HINTS ON HUMAN CONDUCT.

No 95

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ON

HUMAN CONDUCT

IN

VARIOUS RELATIONS.

——— "do all that may become a man;
"Who dares do more, is none."—

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I.—THE CONNEXION BETWEEN NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

In every ingenuous bosom there is a chord, at the touch of which, the universal frame will be softened, and all self-built systems dissolved. It only requires the experience of some heavy disaster, or sore bereavement, to bring home the fact, that suffering and sorrow are appointed to men; and that no human remedy can supply the wants or heal the wounds of the spirit. When

we faint and fail, there is no balm in philosophy, —there is no physician there. But in the infinite compassion of Christ there is solace unspeakable, —in his holy sacrifice, complete salvation. The regenerated soul, ashamed of its past insensibility, follows the impulse of its ardent affections, and regards religion, less as the rule for all moral beings, than as a personal transaction between its author and itself. In its overflowing gratitude the proportions of duty are unconsidered. A devotional tenderness,—a frame of spirit, similar to that in which Mary Magdalene washed the feet of our Saviour with her tears, and wiped them with her hair,—is the characteristic of the recent convert; and after the personal intensity of grateful penitence has ceased to exclude considerations of a wider compass; still he is so penetrated by a sense of the indignities which were endured by the Saviour upon earth, and the preciousness of the blood by which sin is washed away; that he is inclined to view the world only

as the scene of its Redeemer's crucifixion, and all that it contains as fitted for destruction.

It is of great importance, rightly to discern the alliance between nature and revelation, and to be equally disinclined to flatter humanity by over-rating its inherent principles, and to encourage fanaticism by a wild endeavour to subvert them. Without the atonement of Christ, and the application of his sacrifice by the Holy Spirit, the condition of man is confessed to be hopeless. His nature is defiled. The effect of the expiation is to redeem what was lost,—the work of grace is to purify what was corrupt. The believer exists in a probationary state. He begins to be relieved from the burden of indwelling sin, —to put off the old man, and to put on the new man,—to recover not only the energy and purity of his original nature, but to attain to a yet more exalted state than that from which he fell, and to the hope of a still more intimate communion with the author of his being.

It is undoubtedly the object of the gospel to abase the independent pride and self-righteousness of man,—to convince him of his worthlessness, and to refer whatever is great or good to a higher source. It is, however, no less the tendency of the gospel to exalt the dignity of nature, to exhibit the grandeur of its design and destination, and to develop every sentient principle. It is the error of enthusiasm, when it views the difference between a state of sin and a state of holiness, and is sensible of the mighty change which has been effected, to imagine, that nature must not only be purified, but suppressed and extinguished. Literally interpreting the expressive figures of Scripture,—instead of being animated by the spirit of grace to excite and educe what sin had deadened and contracted,—an idle endeavour is made, to seal up the fountains of human nature, and to cover with contempt those faculties and feelings, by the perversion of which, evil was first introduced. A war is commenced against all

that is fair and graceful in humanity. Vulgarity and meanness are substituted for genuine humility; pride is discerned in every species of refinement; imagination is deemed an organ of delusion—beauty a deceitful show; as if this breathing world were a low and unideal scene, and we could possibly offend a God of love, the source of all excellence and beauty, by an expansion of those sentiments which we owe to his goodness.

There is indeed one thing needful in religion; and a complete surrender of the heart to God may be made, without the sign of any other quality than that holy meekness which is declared to be an ornament of great price. That of itself, will communicate a moral beauty, which will attract and affect congenial dispositions. But if, in other respects, there be no very obvious difference, and religion do not produce a greater delicacy of perception and keener sensibilities, it is not because religion and taste are necessarily disconnected, or because the one is at va-

riance with the other. It is a proof only, that a refined taste is neither the substance of religion, nor essential to its development. There is an absence of a quality that humanity can exhibit; but the absence is not in religion,—it is in the man. To bestow more commendation on the individual who possesses the accessary and unessential quality, would be unjust; for our judgment here,—the mode of probation being so various,—should depend on relative and not on absolute merit. But surely it does not detract from the preciousness and sufficiency of saving faith, to suppose that the believer may hereafter evolve and mature what at present is scarcely visible; and that in advancing to perfection, there will be a growth and exfoliation of every germ that God has implanted in the human constitution.

A complete harmony of action, it is admitted, is not possible in man's present state. The tendency towards evil, without exaggeration, may

be considered an opposing principle, which, in this life, can never be altogether overcome. Hence the oscillation of the will, and the dissatisfaction of the judgment. But the distraction of internal conflict would pass endurance, if it were necessary not only to guard against selfish and inordinate desires, but to check and resist every natural impulse, and to regard as sinful or vain, whatever can communicate a feeling of pleasure not directly derived from revealed religion. If the just and the unjust could have nothing in common,—the sun would cease to shine, and the rain to descend with indiscriminate bounty. God is the source of natural, no less than of religious happiness; and to refuse to partake of it, because it is shared by the unholy, is to discover a contracted nature, an insensibility to the spirit of goodness, and a lamentable ignorance of the character and dispensations of the Deity.

It may yet be objected, that the Scriptures are adverse to the entertainment of any doctrine that

gives the least encouragement to nature; and that they militate against its accessary, as well as its essential qualities. This notion, however, does not appear to be well founded. The Scriptures are adapted to every grade of intelligent being,—and weak must be the discernment which does not perceive their majesty and beauty. But the design of the Scriptures must be kept in view. They were to contain the sum of saving knowledge. They were to demonstrate the corruption of nature. So far as the law of God had been defaced on the fleshly tablets where it was first inscribed, revelation restored and added new sanctions to its authority. But its voice is silent, where previous ordination sufficed. With the exercise and improvement of all our faculties God had connected enjoyment. This appointment had not been reversed by transgression, and therefore needed not to be revealed.

Is, then, the spirit of Christianity no more than that of purified humanity? Unquestionably it is.

In the Scriptures there are treasures of wisdom and knowledge, to the discovery of which humanity was unequal,—and in Christ there is a love which passeth knowledge. Nature is the dawn, —revelation is the day. What was dark is illumined—what was weak is strengthened—what was low is raised and supported. Nature, invigorated by holy influences, disclaims her original. Man could extend forgiveness to his enemies, but the Christian can admit them to the circle of his love. Before, he could suffer with patience—now, he can rejoice even in tribulation. Before, God was known,—but now the glory of the Godhead is disclosed.

Such being the prominent features of that economy which relates to human interests, we will perceive the fitness of applying ourselves to the subjects which it embraces with a holy zeal. And whatever the station or circumstances of an individual may be, religion is his first, his last, and, in truth, his only duty; for the commonest events

of every-day life, and the discharge of the meanest offices, are as much a part of the divine administration, as its mightiest movements. We are apt to regard this world as a region remote from the government of God, or at least as a distant province, to which invisible emissaries repair through an unsubstantial expanse. We fancy that all is invisible, except that which we see. We forget that we are at all times in the heart of God's kingdom; that he is everywhere immediately and intimately present; and that the angels before the throne are not more under his eye, than the dwellers on earth. Satan, who is denominated the prince of this world, on account of his ascendancy in the heart which is estranged from God, with glozing delusions would lure us to the belief, that the earth is detached from the divine dominions, and that we are left to walk in the sight of our own eyes, and after the counsel of our own hearts. But if any confidence may be placed in the combined testimony of reason

and revelation, we are already the denizens of a kingdom to which there is no limit, and of which there shall be no end. Our vocation, though inferior, is similar to that of the heavenly ministers; and were the scales removed from our spiritual vision, we should behold ourselves amid a throng of superior intelligences,—the heavens opened,—and the angels ascending and descending.

II.—THE APPROPRIATE ACCOMPANIMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THERE is a very general misunderstanding or forgetfulness of the relative circumstances of Christianity. Because God in his wisdom saw it meet to employ means most contrary to human expectation, and by the things that are weak to confound the things that are strong, that no flesh might glory in his presence; it seems to be supposed, that a state of abasement is the natural

condition of Christianity; and that all temporal auxiliaries are marks of Babylonish corruption. When external embellishment is substituted for inward purity, it may be well, to remind the perverter of the faith, of its spiritual origin and character, and to point to the lowliness of its author. But when religion has exercised so mighty an influence on the progress of society, and in itself has assumed so extended a position,—"of the hand-"ful of corn which was on the top of the moun-"tains, having made the fruit to shake like Leba-"non,"—to sever it entirely from secular interests, and to withhold a recognition correspondent to its importance, would be a proof of insensibility, and might justly warrant a suspicion of infidelity. For the distinction between spiritual and temporal things, is not in the things themselves, but in the manner in which they are viewed,—and, to a religious man, all things are Christ's. With what appearance of sincerity, then, could Christians acknowledge the extent and unity of their

master's kingdom, if, in the midst of affluence and splendour, poverty and insult should be the inheritance of the church,—if, when the crown and the sceptre have succeeded to the stake and fagot, the holy cause should be exposed to contempt? Prosperity, like adversity, demands an appropriate expression. When we are blessed by the bounty of God,—while the heart alone can make an acceptable return,—an external symbol of our pious gratitude is reverent and becoming. And those who rail at the overgrown revenues of the church, and contrast its present wealth with its original indigence, would perhaps be less eager in their projects of retrenchment, were the members as well as the ministers of the Christian church compelled to revert to their original circumstances.

III.—THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

Dominant passions have a plastic influence; and the outward features will in process of time, faithfully indicate the inward dispositions. In the same manner, goodness of heart and greatness of soul will animate and dignify deformity itself; and the habitual application of moral impulse will imperceptibly change even physical properties. The laws of nature may forbid a rapid or visible transition; but there is reason to think, that as the dispositions operate on the features, and qualities are hereditary,—goodness, continued through generations, will in the end have even physical beauty for its concomitant.

There is a pleasure in the exercise of all our feelings and faculties; and though our nature were freed from its corruption, beauty might not be resolved into goodness. But as the influence

of the affections greatly exceeds that of our other powers, the highest rank may be assigned to that moral beauty, which is the expression of love, or the benevolent principle; and as our interest in the general happiness becomes stronger, so may our sense of the beauty of goodness. The beauty that is the subject of mental taste is of a secondary character,—that which appears in connexion with vice—admits of being separated and admired for itself. But while it is of importance to discriminate in our sentiments, and to regard that only, as odious, which is really so,—it is of no less importance to graduate our love for what may be legitimately admired. To subject a moral to an intellectual taste, partakes of the nature of vice. If, however, the taste for intellectual beauty should exceed the love of moral excellence, the error is to be corrected,—not by contracting the former, but by expanding the latter. And it is a high thought, that amidst the finite objects by which we are encompassed,

an infinite provision has been made for our improvement both in goodness and intelligence, and that, so far from interfering with each other, the happiest effects result from their mutual influence *.

* It is an opinion countenanced by high authority, that sensibility, excited by fiction, has a tendency adverse to the active charities of life. The habit, it is said, of being moved without having occasion to relieve, hardens the heart against real distress. But it is thought, that on this subject there is often a confusion of ideas, with a deference to traditional prejudice, which is not consistent with sound philosophy. Every feeling is strengthened by exercise; and it would be a curious result, if the expansion of sympathy could in any way contribute to the contraction of benevolence. Benevolence itself consists not in the outward act, but in the inward feeling,—in a feeling, that must be classed with those which have less palpable modes of expression; and it might just as well be said of it, as of them, that its tone is weakened by use. When the affections withhold what they have it in their power to impart; it is not because they have often been employed unproductively, but because they have been associated with certain tastes which have acquired an undue ascendancy over the moral con-

IV.—THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE USEFUL AND THE AGREEABLE,—THE PALPABLE AND THE SPIRITUAL.

THE useful and the agreeable are often placed in opposition. The slightest attention is sufficient for perceiving, that as happiness is the aim and end of our being, whatever is agreeable must be useful. It is obvious, that imagination and fancy, may be classed among the subjects of utilitarian economy, on the very same principle as agricultural wealth and mechanical industry.

It is true, that necessities must be provided for in the first instance. And such is the condition of human society, that a great portion of time is occupied in obtaining the means of existence. To lessen the number of physical wants is an object of high importance. It would be

stitution. Whatever encourages the growth of such tastes is indubitably pernicious. But fiction may be employed to extirpate as well as to cherish them.

strange, however, if to procure the means of living were the sole purpose of life, and if whatever does not contribute to material aliment or tangible riches, could be justly regarded as useless.

Even in the vulgar sense, the pursuits and pleasures of refinement have a positive value. They increase the demand for labour, and stimulate the powers of production. "Allow not "nature more than nature needs," and the world would be a wilderness of savages.

But were it otherwise,—could the pleasures of animal existence be indefinitely multiplied—as man is constituted, the character of utility could not be confined to those efforts which minister to physical improvement. It is dishonourable to humanity, that it measures the value of labour by the standard of its infirmity, and minds its corporeal appetites rather than its spiritual capacity.

Hence the nominal distinction between the ac-

tual and ideal, as if thought had not as real an existence as the objects of sense. Reason must acknowledge the entity of the one as certainly as of the other. The immaterial, indeed, must occupy the largest place in every man's attention, how reluctantly soever its importance is admitted. We may not entirely concur with Hamlet in the opinion, that "there is nothing good or "bad, but thinking makes it so;" but we will scarcely deny that the world is coloured by the complexion of our minds, and that the same external object will communicate to different individuals impressions as dissimilar, both in kind and in degree, as those which are produced by ravishing music, on the ears of susceptible or indifferent auditors.

——"We receive but what we give,
"And in our life alone, does nature live.
"Ours is her wedding garment—ours her shroud—
"And would we aught behold of higher worth

" Than that inanimate cold world, allowed
" To the poor, loveless, ever anxious crowd,
" Ah from the soul itself, must issue forth—
" A light, a glory, and a luminous cloud,
" Enveloping the earth.———
" And from the soul itself, must there be sent,
" A sweet and potent voice of its own birth,
" Of all sweet sounds, the life and element."

COLERIDGE.

Contempt of the immaterial shows itself in a variety of forms. The traditional glory of poetry is still the inheritance of great and gifted spirits; but their fame consists not in the involuntary tribute of reverberating hearts. Except from a small proportion of congenial natures, it is an homage rendered to the descendants of a race, whose ancient nobility admits of no question. To withhold honour from them, would be self-disparagement. The laurel, however, and not the means by which it was obtained, are the object of the general admiration. Till the poet is crowned, his pre-

tensions are little respected. His efforts are exposed to vulgar ridicule, or, it may be, treated with compassionate condescension. A mortal sin, is often less concealed, than a warm predilection for the noblest of arts. The poet and the man of business are conceived to be at the antipodes. And if contact with selfishness and chicanery, must excite neither disgust nor indignation,—if the soul must contract its proportions to procure a passage through the dark alleys of human interest,—the conception is just. But, on the other hand, if the real business of life,—the improvement of our moral and rational nature,—depend on the growth and enlargement of our faculties;—address, tact and dexterity, deriving their utility from the vices of society,—can have no claim to be compared with that imaginative vigour and lively apprehension, which impart a double life to their possessor, and are an earnest of clearer intelligence and of a loftier communion.

It is not unworthy of observation, that some of

the fine arts are more respectfully treated. A slender proficiency in painting is not deemed a disgrace; and the feeblest effort in music will in general be favourably received. In both these cases, the reason of forbearance or commendation may lie in the nearer approach which is made to the sensual and the tangible. Had we an interest in the finer creations of poetry, the same charity, or a greater degree of it than we bestow on inferior essays in the fine arts, would not be withheld from promising, though imperfect endeavours, in one confessedly superior.

Were the sublime, the only element of poetry, mediocrity might not be tolerated, on account of the disproportion between the attempt and the attainment. But in poetry, not less, if not greatly more than in any other of the fine arts, there is a field for the expression of sentiments, different in kind and in degree.

In the coarsest minds there may be an appearance of imagination:—Nay, the wilder the ro-

mance, it may present greater attractions to vulgar fancy. But on considering the elements of such a fictitious composition as pleases the million, we shall find an additional reason for measuring the agreeable effect which is generally produced by the fine arts, by the degree of their proximity to the palpable and the familiar. For the grotesque and the extravagant are merely exaggerations of the corporeal and the unideal; or if, as in superstitious legends, the interest be excited by the mysterious and the indefinite, still it is in relation to personal and bodily feelings. The harlequin who bolts through a window, and plays all manner of tricks with the commonest objects, is more attractive than the spirit that would "circle the earth in forty minutes," or than any of the gay "creatures of the element." Poetical alchymy is nothing to actual metamorphosis. The wild adventures and improbable occurrences of a bad romance, are substitutes for the interest and vitality which invention can bestow on the

simplest materials. Like lying, often, but most erroneously, supposed a proof of imagination, unnatural fictions evince a shallow intellect. They are the clumsiest specimens of spiritual mechanism, and betray the meagre resources of their contriver.

V.—PARTISANSHIP IN POLITICS.

It is generally supposed, that a medium in politics, is negative and inefficacious. And if, from selfish views, an individual should exhibit an alternation of opinion and a hesitancy of conduct, his vacillating movements will expose him to merited contempt. But a neutral—is not always an undecided policy. It is indeed not a little singular, that, in mixed constitutions, the centre should be deemed, a weak and slippery position. Unless the eulogium on such a constitution as that of Great Britain has been ill bestow-

ed, we might expect in the national character, a representation of its composite elements,—King, Lords and Commons. In theory, these are supposed to coalesce; but so little confidence is placed in human integrity, that the appearance of providing for united interests creates a suspicion of dishonesty; and a sleepless jealousy of each other, becomes with the opposite parties, the only test of patriotism.

If the government be utterly corrupt,—if selfish interests predominate in the legislature, and the voice of truth and reason be uplifted in vain,—there may be a necessity for organising a party, and pursuing a system of political tactics. Such a necessity, in times past, has been acknowledged by the most enlightened statesmen; and the influence of that acknowledgment continues to be felt, when the constraining cause, in one direction at least, has ceased to operate.

As a check to democracy, however, the organization of party is of less avail. The adoption

of any means which may not be referred to pure principle, may have the effect of weakening rather than of strengthening an unpopular minority. A party who have recourse to other instruments besides reason and justice,—unless the adversary be not only deaf to conviction, but reducible to compulsory obedience,—will in the end, gain nothing but reproach.

In public as in private life, indeed, there may be, on the foundation of correct principle, a secure but solitary structure ; and the policy which takes no account of the customs and humours of classes and individuals, will be as little likely to procure success, as an upright but austere character, to ingratiate himself with society. An amiable manner has been so often assumed as a mask for unworthy purposes, that a smooth address has been brought into some degree of disrepute among lovers of truth ; and an ungracious deportment has been reckoned a mark of sincerity. But courtesy and every mode of good-will,

are for the most part, indispensable to human agency. They are not selfish arts, but important duties; and can be slighted or neglected by no one who has an interest in the diffusion of happiness.

So far, therefore, as a party is united for the purpose of disseminating those principles which its members individually respect and cherish, and while their behaviour does not require to be justified by the jesuitical approval of evil for the sake of good, the association is laudable. But to proceed one step beyond,—to make the least sacrifice of conscientious opinion,—to have the slightest connexion with faction,—is neither honourable nor expedient. To despair of a good cause, without the use of equivocal instruments, is to manifest a disbelief of those superior powers by which the order of the moral world is preserved. While humanity retains its constitution, the humblest individual who seeks for happiness by virtue, has stronger auxiliaries than rank, talent, or

numbers can afford. He is in league with truth, justice, and benevolence, and the slightest derogation from one of these, would ill be requited by any support which he could derive from a secular alliance. Let not him therefore, who refuses to enlist under the banners of a party, be reckoned either a contradiction or a nullity. His line of action may be no less decided than that of the most eager partisan, though he may be found sometimes on one side, and sometimes on another of an arbitrary boundary. It is not sufficient to convict him of inconsistency, that he has refused to subscribe to a fluctuating creed. If he have adhered to that higher standard to which all political creeds should conform, he presents a better claim to the character of faithfulness, than the firmest tenacity in respect to conventional articles can offer *.

* The preference of persons to principles has of late been painfully conspicuous. There are disinterested men in all parties; but the servile followers of the pre-

VI.—PREJUDICES AGAINST ARISTOCRACY.

THERE is a growing dislike to aristocracy, not merely as a governing power, but likewise as an

sent, and those of previous administrations, could scarcely be more versatile in their opinions, were they chargeable with open venality. Things as well as persons seem to have changed places. The extreme party have as yet had no opportunity of transmutation. With the exception of inscribing liberty and patriotism on their banners, they make no pretension to loftiness of principle, but honestly avow their design to make as few sacrifices as possible. Nevertheless, they are not without conceit of firmness, and honesty, and public spirit. These are admirable qualities; but assurance, obtuseness, and a passion for notoriety, are often their substitutes. Any member of the social family may take a prominent part in a work of philanthropy without the slightest presumption; but if, in the attainment of inferior ends, a person should thrust himself forward with no recommendation to popular acceptance which every citizen could not as easily prefer, inordinate vanity may justly be suspected.

All pretences are odious. Vulgar ambition cannot

ingredient in the composition of society. The cause of this may be ascribed partly to the invidiousness of unparticipated privileges, and partly to their abuse. Artificial distinctions, however, may be defended on substantial grounds. It is

be raised above its base level by the shouts of a rabble. But, in an especial manner, secularity in the guise of sacredness is obnoxious. Inconsistency of conduct in a member of the church of Christ, whether as a minister, as an elder, or as a censor of abuses, if habitual, or followed by no regret, is a reproach to the Christian profession. When one who makes himself conspicuous by an apparent zeal for the purest forms of ecclesiastical polity, in a case where his religion is brought to the test, acts in the same manner as the world's most abject minion,—it is evident that he is ignorant of religion, or that he miscalculates egregiously the tolerance that is shewn to hypocrisy. But he, as well as those who think that fame is dependant on utterance, and that, because no one arraigns them openly, they are held in honour and reputation,—should remember, that there are vigilant eyes and searching judgments, where no visible indication is given of their exercise ; and that a man, on whom public applause has been lavished, may notwithstanding be deservedly despised.

certainly not enough that nature has led the way; for what nature has already done may admit of no addition. But as men have become great by the study of some eminent model, or by having constantly before them a venerated presence, the image of personified nobility, may prove a perpetual standard of honour and magnanimity. Parental reverence and personal respect will forbid the disappointment of public expectation. Nor although the fabric of character is mainly constructed by each individual, should the transmitted influence of hereditary qualities be overlooked. If national dignity is not an empty name, —if the loftier sentiments of humanity are salutary to the social constitution,—it is expedient that there should be an order in the state, raised above the level of the market place, to whom, as to a priesthood, should be entrusted a sacred charge in the temple of honour. In private transactions, or in public measures, in which men have a private interest, their views may be warped; but in judg-

ing of others, a generous and elevated policy will produce its effect even on the million, and be more likely to procure a benefit than all the arts which selfishness can employ. In its purest state, however, aristocracy is liable to abuse. A certain degree of distinction being attained without any effort, the spring of activity may be inoperative, and corruption be engendered by the breath of flattery and the love of pleasure. When the rank of nobility is conferred, not for illustrious actions and patriotic services, but for secret or shameless reasons, the order is at once degraded, and the object of its existence defeated. When the scions of aristocracy flourish in despite of pernicious qualities, the society in which they are cherished, is itself corrupt. As long as there is soundness in the main body of society, the privileges of aristocracy will require a correspondent demeanour, and the peril attendant on gratuitous honours will be avoided. But when, in spite of mean conduct or flagrant vices, the wearer of a

coronet is followed and caressed, the extinction of aristocracy would prove no remedy for the evil. The servility of the minion, rather than the rank of the magnate, should then be obnoxious, and such means adopted, as would purify and regenerate the corrupted community.

VII.—LOYALTY,—NATIONAL CHARACTER.

UNLIMITED monarchy, is scarcely compatible with the voluntary obedience of a civilised people. External hostilities, or the recent experience of civil dissensions,—the glory of arms, national vanity, or the love of ease,—may for a time preserve an irresponsible dynasty in an enlightened country; but the favour of the government will evanish with the eclat of the individual who made it illustrious, or with the memory of those horrors, for which the worst species of tyranny would have been a welcome substitute. The lover of

learned leisure, may in a careless moment, contrast the amenities of absolute sovereignty with the agitations of democracy; but no man who has a regard either for his own, or for the general interest, can think of arbitrary arrests,—protracted imprisonments,—judicial murders, and the numberless abuses that may be committed, both with and without law, in a despotic state, and be content within its confines. Despotism in any shape is a dreadful evil. Whether in families, or in states,—whether in one or a thousand—an army or a mob,—a tyrannical will, must be feared if passively obeyed, or hated and resisted. Whatever be the character of the ruler invested with supremacy, the happiness of the community is too precious a deposit to be intrusted to any individual.

But a limited monarchy presents a very different aspect. Under it, are combined the benefits of freedom, and the blessing of peace. On a king who reigns for the good of his subjects, and who

has no interest at variance with theirs, the fondest expressions of loyalty are not unworthily lavished. Not every sentiment can bear an analysis; and the combination of several, may produce one, that is entirely distinct from its constituent elements. When loyalty is submitted to the crucible, a spirit evaporates, which, though it may not be weighed nor measured, is eminently conducive to the prosperity of the state. A definition of loyalty, as of religion, must be derogatory and incomplete. Yet all the elements of loyalty, are not so subtle and evanescent as to elude apprehension, nor so trivial as to warrant disrespect. In the king of a free state, we do not behold an object of barbarous wonder, or a splendid idol, before which, we are commanded, at the sound of a trumpet, to fall down and worship. The king of any state, is by his office, the father of his people; but the king of a free state is the express form and image of the nation,—the representative of all that is prized and cherished

in the constitution. If associations of antiquity and chivalrous renown have rendered the national character venerable and noble; it is necessary that the attributes of the sovereign should be in unison with such qualities. A president or chief magistrate chosen from the community, though the best of citizens, could not fulfil these conditions. The habits acquired in the prosecution of private interests, could not be thrown off on the threshold of office; and if they could, would nevertheless be remembered to the prejudice of him who should seem to have forgotten his former estate. Reciprocity is the spirit of commerce; and though merchants become princes, and obtain distinction by justice and liberality; self-sacrifice, or a disregard of their own advantage, is contrary to their general system. But the most attractive feature in a chief, is devotion to his followers, not dependent on calculations of prudence, but the spontaneous emanation of a high-seated heart. Whatever is admirable in knighthood, we expect

from royalty. Were it necessary for the safety of the state that one should die, and the feat of Curtius be reacted,—the prince must be ready to leap into the gulf. It is true, the personal prowess of the sovereign, in modern times, can seldom be exhibited; but the association remains; and wherever there is an opportunity, hand and heart,—by life or by death,—the king must promote the weal of his people.

For the support of royalty, an aristocratic order in the state appears to be essential; not merely because otherwise democracy would preponderate; but also, because the sentiments which should belong to the kingly character, would speedily be extinguished without congenial society. Those, therefore, who would abolish aristocracy, should be equally prepared for the extinction of royalty.

As far as a form of government, can conduce to the welfare of a community in the present state of the world, a limited monarchy is adapted to its object. But the influence of forms of

government has been much overrated. The effect has been mistaken for the cause. The most perfect theory of government is powerless in a community unprepared for its reception. A durable constitution must be made not only for, but by a people; not that it is to be devised by a popular assembly; but its foundations must be laid in the national history, and its character be accordant with that of the country. Forms of government are but the skeleton—the national character is the life and essence of the constitution. An abrupt or violent change in the forms may be highly inexpedient; but to lament over the loss of the constitution, on account of its external structure being altered, betrays an ignorance of its vital properties. A needless change should be regretted, less for the form's sake than for the dissolution of character, which rendered the change an object of desire. While the groundwork remains on which the pile was reared, a substantial edifice might arise even from its

overthrow. A bad government, though in a free and uncorrupted state, may be productive of misery for one or two generations. Fire and bloodshed may be necessary to cure the national frenzy; but if the heart be sound, the body will recover its health and vigour. It is of more consequence, therefore, to attend to the means of forming the national character, than to the mechanism of government. Personal, both includes and surpasses political reform. But government reacts upon the people; and it being admitted, that the happiness of a generation may be involved in a change of its forms, these must always be deemed a subject of great, though not of the first importance; for however excellent a people may have been originally, a vicious government will in process of time, assimilate them to itself. But in the same manner, however vicious a government may have been, it will be gradually reformed by the improving character of the people.

VIII.—DUELLING.

In extolling the principle of honour, its counterfeit may appear to some the object of encomium. But while the glory and happiness of a nation are promoted by the high spirit of the community, yet more than by its physical resources; not only no benefit, but the most serious evil ensues from the existence of a false or factitious principle of honour.

The practice of duelling, as it occurs in modern times, has seldom been defended, except with the view of obviating punishment. Its adoption is generally considered by men of the world as a fatal necessity—a predicament from which, in certain circumstances, there is no possibility of escape. The absurdity, the injustice, the immorality of the act may be admitted; but so it is, we are told, and therefore,—though the inference is not very obvious,—so it must be.

In such a state of things, it might seem at first sight, that the efforts of reason, to remove the evil, would be unavailing. But strong as are the passions and corrupt habits of men; it is scarcely possible to conceive, that in an enlightened age, any custom which is without support from respectable authority should maintain its footing. The reasons of the individual who justifies the practice, and the motives of him who follows it, may be altogether dissimilar. But the former, if not the foundation, may be considered as the bulwark of the latter, even though the connexion should be disowned; and if irrationality and recklessness had no countenance except from each other, their effrontery would be less.

Accordingly, it is of primary importance to ascertain if there be one tenable position which the defender of duelling can occupy; and with this view, the character of the act must be impartially examined. Appeals to religion and hu-

manity, while the criminality of the custom is not admitted, are premature. If it can be established, that the good of society is promoted by the tolerance of private warfare, it is not possible that it should be forbidden either by reason or Scripture.

Where the law of the land treats it as a crime, unless such law be virtually abrogated by the violated feelings of the community,—nothing less than the proof of the prohibition being itself the infraction of a superior law, can justify disobedience.

Let the case, however, be disentangled from positive sanctions, whether of divine or human authority. Let the end of duelling be stated, and the means by which that end is to be accomplished; and then we shall be enabled to decide whether, and in what respect, the practice is to be praised or condemned.

The preservation of manners, and the maintenance of station which has sometimes been

termed self-defence, are the chief, if not the only ends that can be plausibly alleged in considering the character of duelling. How far the term self-defence, can be applied to the circumstances to which it is intended to refer, need not be determined at present; for though the definition were unexceptionable, the argument which rests on it, is an evident begging of the question. Reason must decide whether or not duelling is right; and if the judgment be in the negative, it can neither be reversed nor altered in the slightest degree, though it should be contradicted not merely by a section of society, but by the universal practice of men. To propone self-defence in the first instance, as a justification of duelling, is to admit the delict, and to maintain its necessity on account of the predominance of irrational authority.

An unequivocal plea of self-defence would be entitled to primary notice,—for the protection of individuals is the interest of society. But slight

as the claim which rests on the propriety of manners may seem, it is in truth the only one which does not in some measure infer culpability.

There are cases in morality, to reason on which, discredits the superior principles which dictate the decision. Were an illustration required of this supererogation of reason, it would be unnecessary to go beyond the subject in hand. When it is proposed to guard good manners by conflict and bloodshed, and to put it into the power of a vindictive individual to punish capitally,—where the law, which leaves no substantial wrong without a remedy administered by impartial judges, refuses even civil redress,—the disproportion betwixt the means and the end is instantly apparent; and could an argument be devised to puzzle the understanding, inability to unravel its sophistry would in no wise prevent a thorough conviction of its falsehood.

But having made this protest against the supposition, that reasoning is at all necessary in this

part of the inquiry; let it not be imagined that there is any wish to decline its jurisdiction. Let social politeness be deemed worthy of the highest sacrifice, and it will appear that the price offered cannot purchase the desired advantage.

There may have been a time, when the pride of physical strength, and the consciousness of personal prowess, had a domineering influence on society,—when insolence of tongue, or tyranny of temper, unrestrained by opinion, stood in need of a violent check,—though it is not easy to see how the same qualities which incited to insult, preponderant as they would generally be in a personal encounter, could be curbed or repressed by the penalty—or what, in chivalrous language, would rather be termed—the pastime of a challenge. Society, however, at such a time, was in a semi-barbarous condition. In civilised eras, society permits not animal ascendancy. Both for its entertainment and its defence, it relies chiefly on moral and intellectual resources;—it upholds

the standard of taste; and, in considering the pretensions or the conduct of its members, is wholly independent of physical constraint. To urge the necessity of the sword and the pistol, is to assume an uncivilised state of manners; and therefore, unless it is contended, that barbarism is still a social characteristic, the argument is,—not that duelling now preserves, but that it originally procured the alleged benefit.

It is difficult to imagine, that we are in any notable degree, indebted to a preventive influence, for the peace and propriety of social communion. Against the enemies of society, fear and its auxiliaries may be of signal efficacy; but among friends and acquaintances, or in general intercourse, the courtesy which prevails must be ascribed to a worthier principle. In referring to past times, an endeavour is made to hide an indefensible practice in the mists of antiquity, or to derive from the sanction of a ruder age a prescriptive title to observance. But it must be re-

membered, that at the time to which reference is made, the combat,—so far from resembling the presumptuous attempt at personal retribution which the modern duel exhibits, was a judicial appointment—a solemn transaction—an appeal to the Deity in matters of such moment as appeared to warrant his providential interposition. Subsequently the institution was perverted; and for causes comparatively trivial the issue was referred to arms. Before the discovery of gunpowder, the custom of deciding quarrels by the lance or the sword could have operated little in favour of the weak, if indeed it had not a contrary tendency. Since then—the influence of civilization should itself have proved a sufficient protection. Here, however, we return to the question of the duel as it is. If the preceding view be correct, there is no reason to think that society has been benefited by a practice in any respect similar to the duel of modern times.

But had it been otherwise—had the benefit of

duelling at one time been manifest—it will not surely be maintained, that on that account it ought never to be discontinued. As well might perpetual war be waged, for the purpose of procuring peace. It in no wise follows, that the means by which an object is procured, are those by which it must be preserved ; and if the agency of the instrument be at all questionable, the end being accomplished—whatever is not indispensable to the continuance of the effect, should forthwith be discontinued. If then there be, in the moral sense of society, a sufficient safeguard against indecent and ferocious manners,—the employment of mortal weapons in private quarrels, indicates an unjustifiable recklessness of human life, and, in the great majority of instances, is the disguised substitute of assault and assassination.

It is possible, however, that the influence of civilization may be deemed inadequate to the maintenance of good manners ; and the number of duels which actually occur, may be deemed a proof

of prevailing offences. If from that number be deducted, the cases in which the demand for satisfaction was dictated by a blamable resentment, and those in which no offence would have been taken, but for the arbitrary code by which the offence was created,—the remainder would be found to be insignificant. Except in rare instances, the field of social intercourse is protected from the fury of passion, by a feeling of common interest, as well as mutual benevolence. Superficial politeness and formal grimace may consist with the dread of our companions; but the spirit of enlightened courtesy is cordial and expansive. It acts not in conformity to frigid modes, but to the free impulses of a generous heart and an intelligent mind. Unfortunate, indeed, in respect of the society which he has himself chosen, or on which he has been cast, must be the individual, who thinks that social amenity can be preserved only by the dread of a latent weapon. For such, the awaiting cartel, in reality is. To outward appearance, a gentleman

no longer wears his sword in society; but if he have reserved to himself a privilege of challenge, on the slightest cause of real or on fancied provocation; it is only to appearance, that his sword is abandoned. He is still armed, not in moral proof,—in goodness and in honesty,—but with the same weapons as the felon and the outlaw. When the sword was laid aside, it certainly could not have been intended that its place should be so vulgarly supplied.

Nature, indeed, is various, and there is perhaps no circle where her unchecked tendencies may not sometimes be rudely developed. The fierce and the imperious may have occasionally restrained their natural inclinations from no worthier motive than the avoidance of danger. But had their wrath and arrogance known no control, and made society a witness of their excess, exclusion or disgrace would have followed as a consequence; so that in this view, the duel, instead of banishing the injurious from society, has only the effect

of retaining them in it, by saving them from public exposure, while the irritation of their suppressed humours will incite to every species of unchallenged annoyance. At the same time, it should be considered how far duelling may not have directly contributed to the very evil which it is professedly designed to repress; and how often, trusting to a formidable repute, and the general reluctance to have recourse to compulsory vindication, the bully and the ruffian have endeavoured to bear down the better sense of society. There is reason to believe that falsehood is much encouraged by passing without contradiction, on account of the disagreeable results that might ensue. To the communion of intelligent and honourable men, a habitual liar must be a stranger. But as the offence is not so palpable as that of outrageous manners, a station in promiscuous society may frequently be maintained by a person, whose total disregard of veracity is alike an insult to the understanding,

and a cause of loathing to the moral taste of his unwilling auditors.

Farther, the character of duelling may incur some suspicion from that of its patrons.

It may here be remarked, that if the custom were necessary for the conservation of civilised intercourse, it would be not a little strange that it was entirely unknown to the ancient world, and to those nations that have furnished surpassing specimens of taste, and signal examples of manly virtue *.

But confining ourselves to our own times, let us examine the pretensions of the advocates of duelling and the champions of honour. Are they to be considered as the Percies of the age, to whom " it were an easy leap, to pluck bright " honour from the pale-faced moon ?" Does their jealousy of affront proceed from a knightly re-

* See the Letter of Julie to St Preux, in which she endeavours to dissuade him from sending a challenge. This observation, as well as others in the course of this argument, are there, most happily enforced.

gard for reputation, and an unsullied nobility of nature? Are they models of refinement and patterns of propriety? Experience is at hand with a negative reply. It is not denied, that amiable and honourable men have been unable to resist the current of fashionable or professional opinion, and have conformed to a custom which they either condemned, or conceived it impossible to do away. Statesmen, indeed, have so far forgot the dignity of their office as to enter the arena of personal contention. But the fire-eater, and he who submits to a conventional ordeal, are easily distinguished. The stronghold of duelling, is the den of vice,—its warmest supporters are the slaves of sensuality. Gamblers and adulterers, sharpers, rakes and bullies,—men whose ideas have almost a material grossness, and whose speech to a delicate ear is a pain or a pollution,—the possessors, it may be, of animal courage, but destitute of moral fortitude, and often cowards at heart,—these are the per-

sons with whom the credit of duelling is connected, and from whom any argument against it meets with the most unfavourable reception. The reasons are obvious. A savage redress recommends itself to an obtuse and brutified intellect. But there is a want of will, yet more than of power, to resort to a moral analysis. By the observance of one factitious ordinance, an immunity is sought for the breach of every moral obligation. If inadvertently, we have given offence to a man of character and feeling, reconciliation will not be difficult; but if we have come into collision with a person all but infamous, the reverse will be the result. He cannot afford to abate one jot of his demand. If not combative, he is nothing. A virtuous man may refuse a challenge without fear of inconsistency. The profligate must fight, or submit ever after to moral restraints. Thus duelling is the covert of delinquency. It may perhaps with safety be affirmed, that in modern times at least, a chal-

lenge was never accepted by an individual, whose morality, even in the eyes of the world, was not in some other respect open to exception.

Against occasional interruptions to the peace of society, while the human constitution is subject to its present impulses, no means will be altogether available. But for the production of any effect which makes intercourse pleasant, or even tolerable, a prohibitive and compulsory influence is worse than useless. To protect the weak against the strong is a benevolent design; but to power, in one shape or other, deference will invariably be rendered; and if there be any unwillingness in its owner to wave his superiority, no great ingenuity will be required to depress and mortify a humble antagonist, without affording the slightest pretext for a challenge. The most amiable of human beings may remember instances, in which, by no positive sign of displeasure, but by a mere negation of good-will on his part, an act apparently gracious was meant

and understood as an opposite demonstration. If the elements of strife abound in society, their hostile tendencies will operate, though not with convulsive violence; but social complacency is more disturbed by a constant fermentation, than by an unusual explosion. To create an unpleasant feeling, it is not necessary to say or do what is disagreeable—the inward sentiment will find an interpreter. Withdraw the will to please—and alienation will inevitably ensue. There is as great a difference between formal and free courtesy, as between a mechanical and a living impulse. The spirit of reciprocal amity is the only conservative principle of society. Imbued with it, the possessor of power is not inclined to misuse his advantages. Whatever be the predominant influence of a circle, it constitutes the standard of power among its members. The athlete, the author, and the philanthropist have their several criteria. In general society, benevolence is power. By it—the physically weak

may be morally strong, and the stronger they become, the more will they be loved.

The plea of self-defence, claims our notice less on account of its intrinsic importance, than of the grave authority by which it has been supported, and the confidence with which it has been urged before public tribunals. In an abstract discussion, it is strictly inadmissible—for if it do not condemn, it makes no attempt to justify the majority. It is a palliative plea, addressed not to general reason, but to the lenity of those individuals by whom a particular case may be tried. It asserts the necessity, without upholding the propriety of the action; or at least maintains that it is proper only because it is necessary.

Now, though, as a plea in mitigation, the custom of society may be worthy of attention till the rule and the mode of manners are more in unison--the plea should rest on its proper footing, and not be confounded with a claim of undeniable justice.

Applied to this subject, the term self-defence, is an unwarranted assumption. It conveys a meaning, wholly different from that which it bears in every other instance. The life of the person is endangered, only by that act which is alleged to be necessary for self-defence. It is admitted, that character and station may be dearer than life; but still they are a species of property, and not existence itself. If they cannot be preserved without the peril or the forfeiture of life, duelling may be vindicated; but if the case admit of any alternative—if there be a possibility of preserving otherwise—not a factitious and nominal good, but interests incalculably precious,—both reason and law forbid the redress, which a real necessity alone could have justified.

Neither good name, nor any other interest that is truly valuable, are or can be affected by a practice which is contrary to reason. Consistency of character is its own defence. An upright conscience, strong in itself, might stand against the

world. But the world—all the abiding power that is in the world—is on its side. For fashion and convention, potent as they appear, have a limited and transient influence; they are creatures of accident and fancy; " a breath dissolves " them as a breath has made;" while truth and reason, founded in nature, exercise a dominion co-extensive with humanity, and are as little affected by the folly of the day, as is the stream, by the bubbles on its surface. By the refusal of a challenge, the opinion of no good man will be lost. Nay, more, while some would acknowledge, in the opposer of a vicious custom, an additional claim to respect,—his station in promiscuous society will not be in the slightest degree lowered. The recognition of a particular class may be withheld; though, if the individual were known to act upon principle, even that will not be a likely result. If it were otherwise, however, it would prove the heartlessness of the caste; and though the slight of the unworthy may be offensive, their

communion would be avoided as a matter of choice, and their countenance deemed of little importance.

Were there any profession, in which pecuniary interests might depend on the acknowledgment of false notions of honour, it would be a partial exception to the general rule. The army * has sometimes, but falsely, been supposed to exhibit an example of so pernicious an alliance. The soldier is expressly prohibited from duelling—and it is not conceivable, that in the administration even of military law, an individual should be punished, pecuniarily at least, for declining that which he was forbidden to do. Practice, indeed, so far as opinion is concerned, may annul the prohibition. It has modified it considerably. But there is not now, if there ever were, a necessity imposed upon the soldier, from which the civilian is free. A right motive will be estimated

* The observations in this paragraph apply equally to both branches of the national service.

in the army, as in every place where it operates. If the soldier be more quick to resent an affront —it is because he so far participates in the sentiments of the unreasoning portion of society, and belongs to a profession, that whatever be received as the code of honour, must be forward to obey it.

Is there, then, nothing of which an individual may be deprived by declining a hostile reference? Nothing certainly that a wise man should for a moment regret. An allowance, however, may be made to human imperfection. The feelings are sometimes wounded, when reason reproves their sensibility. It were in vain to deny, that a position which is shared by the recreant is disagreeable, and that the ban of any portion of our fellow-beings is a cause of annoyance. The peril that is encountered to avoid such a predicament, sufficiently evinces the uneasiness which it occasions. The mind may be rendered as really miserable, by shadowy as by substantial griev-

ances. Yet no one would propose to indulge the humours of caprice, or to feed the wants of a diseased imagination. The value of the abstracted good, must not be left to the fantastic appreciation of the individual, but must be declared by the common judgment of mankind.

Fully admitting, that the interest of the mind to preserve its peculiar sources of enjoyment, is an appreciable advantage, and may be defended as a property, the right must be maintained with a due regard to that of others. Without calling in question the power of demanding life for extensive and systematic violations of property; it is certain, that if the retribution be out of all proportion to the loss, in the general estimation; it is injurious and criminal. An apple on a bough may have attracted the particular regard of its owner; but if an urchin, having seized it, should flee and refuse to stop, to shoot him on the instant would be a flagrant act of moral injustice.

This leads us to the consideration of the means,

by which the end of duelling is effected. Here a lengthened detail is unnecessary. A gloomy picture might be drawn of the calamitous results of personal conflicts. The extinction of high hopes—the sudden termination of a thoughtless or guilty career—the shock of widowed affections—the loss of fortune and the ruin of families, will readily suggest themselves to every recollection. But it is enough to know, that for the purpose of the duellist, a lethal instrument is requisite—that punctilio is enforced by the penalty of death. The frequent escapes on the field of danger may expose the pretence, or the flurry of the combatants; but the severity of the sanction remains unaltered. As the argument now stands —for a solace to injured pride—in a case where reason would prohibit a demand of restitution; nothing will suffice but the blood of a fellow-creature, with whose existence may be entwined a thousand sensibilities, not selfish and morbid, but the offspring of sacred relations and domestic cha-

rities. A more wanton act can scarcely be conceived.

The true nature of duelling, is often concealed by the multiplicity and mixture of ideas which the subject suggests. But having separately examined the component parts—having seen, that so far from being conducive, the custom is adverse to the concord of society; and that the plea of self-defence is wholly untenable—the character of the act cannot be mistaken. Duelling must be deemed a crime—a crime of no lighter dye, and entitled to no milder designation, than that of wilful and deliberate murder.

From so grave a charge, it is easier to recoil than to escape,—for it will be difficult to shew, in what respect, it is either excessive or inapplicable.

A desperate case, betimes, gives birth to a desperate argument. The analogy of public and private war, would not have been attempted, except in a lamentable scarcity of resources. For supposing, that the legal and authoritative

acts of a national executive, and the unlawful and arbitrary proceedings of a private individual, were on the same footing, the question already answered would be tried only on a larger scale, and would fall to be resolved in the very same manner. Who can doubt, that the promoters of an unnecessary war are guilty of the highest crime, or imagine, that the guilt can be diminished by the number or magnitude of the offenders?

Still the charge of murder, grates upon the unaccustomed ear; and the man who engages in a transaction before honourable witnesses, and incurs an equal risk with a consenting antagonist, can have no conception that he is worthy of the scaffold. The reasons, however, on which he would exculpate himself, would probably have little weight, with him, or with any sensible juryman, in a case of revenge, where the code of honour had no application. The openness of the act might then be an evidence of hardihood; and the peril incurred might indicate callous indiffe-

rence, or intense animosity. With regard to the other particular—the consent of his adversary—from that—if it be a defence—the duellist is plainly precluded: For, according to him, the acceptance of a challenge is not matter of option; its refusal is, in his view, an abdication of the world—an instant forfeiture of social existence. But waving the personal exception, consent, to be valid, must be legitimate. Would it be a defence against the claim of the lawful owner, that the custodier of goods betrayed his trust, and was a party to the theft? No more is it a defence against any of the authorities, to which man owes his allegiance, that he consented to dispose of that which was not within his power.

But the charge is not yet exhausted. The duellist not only disregards the laws of men and the rights of humanity—he violates the express commandments of God, and declares himself an infidel. The slightest infraction of natural equity is an offence against the Deity; but if nature and

revelation concur in a prohibitory ordinance,—if it be equally legible on the tablet of the heart, and on the sacred record—disobedience or defiance can be referred to no other cause than infidelity. The delinquent may perhaps be unconscious of his character. He may profess, and even think that he believes the most orthodox creed ; but his conduct contradicts the supposition. A faith that has a firm foundation, will evince itself by the energy of positive principles more than by negative restraints. While every commandment will be cheerfully obeyed, its possessor will manifest the love that " casteth out fear ;" and walk by the will, as well as by the statutes of the Deity. A fainter belief may acknowledge an inferior and ungracious influence. To it, the Deity may be associated with the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire, rather than with the still small voice. But no one, who is actuated either by the love or the fear that are the necessary accompaniments of a strong or a weaker faith, can consider the will

and commandment of God, in relation to the life of the creature, and desire or dare to oppose it. With regard to the assured believer, there can be no doubt—and if the penalty be kept in view—it will appear just as evident, that from a premeditated contravention of a prominent law, the mere bond-slave of religion will be scared by the terror of transgression.

Eternal punishment is a theme which ought not to be lightly handled. It has often been introduced with more force than discretion, and its effect may have been somewhat impaired by its indiscriminate employment. On the present occasion it could scarcely be thought impertinent: but to prove the insanity of the duellist, if he believe that his act exposed him to the divine displeasure—it is not necessary to throw back the gates of Hell, and to uncover the pit of darkness. If he be convinced, that a punishment will be inflicted in proportion to the offence—that the penalty of his crime will be a greater evil than the

satisfaction of his immediate desire; he will be constrained, by the laws of his moral constitution, from deliberately committing an act inimical to his happiness.

Apprehension of consequences is often referred to timidity of disposition. Courage, like many other qualities, has been invested with imaginary attributes. Some will profess that they never knew fear—others will admit no acquaintance with shame. Imposture, effrontery and ignorance are the source of such pretensions. Whoever has hoped, must also have feared—whoever has erred, must have reason for shame. In proportion to the sensibility of good will be that of evil—the higher the standard of taste or morals, the more painful the consciousness of failure or imperfection.

No fabulous invention surpasses the idea of a man without fear. There is indeed a blind courage, which the aspect of danger seems unable to appal. The rush of impetuous blood, and the

twang of resilient nerves, disturb the equipoise of reason; and animal force, like an engine of war, discharges its fire in the face of destruction. The danger is unfelt, because it is indistinctly perceived. In cases of the most imminent hazard, a child or a drunkard may be equally fearless. Animal excitement is in truth a species of intoxication. True courage, consists in the firm performance of duty, with a full knowledge of the peril, countervailed by the influence of superior principles.

Of the invigorating power of such principles, the duellist can have no experience. He must therefore, either be blind to his danger, and consequently entitled to no credit for courage, or he must disbelieve that the danger exists—and so prove his infidelity.

In every point of view, then, the custom of duelling is odious. It is adverse to good manners—contrary to reason—inconsistent with hu-

manity. It is a contempt of law, and an abnegation of religion.

IX.—SYMPATHY WITH INFERIOR CREATURES.

SATIRICAL pleasantry is not the entertainment of an earnest or sensitive mind—otherwise the compassion bestowed on the simple individual who can live in the country without a gun or any other implement of sport, would be matter of ridicule.

When a sportsman, elate with the success of consecutive seasons, expects to facilitate his intercourse with a stranger by a question as to a common pursuit, and hears, to his amazement, that his new acquaintance does not partake in it; he almost feels vexed for having extorted the confession, and assumes an air of patronage towards the unhappy being who uttered it.

It is really conceived, by a large class of intel-

ligent and educated men, that the country is appropriated to farmers and sportsmen. Gardening, in their eye, is merely a refined species of agriculture—and the breath of scented fields is but a medicinal restorative. If in any of them the trace of an imaginative or poetical nature be discernible—it is of that rude and palpable kind which is attracted by stirring action and sensual imagery. To them, contemplation is synonymous with melancholy; and the spiritual and the invisible are not mysteries—but non-entities. The beauty of a flower is associated with their right of acquisition or personal embellishment. They may relish a minstrel's tale of feud and foray, and their blood may glow with the impulse of woman, war and wine; but they have no delight in communion with nature, and in the personification of inanimate objects. They would as soon expect to find fish in the fields and fruits in the sea, as

"Tongues in the trees—books in the running brooks,
"Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

Yet nobody thinks that he has a better title to be called a lover of nature than the sportsman. Upland and meadow, dingle, lake and stream are the haunts of his happiest hours,—they abound in their respective species of game. To him, nature is not a varied manifestation of power and beauty—an expression of the love that pervades the universe,—but an exhibition of animal and vegetable properties,—a picture of objects that administer to his favourite pursuits. Nothing appears to him so exquisitely natural as a trout gasping on a bank, or a heathfowl beating the ground with blood-stained plumage. If in a collection of paintings he were asked to point out the most vivid representation of nature, he would pass by as fine a landscape as ever was delineated, and turn to a bare *fac simile* of something homely or familiar, such as, "Dead or living "game,"—or a dresser heaped with a medley of viands: or if he should prefer a more animated subject, his choice would fall on a fox-chase, or

perhaps he might find no match to the rat-hunt in a stack-yard.

When men are hunters from necessity, and when the pursuit is accompanied with peril not wantonly incurred; the quest of wild animals may be consistent with the love of nature. The Indian delights in the pathless forest,—not so much because it supplies to him the means of existence, and is the scene of those efforts which he counts among his labours rather than his pleasures,—as because it protects his liberty, and permits the indulgence of his wandering habits. Though every inferior animal acts in subservience to its instinctive propensities; a carnivorous bird, or a savage beast of prey, may be destroyed without violence to human sympathy. To despatch the vulture feeding on a carcase, or the tiger couching in the jungle, would excite a feeling of satisfaction. The chamois hunter, connecting the excitement of his occupation, and his hair-breadth escapes, with the game that he follows, may be

attached at the same time to nature and the chase. Nor, though it might occasion some regret,—being personally secure,—to strike down an eagle soaring in its "pride of place,"—could he, who, at the imminent peril of his life, had scaled its abode in the cliffs, be accused of inhumanity,—if he plucked a feather from its wing, and wore it on his cap as a badge of his conquest.

In admitting that the chase is not an unfeeling nor improper occupation, provided there be a sufficient degree of excitement, or a natural antipathy to the qualities by which the object of pursuit is characterised; it may be thought that a very large allowance has been made to the love of sport. For, in the hunting field, the spirits are at the acmé of excitement,—the cry of the dogs, —the fervour of the horses, and the glee of the company kindle the blood; and the flame is not lessened by dashing through hedges, spanning ditches, and leaping over five-barred gates. Again, not to speak of the animals which pass by the

name of vermin,—either those which lurk in the woods, or those which infest the barn and breed in every cranny,—the cunning nature and predatory habits of the fox seem to have but a slender claim to sympathy.

Notwithstanding, the opinion before expressed requires no modification. In all rural employments, the healthful influence of fresh breezes and pure air must not be entirely kept out of view; but beyond this, the pleasures of the fox-hunter depend in no degree upon the rural character of the scene in which they are procured. His excitement is akin to the fever of the cock-pit. He would rather breathe the impurest atmosphere with a throbbing pulse, than inhabit another Eden with unruffled veins. It would perhaps be unfair to assign the proverbial reputation of the old to the modern fox-hunter. But the latter retrieves himself from the predicament only by a diminished devotion and less cordial participation. For the time he occupies a simi-

lar position. He uses noble materials for an insignificant purpose. Any danger which he encounters is not necessary for the end, but is sought for its own sake. But even in the extinction of noxious creatures,—if the end be subordinate to the mean, the reflective, nay the rational nature,—has been dormant. Humanity has been misemployed.

A great proportion, however, of the sportsman's toils derive no interest from danger, and no motive from antipathy. The most timid and defenceless animals—creatures distinguished by elegance and beauty—forms that discover the most amiable attributes of sentient being, are the victims of his remorseless persecution. To suppose that the person who can witness a hare pursued by greyhounds, and listen to its dying cries without a feeling of pain, has any perception of Nature's love, or the impulses of true humanity, would involve an unparalleled anomaly. Let convention judge as it will,—such a person, if not a stock or a stone, ei-

ther degrades his better feelings under its influence—or he is at heart a ruthless savage, and is indebted for whatever correctness of deportment he may exhibit in society to imitation and restraint.

Is the earth then to be overrun by the inferior animals—are the fruits of industry to be spoiled—or is provision to be made for vermin, as it is said to be among some of the Hindoos, on a principle of religion? Undoubtedly not. An alternate process of generation and destruction takes place in the economy of nature; and by the obedience of every creature to the law of its being—the balance is preserved, and the general good promoted. By instinct, some animals pursue and make prey of others;—by reason, man is induced to check the redundance of both. His constitution is evidently adapted for the consumption of animal as well as vegetable food. He partakes, not only without repugnance, but with relish, of the meat that has been procured from the shambles. The butcher

who puts an animal to death with the least possible expense of time and suffering, has a disagreeable, and to many a revolting, but yet not an unreasonable occupation. But to haunt the slaughter-house, and to wield the hatchet as a pastime, would give cause to suspect a sanguinary disposition.

Opposition to sporting on rational principles is not to be confounded with a Brahminical superstition, or an affectation or excess of sentiment. For purposes of utility, the lower animals are at the free disposal of man. He is authorised by reason to provide for his own necessities, and to check their superabundance, by the speediest modes of capture and destruction. But he is in like manner forbidden, by reason and the best feelings of humanity, from making their slaughter the source of his amusement.

The resources to which men betake themselves to defend the acts of a selfish will are manifold. So far from being chargeable with inhumanity,

the sportsman sometimes contends, that when the miseries to which the inferior races are subject in the course of nature are considered—he has a claim to be reckoned their benefactor — for abridging the term of a painful existence. He would have us to believe that a sporting excursion is a mission of benevolence. His doings, nevertheless, we would class with the tender mercies that are cruel. The grateful savour of existence, under almost any form, may be guessed from our own consciousness. If Providence permit a lengthened age—it cannot be presumed, without an impeachment of His goodness, that he does not co-extend the means of enjoyment. If he have ordered its abbreviation by the destructive powers conferred on other creatures—a human agent in co-operating, classes itself with them,—or the inadequacy of unreasoning instinct is left to be supplied by the sympathies of reflective humanity.

This would imply, either a conversion of rea-

son into instinct, or exhibit the extraordinary phenomenon of a sentiment of pain, being transmuted by a process of reason, into a feeling of pleasure. The idea of a sportsman's motive being other than that of his own gratification or benefit, when gravely exposed, is too favourably treated. Either view him in the field—or hear him at the table—and the sparkle of exulting vanity betrays the ascendancy of personal triumph, in a manner not to be mistaken.

There is a mode of treating a subject, which if not unfair, is illiberal and severe. An act is submitted to a searching analysis—it is exhibited in its different bearings, and viewed in all its relations. The latent truth, when prominently set forth, cannot be gainsaid; and in the moment of his concession, and when he is encompassed with irresistible convictions, the individual who committed the act in a state of inconsideration or ignorance, is arraigned, as if he had been fully aware of every circumstance by which an earnest

accuser can aggravate the charge. The pleasure that accompanies every exercise of power, is present even in the force of a moral impeachment—especially if the accused be intrenched in public opinion, or possessed of any other stronghold—and without intending to be disingenuous, the impetus of invective may carry the assailant beyond the legitimate object of attack;—while the latter, overwhelmed by indignant obloquy, and impressed more by present than by previous convictions, may feel condemned in the eyes of others; and himself conclude that there is a fallacy, only by being conscious, that if possessed of his moral identity, he was incapable of the turpitude which is laid to his charge.

To accuse the sportsman of wilful cruelty, would exemplify such a mode of treatment. The palpitating breast and lacerated nerve might be painfully pourtrayed. He could not deny that the dying convulsions of an animated creature were simultaneous with his own complacent smiles.

But except where the appeal to humanity is so clamant, that it must either be admitted or rejected—inattention being impossible—he might nevertheless refuse to plead guilty to the charge of wilful cruelty. Knowing that his heart is responsive to the calls of affection, and alive to domestic and social charities, he would deem such a charge utterly false, instead of being, as it is, only exaggerated. If he had been aware of all that ought to have been present to his mind, it would be perfectly true. In many cases the plea of inconsideration would be inadmissible. In the present instance, however, it would be unjust to overlook it, paying a due regard to the difference between an undesigned and a purposed inadvertence.

It is not then maintained, that the sportsman is in the general case, wilfully cruel. He is cruel only in so far as he shuts his eyes, or stops his ears, against obvious impressions. The alembic of malice could scarcely extract from unmixed

pain a feeling of pleasure. Even with demoniac spite we connect a craving for sympathy. But inconsideration may be in a high degree culpable. When it proceeds from ignorance, it implies a gross or a contracted nature, and defective intellect. When it is voluntary, though the influence on the affections may be less pernicious, than if sights and sounds of torture had been callously encountered, it is in moral estimation, a like cruelty. The hand that orders, and the eye that witnesses, the pains of the rack, belong to kindred temperaments; and any difference which there is between them, may be ascribed, not to humane, but selfish regards.

The key to the whole question is contained in the closing stanza of a poem, which cannot be read without an expansion of natural sympathies, "Wordsworth's Hart Leap Well."

"One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
"Taught by what nature shews, and what conceals,

" Never to blend our pleasure or our pride,
" With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels *."

* The praise which Wordsworth bestows upon Walton, in one of his sonnets,

" While flowing rivers yield a harmless sport,
" Shall live the name of Walton; sage benign"—

is not very consistent with the moral of Hart Leap Well. The author of the Seasons, in like manner, has condemned the cruelty of hare-hunting, and described the delights of salmon-fishing. To deem the fish a cold-blooded, and comparatively impassive animal, approaches very near to the philosophy of the eel-skinner. But poets have often a pleasure in description, which they have not in pursuit.

A still greater inconsistency is exhibited by a person, who, with a profession—sincere it may be—of extraordinary devoutness, unites a love of sport, and devotes himself alternately to the saving of souls and the killing of game. Does the man, who for his selfish pleasure, wounds and slays a number of happy creatures, conceive that he possesses a Christian tenderness of spirit? If so, what an exaggerated idea does he entertain of his own importance,—how limited a view of his relations,—how little sympathy does he manifest with the divine goodness! To such a person we would recommend the per-

X.—SOCIAL DUTY.

In the principles which should regulate an individual, his social duty is necessarily involved.

usal of Dr Chalmers's Sermon on Cruelty to Animals, and would draw his notice, in a particular manner, to the concluding appeal.

"The lesson of this day is not the circulation of bene-
"volence within the limits of one species. It is the trans-
"mission of it from one species to another. The first is
"but the charity of a world. The second is the charity
"of a universe. Had there been no such charity, no
"descending current of love and of liberality from spe-
"cies to species, what, I ask, should have become of our-
"selves? Whence have we learned this attitude of lofty
"unconcern about the creatures who are beneath us?
"Not from those ministering spirits who wait upon the
"heirs of salvation. Not from those angels who circle
"the throne of heaven, and make all its arches ring with
"joyful harmony, when but one sinner of this prostrate
"world turns his footsteps towards them. Not from that
"mighty and mysterious visitant, who unrobed Him of
"all his glories, and bowed down his head unto the sacri-
"fice, and still, from the seat of his now exalted media-

The development of particular excellence implies the public advantage;—and no one who has been

" torship, pours forth his intercessions and his calls in " behalf of the race he died for. Finally, not from the " Eternal Father of all, in the pavilion of whose residence " there is the golden treasury of all those bounties and " beatitudes that roll over the face of nature, and from " the footstool of whose empyreal throne there reaches a " golden chain of providence to the very humblest of his " family. He who hath given his angels charge concern- " ing us, means that the tide of beneficence should pass " from order to order through all the ranks of his magni- " ficent creation; and we ask, is it with man that this " goodly provision is to terminate,—or shall he, with all " his sensations of present blessedness, and all his visions " of future glory let down upon him from above, shall he " turn him selfishly and scornfully away from the rights " of those creatures whom God hath placed in depen- " dence under him? We know that the cause of poor " and unfriended animals has many an obstacle to con- " tend with in the difficulties or the delicacies of legisla- " tion. But we shall ever deny that it is a theme beneath " the dignity of legislation; or that the nobles and sena- " tors of our land stoop to a cause which is degrading, " when, in the imitation of heaven's high clemency, they " look benignly downward on these humble and helpless

rightly instructed as to his personal conduct, will be ignorant of what he owes to the community.

" sufferers. Ere we can admit this, we must forget the " whole economy of our blessed gospel. We must for- " get the legislations and the cares of the upper sanctuary " in behalf of our fallen species. We must forget that " the redemption of our world is suspended on an act of " jurisprudence which angels desired to look into, and " for effectuating which, the earth we tread upon was " honoured by the footsteps, not of angel or of archangel, " but of God manifest in the flesh. The distance up- " ward between us and that mysterious Being, who let " himself down from heaven's high concave upon our " lowly platform, surpasses by infinity the distance down- " ward between us and every thing that breathes. And " he bowed himself thus far, for the purpose of an ex- " ample, as well as for the purpose of an expiation, that " every Christian might extend his compassionate regards " over the whole of sentient and suffering nature. The " high court of Parliament is not degraded by its atten- " tions and its cares in behalf of inferior creatures, else " the sanctuary of heaven has been degraded by its coun- " cils in behalf of the world we occupy, and in the exe- " cution of which the Lord of heaven himself relinquish- " ed the highest seat of glory in the universe, and went " forth to sojourn for a time on this outcast and accursed " territory."

A social obligation in any degree different from a private duty could scarcely arise—if the separate members of society duly cultivated their several capacities. A general supervision has a regard to individual neglect; and the reform of a common evil can be effected only by the definite and well-directed exertions, both of the prime movers, and those to whom the impulse is communicated. The effectual agents in such a reform, are they who stand in need of it. The persons who recommend it, can do little more than point, to what others must prosecute.

Often as the illusions of an ambitious philanthropy have been exposed—the mind, from its natural tendency to be affected by magnitude, continues to prefer a wide to a narrow sphere; and sometimes overlooks a real and immediate benefit in pursuit of an imaginary and distant good. It may be true, that there is a reflex influence in the progressive movement; and that the promoter of general schemes of benevolence

will most readily engage in its particular exercises. But the welfare of the receiver would be entitled to more regard than the feelings of the giver—if their interests were not completely in unison. They are, however, quite accordant. It must be the desire of benevolence, to operate where its exertions are most likely to be attended with benefit; and though not deadened by disappointment, it must derive encouragement from success; and delight in the fulfilment of its fond expectations.

Magnificent projects admit of no comparison with actual achievements. The desires of man are infinite, and his mind ranges through creation with untraceable celerity. But beyond the consciousness of spiritual existence, and immaterial attributes, this excursive flight leads to no discovery. In nature, the growth of what is destined to endure, is rarely the object of ocular perception. Science advances by slow degrees, and though 'rapt' Genius

" Glances from heaven to earth—from earth to heaven,"

its progress for the most part is through a resisting medium, and its enduring monuments, like the pyramids, are reared by accumulated labours. In the acquisition of material advantages, the expediency of proceeding, with a respect to our means of securing and maintaining the object of our pursuit, will be readily acknowledged;—and in aiming at results, where the good is of a mixed nature—being composed of both moral and physical benefit—if sufficient attention be bestowed, the same expediency will not fail to be recognised.

It is of the utmost importance, therefore, even when the interest of society is the end to be considered, that every man should be convinced, that he can in no way advance it so effectually, as by a right formation of his individual character. Whatever be the degree of his activity, or the extent of his munificence in his public relations,—while there is disorder in his own bosom, with its

concomitant expression,—though it should produce no worse effect than a saturnine aspect—instead of being valuable to society, on account of his zeal and generosity, he interrupts its harmony by his internal discord. There is a gross deception in supposing, that benevolence can exist without a focus; and that its glow can be imparted to distant objects, while those which are intermediate or nearer, partake not in its radiation. The charity that embraces the horizon of humanity must emanate from home. The niggard in domestic, cannot be liberal in social affection. The same fountain cannot send forth sweet water and bitter. Specious designs and grand undertakings, for the good of others, must be attributed to superstition, vanity or policy, when the private conduct of their supporters is inconsistent with the idea of benevolence. A sincere, though sanguine, temperament may be partial to a comprehensive enterprise: but its exertions will be disproportioned—not contradictory. If not disheartened at the out-

set, it will derive, from experience, an increase of discretion, without an abatement of zeal. The efficacy of an influence is not to be estimated by its outward potency, and the claims which it presents to vulgar notice. There are principles in the moral as in the natural world, which, by silent and constant operation, transcend, in actual effect, the most sublime displays of visible energy. Good, like evil, has an assimilating tendency. Its least particle may produce an infinite result; and the latent power of humble virtue exceed in salutary operation, the flash of enthusiasm and the burst of emotion,—as much as the secret force by which the globe is upheld—the instant lightning, and the reverberating thunder.

The conviction of this truth is a powerful encouragement to perseverance in duty. In the humblest nature there are high aspirations; and though the man of thorough principle would not withhold his best endeavours, if he had no other stimulus, than the sense of his obligation; it must

be cheering to reflect, that his least effort has a productive sequence, and that however insignificant he may be in the world's estimation, he discharges an honourable part, and will, in no wise, pass unrewarded. When the meridian of life is attained, without a wreath of civil or military fame, the heart that once swelled with ambitious hopes is ready to sink, and its obscure possessor to count himself a cipher. If he have abandoned himself to unavailing regrets, he is not so blameless. But, on the other hand, if he have drawn from adversity "its sweet uses," if he have been "faithful among the faithless," if, amid abounding corruption, he have maintained his purity and truth; he may have better fulfilled the purpose of his being, and be more worthy of honour, than if, with less of moral worth, he had reached the summit of worldly distinction.

The importance of private virtue, and the advantage to be derived from the exercise of benevolence in a defined locality, have been forcibly

exhibited by a writer *, whose imaginative power has not withdrawn him from minute and practical inquiries. There is no reason that in any instance such a separation should take place. It is often imagined that enthusiasm and zeal are incompatible with plain and ordinary duties. But the chief recommendation of a distinct and familiar sphere in the exercise of duty, is the superior means which it affords for keeping alive, and augmenting that ardour and devotedness of spirit which are the soul of charity—but which, in ambitious projects, if active at the beginning, soon languishes for want of appropriate nourishment, and often evanishes altogether, or reappears only in momentary gleams.

The first locality, then, which a friend to society should occupy, is his own heart. Its cultivation and improvement will benefit himself and his household—through them it will pass to the neighbourhood—from the neighbourhood to the

* Chalmers.

community—from the community to the country —from the country to the world, and through every ramification of society.

But in the present condition of mankind, no individual of right feeling can regard his own improvement as the sum of his social duty. If the poverty and misery that certainly exist in the community were visibly present to its prosperous members, their enjoyment would be at an end. We are so constituted, that our immediate sympathies produce a deeper impression than our reflective judgments. This is the cause of our being painfully affected by the sight of distress, notwithstanding of our confidence in the goodness of the Deity. On the other hand, we can pursue the business, and partake in the pleasures of life, when we know, but do not actually see the affliction by which we are surrounded. Unless it be brought home to us by striking or particular circumstances—it is then the subject of reflexion rather than of feeling; and instinctive

sympathies are no hindrance to the operation of reason.

We must beware, however, of abusing a salutary principle, and must not convert our trust in Providence into a motive for inactivity. There is every reason to conclude, that the worst evils, are in the hands of the Sovereign Disposer, instruments of good. The relief and the removal of human ills are evidently the objects of a divine economy; but the sympathies of men are as evidently subservient to its purposes. So far as they are available, they must be willingly bestowed; and it is only when an individual has endeavoured to discharge his duty, by doing all within the compass of humanity, that he can derive any consolation from reflecting that evil overruled, is a minister of good; and that "man's extremity "is God's opportunity."

There being no doubt, therefore, as to the obligation of an individual to use every effort for the

diminution of social evils; it is necessary to ascertain the manner in which the object is to be effected. For the application of improper remedies aggravates the disease—injudicious assistance is a premium to misconduct. The evils of pauperism can hardly be overrated. Idleness,—improvidence,—want of self-dependence and respect—interference with the wages of industry—increasing rapacity—destruction of capital—contamination of public morals—these, if not inseparable from any system of poor laws, have hitherto accompanied their abused administration. Without deciding on the possibility of poor laws under a proper management being available to the purpose of their enactment—we may at least conclude, that in themselves—with any thing but a bare subsistence in cases of otherwise irremediable indigence—a subsistence inferior to that of the poorest labourer—no provision being made for an amendment of morals,—though in form a benefit—they are, in fact, a bane to any country.

Voluntary contributions on a comprehensive scale—where the evil admits of increase by a relaxation of industrial effort,—are exposed to similar objections. A large class of cases remains, in which no injury can result from public benevolence. The blind,—the deaf and dumb,—the maimed and diseased,—the fatuous and the insane, and all those whose misfortunes are not the offspring of their own imprudence and neglect, may receive the bounty of an unrestrained compassion. Nor would we abandon the outcast, or the victim of repented folly. God forbid! We would treat him still with brotherly tenderness. We would only prevent him from abusing the public sympathy, by mistaking his position, and claiming as a right what he should regard as a boon *.

* Scripture is sometimes cited as an authority, where a change of circumstance renders an obedience of the letter, a contradiction of the spirit. The poverty produced by misfortune or oppression, and that which proceeds from a reliance on other men's labours, cannot be deserving of the same treatment. The principle of benevo-

If the system of locality, which has been so strongly recommended by the writer, to whom we have already alluded, were carried into effect —methodised schemes for the relief of poverty might be superseded; and surely, the adoption of such a system is not to be reckoned among the day-dreams of a visionary philanthropy. We would hope that the time is not far distant, when in the largest cities there will be such a division of benevolent superintendency, that every individual will be the subject, not of a suspicious inquisition, but of a welcome communion,—when innocent distress, and inevitable indigence, will be as sure of relief as imposture of detection.

In the meanwhile, however, the experiment of dissolving societies of doubtful tendency might be severe. While we have provided no substitute, the refusal of our alms, where feeling and rea-

lence—the desire to effect the greatest amount of good—preserves its identity, how contrary soever may be the modes of its operation.

son are in opposition, approaches, in some degree, to that presumptuous trust which implies a forgetfulness of our own duty. But this should urge us to lose no time in procuring the substitute.

Nor will a tedious search be necessary. A religious and moral education is the only effectual bulwark against pauperism. Whether a legal rate or voluntary charity is to meet the claims of indigence,—without public instruction there can be no basis of progressive amelioration. The prejudice which exists against the diffusion of knowledge among the people, calls for compassion rather than exposure. The advantage of acquiring the signs of knowledge may have been overrated. To read and write are not, to know, but to have the means of knowing *. The value of mere intelligence, also, may have been too highly

* Journal of Education, art. Public Instruction, No. 11, p. 50.

prized. If the apprehensive faculties only, have been exercised, the moral powers may be languid or dormant. The effect of intelligence appears to hold a middle place, between the exaggeration of one class, and the depreciation of another. It is neither an absolute preventive, nor a likely provocative of evil. It increases the capacity of the sentient being. The enlargement of the mind, and the prosecution of intellectual pursuits, have a salutary tendency; and their influence may well counterpoise the danger of enlivened susceptibility,—if the Will exhibit no oblique inclination; but if selfish passion be its governor, the benefit of intelligence may not only be counteracted, but perverted. For great as is the power of knowledge in regulating the affections, it either has an independent existence, or by the manner in which it is exercised may be considered as if it were altogether distinct, and may act either as a sovereign or a minister. Till it passes into wisdom,

and assumes the moral supremacy, it will be subservient to passionate volitions, and perhaps to vicious propensities *.

* Fully to develop the relative offices of the human faculties, would occupy more space, than the generality of readers would patiently survey. The primary truths of mental philosophy, it is to be feared, often share the same fate, as the cobwebs of metaphysical sophistry. The constitution of mind and body excites little interest, even among those, who have received what is termed, a liberal education. But while recondite inquiries may be left to men of science,—an elementary knowledge both of the mental and bodily powers, can be withheld from none, without injurious consequences. It is of little avail, that duties are explained and enforced; if the capacities of the agent be not applied to their respective uses. To apprehend moral truth, by a purely intellectual process, is a vain endeavour; and yet, it is very common to regard the understanding, as the sole medium of judgment, and entirely to overlook the fact, that there is a moral, as well as an intellectual reason; and that the most valuable knowledge, has no other avenue, than that of the affections. Much of what appears at first sight, an intellectual exercise, has a reference to moral action; and this is a reason for attribut-

The utmost depravity is often combined with great intelligence; but, generally speaking, an intel-

ing to it more efficacy, than if it had no connexion with the will.

On the following points, if the evidence were pondered, a large proportion of impartial observers would probably coincide:

1. That the mind, though existing at different times, in different states, is simple, and indivisible in its essence.

2. That there are certain first principles of knowledge, and likewise inherent feelings, which cannot be ascribed to any mental process.

3. That the mind, perceiving the relation between objects of simple apprehension, and discerning their difference, understands, and reasons.

4. That the mind, directed by its emotions, not only acts and feels; but discovers and eliminates moral truth. The same remark may be applied to the perception of beauty.

5. That conscience is to the moral, what understanding is to the intellectual nature.

6. That the mental faculties have a mutual influence; and though, what at first was received by the understanding only, may afterwards have an effect on the conduct,—not in consequence of the original admission,

ligent will be a reputable member of society. Misery is both the consequence and the cause of crime. Ignorance begets idleness, and idleness engenders misery; therefore, the removal of ignorance must be beneficial. That degree of activity which the possession of intelligence implies, is incompatible with a passive submission to the ills of an abject and grovelling condition. The man who has any knowledge of himself, or of the world's resources, will not be content to starve or beg, or to feed at the swine trough. If the field of supply admitted of no extension, intelligence might furnish more weapons to rapacity; but it adds to the old and opens up new materials. To anticipate a redundance of mankind, does not belong to this, nor will probably to any generation; but, till the earth

—but of the subsequent application,—the opposite influence is both more frequent and powerful:—That the will, except in the face of the most rigid demonstration, refuses to admit an unwelcome conclusion; and that vicious passions, hinder not merely the practice, but also, the perception of virtue.

is exhausted, the work of improvement may be zealously promoted*.

* Were it not for the pressure of population in one place, vast regions of the earth might continue to bear ungathered fruits. This surely cannot be presumed to be the plan of the divine economy. The opponents of population would postpone the time of marriage, so as to render emigration unnecessary. Are they aware of the extent of the requisite protraction? Do they not see, that they must come at length to a point in time, in the same manner as they allege their adversaries must arrive at a point in space, where marriage must cease? And in the meantime, what becomes of the influence of irregular passion? Do they suppose that it can be generally counteracted by improved morality? and if it could—has the Deity provided inadequately for the temperate desires of moral beings?

A right view of this subject is of vital importance to all classes of society; for the association of marriage with inferior purposes has a tendency to debase the tone of every station. The advocate of late marriages exclaims against sensual indulgence, while the reward which he holds out to abstinence, is, after all, only an accumulated store of physical comfort. It seems to be forgotten, that, as the body has its wants, the heart has its yearnings; and that to provide for the former at the expense of the latter, is a manifest inversion. The neglect of either, nature

There is no reason, however, to contend strenuously for the advantage to be derived from

forbids,—and annexes to her decrees proportionate penalties. To degrade woman to a species of household commodity; or to look upon her merely as an instrument of pleasure and productiveness; lowers her character, and withdraws a most powerful inducement to interior culture. The conversion of matrimony from a communion of hearts to a participation of the bed, has already told with fearful effect on female education, and has of course extended its influence to the other sex, rendering them frivolous and superficial. External garniture and meretricious embellishments abound. If a man be in search of a woman to bear his name, spend his money, and be the mistress of his establishment, his pursuit needs not be tedious. But a woman fitted alike for prosperous and adverse fortune, who, instead of a barren surface, decked with artificial garlands, has in herself the germ of loveliness, and whose constant expression is a development of feminine excellence and beauty,—a woman, worthy of the name,—is as rare as she is valuable. As long as marriage is reckoned the voluptuous reward of garnered wealth, and unsolaced labours—rather than an encouragement to united perseverance—under the guise of wedlock a system of legalised prostitution, with all its attendant evils, must accompany the bane of unlicensed profligacy.

The honest indignation which arises against an unna-

mere intelligence. If it really were noxious without proper accompaniments, the consequence would be,—not that intelligence should be withheld, but that morality should be superadded. Perhaps none of our seminaries of education has attended sufficiently to the compound nature of the human constitution. Every plan for the training of youth which does not make provision for a proportionate exercise of the physical, intellectual, and moral powers, is incomplete. But the principle begins to be recognised, and the most salutary results may be expected from its adoption. There may be a difference of opinion with respect to the execution, but there seems no ground for denying the practicability of the object. Other states have set the example of rendering education universal. If the community were moral and intelligent, the

tural theory is not to be rated as a puerile sentimentality. And they who cannot offer their own experience in proof of their doctrines, should be especially diffident in recommending to others a state of which they are ignorant.

particular mechanism of local agencies for the supply of its wants, would be rendered comparatively immaterial by the efficacy of a pervading principle. How varied soever the means, the end is one,—the sound education of every individual. To the teachers, an acquaintance with human nature will be indispensable. But, fortunately, neither they nor their pupils will be left to the unassisted light of nature in their respective exertions. The Bible is the interpreter and the guide of humanity—a luminous exponent of that part of nature to which it relates; and if the communication of the Scriptures be not attended with greater difficulty than that of any other species of knowledge, the advantage of a moral, as well as an intellectual education, may be offered to all the families of the realm *.

* The necessity of religion, not only as the basis, but as the end of education, may be admitted without that superstitious confidence, which is sometimes bestowed on the instruments of spiritual culture. The Bible itself is frequently regarded as an amulet, possessing a mysterious

The instruction of the ignorant is a preventive —the support of the needy, under the guise of

potency against the powers of evil ; and the utterance of a text as endued with exorcising virtue. Instead of being explained, illustrated and applied,—the Word of God, which, when brought to bear upon the conscience, by earnest preaching, or by prayer and meditation, is quick and powerful, and sharper than any " two-edged sword, " piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, " and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the " thoughts and intents of the heart,"—considered as a holy charm, and as miraculously energetic,—betrays both those who communicate and those who receive it, into a fatal neglect of the means, which the Spirit employs in the administration of His bounty. In like manner,—a church, —the mere external edifice, with perhaps the unimportant addition of a frigid service upon the Sabbath, is conceived to have a sanative influence, in the midst of a tainted community. An increase of churches, has been represented, as indispensable for the commonwealth. This proposition must be admitted, or denied, according to the idea which is entertained, of a church. If it be thought, that to constitute a church, no more is necessary than a building with a belfry,—a clergyman with a stipend,—and a congregation with some degree of reverence for ecclesiastical routine,—there might be churches in

relief, is often a cause—of the evil which it would cure. As the most important charity that can

every street,—and the populace remain in a state of unredeemed wretchedness. Public worship, performed as a duty, rather than embraced as a privilege, is a dreary ceremonial:—and it might quicken the zeal of many, who content themselves with doling out a weekly prelection, to know with what weariness of heart, their passive auditors listen to discourses, which instead of enlivening the affections and moving the conscience of "creatures "hastening to death and to judgment,"—are composed and delivered, as if the preacher had studied humanity, only in his closet, and wanted either power or will to participate in its sympathies. But, if by a church, be signified,—not only a house dedicated to the worship of God, but also, a complete apparatus of ecclesiastical tuition; by means of which, a defined district may be thoroughly superintended,—the advantages to be derived from such institutions are probably not overrated. To take from the Church, a single fraction for purposes wholly secular, would be a dangerous precedent; and to appropriate what is otherwise vested—even to similar uses, may be a boon to selfishness; but if no farther encroachment were made on the revenues of the Church, than to apply them to the most effectual mode of promoting religious education,—the friends of the establishment would have no great cause of alarm.

occupy the regards of philanthropy, it is the duty of all, in their respective stations, to promote the interests of education by every means in their power. But while individuals are required to render their best services in their peculiar spheres; and while, on their vigilant supervision of manageable departments, the success of any general system will depend; the education of the people must be deemed the interest of the commonwealth, and must be viewed, not as a public good only, but as a national necessity.

The rulers of a country cannot be too frequently reminded, that the welfare of the state depends on the character of the people, and that the government is responsible for the conduct of its subjects. The development of moral power, as a source of political strength, has been long neglected. Its effect is for the most part unheeded; and when it is acknowledged; it is more as an object of religious respect than of visible and practical utility. In public discussions, the arguments em-

ployed frequently exhibit the utmost sensitiveness, in subjects of finance, and a total indifference in matters of principle. Their intimate connexion is overlooked. The dependence of physical on moral influence, in a pecuniary point of view, is not even surmised. For the defeat of foreign competition, some would permit a sacrifice of humanity. They do not consider, that outraged nature is a violent avenger; and that disruption and disorder are the results of undue compression. Men cannot be used like machines, without a dissolution of morals. Immorality is the precursor of anarchy. In a season of groundless alarm, or when there is the most remote apprehension of anarchy, the productive powers of the country are paralysed. When it actually arrives, the arts of civilised life are annihilated.

The philanthropy of others would spurn the idea of purchasing commercial advantage at the cost of human life: They would carefully regard and humanely provide for physical necessities;

but their social affections would carry them no farther.

The importance of attending to the material, as well as to the spiritual part of our nature, has been already noticed; and much might be done, both by those in public authority, and by private individuals, for invigorating the health, and increasing the cleanliness and comfort of the people. Public parks and abounding fountains—spacious streets and ventilated passages—merry games and athletic exercises—spade tillage, and the culture of plants and flowers, contribute largely to the content and happiness of a community.

Nor is the taste of the people a matter of small moment. Noble monuments, majestic statues, and grand edifices, have a tendency to elevate and refine their ideas. A national gallery and museum are worthy of legislative encouragement, not only as they are a source of mental pleasure, but also, because they serve to connect the interests of the rich and the poor, and to soften the

asperity which has been engendered, by the spirit of exclusiveness, to such a degree, that even public ornaments, in which all have, as it were, a right of property, are sometimes vindictively defaced.

But no exercise of the body, and no enjoyment of the mind, that either blunts the feelings or endangers morality, is entitled to the least tolerance. Prize-fighting brutalizes those who witness, as well as those who engage in it, and calls for a full measure of penal severity. The abuse of the lower animals, though at all times an object for moral reprobation, may not always be exposed to legal prosecution, without the hazard of inexpedient results. But where the offence is not only committed, but patronised, as in the case of animals baited in a ring,—a legislature, not conscious of a similarity between the pastimes of its members, and those of the populace, would not hesitate to interfere. The manliness of the national character has sometimes been associated

with these brutal diversions. Our candour in peace, and our courage in war, have been ascribed to bold brows and iron sinews. We underrate not the value of muscular vigour. On the contrary, we would sedulously cultivate the means by which, it, as well as a greater, may be attained. These we believe to be health and virtue; and though from this time forward, the arena should be closed,—we should neither be less sure of our fellows' sincerity in social intercourse, nor feel more anxious for the national standard, in the hour of conflict.

THE END.

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