Hoop*; when he slowly unlocks his leathern jaw, we hear him with a sort of pleasure. Hoop has been in various countries and situations; in that croaking metallic voice of his, can tell a distinct story. Diderot apprehended he would one day hang himself: if so, what Museum now holds his remains? The Parent Hoops, it would seem, still dwelt in the city of Edinburgh; he, the second son, as Bourdeaux Merchant, having helped them thither, out of some proud Manor-house no longer weather-tight. Can any ancient person of that city give us trace of such a man? It must be inquired into. One only of Father Hoop's reminiscences we shall report, as the highest instance on record of a national virtue: At the battle of Prestonpans, a kinsman of Hoop, a gentleman with gold rings on his fingers, stands fighting and fencing for life with a rough Highlander; the Highlander, by some clever stroke, whisks the jewelled hand clear off, and then — picks it up from the ground, sticks it in his sporrán for future leisure, and fights on! The force of *Virtue** could no further go.

It cannot be uninteresting to the general reader to learn, that in the last days of October, in the year of grace 1770, Denis Diderot over-ate himself (as he was in the habit of

* *Virtus* (properly *manliness*, the chief duty of man) meant, in old Rome, *power of fighting*; means, in modern Rome, *Connoisseurship*; in Scotland, *Thrift*. — ED.

doing), at Grandval; and had an obstinate 'indigestion of bread.' He writes to Grimm that it is the worst of all indigestions: to his fair Voland that it lay more than fifteen hours on his stomach, with a weight like to crush the life out of him; would neither *remonter* nor *descendre*; nor indeed stir a hairsbreadth for warm water, *de quelque côté que je la* (the warm water) *prisse*.

*Clysterium donare,
Ensuite purgare!*

Such things, we grieve to say, are of frequent occurrence: the Holbachian table is all too plenteous; there are cooks too, we know, who boast of their diabolic ability to cause the patient, by successive intensations of their art, to eat with new and ever new appetite, till he explode on the spot. Diderot writes to his fair one, that his clothes will hardly button, that he is thus 'stuffed,' and thus; and so indigestion succeeds indigestion. Such Narratives fill the heart of sensibility with amazement; nor to the woes that chequer this imperfect, caco-gastric state of existence, is the tear wanting.

The society at Grandval cannot be accounted very dull: nevertheless let no man regretfully compare it with any neighborhood he may have drawn by lot, in the present day; or even with any no-neighborhood, if that be his affliction. The gayety at Grandval was of the kind that could not last. Were it not that some Belief is left in Mankind, how could the sport of emitting Unbelief continue? On which ground, indeed, Swift, in his masterly argument 'Against abolishing the Christian Religion,' urges, not without pathos, that innumerable men of wit, enjoying a comfortable status by virtue of jokes on the Catechism, would hereby be left without pabulum, the staff of life cut away from their hand. The Holbachs were blind to this consideration; and joked away,

as if it would last for ever. So too with regard to Obscene Talk : where were the merit of a riotous Mother-in-law, saying and doing, in public, these never-imagined scandals, had not a cunningly-devised fable of Modesty been set afloat ; were there not some remnants of Modesty still extant among the unphilosophic classes ? The Samoeids (according to Travellers) have few double meanings ; among stall cattle the witty effect of such is lost altogether. Be advised, then, foolish old woman ! ' Burn not thy bed ' ; the light of it will soon go out, and then ? — Apart from the common household topics, which the ' daily household epochs ' bring with them everywhere, two main elements, we regret to say, come to light in the conversation at Grandval ; these, with a spicing of Noble-sentiment, are, unfortunately, Blasphemy and Bawdry. Whereby, at this distance, the whole matter grows to look poor, and effete ; and we can honestly rejoice that it all *has* been, and need not be again.

But now, hastening back to Paris, friend Diderot finds proof-sheets enough on his desk, and notes, and invitations, and applications from distressed men of letters ; nevertheless runs over, in the first place, to seek news from the Volland ; will then see what is to be done. He writes much ; talks and visits much : besides the Savans, Artists, spiritual Notabilities, domestic or migratory, of the period, he has a liberal allowance of unnotable Associates ; especially a whole bevy of young or oldish, mostly rather spiteful Women ; in whose gossip he is perfect. We hear the rustling of their silks, the clack of their pretty tongues, tittle-tattle ' like their patens when they walk ; ' and the sound of it, fresh as yesterday, through this long vista of Time, has become significant, almost prophetic. Life could not hang heavy on Diderot's hands : he is a vivid, open, all-embracing creature ; could have found occupation anywhere ; has occupation here forced on him, enough and to spare. ' He had much to do, and did

much of his own,' says Mademoiselle; 'yet three-fourths of his life were employed in helping whomsoever had need of his purse, of his talents, of his management: his study, for the five and twenty years I knew it, was like a well-frequented shop, where, as one customer went, another came.' He could not find in his heart to refuse any one. He has reconciled Brothers, sought out Tutorages, settled Lawsuits; solicited Pensions; advised, and refreshed hungry Authors, instructed ignorant ones: he has written advertisements for incipient helpless Grocers; he once wrote the dedication (to a pious Duc d'Orleans) of a lampoon against himself, — and so raised some five and twenty gold louis, for the famishing lampooner. For all these things, let not the light Diderot want his reward with us! Other reward, except from himself, he got none; but often the reverse; as in his little Drama, *La Pièce et le Prologue*, may be seen humorously and good-humoredly set forth under his own hand. Indeed, his clients, by a vast majority, were of the scoundrel species; in any case, Denis knew well, that to expect gratitude, is to deserve ingratitude. — 'Rivière well contented' (hear Mademoiselle) 'now thanks my father, both for his services and his advices; sits chatting another quarter of an hour, and then takes leave; my father shows him down. As they are on the stairs, Rivière stops, turns round, and asks: "M. Diderot, are you acquainted with Natural History?" — "Why a little, I know an aloe from a sago; a pigeon from a colibri." — "Do you know the history of the *Formica-leo*?" — "No." — "It is a little insect of great industry: it digs a hole in the ground like a reversed funnel; covers the top with fine light sand; entices foolish insects to it; takes them, sucks them, then says to them: M. Diderot, I have the honor to wish you good day." My father stood laughing like to split at this adventure.'

Thus, amid labor and recreation; questionable Literature,

unquestionable Loves; eating and digesting (better or worse); in gladness and vexation of spirit, in laughter ending in sighs, does Diderot pass his days. He has been hard toiled, but then well flattered, and is nothing of a hypochondriac. What little service renown can do him, may now be considered as done: he is in the centre of the literature, science, art, of his nation; not numbered among the Academical Forty, yet in his heterodox heart, entitled to be almost proud of the exclusion; successful in Criticism, successful in Philosophism, nay (highest of sublunary glories), successful in the Theatre; vanity may whisper, if she please, that, excepting the unattainable Voltaire alone, he is the first of Frenchmen. High heads are in correspondence with him the low-born; from Catherine the Empress to Philidor the Chess-player, he is in honored relation with all manner of men; with scientific Buffons, Eulers, D'Alemberts; with artistic Falconnets, Vanloos, Riccobonis, Garricks. He was ambitious of being a Philosophe; and now the whole fast-growing sect of Philosophes look up to him as their head and mystagogue. To Denis Diderot, when he stepped out of the Langres Diligence at the College d'Harcourt; or afterwards, when he walked in the subterranean shades of Rascaldom, with uneasy steps over the burning marle, a much smaller destiny would have seemed desirable. Within doors, again, matters stand rather disjointed, as surely they might well do: however, Madame Diderot is always true and assiduous; if one Daughter talk enthusiastically, and at length (though her father has written the *Religieuse*) die mad in a convent, the other, a quick, intelligent, graceful girl, is waxing into womanhood, and takes after the father's Philosophism, leaving the mother's Piety far enough aside. To which elements of mixed good and evil from without, add this so incalculably favorable one from within, that of all literary men Diderot is the least a self-listener; none of your puz-

zing, repenting, forecasting, earnest-bilious temperaments, but sanguineous-lymphatic every fibre of him, living lightly from hand to mouth, in a world mostly painted rose-color.

The *Encyclopédie*, after nigh thirty years of endeavor (to which only the Siege of Troy may offer some faint parallel), is finished. Scattered Compositions of all sorts, printed or manuscript, making many Volumes, lie also finished; the *Philosophe* has reaped no golden harvest from them. He is getting old: can live out of debt, but is still poor. Thinking to settle his daughter in marriage, he must resolve to sell his Library; money is not otherwise to be raised. Here, however, the Northern Cleopatra steps imperially forward; purchases his Library for its full value; gives him a handsome pension, as librarian to keep it for her; and pays him moreover fifty years thereof by advance in ready money. This we call imperial (in a world so necessitous as ours), though the whole munificence did not (we find) cost above three thousand pounds; a trifle to the Empress of all the Russias. In fact, it is about the sum your first-rate king eats, as board-wages, in one day; who, however, has seldom sufficient: not to speak of charitable overplus. In admiration of his Empress, the vivid *Philosophe* is now louder than ever; he even breaks forth into (rather husky) singing. Who shall blame him? The Northern Cleopatra (whom, in any case, he must regard with other eyes than we) has stretched out a generous, helping hand to him, where otherwise there was no help, but only hindrance and injury: all men will, and should, more or less, obey the proverb, to praise the fair as their own market goes in it.

One of the last great scenes in Diderot's Life, is his personal visit to this Benefactress. There is but one Letter from him with Petersburg for date, and that of ominous brevity. The *Philosophe* was of open, unheedful, free-and-easy disposition; Prince and Polisson were singularly alike to him;

it was 'hail fellow well met,' with every Son of Adam, be his clothes of one stuff or the other. Such a man could be no court-sycophant, was ill calculated to succeed at court. We can imagine that the Neva-colic, and the character of the Neva-water, were not the only things hurtful to his nerves there. For King Denis, who had dictated such wonderful anti-regalities in the Abbé Raynal's *History*; * and himself, in a moment of sibylism, emitted that surprising announcement (surpassing all yet uttered, or utterable, in the Tyrtæan way) how

*Ses mains (the freeman's) ourderaient les entrailles du prêtre,
Au défaut d'un cordon, pour étrangler les rois ;*

for such a one, the climate of the Neva must have had something oppressive in it. The *entrailles du prêtre* were, indeed, much at his service here (could he get clutch of them); but only for musical philosophe fiddle-strings; nowise for a

* 'But who *dare* stand for this?' would Diderot exclaim. 'I will! I!' eagerly responded the Abbé. 'Do but proceed.' (*A la Mémoire de Diderot*, by De Meister). — Was the following one of the passages?

'Happily these perverse instructors (of Kings) are chastised, sooner or later, by the ingratitude and contempt of their pupils. Happily, these pupils too, miserable in the bosom of grandeur, are tormented all their life by a deep *ennui*, which they cannot banish from their palaces. Happily, the religious prejudices, which have been planted in their souls, return on them to affright them. Happily, the mournful silence of their people, teaches them, from time to time, the deep hatred that is borne them. Happily, they are too cowardly to despise that hatred. Happily (*heureusement*), after a life which no mortal, not even the meanest of their subjects, would accept, if he knew all its wretchedness, they find black inquietude, terror and despair, seated on the pillow of their death-bed (*les noires inquiétudes, la terreur et le désespoir assis au chevet de leur lit de mort*).' — Surely, 'kings have poor times of it, to be run foul of by the like of thee!'

cordon! Nevertheless, Cleopatra is an uncommon woman (or rather an uncommon man), and can put up with many things; and, in a gentle, skilful way, make the crooked straight. As her Philosophe presents himself in common apparel, she sends him a splendid court-suit; and as he can now enter in a civilized manner, she sees him often, confers with him largely: by happy chance, Grimm too at length arrives; and the winter passes without accident. Returning home in triumph, he can express himself contented, charmed with his reception; has mineral specimens, and all manner of hyperborean memorials for friends; unheard-of-things to tell; how he crossed the bottomless, half-thawed Dwina, with the water boiling up round his wheels, the ice bending like leather, yet crackling like mere ice, — and shuddered, and got through safe; how he was carried, coach and all, into the ferry-boat at Mittau, on thirty wild men's backs, who floundered in the mud, and nigh broke his shoulder-blade; how he investigated Holland, and had conversed with Empresses, and High Mightinesses, and principalities and powers, and so seen, and conquered (for his own spiritual behoof) several of the Seven Wonders.

But, alas! his health is broken; old age is knocking at the gate, like an importunate creditor, who has warrant for entering. The radiant, lightly-bounding soul is now getting all dim, and stiff, and heavy with sleep; Diderot too must adjust himself, for the hour draws nigh. These last years he passes retired and private, not idle or miserable. Philosophy or Philosophism has nowise lost its charm; whatsoever so much as calls itself Philosopher can interest him. Thus poor Seneca (on occasion of some new Version of his Works) having come before the public, and been roughly dealt with, Diderot, with a long, last, concentrated effort, writes his *Vie de Sénèque*; struggling to make the hollow solid. Which, alas! after all his tinkering still

sounds hollow ; and notable Seneca, so wistfully desirous to stand well with Truth, and yet not ill with Nero, is and remains only our perhaps niceliest-proportioned Half-and-half, the plausiblest Plausible on record ; no great man, no true man, no man at all ; yet how much lovelier than such, — as the mild-spoken, tolerating, charity-sermoning, immaculate Bishop Dogbolt, to a rude, self-helping, sharp-tongued Apostle Paul ! Under which view, indeed, Seneca (though surely erroneously, for the origin of the thing was different) has been called, in this generation, ‘ the father of all such as wear shovel-hats.’

The *Vie de Sénèque*, as we said, was Diderot’s last effort. It remains only to be added of him that he too died ; a lingering but quiet death, which took place on the 30th of July, 1784. He once quotes from Montaigne the following, as Skeptic’s viaticum : ‘ I plunge stupidly, head foremost, into this dumb Deep, which swallows me, and chokes me, in a moment, — full of insipidity and indolence. Death, which is but a quarter of an hour’s suffering, without consequence and without injury, does not require peculiar precepts.’ It was Diderot’s allotment to die with all due ‘ stupidity : ’ he was leaning on his elbows ; had eaten an apricot two minutes before, and answered his wife’s remonstrances with : *Mais que diable de mal veux-tu que cela me fasse ?* (How the deuce can that hurt me ?) She spoke again, and he answered not. His House, which the curious will visit when they go to Paris, was in the Rue Taranne, at the intersection thereof with the Rue Saint-Benoît. The dust that was once his Body went to mingle with the common earth, in the church of Saint-Roch ; his Life, the wondrous manifold Force that was in him, that was He, — returned to ETERNITY, and is there, and continues there !

Two things, as we saw, are celebrated of Diderot. First,

that he had the most encyclopedical head ever seen in this world : second, that he talked as never man talked ;— properly, as never man his admirers had heard, or as no man living in Paris then. That is to say, his was at once the widest, fertilest, and readiest of minds.

With regard to the Encyclopedical Head, suppose it to mean that he was of such vivacity as to admit, and look upon with interest, almost all things which the circle of Existence could offer him ; in which sense, this exaggerated laudation, of Encyclopedism, is not without, its fraction of meaning. Of extraordinary openness and compass we must grant the mind of Diderot to be ; of a susceptibility, quick activity ; even naturally of a depth, and in its practical realized shape, of a universality, which bring it into kindred with the highest order of minds. On all forms of this wondrous Creation he can look with loving wonder ; whatsoever thing stands there, has some brotherhood with him, some beauty and meaning for him. Neither is the faculty to see and interpret wanting ; as, indeed, this faculty to *see* is inseparable from that other faculty to *look*, from that true wish to look ; moreover (under another figure), Intellect is not a *tool*, but a *hand* that can handle any tool. Nay, in Diderot we may discern a far deeper universality than that shown, or showable, in Lebreton's *Encyclopédie* ; namely, a poetical ; for, in slight gleams, this too manifests itself. A universality less of the head than of the character ; such, we say, is traceable in this man, at lowest the power to have acquired such. Your true Encyclopedical is the Homer, the Shakspeare ; every genuine Poet is a living embodied, real Encyclopedia, — in more or fewer volumes ; were his experience, his insight of details, never so limited, the whole world lies imaged as a whole within him ; whosoever has not seized the whole cannot yet speak truly (much less can he speak *musically*, which is harmoniously, con-

cordantly) of any part, but will perpetually need new guidance, rectification. The fit use of such a man is as hodman ; not feeling the plan of the edifice, let him carry stones to it ; if he *build* the smallest stone, it is likeliest to be wrong, and cannot continue there.

But the truth is, as regards Diderot, this saying of the encyclopedical head comes mainly from his having edited a Bookseller's Encyclopedia, and can afford us little direction. Looking into the man, and omitting his trade, we find him by nature gifted in a high degree with openness and versatility, yet nowise in the highest degree ; alas, in quite another degree than that. Nay, if it be meant further that in practice, as a writer and thinker, he has taken in the Appearances of Life and the World, and images them back with such freedom, clearness, fidelity, as we have not many times witnessed elsewhere, as we have not various times seen infinitely surpassed elsewhere,—this same encyclopedical praise must altogether be denied him. Diderot's habitual world, we must on the contrary say, is a half-world, distorted into looking like a whole ; it is properly, a poor, fractional, insignificant world ; partial, inaccurate, perverted from end to end. Alas, it was the destiny of the man to live as a Polemic ; to be born also in the morning tide and first splendor of the Mechanical Era ; not to know, with the smallest assurance or continuance, that in the Universe, other than a mechanical meaning could exist ; which force of destiny acting on him through his whole course, we have obtained what now stands before us : no Seer, but only possibilities of a Seer, transient irradiations of a Seer, looking through the organs of a Philosophe.

These two considerations, which indeed are properly but one (for a thinker, especially of French birth, in the Mechanical Era, could not be other than a Polemic), must never for a moment be left out of view in judging the works of

Diderot. It is a great truth, one side of a great truth, that the Man makes the Circumstances, and spiritually as well as economically, is the artificer of his own fortune. But there is another side of the same truth, that the man's circumstances are the element he is appointed to live and work in; that he by necessity takes his complexion, vesture, embodiment, from these, and is, in all practical manifestations, modified by them almost without limit; so that in another no less genuine sense, it can be said the Circumstances make the Man. Now, if it continually behoves us to insist on the former truth towards ourselves, it equally behoves us to bear in mind the latter when we judge of other men. The most gifted soul, appearing in France in the Eighteenth Century, can as little embody himself in the intellectual vesture of an Athenian Plato, as in the grammatical one; his thought can no more be Greek, than his language can. He thinks of the things belonging to the French eighteenth century, and in the dialect he has learned there; in the light, and under the conditions prescribed there. Thus, as the most original, resolute, and self-directing of all the Moderns has written: 'Let a man be but born ten years sooner, or ten years later, his whole aspect and performance shall be different.' Grant, doubtless, that a certain perennial Spirit, true for all times and all countries, can and must look through the thinking of certain men, be it in what dialect soever: understand, meanwhile, that strictly this holds only of the highest order of men, and cannot be exacted of inferior orders; among whom, if the most sedulous, loving inspection disclose any even secondary symptoms of such a Spirit; it ought to seem enough. Let us remember well that the high-gifted, high-striving Diderot was born in the point of Time and of Space, when of all uses he could turn himself to, of all dialects speak in, this of Polemical Philosophism, and no other, seemed the most promising and fittest. Let us remember too

that no earnest Man, in any Time, ever spoke what was wholly meaningless ; that, in all human convictions, much more in all human practices, there was a true side, a fraction of truth ; which fraction is precisely the thing we want to extract from them, if we want anything at all to do with them.

Such palliative considerations (which, for the rest, concern not Diderot, now departed, and indifferent to them, but only ourselves who could wish to *see* him, and not to mis-see him) are essential, we say, through our whole survey of his Opinions and Proceedings, generally so alien to our own ; but most of all in reference to his head Opinion, properly the source of all the rest, and more shocking, even horrible, to us than all the rest : we mean his Atheism. David Hume, dining once in company where Diderot was, remarked that he did not think there were any Atheists. ‘Count us,’ said a certain Monsieur——: they were eighteen. ‘Well,’ said the Monsieur——, ‘it is pretty fair if you have fished out fifteen at the first cast ; and three others who know not what to think of it.’ In fact, the case was common : your Philosophe of the first water had grown to reckon Atheism a necessary accomplishment. Gowkthraple Naigeon, as we saw, had made himself very perfect therein.

Diderot was an Atheist, then ; stranger still, a proselytizing Atheist, who esteemed the creed worth earnest reiterated preaching, and enforcement with all vigor ! The unhappy man had ‘sailed through the Universe of Worlds and found no Maker thereof ; had descended to the abysses where Being no longer casts its shadow, and felt only the rain-drops trickle down ; and seen only the gleaming rainbow of Creation, which originated from no Sun ; and heard only the everlasting storm which no one governs ; and looked upwards for the DIVINE EYE, and beheld only the black,

bottomless, glaring DEATH'S EYE-SOCKET: 'such, with all his wide voyagings, was the philosophic fortune he had realized.

Sad enough, horrible enough: yet instead of shrieking over it, or howling and Ernulphus'-cursing over it, let us, as the more profitable method, keep our composure, and inquire a little, What possibly it may mean? The whole phenomenon, as seems to us, will explain itself from the fact above insisted on, that Diderot was a Polemic of decided character, in the Mechanical Age. With great expenditure of words and froth, in arguments as waste, wild-weltering, delirious-dismal as the chaos they would demonstrate; which arguments one now knows not whether to laugh at or to weep at, and almost does both, — have Diderot and his sect perhaps made this apparent to all who examine it: That in the French System of Thought (called also the Scotch, and still familiar enough everywhere, which for want of a better title we have named the Mechanical), there is no room for a Divinity; that to him, for whom '*intellect*, or the power of knowing and believing is still synonymous with *logic*, or the mere power of arranging and communicating,' there is absolutely no proof discoverable of a Divinity; and such a man has nothing for it but either (if he be of half spirit, as is the frequent case) to trim despicably all his days between two opinions; or else (if he be of whole spirit) to anchor himself on the rock or quagmire of Atheism, — and further, should he see fit, proclaim to others that there is good riding there. So much may Diderot have demonstrated: a conclusion at which we nowise turn pale. Was it much to know that Metaphysical Speculation, by nature, whirls round in endless Maelstroms, both 'creating and swallowing — itself?' For so wonderful a self-swallowing product of the Spirit of the Time, could any result to arrive at be fitter than this of the ETERNAL No? We

thank Heaven that the result *is* finally arrived at ; and so now we can look out for something other and further. But above all things, *proof* of a God ? A *probable* God ! The smallest of Finites struggling to *prove* to itself (that is to say, if we will consider it, to picture out and arrange as diagram, and *include* within itself) the Highest Infinite ; in *which*, by hypothesis, *it* lives, and moves, and has its being ! This, we conjecture, will one day seem a much more miraculous miracle than that negative result it has arrived at, — or any other result a still absurder chance might have led it to. He who, in some singular Time of the World's History, were reduced to wander about, in stooping posture, with painfully constructed sulphur-match and farthing rushlight (as Gowkthrapple Naigeon), or smoky tar-link (as Denis Diderot), searching for the Sun, and did not find it ; were *he* wonderful and his failure ; or the singular Time, and its having put him on that search ?

Two small consequences, then, we fancy, may have followed, or be following, from poor Diderot's Atheism. First, that all speculations of the sort we call Natural-theology, endeavoring to prove the beginning of all Belief by some Belief earlier than the beginning, are barren, ineffectual, impossible ; and may, so soon as otherwise it is profitable, be abandoned. Of final causes, man, by the nature of the case, can *prove* nothing ; knows them (if he know anything of them) not by glimmering flint-sparks of Logic, but by an infinitely higher light of intuition ; never long, by Heaven's mercy, wholly eclipsed in the human soul ; and (under the name of Faith, as regards this matter) familiar to us now, historically or in conscious possession, for upwards of four thousand years. To all open men it will indeed always be a favorite contemplation, that of watching the ways of Being, how animate adjusts itself to inanimate, rational to irrational ; and this, that we name Nature, is not a desolate

phantasm of a chaos, but a wondrous existence and reality. If, moreover, in those same 'marks of design,' as he has called them, the contemplative man find new evidence of a designing Maker, be it well for him: meanwhile, surely, the still clearer evidence lay nearer home, in the contemplative man's own head that *seeks* after such! In which point of view our extant Natural-theologies, as our innumerable Evidences of the Christian Religion, and such like, may, in reference to the strange season they appear in, have an indubitable value, and be worth printing and reprinting; only let us understand for whom, and how, they are valuable; and be nowise wroth with the poor Atheist, whom they have not convinced, and could not, and should not convince.

The second consequence seems to be that this whole current hypothesis of the Universe being 'a Machine,' and then of an Architect, who constructed it, sitting as it were apart, and guiding it, and *seeing* it go, — may turn out an inanity and nonentity; not much longer tenable: with which result likewise we shall, in the quietest manner, reconcile ourselves. 'Think ye,' says Goethe, 'that God made the Universe, and then let it run round his finger (*am Finger laufen liesse*)?' On the whole, that Metaphysical hurly-burly (of our poor, jarring, self-listening Time) ought at length to compose itself: that seeking for a God *there*, and not *here*; everywhere outwardly in physical Nature, and not inwardly in our own Soul, where alone He is to be found by us, — begins to get wearisome. Above all, that 'faint possible Theism,' which now forms our common English creed, cannot be too soon swept out of the world. What is the nature of that individual, who with hysterical violence theoretically asserts a God, perhaps a revealed Symbol and Worship of God; and for the rest, in thought, word, and conduct, meet with him where you will, is found living as if his theory were some polite figure of speech, and his

theoretical God a mere distant Simulacrum, with whom he, for his part, had nothing further to do? Fool! The ETERNAL is no Simulacrum; God is not only There, but Here, or nowhere, in that life-breath of thine, in that act and thought of thine, — and thou wert wise to look to it. If there is no God, as the fool hath said in his heart, then live on with thy decencies, and lip-homages, and inward Greed, and falsehood, and all the hollow cunningly-devised halfness that recommends thee to the Mammon of this world: if there *is* a God, we say, look to it! But in either case, what art thou? The Atheist is false; yet is there, as we see, a fraction of truth in him; he is true compared with thee; thou, unhappy mortal, livest wholly in a lie, art wholly a lie.

So that Diderot's Atheism comes, if not to much, yet to something: we learn this from it (and from what it stands connected with, and may represent for us), that the Mechanical System of Thought is, in its essence, Atheistic; that whosoever will admit no organ of truth but logic, and nothing to exist but what can be argued of, must even content himself with this sad result, as the only solid one he can arrive at; and so with the best grace he can, 'of the æther make a gas, of God a force, of the second world a coffin;' of man an aimless nondescript, 'little better than a kind of vermin.' If Diderot, by bringing matters to this parting of the roads, have enabled or helped us to strike into the truer and better road, let him have our thanks for it. As to what remains, be pity our only feeling; was not his creed miserable enough; nay, moreover, did not he bear its miserableness, so to speak, in our stead, so that it need now be no longer borne by any one?

In this same, for him unavoidable circumstance, of the age he lived in, and the system of thought universal then, will be found the key to Diderot's whole spiritual character

and procedure ; the excuse for much in him that to us is false and perverted. Beyond the meagre 'rush-light of closet-logic,' Diderot recognised no guidance. That 'the Highest cannot be spoken of in words,' was a truth he had not dreamt of. Whatsoever thing he cannot debate of, we might almost say measure and weigh, and carry off with him to be eaten and enjoyed, is simply not there for him. He dwelt all his days in the 'thin rind of the Conscious ;' the deep fathomless domain of the Unconscious, whereon the other rests, and has its meaning, was not, under any shape, surmised by him. Thus must the Sanctuary of Man's Soul stand perennially shut against this man ; where his hand ceased to grope, the World ended : within such strait conditions had he to live and labor. And naturally to distort and dislocate, more or less, all things he labored on : for whosoever, in one way or another, recognises not that 'Divine Idea of the World, which lies at the bottom of Appearances,' can rightly interpret no Appearance ; and whatsoever spiritual thing he does, must do it partially, do it falsely.

Mournful enough, accordingly, is the account which Diderot has given himself of Man's Existence ; on the duties, relations, possessions whereof he had been a sedulous thinker. In every conclusion we have this fact of his Mechanical culture. Coupled too with another fact honorable to him : that he stuck not at half measures ; but resolutely drove on to the result, and held by it. So that we cannot call him a Skeptic ; he has merited the more decisive name of Denier. He may be said to have denied that there was any the smallest Sacredness in Man, or in the Universe ; and to have both speculated and lived on this singular footing. We behold in him the notable extreme of a man guiding himself with the least spiritual Belief that thinking man perhaps ever had. Religion, in all recognisable shapes and

senses, he has done what man can do to clear out of him. He believes that pleasure is pleasant; that a lie is unbelievable; and there his *credo* terminates; nay there, what perhaps makes his case almost unique, his very fancy seems to fall silent.

For a consequent man, all possible spiritual perversions are included under that grossest one of 'proselytizing Atheism;' the rest, of what kind and degree soever, cannot any longer astonish us. Diderot has them of all kinds and degrees: indeed, we might say, the French Philosophie (take him at his *word*, for inwardly much that was foreign adhered to him, do what he could) has emitted a Scheme of the World, to which all that Oriental Mullah, Bonze, or Talapoin have done in that kind is poor and feeble. Omitting his whole unparalleled Cosmogonies and Physiologies; coming to his much milder Tables of the Moral Law, we shall glance here but at one minor external item, the relation between man and man; and at only one branch of this, and with all slightness, the relation of covenants; for example, the most important of these, Marriage.

Diderot has convinced himself, and, indeed, as above became plain enough, acts on the conviction, that Marriage, contract it, solemnize it in what way you will, involves a solecism which reduces the amount of it to simple zero. It is a suicidal covenant; annuls itself in the very forming. 'Thou makest a vow,' says he, twice or thrice, as if the argument were a clencher, 'thou makest a vow of eternal constancy under a rock, which is even then crumbling away.' True, O Denis! the rock crumbles away; all things are changing; man changes faster than most of them. That, in the meanwhile, an Unchangeable lies under all this, and looks forth, solemn and benign, through the whole destiny and workings of man, is another truth; which no Mechanical Philosophie, in the dust of his logic-mill, can be expected to

grind out for himself. Man changes, and will change : the question then arises, Is it wise in him to tumble forth, in headlong obedience to this love of change ; is it so much as possible for him ? Among the dualisms of man's wholly dualistic nature, this we might fancy was an observable one : that along with his unceasing tendency to change, there is a no less ineradicable tendency to persevere. Were man only here to change, let him, far from marrying, cease even to hedge in fields, and plough them ; before the autumn season, he may have lost the whim of reaping them. Let him return to the nomadic state, and set his house on wheels ; nay there too a certain restraint must curb his love of change, or his cattle will perish by incessant driving, without grazing in the intervals. O Denis, what things thou babblest in thy sleep ! How, in this world of perpetual flux, shall man secure himself the smallest foundation, except hereby alone : that he take pre-assurance of his Fate ; that in this and the other high act of his life, his Will, with all solemnity, *abdicate* its right to change ; voluntarily become involuntary, and say once for all, Be there then no further dubitation on it ! Nay, the poor unheroic craftsman ; that very stocking-weaver, on whose loom thou now as amateur weavest : must not even he do as much, — when he signed his apprentice-indentures ? The fool ! who had such a relish in himself for all things, for kingship and emperorship ; yet made a vow (under penalty of death by hunger) of eternal constancy to stocking-weaving. Yet otherwise, were no thriving craftsmen possible ; only butchers, bunglers, transitory nondescripts ; unfed, mostly gallows-feeding. But, on the whole, what feeling it was in the ancient devout deep soul, which of Marriage made a *Sacrament* : this, of all things in the world, is what Denis will think of for sons, without discovering. Unless, perhaps, it were to increase the vestry-fees ?

Indeed, it must be granted, nothing yet seen or dreamt

of can surpass the liberality of friend Denis as *magister morum*; nay, often our poor Philosophe feels called on, in an age of such Spartan rigor, to step forth into the public Stews, and emit his inspiring *Macte virtute!* there. Whither let the curious in such matters follow him: we, having work elsewhere, wish him 'good journey,'—or rather 'safe return.' Of Diderot's indelicacy and indecency there is for us but little to say. Diderot is not what we call indelicate and indecent; he is utterly unclean, scandalous, shameless, sansculottic-samœidic. To declare with lyric fury that this is wrong; or with historic calmness, that a pig of sensibility would go distracted did you accuse him of it, may (especially in countries where 'indecent exposure' is cognized at police-offices) be considered superfluous. The only question is one in Natural History: Whence comes it? What may a man, not otherwise without elevation of mind, of kindly character, of immense professed philanthropy; and doubtless of extraordinary insight, mean thereby? To us it is but another illustration of the fearless, all-for-logic, thoroughly consistent, Mechanical Thinker. It coheres well enough with Diderot's theory of man; that there is nothing of sacred either in man or around man; and that chimeras are chimerical. How shall he for whom nothing, that cannot be jargoned of in debating-clubs, exists, have any faintest forecast of the depth, significance, divineness of SILENCE; of the sacredness of 'Secrets known to all?'

Nevertheless, Nature is great; and Denis was among her nobler productions. To a soul of his sort something like what we call Conscience could nowise be wanting: the feeling of Moral Relation; of the Infinite character thereof, (as the essence and soul of all else that can be felt or known) must assert itself in him. Yet how assert itself? An Infinity to one, in whose whole Synopsis of the Universe no Infinite stands marked? Wonderful enough is Diderot's

method ; and yet not wonderful, for we see it, and have always seen it, daily. Since there is nothing sacred in the Universe, whence this sacredness of what you call Virtue ? Whence or how comes it that you, Denis Diderot, *must* not do a wrong thing ; could not, without some qualm, speak, for example, one Lie, to gain Mahomet's Paradise with all its houris ? There is no resource for it, but to get into that interminable ravelment of Reward and Approval, virtue being its own reward ; and assert louder and louder, — contrary to the stern experience of all men, from the Divine Man, expiring with agony of bloody sweat on the accursed tree, down to us two, O reader (if we have ever done one Duty) — that Virtue is synonymous with Pleasure. Alas ! was Paul, an apostle of the Gentiles, virtuous ; and was virtue its own reward, when *his* approving conscience told him that he was ' the chief of sinners,' and (bounded to this life alone) ' of all men the most miserable ? ' Or has that same so sublime Virtue, at bottom, little to do with Pleasure, if with far other things ? Are Eudoxia, and Eusebeia, and Euthanasia, and all the rest of them, of small account to Eubosia and Eupepsia ; and the pains of any moderately-paced Career of Vice (Denis himself being judge) as a drop in the bucket to the ' Career of Indigestions ? ' That is what Denis never in this world will grant.

But what then will he do ? One of two things : admit, with Grimm, that there are ' two justices,' — which may be called by many handsome names, but properly are nothing but the pleasant justice, and the unpleasant ; whereof only the former is binding. Herein, however, Nature has been unkind to Denis ; he is not a literary court-toad-eater ; but a free, genial, even poetic creature. There remains, therefore, nothing but the second expedient ; to ' assert louder and louder ; ' in other words, to become a Philosophe-Sentimentalist. Most wearisome, accordingly, is the perpetual

clatter kept up here about *vertu, honnéteté, grandeur, sensibilité, ames-nobles*; how unspeakably good it is to be virtuous, how pleasant, how sublime: 'In the Devil and his grandmother's name, *be* virtuous; and let us have an end of it!' In such sort (we will nevertheless joyfully recognise) does great Nature in spite of all contradictions, declare her royalty, her divineness; and, for the poor Mechanical Philosopher, has prepared, since the substance is hidden from him, a shadow wherewith he can be cheered.

In fine, to our ill-starred Mechanical Philosophe-Sentimentalist, with his loud preaching and rather poor performing, shall we not, in various respects, 'thankfully stretch out the hand?' In all ways 'it was necessary that the logical side of things should likewise be made available.' On the whole, wondrous higher developments of much, of Morality among the rest, are visible in the course of the world's doings, at this day. A plausible prediction were that the Ascetic System is not to regain its exclusive dominancy. Ever, indeed, must Self-denial, '*Annihilation of Self*, be the beginning of all moral action:' meanwhile, he that looks well, may discern filaments of a nobler System, wherein this lies included as one harmonious element. Who knows what new unfoldings and complex adjustments await us, before (for example) the true relation of moral Greatness to moral Correctness, and their proportional value, can be established? How, again, is perfect tolerance for the Wrong to coexist with ever-present conviction that Right stands related to it, as a God does to a Devil, — an Infinite to an opposite Infinite? How, in a word, through what tumultuous vicissitudes, after how many false partial efforts, deepening the confusion, shall it, at length, be made manifest, and kept continually manifest, to the hearts of men, that the Good is not properly the highest, but the Beautiful; that the true Beautiful (differing from the false, as Heaven does from Vauxhall) comprehends

in it the Good? — In some future century, it may be found that Denis Diderot, acting and professing, in wholeness and with full conviction, what the immense multitude act in halfness and without conviction, — has, though by strange inverse methods, forwarded the result. It was long ago written, the Omnipotent 'maketh the wrath of the wicked' (the folly of the foolish) 'to praise Him.' In any case, Diderot acted it, and not we; Diderot bears it, and not we: peace be with Diderot!

The other branch of his renown is excellence as a Talker. Or, in wider view, (think his admirers,) his philosophy was not more surpassing than his delivery thereof. What his philosophy amounts to we have been examining: but now, that in this other conversational province he was eminent, is easily believed. A frank, ever-hoping, social character; a mind full of knowledge, full of fervor; of great compass, of great depth, ever on the alert: such a man could not have other than a 'mouth of gold.' It is still plain, whatsoever thing imaged itself before him, was imaged in the most lucent clearness; was rendered back, with light labor, in corresponding clearness. Whether, at the same time, Diderot's conversation, relatively so superior, deserved the intrinsic character of supreme, may admit of question. The worth of words spoken depends, after all, on the wisdom that resides in them; and in Diderot's words there was often too little of this. Vivacity, far-darting brilliancy, keenness of theoretic vision, paradoxical ingenuity, gayety, even touches of humor; all this must have been here: whosoever had preferred sincerity, earnestness, depth of practical rather than theoretic insight, with not less of impetuosity, of clearness and sureness, with humor, emphasis, or such other melody or rhythm as that utterance demanded, — must have come over to London; and (with

forbearant submissiveness) listened to our Johnson. Had we the stronger man, then? Be it rather, as in that Duel of Cœur-de-Lion with the light, nimble, yet also invincible Saladin, that each nation had the strength which most befitted it.

Closely connected with this power of conversation is Diderot's facility of composition. A talent much celebrated; numerous really surprising proofs whereof are on record: how he wrote long works within the week; sometimes within almost the four-and-twenty hours. Unhappily, enough still remains to make such feats credible. Most of Diderot's Works bear the clearest traces of extemporaneousness; *stans pede in uno!* They are much liker printed talk, than the concentrated well-considered utterance, which, from a man of that weight, we expect to see set in types. It is said, 'he wrote good pages, but could not write a good book.' Substitute *did not* for *could not*; and there is some truth in the saying. Clearness, as has been observed, comprehensibility at a glance, is the character of whatever Diderot wrote: a clearness which, in visual objects, rises into the region of the Artistic, and resembles that of Richardson or Defoe. Yet, grant that he makes his meaning clear, what is the nature of that meaning itself? Alas, for most part, only a hasty, flimsy, superficial meaning, with gleams of a deeper vision peering through. More or less of Disorder reigns in all Works that Diderot wrote; not order, but the plausible appearance of such: the true heart of the matter is not found; 'he skips deftly along the radii, and skips over the centre, and misses it.'

Thus may Diderot's admired Universality and admired Facility have both turned to disadvantage for him. We speak not of his reception by the world: this indeed is the 'age of specialities;' yet, owing to other causes, Diderot the Encyclopedist had success enough. But, what is of far more

importance, his inward growth was marred : the strong tree shot not up in any one noble stem (bearing boughs, and fruit, and shade all round) ; but spread out horizontally, after a very moderate height, into innumerable branches, not useless, yet of quite secondary use. Diderot could have been an Artist ; and he was little better than an Encyclopedic Artisan. No smatterer indeed ; a faithful artisan ; of really universal equipment, in his sort : he did the work of many men ; yet nothing, or little, which many could not have done.

Accordingly, his Literary Works, now lying finished some fifty years, have already, to the most surprising degree, shrunk in importance. Perhaps no man so much talked of is so little known ; to the great majority he is no longer a Reality, but a Hearsay. Such, indeed, partly is the natural fate of Works Polemical, which almost all Diderot's are. The Polemic annihilates his opponent ; but in so doing annihilates himself too, and both are swept away to make room for something other and farther. Add to this, the slight-textured transitory character of Diderot's style ; and the fact is well enough explained. Meanwhile, let him, to whom it applies, consider it ; him among whose gifts it was to rise into the Perennial, and who dwelt rather low down in the Ephemeral, and ephemerally fought and scrambled there ! Diderot the Great has contracted into Diderot the easily-measurable : so must it be with others of the like.

In how many sentences can the net-product of all that tumultuous Atheism, printed over many volumes, be comprised ! Nay, the whole *Encyclopédie*, that world's wonder of the eighteenth century, the Belus' Tower of an age of refined Illumination, what has it become ! Alas ! no stone-tower, that will stand there as our strength and defence through all times ; but, at best, a wooden *Helepolis* (City-taker), wherein stationed, the Philosophus Policaster has

burnt and battered down many an old ruinous Sorbonne ; and which now, when that work is pretty well over, may, in turn, be taken asunder, and used as firewood. The famed Encyclopedical Tree itself has proved an artificial one, and borne no fruit. We mean that, in its nature, it is mechanical only ; one of those attempts to parcel out the invisible mystical Soul of Man, with its *infinite* of phases and character, into shop-lists of what are called 'faculties,' 'motives,' and such like ; which attempts may indeed be made with all degrees of insight, from that of a Doctor Spurzheim to that of Denis Diderot, or Jeremy Bentham ; and prove useful for a day, but for a day only.

Nevertheless it were false to regard Diderot as a Mechanist and nothing more ; as one working and grinding blindly in the mill of mechanical Logic, joyful with his lot there, and unconscious of any other. Call him one rather who contributed to deliver us therefrom : both by his manful whole spirit as a Mechanist, which drove all things to their ultimatum and crisis ; and even by a dim-struggling faculty, which virtually aimed beyond this. Diderot, we said, was gifted by Nature for an Artist : strangely flashing through his mechanical encumbrances, are rays of thought, which belong to the Poet, to the Prophet ; which, in other environment, could have revealed the deepest to us. Not to seek far, consider this one little sentence, which he makes the last of the dying Sanderson : *Le temps, la matière, et l'espace ne sont peut-être qu'un point* (Time, Matter, and Space are perhaps but a point) !

So too, in Art, both as a speaker and a doer, he is to be reckoned as one of those who pressed forward irresistibly out of the artificial barren sphere of that time, into a truer genial one. His Dramas, the *Fils Naturel*, the *Père de Famille*, have indeed ceased to live ; yet is the attempt towards great things visible in them ; the attempt remains to

us, and seeks otherwise, and has found, and is finding, fulfilment. Not less in his *Salons* (Judgments of Art-Exhibitions), written hastily for Grimm, and by ill chance, on artists of quite secondary character, do we find the freest recognition of whatever excellence there is; nay, an impetuous endeavor, not critically but even creatively, towards something more excellent. Indeed, what with their unrivalled clearness, painting the picture over again for us, so that we too see it, and can judge it; what with their sunny fervor, inventiveness, real artistic genius (which only cannot manipulate), they are, with some few exceptions in the German tongue, the only Pictorial Criticisms we know of worth reading. Here too, as by his own practice in the Dramatic branch of art, Diderot stands forth as the main originator (almost the sole one in his own country) of that many-sided struggle towards what is called Nature, and copying of Nature, and faithfulness to Nature; a deep indispensable truth, subversive of the old error; yet under that figure, only a half-truth, for Art too is Art, as surely as Nature is Nature; which struggle, meanwhile, either as half-truth or working itself into a whole truth, may be seen (in countries that have any Art) still forming the tendency of all artistic endeavor. In which sense, Diderot's *Essay on Painting* has been judged worth translation by the greatest modern Judge of Art, and greatest modern Artist, in the highest kind of Art; and may be read anew, with argumentative commentary and exposition, in *Goethe's Works*.

Nay, let us grant, with pleasure, that for Diderot himself the realms of Art were not wholly unvisited; that he too, so heavily imprisoned, stole Promethean fire. Among these multitudinous, most miscellaneous Writings of his, in great part a manufactured farrago of Philosophism no longer saleable, and now looking melancholy enough, — are two that we can almost call Poems; that have something peren-

nially poetic in them : *Jacques le Fataliste* ; in a still higher degree, the *Neveu de Rameau*. The occasional blueness of both ; even that darkest indigo in some parts of the former, shall not altogether affright us. As it were, a loose straggling sunbeam flies here over Man's Existence in France, now nigh a century behind us : ' from the height of luxurious elegance to the depths of shamelessness ' ; all is here. Slack, careless seems the combination of the picture ; wriggling, disjointed, like a bundle of flails ; yet strangely united in the painter's inward unconscious feeling. Wearisomely crackling wit gets silent ; a grim, taciturn, dare-devil, almost Hogarthian humor, rises in the background. Like this there is nothing that we know of in the whole range of French Literature : La Fontaine is shallow in comparison ; the La Bruyère wit-species not to be named. It resembles *Don Quixote*, rather ; of somewhat similar stature ; yet of complexion altogether different ; through the one looks a sunny Elysium, through the other a sulphurous Erebus : both hold of the Infinite. This *Jacques*, perhaps, was not quite so hastily put together : yet there too haste is manifest : the Author finishes it off, not by working out the figures and movements, but by dashing his brush against the canvass ; a manœuvre which in this case has not succeeded. The *Rameau's Nephew*, which is the shorter, is also the better ; may pass for decidedly the best of all Diderot's Compositions. It looks like a Sibylline utterance from a heart all in fusion : no ephemeral thing (for it was written as a Satire on Palissot) was ever more perennially treated. Strangely enough, too, it lay some fifty years, in German and Russian Libraries ; came out first in the masterly version of Goethe, in 1805 ; and only (after a deceptive re-translation by a M. Saur, a courageous mystifier otherwise), reached the Paris public, in 1821, — when perhaps *all*, for whom, and against whom it was written, were no more ! — It is a

farce-tragedy ; and its fate has corresponded to its purport. One day it must also be translated into English ; but will require to be done by *head* ; the common steam-machinery will not meet it.

We here (*con la bocca dolce*) take leave of Diderot in his intellectual aspect, as Artist and Thinker : a richly endowed, unfavorably situated nature ; whose effort, much marred, yet not without fidelity of aim, can triumph, on rare occasions ; is perhaps nowhere utterly fruitless. In the moral aspect, as Man, he makes a somewhat similar figure ; as indeed, in all men, in him especially, the Opinion and the Practice stand closely united ; and as a wise man has remarked, ' the speculative principles are often but a supplement (or excuse) to the practical manner of life.' In conduct, Diderot can nowise seem admirable to us ; yet neither inexcusable ; on the whole, not at all quite worthless. Lavater traced in his physiognomy ' something timorous ;' which reading his friends admitted to be a correct one. Diderot, in truth, is no hero : the earnest soul, wayfaring and warfaring in the complexities of a World like to overwhelm him, yet wherein he by Heaven's grace will keep faithfully warfaring, prevailing or not, can derive small solacement from this light, fluctuating, not to say flimsy existence of Diderot : no Gospel in that kind has he left us. The man, in fact, with all his high gifts, had rather a female character. Susceptible, sensitive, living by impulses, which at best he had *fashioned* into some show of principles ; with vehemence enough, with even a female uncontrollableness ; with little of manful steadfastness, considerateness, invincibility. Thus, too, we find him living mostly in the society of women, or of men who, like women, flattered him, and made life easy for him ; recoiling with horror from an earnest Jean Jacques, who understood not the science of walking in a vain show ; but

imagined (poor man) that truth was there as a thing to be told, as a thing to be acted.

We call Diderot, then, not a coward; yet not in any sense a brave man. Neither towards himself, nor towards others, was he brave. All the virtues, says M. de Meister, which require not 'a great *suite* (sequency) of ideas' were his: all that do require such a *suite* were not his. In other words, what duties were easy for him he did: happily Nature had rendered several easy. His spiritual aim, moreover, seemed not so much to be enforcement, exposition of Duty, as discovery of a Duty-made-easy. Natural enough that he should strike into that province of *sentiment*, *cœur-noble*, and so forth. Alas, to declare that the beauty of virtue is beautiful, costs comparatively little: to win it, and wear it, is quite another enterprise, — wherein the loud braggart, we know, is not the likeliest to succeed. On the whole, peace be with *sentiment*, for that also lies behind us! — For the rest, as hinted, what duties were difficult our Diderot left undone. How should he, the *cœur sensible*, front such a monster as Pain? And now, since misgivings cannot fail in that course, what is to be done but fill up all asperities with floods of *Sensibilité*, and so voyage more or less smoothly along? *Est-il bon? Est-il méchant?* is his own account of himself. At all events, he was no voluntary hypocrite; that great praise can be given him. And thus with Mechanical Philosopherism, and *passion vive*; working, flirting; 'with more of softness than of true affection, sometimes with the malice and rage of a child, but on the whole an inexhaustible fund of goodnatured simplicity,' has he come down to us, for better or worse: and what can we do but receive him?

If now we and our reader, reinterpreting for our present want that Life and Performance of Diderot, have brought it

clearer before us, be the hour spent thereon, were it even more wearisome, no profitless one! Have we not striven to unite our own brief present moment more and more compactly with the Past and with the Future; have we not done what lay at our hand towards reducing that same Memoirism of the Eighteenth Century into History, and 'weaving' a thread or two thereof nearer to the condition of a 'web'?

But finally, if we rise with this matter (as we should try to do with all) into the proper region of Universal History, and look on it with the eye not of this time, or of that time, but of Time at large, perhaps the prediction might stand here, that intrinsically, essentially little lies in it; that one day when the net-result of our European way of life comes to be summed up, this whole as yet so boundless concern of French Philosophism will dwindle into the thinnest of fractions, or vanish into nonentity! Alas, while the rude History and Thoughts of those same '*Juifs miserables*,' the barbaric War-song of a Deborah and Barak, the rapt prophetic Utterance of an unkempt Isaiah, last now (with deepest significance) say only these three thousand years, — what has the thrice-resplendent *Encyclopédie* shrivelled into within these three score! This is a fact which, explain it, express it, in which way he will, your Encyclopedist should actually consider. *Those* were tones caught from the sacred Melody of the All, and have harmony and meaning for ever; *these* of his are but outer discords, and their jangling dies away without result. 'The special, sole, and deepest theme of the World's and Man's History,' says the Thinker of our time, 'whereto all other themes are subordinated, remains the Conflict of UNBELIEF and BELIEF. All epochs wherein Belief prevails, under what form it may, are splendid, heart-elevating, fruitful for contemporaries and posterity. All epochs, on the contrary, wherein Unbelief, under what

form soever, maintains its sorry victory, should they even for a moment glitter with a sham splendor, vanish from the eyes of posterity; because no one chooses to burden himself with study of the unfruitful.

ON HISTORY AGAIN.

[Fraser's Magazine, 1833.]

[The following singular Fragment on *History* forms part, as may be recognised, of the Inaugural Discourse delivered by our assiduous 'D. T.' at the opening of the *Society for the Diffusion of Common Honesty*. The Discourse, if one may credit the Morning Papers, "touched in the most wonderful manner, didactically, poetically, almost prophetically, on all things in this world and the next, in a strain of sustained or rather of suppressed passionate eloquence rarely witnessed in Parliament or out of it: the chief bursts were received with profound silence," — interrupted, we fear, by snuff-taking. As will be seen, it is one of the didactic passages that we introduce here. The Editor of this Magazine is responsible for its accuracy, and publishes, if not with leave given, then with leave taken. — O. Y.]

* * * HISTORY recommends itself as the most profitable of all studies: and truly, for such a being as Man, who is born, and has to learn and work, and then after a measured term of years to depart, leaving descendants and performances, and so, in all ways, to vindicate himself as vital portion of a Mankind, no study could be fitter. History is the Letter of Instructions, which the old generations write and posthumously transmit to the new; nay it may be called, more generally still, the Message, verbal or written, which all Mankind delivers to every man; it is the only *articulate* communication (when the inarticulate and mute, intelligible or not, lie round us and in us, so strangely through every fibre of our being, every step of our activity) which the Past can have with the Present, the Distant with what is Here. All Books, therefore, were they but Song-books or treatises on Mathematics, are in the long run historical doc-

uments,—as indeed all Speech itself is : thus might we say, History is not only the fittest study, but the only study, and includes all others whatsoever. The Perfect in History, he who understood, and saw and knew within himself, *all* that the whole Family of Adam had hitherto *been* and hitherto *done*, were perfect in all learning extant or possible ; needed not thenceforth to *study* any more ; had thenceforth nothing left but to *be* and to *do* something himself, that others might make History of it, and learn of *him*.

Perfection in any kind is well known not to be the lot of man : but of all supernatural perfect-characters this of the Perfect in History (so easily conceivable too) were perhaps the most miraculous. Clearly a faultless monster which the world is not to see, not even on paper. Had the Wandering Jew, indeed, begun to wander at Eden, and with a Fortunatus' Hat on his head ! Nanac Shah too, we remember, steeped himself three days in some sacred Well ; and there learnt enough : Nanac's was a far easier method ; but unhappily not practicable,—in this climate. Consider, however, at what immeasurable distance from this Perfect Nanac your highest Imperfect Gibbons play their part ? Were there no brave men, thinkest thou, before Agamemnon ? Beyond the Thracian Bosphorus, was all dead and void ; from Cape Horn to Nova Zembla, round the whole habitable Globe, not a mouse stirring ? Or, again, in reference to Time : —the Creation of the World is indeed old, compare it to the Year One ; yet young, of yesterday, compare it to Eternity ! Alas, all Universal History is but a sort of Parish History ; which the ' P. P. Clerk of this Parish,' member of ' our Alehouse Club ' (instituted for what ' Psalmody ' is in request there) puts together,—in such sort as his fellow-members will praise. Of the *thing* now gone silent, named Past, which was once Present, and loud enough, how much do we know ? Our ' Letter of Instructions ' comes

to us in the saddest state ; falsified, blotted out, torn, lost, and but a shred of it in existence ; this too so difficult to read or spell.

Unspeakably precious meanwhile is our shred of a ' Letter,' is our ' written or spoken Message,' such as we have it. Only he who understands what has been, can know what should be and will be. It is of the last importance that the individual have ascertained his relation to the whole ; ' an individual helps not,' it has been written ; ' only he who unites with many at the proper hour.' How easy, in a sense for your all-instructed Nanac to work without waste of force (or what we call fault) ; and, in practice, act new History, as perfectly as, in theory, he knew the old ! Comprehending what the given world was, what it had and what it wanted, how might his clear effort strike in at the right time and the right point ; wholly increasing the true current and tendency, nowhere cancelling itself in opposition thereto ! Unhappily, such smooth-running, ever-accelerated course is nowise the one appointed us ; cross currents we have, perplexed backflows ; innumerable efforts (every new man is a new effort) consume themselves in aimless eddies : thus is the River of Existence so wild-flowing, wasteful ; and whole multitudes, and whole generations, in painful unreason, spend and are spent on what can never profit. Of all which, does not one half originate in this which we have named want of Perfection in History ;—the other half, indeed, in another want still deeper, still more irremediable ?

Here, however, let us grant that Nature, in regard to such historic want, is nowise blamable : taking up the other face of the matter, let us rather admire the pains she has been at, the truly magnificent provision she has made, that this same Message of Instructions might reach us in boundless plenitude. Endowments, faculties enough we have : it is her

wise will too that no faculty imparted to us shall rust from disuse; the miraculous faculty of Speech, once given, becomes not more a gift than a necessity; the Tongue, with or without much meaning, will keep in motion; and only in some La Trappe, by unspeakable self-restraint forbear wagging. As little can the fingers that have learned the miracle of Writing lie idle; if there is a rage of speaking, we know also there is a rage of writing, perhaps the more furious of the two. It is said, 'so eager are men to speak, they will not let one another get to speech;' but, on the other hand, writing is usually transacted in private, and every man has his own desk and inkstand, and sits independent and unrestrainable there. Lastly, multiply this power of the Pen some ten thousand fold: that is to say, invent the Printing-Press, with its Printers' Devils, with its Editors, Contributors, Booksellers, Billstickers, and see what it will do! Such are the means wherewith Nature, and Art the daughter of Nature, have equipped their favorite, man, for publishing himself to man.

Consider now two things: first, that one Tongue, of average velocity, will publish at the rate of a thick octavo volume per day; and then how many nimble enough Tongues may be supposed to be at work on this Planet Earth, in this City London, at this hour! Secondly, that a literary Contributor, if in good heart and urged by hunger, will many times (as we are credibly informed) accomplish his two Magazine sheets within the four-and-twenty hours; such Contributors being now numerable not by the thousand, but by the million. Nay, taking History in its narrower, vulgar sense, as the mere chronicle of 'occurrences' (of things that can be, as we say, 'narrated'), our calculation is still but a little altered. Simple Narrative, it will be observed, is the grand staple of Speech: 'the common man,' says Jean Paul, 'is copious in Narrative, exiguous in Reflec-

tion ; only with the cultivated man is it otherwise, reverse-wise.' Allow even the thousandth part of human publishing for the emission of Thought, though perhaps the millionth were enough, we have still the nine hundred and ninety-nine employed in History proper, in relating occurrences, or conjecturing probabilities of such ; that is to say, either in History or Prophecy, which is a new form of History ; — and so the reader can judge with what abundance this life-breath of the human intellect is furnished in our world ; whether Nature has been stingy to him or munificent. Courage, reader ! Never can the historical inquirer want pabulum, better or worse ; are there not forty-eight longitudinal feet of small-printed History in thy Daily Newspaper ?

The truth is, if Universal History is such a miserable defective 'shred' as we have named it, the fault lies not in our historic organs, but wholly in our misuse of these ; say rather, in so many wants and obstructions, varying with the various age, that pervert our right use of them ; especially two wants that press heavily in all ages : want of Honesty, want of Understanding. If the thing published is not true, is only a supposition, or even a wilful invention, what can be done with it, except abolish it and annihilate it ? But again, Truth, says Horne Tooke, means simply the thing *trowed*, the thing believed ; and now, from this to the thing *extant*, what a new fatal deduction have we to suffer ! Without Understanding, Belief itself will profit little : and how can your publishing avail, when there was no vision in it, but mere blindness ? For as in political appointments, the man you appoint is not he who was ablest to discharge the duty, but only he who was ablest to be appointed ; so too, in all historic elections and selections, the maddest work goes on. The even worthiest to be known is perhaps of all others the least spoken of ; nay some say, it lies in

the very nature of such events to be so. Thus, in those same, forty-eight longitudinal feet of History, or even when they have stretched out into forty-eight longitudinal miles, of the like quality, there may not be the forty-eighth part of a hair's-breadth that will turn to anything. Truly, in these times, the quantity of printed Publication that will need to be consumed with fire, before the smallest permanent advantage can be drawn from it, might fill us with astonishment, almost with apprehension. Where, alas, is the intrepid Herculean Dr. Wagtail, that will reduce all these paper-mountains into tinder, and extract therefrom the three drops of Tinder-water Elixir?

For, indeed, looking at the activity of the historic Pen and Press through this last half-century, and what bulk of History it yields for that period alone, and how it is henceforth like to increase in decimal or vigesimal geometric progression, — one might feel as if a day were not distant, when perceiving that the whole Earth would not now contain those writings of what was done in the Earth, the human memory must needs sink confounded, and cease remembering! — To some the reflection may be new and consolatory, that this state of ours is not so unexampled as it seems; that with memory and things memorable the case was always intrinsically similar. The Life of Nero occupies some diamond pages of our Tacitus: but in the parchment and papyrus archives of Nero's generation how many did it fill? The Author of the *Vie de Séneque*, at this distance, picking up a few residuary snips has with ease made two octavos of it. On the other hand, were the contents of the then extant Roman memories, or, going to the utmost length, were all that was then *spoken* on it, put in types, how many 'longitudinal feet' of small-pica had we, — in belts that would go round the Globe?

History, then, before it can become Universal History,

needs of all things to be compressed. Were there no epitomizing of History, one could not remember beyond a week. Nay, go to that with it, and exclude compression altogether, we could not remember an hour, or at all : for Time, like Space, is *infinitely* divisible ; and an hour with its events, with its sensations and emotions, might be diffused to such expansion as should cover the whole field of memory, and push all else over the limits. Habit, however, and the natural constitution of man, do themselves prescribe serviceable rules for remembering ; and keep at a safe distance from us all such fantastic possibilities ; — into which only some foolish Mahomedan Caliph, ducking his head in a bucket of enchanted water, and so beating out one wet minute into seven long years of servitude and hardship, could fall. The rudest peasant has his complete set of Annual Registers legibly printed in his brain ; and, without the smallest training in Mnemonics, the proper pauses, subdivisions, and subordinations of the little to the great, all introduced there. Memory and Oblivion, like Day and Night, and indeed like all other Contradictions in this strange dualistic Life of ours, are necessary for each other's existence : Oblivion is the dark page, whereon Memory writes her light-beam characters, and makes them legible ; were it all light, nothing could be read there, any more than if it were all darkness.

As with man and these autobiographic Annual-Registers of his, so goes it with Mankind and its Universal History (which also is *its* Autobiography) : a like unconscious talent of remembering and of forgetting again does the work here. The transactions of the day, were they never so noisy, cannot remain loud for ever ; the morrow comes with its new noises, claiming also to be registered : in the immeasurable conflict and concert of this chaos of existence, figure after figure sinks, as *all* that has emerged must one day

sink : what cannot be kept in mind will even go out of mind ; History contracts itself into readable extent ; and at last, in the hands of some Bossuet or Müller, the whole printed History of the World, from the Creation downwards, has grown shorter than that of the Ward of Portsoken for one solar day.

Whether such contraction and epitome is always wisely formed, might admit of question ; or rather, as we say, admits of no question. Scandalous Cleopatras and Messalinas, Caligulas and Commoduses, in unprofitable proportion, survive for memory ; while a scientific Pancirollus must write his *Book of Arts Lost* ; and a moral Pancirollus (were the vision lent him) might write a still more mournful *Book of Virtues Lost* ; of noble men, doing, and daring, and enduring, whose heroic life, as a new revelation and development of Life itself, were a possession for all, but is now lost and forgotten, History having otherwise filled her page. In fact, here as elsewhere, what we call Accident governs much ; in any case, History must come together not as it should, but as it can and will.

Remark nevertheless how, by natural tendency alone, and as it were without man's forethought, a certain fitness of selection, and this even to a high degree, becomes inevitable. Wholly worthless the selection could not be, were there no better rule than this to guide it : that men permanently speak only of what is extant and actively alive beside them. Thus do the things that have produced fruit, nay whose fruit still grows, turn out to be the things chosen for record and writing of ; which things alone were great, and worth recording. The Battle of Chalons, where Hunsland met Rome, and the Earth was played for, at sword-fence, by two earth-bestridding giants, the sweep of whose swords cut kingdoms in pieces, hovers dim in the languid remembrance of a few ; while the poor police-court Treach-

ery of a wretched Iscariot, transacted in the wretched land of Palestine, centuries earlier, for 'thirty pieces of silver,' lives clear in the heads, in the hearts of all men. Nay moreover, as only that which bore fruit was great; so of all things, that whose fruit is still here and growing must be the greatest, the best worth remembering; which again, as we see, by the very nature of the case, is mainly the thing remembered. Observe too how this 'mainly' tends always to become a 'solely,' and the approximate continually approaches nearer: for triviality after triviality, as it perishes from the living activity of men, drops away from their speech and memory, and the great and vital more and more exclusively survive there. Thus does Accident correct Accident; and in the wondrous boundless jostle of things (an aimful POWER presiding over it, say rather, dwelling *in* it), a result comes out that may be put up with.

Curious, at all events, and worth looking at once in our life, is this same compressure of History, be the process thereof what it may. How the 'forty-eight longitudinal feet' have shrunk together after a century, after ten centuries! Look back from end to beginning, over any History; over our own *England*: how, in rapidest law of perspective, it dwindles from the canvass! An unhappy Sybarite, if we stand within two centuries of him and name him Charles Second, shall have twelve times the space of a heroic Alfred; two or three thousand times, if we name him George Fourth. The whole Saxon Heptarchy, though events, to which Magna Charta, and the world-famous Third Reading, are as dust in the balance, took place then (for did not England, to mention nothing else, get itself, if not represented in Parliament, yet converted to Christianity?) is summed up practically in that one sentence of Milton's (the only one succeeding writers have copied, or readers remembered) of the 'fighting and flocking of kites and crows.'

Neither was that an unimportant wassail-night, when the two black-browed Brothers, strongheaded, headstrong, Hengist and Horsa (*Stallion and Horse*), determined on a man-hunt in Britain, the boar-hunt at home having got overcrowded; and so, of a few hungry Angles, made an English Nation, and planted it here, and — produced *thee*, O Reader! Of Hengist's whole campaignings scarcely half a page of good Narrative can now be written; the *Lord-Mayor's Visit to Oxford* standing, meanwhile, revealed to mankind in a respectable volume. Nay what of this? Does not the Destruction of a Brunswick Theatre take above a million times as much telling as the Creation of a World?

To use a ready-made similitude, we might liken Universal History to a magic web; and consider with astonishment how, by philosophic insight and indolent neglect, the ever-growing fabric wove itself forward, out of that ravelled immeasurable mass of threads and thrums (which we name *Memoirs*); nay, at each new lengthening (at each new epoch), changed its whole proportions, its hue and structure to the very origin. Thus, do not the records of a Tacitus acquire new meaning, after seventeen hundred years, in the hands of a Montesquieu? Niebuhr must reinterpret for us, at a still greater distance, the writings of a Titus Livius: nay, the religious archaic chronicles of a Hebrew Prophet and Lawgiver escape not the like fortune; and many a ponderous Eichhorn scans, with new-ground philosophic spectacles, the revelation of a Moses, and strives to reproduce for this century what, thirty centuries ago, was of plainly infinite significance to all. Consider History with the beginnings of it stretching dimly into the remote Time; emerging darkly out of the mysterious Eternity: the ends of it enveloping *us* at this hour, whereof we at this hour, both as actors and relators, form part! In shape we might mathematically name it *Hyperbolic-Asymptotic*; ever of

infinite breadth around us; soon shrinking within narrow limits: ever narrowing more and more into the infinite depth behind us. In essence and significance it has been called 'the true Epic Poem, and universal Divine Scripture, whose "plenary inspiration" no man (out of Bedlam, or in it) shall bring in question.' * * *

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