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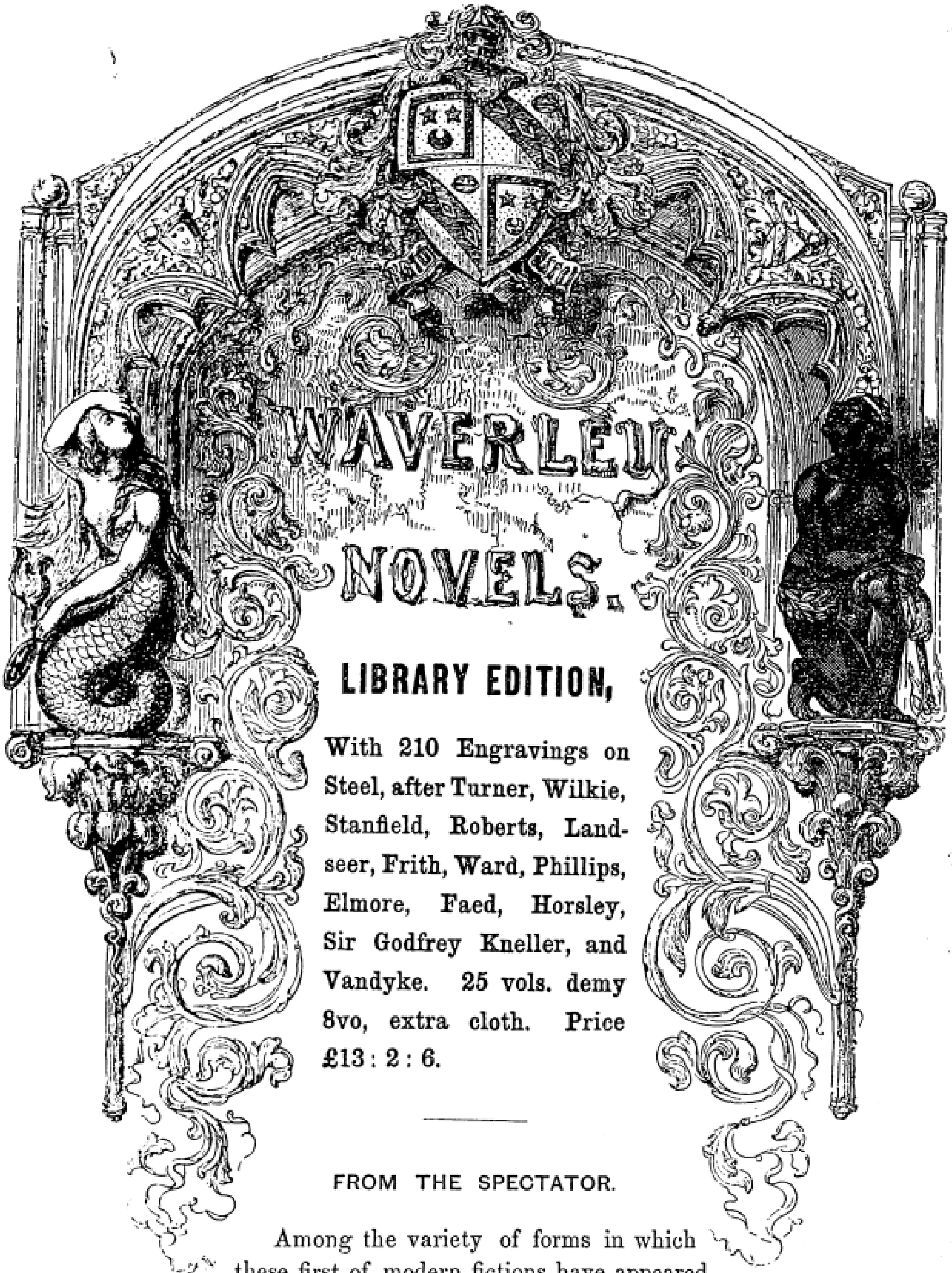

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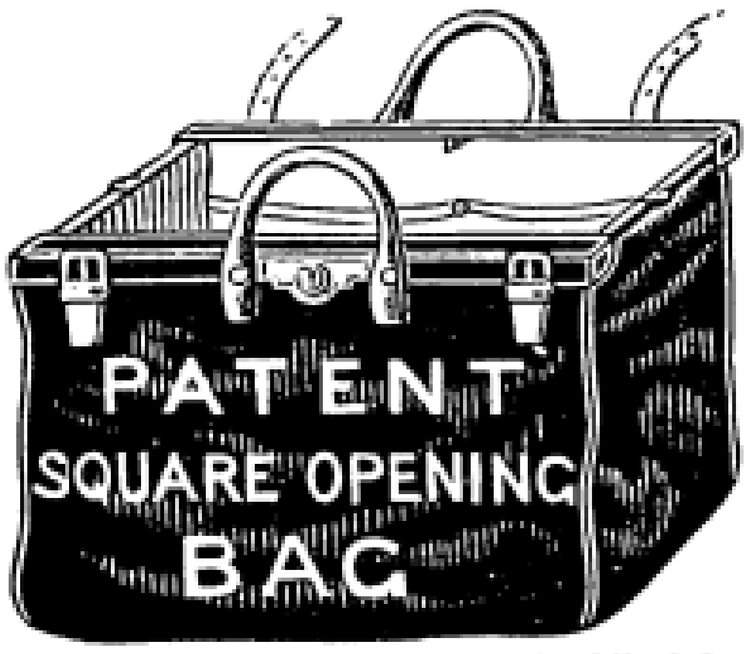

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PREFACE.

IT is hardly necessary to premise that this publication has been suggested by the *Oxford* and *Cambridge Essays* published by Mr. Parker, a series to which it is in aim and plan substantially similar. The main peculiarity and advantage of that plan is, that it demands no conformity to any one standard in matters of opinion, each writer being individually responsible for his own statements.

The term "Members of the University" requires a word of explanation. Properly speaking, that phrase includes only Professors and Matriculated Students; here, however, it is used merely as the briefest mode of indicating that the writers have been alumni of the University, or now hold office in it. To have narrowed the circle of contributors within more formal limits would have deprived the publication of any just claim to that representative character which is one of the objects aimed at. It may be necessary to add, for the information of those unacquainted with the peculiar

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constitution of our University, that Graduates enjoy no academic privileges. Degrees in Arts, in particular, are elevated above any consideration of advantage to the possessor; they are strictly Honours, and, as a natural consequence, attract few candidates.[1]

[1] How little a Degree in Arts can be regarded as a fair criterion of distinction at Edinburgh may be judged from the following Table of the numbers of Students and Graduates during five years :—

Years.	Med. Stud.	M.D.	Lit. Stud.	M.A.	B.A.
1852	503	51	843	6	11
1853	490	85	795	6	9
1854	463	56	767	13	10
1855	495	54	789	8	12
1856	457	59	798	12	13

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PLATO.

PLATO is one of the most massive and magnificent, but at the same time, to us moderns at least, in some respects one of the most perplexing and unsatisfactory of writers. This fault, however, is not one of poverty and weakness, but proceeds, in a great measure, from the very vastness, comprehensiveness, and many-sided variety of his intellect. As on some mighty broad-based monarch of mountains, like our Scottish Benmuich-dhui, it is more easy to lose one's way, than on a compact, well-rounded, and distinctly marked hill, of which the boundary is anywhere easily measured by common optics; and as the approach to this huge-heaved summit is made through long stretches of bog, forest, sheer-rising cliff, and curiously-winding glen—so the study of Plato is not a work to be lightly undertaken by every man who can drive a gig creditably on good roads through the low country of Dr. Paley and Dr. Reid. The same slipperiness of approach, in fact, and the same difficulty of mastering, is observable in the case of Goethe, and other writers of various and rich fertility of genius. We do not mean, of course, that a great genius is always hard to be laid hold of—Walter Scott were a very notable example to the contrary—but what we say is, that there is a particular order of minds of the first class, that comprehend so much, and unite, under one gigantic intellectual supremacy, such contrary and apparently incompatible elements, that it is very difficult for readers, accustomed to the simple structure of inferior minds, to work their way to the central point from which the vast whole becomes comprehensible. Such a central point unquestionably there is in every strong and original mind; exactly as in the case of the lofty mountain, the summit, and the summit only, is the point from

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which the whole rocky mass itself, and the circumjacent plains, may be intelligibly surveyed. Now, it is no doubt possible to be transported to the top of a high mountain in a balloon or other airy carriage, and thus, at a very small expense of time and labour, master the general outlines of such an intelligible survey; but for a really clear and thorough understanding of a mighty mountain, the detailed way of mounting gradually, through the winding approach of the long glens, is indispensable. The squashy bogs, dark forests, and rushing torrents without bridges, are not to be evaded. God has not willed that any knowledge obtained at a slight expense of labour shall be of equal value to that which is acquired at a great expense. War may be talked of by poets and Quakers; but it is understood only by those who have gone through a campaign. Plato, in the same way, to be known, must be studied; and he must be studied, not with the head only, but, like the Bible, with the whole man; for a great writer, who brings his whole highly developed nature into play, can never be appropriated by one whose culture is fragmentary, and the notes of whose life have never been blended into a harmony of which any reasonable ear can take cognizance. As a whole, therefore, Plato never will be comprehended by the million; at least till the million possess a great deal more patience, love of truth, reach of thought, and contemplative subtlety than they have hitherto displayed. Under good guidance, indeed, individual dialogues of the great master idealist, whether in the original or in a good translation, may be read with pleasure and instruction by any man; but whoever buckles to Plato honestly, as a whole, will find that he is full of stumblingblocks, and that he bristles with offence; and, what will try the student's temper most, his most interesting dialogues often seem to lead nowhere, and to end, like Highland roads, in a bog.

The misfortune is that Plato is an intellect of such a world-commanding class, that any man who has opinions at all must have some opinions about him, just as he has about Homer and Mahomet. No man can say that the empire of Plato over the minds of thinking men has passed away, or can pass away. To call yourself a thinker and ignore Plato, is to say you are a builder, and never heard of Michael Angelo

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and St. Peter's. You dare not say so;[1] and therefore, if you don't really know anything of the architectural power of the great Florentine, you will, as vulgar honesty goes, pretend that you do so; your position will force you to make the best shift you can with the first best δόξα, or mere OPINION on the matter since you cannot boast the stable certainty of ἐπιστήμη, or KNOWLEDGE. Now, in cases of this kind, we generally find that the popular opinion is founded on the most prominent and the most striking, but for that reason, often the most superficial feature in the interesting object of which a knowledge is pretended. That Cromwell had a wart on his nose; that Byron had a club foot, which gave him more anxiety than the critiques on his poems; that the head of Pericles was too long, for which reason the sculptors always made his bust helmeted, while that of Julius Caesar was bald, which made it doubly grateful to that great commander to have his brow encompassed with an oaken wreath, or the coveted kingly diadem; such prominent and superficial accessories of personal appearance, in the case of well-known characters, will often be familiar to thousands who know nothing more of the person so curiously characterised. But these, so far as they go, are certainly true; they are accurate knowledge, not mere opinion. Even vulgar opinion is not so often altogether false as it is partial and inadequate, and therefore unjust. Of Mahomet, for instance, everybody knows that he was the prophet of an intolerant religion, which its most sincere professors have always most zealously propagated with the sword. This is quite true; but it is far from embracing the whole truth with regard to the religion of the Koran; and he who, with the inconsiderate haste of popular logic, uses this accurate knowledge about a fraction of a thing, as if it were the just appreciation of the whole, falls not the less certainly into the region of mere δόξα and delusion; for though the thing that he believes is true, it is not true as he gives it currency. He is in fact doing a thing in the region of ideas which is equivalent to passing a farthing for a guinea; an act whereby

[1] A good example of this will be found in Lord Jeffrey's article BEAUTY, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where the author makes a smart preliminary flourish about the Hippias, which to the intelligent merely shows that he knew nothing about Plato.

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he swindles the public and himself very nearly as much as if he were to pass off a piece of painted pasteboard for the same value. Still a farthing is better than a piece of pasteboard; and so with regard to a great philosopher like Plato, the common opinion of the most ignorant, that he was a dreamer and a fantastic speculator, who was always wandering among clouds and sunbeams, and who taught the art of falling in love with the souls of persons who have no bodies—this vulgarest notion is so far true, that Plato, as contrasted with Aristotle, and other bare and square intellectual architects, did amuse himself with weaving tissues of beautiful iridescent speculation, and with sketching magnificent pictures of infinite worlds beyond the moon, for the decoration of the walls of his stable palace of the science of eternal ideas; but beyond this it is altogether false—as false as it would be to say that the granite mountain of Cairngorm, where the precious stones are dug, is made of velvet, because it is in fact, in many places, carpeted with a very delicate soft moss, on which the foot of the most dainty lady might tread with luxury.

So far we have been talking of Plato only as a man, and of his critics and commentators, and whosoever expresses opinions about him as men. But Plato was a Greek man; and we are English and Scottish men. Herein also lies the cause of no inconsiderable difficulty of adequate appreciation. That the Englishman is one of the most noble species of the genus to which he belongs seems to be generally conceded. The poet Southey expressed the opinion of more thinkers than himself when he said that the Englishman is the model or pattern man, at least of all the species at present existing. But even those who are most thoroughly convinced of this must admit that he has his peculiarities—peculiarities of such a nature as make it extremely difficult for him to pronounce an impartial judgment on the character and value of notable men belonging to other nations. One of the strongest features in the Englishman's character is his nationality; and one of the most striking traits of that nationality is pride. Both these qualities are a great bar in the way of honest appreciation of foreign excellence; for it is not by the narrowness of a national estimate, but by the breadth

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of a cosmopolitan sympathy, not by the isolation of pride, but by the condescension and chivalrous acknowledgment of love, that we learn to know and to appreciate whatsoever is not ourselves and of ourselves. But there is another potent element in the English character which renders it peculiarly unfit for the appreciation of any phenomenon so essentially Greek as Plato. We are a practical people. This word "practical" is indeed the shibboleth by which we love to recognise ourselves; as the Greeks delighted to picture themselves as more wise, and the French as more polite than other nations. But the Greeks, as we all know, were in the highest degree a speculative, and a subtle, and an essentially unpractical people. Therefore, as like is only recognised by like, the Greek mind, or at least a great part of it, will always remain a mystery to the English mind. Let Greek grammars and Greek lexicons be multiplied to infinity; let certain plays of Euripides and certain treatises of Aristotle be commented on, so long as England shall be England, by all the aspirants to a mastership, a deanery, or a bishopric in the kingdom; let head masters of large schools, and tutors of colleges, dilate, in every varied form of mingled reason and sophistry, on the never sufficiently to be belauded advantages of a classical education; with all this the inner soul of Greece will not be known by, or knowable to, the normal Englishman; and Greek scholarship in England will be liable to become a thing, as we have too frequently seen it, altogether without a soul—a thing that deals merely with the external shell of learning, and amuses a snugly-cabined leisure with all sorts of grammatical fribbles, and philological card-castles. How little, indeed, the English mind, even in the case of professional scholars, is occupied with the problems proposed by Greek philosophy, is manifest from the fact that the most important articles on Greek philosophers in Doctor Smith's admirable Dictionary, are written not by Englishmen but by Germans. Our genius has a most real, concrete, and altogether terrestrial tendency; there seems to be a considerable majority of Sadducees amongst us, or, as Plato calls them, "uninitiated persons, who believe in nothing but what they can lay hold of with their hands." These men will make railways, telegraphs, and tunnels, and build crystal palaces, and collect

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industrial products from the ends of the earth, and exhibit in every possible shape and variety the sublime of what is mechanical and material; but for supersensual ideas, and the *τὸ ὄντως ὄν*—the enduring and only real substratum of all that is—they will have none of them. Plato is a dreamer and a fantastical fellow to them; as they are *βαναυσικοὶ* and "a nation of shopkeepers" to him. Between Plato and the English nation there is in fact a gulf which cannot be passed; any more than that greater gulf can be passed which lies between the sphere of English notions and the world of German speculation. Individual Englishmen will no doubt make excursions to the Brocken, and find that it is not always altogether possessed by witches and devils; but your normal Englishman will hold to the belief that the man who travels in Germany has brought home a score of bottle-imps in his pocket, and that for this reason it is dangerous to have dealings with him. So individual Englishmen, as Butler (though strictly speaking he was an Irishman), will lecture on Plato, and exhibit some portion of that ideal enthusiasm with which his dialogues were written; in Cambridge, also, where, since the days of Smith and Cudworth, Plato has never been altogether forgotten, learned professors of Greek will wisely use the advantages of their position by endeavouring to inoculate the susceptible mind of some young Kingsley or Maurice, with the living germ of Platonic speculation; nay, even in cold and precise Oxford, where Aristotle has long been worshipped as the only "god of the philosophers,"[1] a few heretical noses, with Puseyistic or Rationalising tendencies, may be found sniffling in this direction; but all these very praiseworthy exertions will never create a school of Platonists in England, such as that famous one which existed in Florence, illuminated by the first fair virgin flush of chaste thought that accompanied the revival of classical learning in the fifteenth century. Among the thousand and one publications in the domain of classical learning in England during the last century and a half, Butler's *Lectures* (so admirably annotated by Professor Thompson), with the exception of the translations of the eccentric Taylor, for a hearty

[1] A well-known phrase used by Cicero in reference to Plato.

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recognition of the true Platonic attitude of philosophy, seem to stand almost alone.[1] None of our great and most applauded English names in the world, whether of thought or of professed scholarship, were Platonic. Neither Bacon, nor Locke, nor Bentley, nor Porson, nor Whewell, nor Thirlwall, nor Grote, is a Platonist. The last-named writer, indeed, has come boldly out with one of the most characteristic features of "the nation of shopkeepers," when he represents Plato as the subtle theorist, and the sophists as the useful practical thinkers of the ancient world in the fifth century before Christ.[2] This is the genuine English sentiment uttered by a learned London banker; while the strong denunciation of the sophists, and the hearty sympathy with Plato's Republic exhibited by one of the most talented of the English Puseyites,[3] can only be regarded as one of those manifestations of combined academical and ecclesiastical feeling that so often react in a very salutary fashion against the merely practical tendencies of our age and nation. As for Scotland (since in a matter pertaining to philosophy it were wrong not to speak of our own country specially), it is, of all quarters of the world, that one where a person might wander longest without stumbling on a thinking person who had any living pulses beating in sympathy with the great founder of the Academy.[4] Dr. Reid was, no doubt, a very strong-

[1] Badham's edition of the *Philebus*, recently published, must also be mentioned, as a work combining the most accurate philological learning with the soundest appreciation of the Platonic philosophy. It is understood that Professor Jowett of Cambridge is occupied with a new edition of the whole works of Plato. This is just what was to have been expected from that quarter.

[2] Mr. Grote, whose merits as a political historian no wise critic will deny, is perhaps not the man, under any circumstances, to write in a worthy tone about Greek philosophy; but his whole chapter on Plato and the sophists, if there were no graver offence, is completely marred for historical purposes by the violent polemical attitude which this writer constantly assumes. His pages sound often like reports of an emphatic party-speech delivered in Parliament, rather than the grave verdict of a historian.

[3] Sewell, in his introduction to the *Dialogues of Plato;* a book glowing with great truths, but sparkling also with the brilliant exaggerations that belong to genius without sense.

[4] Here, as in many other respects, the Scottish people have lagged wofully behind the conception of their own great reformer John Knox,

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headed man, with a great amount of "common sense," a virtue on which the Scottish nation generally, and not without reason, place a very high value; but he was no Platonist. The present writer once put the question to the late Sir William Hamilton, whether either Reid, or Stewart, or Brown, might be looked upon as men learned in the Greek philosophy; and the answer was "*decidedly not.*" "The whole Scottish school of philosophy," said he, "was essentially destitute of a learned foundation." And most certainly it does appear, that of all possible cognitive organs, "common sense," however useful in its place, is that which is the least adapted for laying hold of some of the most fundamental ideas in Plato. But even had the Scottish philosophy been based on a higher principle, it would have remained impossible for the Scottish people to have received Plato into their culture, so long as the universities were condemned to content themselves with dribbling out the beggarly elements of a nominal scholarship to satisfy the low demands of the country presbyteries of a church in which learning bears no premium. Of the two elements which go to a knowledge of Plato—an ideal tone of thought, and a familiarity with the Greek language—the Scotch had perhaps less of the former than the English, and of the latter they were altogether destitute. Hence Platonism never existed in Edinburgh; and Lord Jeffrey and the Reverend Archibald Alison were allowed with general applause to propound a theory of beauty, the characteristic feature of which consisted in denying that there exists any intellectual principle of beauty at all—the identical sceptical doctrine, in fact, tricked out with sentimental phrases, of the stout old Abderitan sophist Protagoras, that "every man is the measure of all things to himself, of true things that they are true, and of false things that they are false," and that beautiful objects are so only in virtue of an arbitrary and ever-shifting bond of association in the mind of the contemplator.

Hitherto, our readers will likely think we have been

who, in the *Books of Discipline*, lays it down expressly that the study of Plato and the New Testament shall go hand in hand in the universities. See *First Book of Discipline*, "of *Readers*, and of the *Degrees and Times of Study*."

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offering them very little encouragement to the study of Plato; having been eager, as it would seem, only to prove that both the English and the Scottish mind labour under a special incapacity of comprehending the works of the great apostle of idealism. Now, this certainly does seem ungracious; but it is so far necessary. It is not advisable that certain persons should wish to know anything about Plato, any more than about Coleridge, Carlyle, Shelley, or John Keats. Nothing is more beneficial to the mind than the cultivation of the habit of being content to be ignorant of certain subjects. Nevertheless there is one door through which the English mind has a more free and open access to the Platonic philosophy, viz., religion; and it is really astonishing, when we reflect seriously, how little this avenue has been made use of. Learned Germans have written valuable books on "the Christian element in Plato;"[1] and it is a well-known fact that many of the most authoritative of the Greek fathers spoke of the philosophy of the Academy, in the very same language that St. Paul used in reference to Judaism, as being a schoolmaster to bring the Greek world to Christ.[2] Nor does it require a very profound glance to see how Platonic philosophy and Christian faith, in their grand outlines, characteristic tendencies, and indwelling spirit, are identical; identical, at least, in so far as a thing of Hebrew, and anything of Hellenic origin, can be considered as presenting varieties of a common type. The prominence given to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in all Plato's works, as contrasted with the position of the same doctrine in the systems of Aristotle and other Greek philosophers—the atmosphere of a pure and unworldly emotion, that, like airs from Paradise, floats through the blooming bowers of the Academy; the single-hearted dedication of the soul to truth, beauty, and holiness, as things essentially divine, for their own sake, to the utter contempt of all the inferior springs of action that lie in the words expediency, policy, utility, and worldly wisdom; these, with other characteristic features that lie on the very surface of the Platonic books, are things essentially Christian, and are felt by every person

[1] *Ueber das Christliche in Plato*, by Ackermann; a book worth reading.

[2] Clemens Alexandrinus says this distinctly.

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of well cultivated moral sensibility, to be much more closely allied to the Gospel of John than they are to Aristotle, or John Locke, or Doctor Paley. Why then, we ask again, has this door of entrance to the inner sanctuary of Platonic meditation been so little taken advantage of in these lands? Plainly, so far as we can see, from the strange peculiarities of the English mind already alluded to, which at once robbed our scholarship of all capacity to develope the best elements which it contained, and our theology of all desire to form any alliance with the highest forms of scholarship. Our universities were, and still are, very closely connected with our churches; and yet Plato, the element in purely academical learning most essentially Christian, was neglected; just because the tyrannical force of the strong English character, with its obstinate idiosyncrasy, impressed a stamp both upon our theology and our scholarship which made it impressible in the least possible degree by anything in the shape of Platonism. Our universities, moreover, worked themselves, by the neglect of generations, into a course of narrow, pedantic routine, removed from the healthy breadth and large generosity of the English character almost as far as it certainly was from a truly stimulant and expansive academic teaching. It may be a harsh thing to say, but it is certainly true, that the combined action of these restrictive influences, produced, at an epoch now happily passing away, a temper of mind in the English universities, which was just as far from relishing or comprehending the Gospel of John as it was from relishing or comprehending Plato. The peculiarly Platonic element in Christianity was ignored by whole parties and whole generations of churchmen, just as much as the Christian element in Plato was unknown to scholars, or at all events little appreciated. Instead of giving lectures on Plato, an English scholar began at an early period to authenticate his claims for a future bishopric, by editing, with new Latin notes and a sprinkling of fresh various readings, some declamatory play of Euripides, for the hundredth time; and a Christian bishop, when once made, would find the occupation of his prelatical leisure much sooner in quarreling with Hermann about the metrical division of a choral line in Aeschylus, than in showing how the philosophers in the Academy bore

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witness to the preachers of the Gospel, and the conversion of the apostle Paul from Judaism to Christianity had been prefigured by the no less sudden change of Polemo from licentiousness to sobriety.[1] Our scholarship, in fact, and our theology, were alike deficient in the philosophical element;[2] and without this element neither Greek nor theology could lead the normal English academical or ecclesiastical man into the essentially speculative domain of Plato. Hence in the most Christian and most classical country of Europe, the works of the man who wrote the noblest Greek, and taught the most Christianizing of doctrines, were practically ignored. Scholarship dressed itself up in modes of verbal priggery. Theology stood aloof from its best friend, partly from apathy and pure stupidity, partly from a frigid jealousy of introducing a stirring soul of inoculated vitality beneath the stiff ribs of its reputable formalism; partly also, among the men called Evangelicals, from a morbid incapacity of acknowledging even kindred emotion and character without the shibboleth of a favourite phraseology, and the scheme of a doctrine which tradition had rendered sacred, and custom indispensable. Some of these persons, had they known anything about him, would have eschewed Plato with the more jealousy, even as Cardinal Bellarmin is reported to have done, "*just because he was so very closely allied to Christ.*" Such likeness (it was feared by timid souls) might have given rise to a dangerous mistake.

So much for Plato's relation to the present time and place. We must now come closer, and consider his relation to his own age and his own people. And here we shall find, that just in proportion to the magnitude of his intellect, and the large capacity of his heart, were the thousand quivering points by which he lays hold of his environment. A small literary man, like our poet Rogers, may think and

[1] See the striking account of this heathen regeneration in Valerius Maximus, lib. vi. 9, and Diogenes Laertius.

[2] Emerson says with a severe sarcasm, "The English university system ripens bishops and extrudes philosophy (English Traits, p. 125);" and I remember reading an article in the *Times* to the effect that the much vaunted tutorial system, in behalf of which Dr. Pusey has written a work, is calculated to produce *learning*, *not thought*. But mere erudition will never inspire a man with enthusiasm for Plato.

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write alone, unaffected in any perceptible way by the great intellectual, moral, and political movements of the age in which he lives—a great soul never. The relation indeed of a gigantic genius to its environment may be that of distinctly marked hostility, in some aspects, or in the gross. So with Tacitus, so with Shelley; but it can never be the relation of general indifference and absolute negation. Goethe, for instance, held himself aloof, with what to harsh judges might appear a morbid sensitiveness, from the political movements of his own time and place; but no German writer was more affected by the influences, moral, intellectual, and social, of the atmosphere in which he lived. Though in style and outward form presenting none of the more notable peculiarities of Germanism, he was, in soul and intellectual attitude, the most German of the German classics. This all classes of his countrymen understand. An exactly similar phenomenon presents itself in Plato. While, as a politician, he viewed, as fundamentally false, the whole machinery of the democracy in the midst of which he lived, and looked down, from a serene imperturbable altitude, even on the patriotic achievements of a Themistocles, a Pericles, and a Cimon;[1] as a philosopher, his grand aim seems to have been, to unite, into one grand vegetation of thought, whatsoever germs of the highest truth, carefully sown by previous thinkers, were now grown up into a garden of rich and various, but rank and unweeded speculation. Weeds, no doubt, there were many; and plants positively poisonous not a few. These it was his mission, in the first place, unsparingly to uproot, and with merciless dialectic, to rend and disintegrate; but after this negative work was done, his all-embracing soul, with a positive and constructive instinct which has never been surpassed, conceived the work of piling that imperial dome of thought, beneath whose comprehensive span the greatest thinkers of all ages have never failed to find a shrine for their

[1] See Gorgias, 515 D. Mr. Grote's quick eye could not fail to notice this in order to bring his maligned friends, the itinerant Sophists, into good company; but Plato rides always full speed against these masters of tongue-fence, while to the great statesmen he merely gives an occasional brush in passing, as if to remind them that they also are far from perfection.

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worship. All the previous culture of Greece, intellectual and poetical, culminated in Plato; for though he was forced, by his position as a moral reformer, to make decided war against the Homeric theology; and though his profound reverence for philosophy, as containing the method of the highest culture, often led him to speak of poets and poetry in a light and depreciatory style; in spite of all this, his unfeigned reverence for the old poetic theologians and thinkers, who lived "nearer to the gods,"[1] shines through all his works; and he himself, while condemning dramatic poets in the gross, as little better than mimics and buffoons, is, at bottom, a more fine dramatist, a more delicate comedian, and a poet of more magnificent fancy, than many who have made mere historic and literary imitation the business of their lives. The splendid myths with which the Gorgias, the Protagoras, the Republic, and other of his best works are decorated, served conveniently enough, some have thought, the purpose of concealing the weak points of his system. Very probably they did. But they will be much more properly valued as a necessary part of that luxuriant amplitude of intellectual existence, and that fulness of universal Greek culture, by which Plato so strikingly overgrows the meagreness which is natural to common philosophical minds dealing with abstract truth. Many men, perhaps most men, in this country, will think Aristotle a more just thinker, and a more safe speculator; but no person with his eyes open can admire him as a more lofty philosopher and a more thoroughly accomplished Greek. The Stagyrite is the most massive man of science that Greece produced, not for Greece only, but for all peoples and all ages. But Plato combined in his own person all that was most human and most Greek in the highly cultivated age to which he belonged, not less completely, and with no less polish of execution, than Homer showed, when he gathered into two immortal epics all the humanity and all the Hellenism of the heroic ages. As a fertile author, after having produced a series of works, each stamped with its own peculiar freshness

[1] "οἱ μὲν παλαιοὶ κρείττονες ἡμῶν καὶ ἐγγυτέρω θεῶν οἰκοῦντες."—*Philebus*, 76 c.

Πειστέον δὲ τοῖς εἰρηκόσιν ἔμπροσθεν ἐκγόνοις μὲν θεῶν οὖσιν."—*Timaeus*, 40. E., com. *Phileb.* 16 D.

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and individuality, sometimes will create a greatest and crowning work, in which the excellences of all his previous productions are combined and harmonised; so Greece, after having produced philosophers of such opposite types as Xenophanes and Democritus, Pythagoras and Heraclitus, with philosophic poets like Pindar and Aeschylus, produced Plato. The genius of combined poetry and philosophy could go no further. The work of constructive speculation was ended. Wherefore Aristotle commenced to dissect animals, and Eratosthenes at Alexandria measured the diameter of the earth. On this track, Bacon, the pioneer of British physical philosophy, has pointed the way to us; and we are now measuring the descent of glaciers, and hunting out the law that guides the fitful storms. But Plato holds still the undisputed sovereignty over the realm of innate ideas which he conquered. Under various masks, and with shifting shibboleths, the grand truths he first systematized still continue to exercise the mastership over all those, whether poets, philosophers, or preachers, who have not been willing to make a cheap compromise with the bare reality which fronts them, but have sworn to impress the stamp of a higher ideal upon it, or to die in the attempt. While nobility of character and heroism of conduct shall live upon the earth, Plato and Platonism may not disappear from among men.

The progress of speculative philosophy in Greece, from the earliest times to the culminating epoch of Plato, presents a series of gradations, transitions, and combinations, exactly such as a thoughtful mind, observant of the usual course of human affairs, would naturally anticipate. First, we have in Orpheus a philosophy altogether and completely identified with religion and mystic ceremonial. In the operations of the infant human thought the principle of the division of labour had not yet been admitted. Nature, God, thought, and feeling, were taken up into the soul in one grand totality; and the spokesman of this totality was at once prophet and poet, priest and philosopher. After the lapse of a few centuries, the secular poet first appeared as a separate character in Homer; and, two or three centuries later, the philosopher in Thales. As was to have been expected, the first philosophy of the Greeks, like their first poetry, started from the fresh

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sense-controlling and soul-enriching realities of external nature; it was altogether "objective," as the Germans phrase it, and so we find the wise Thales, six hundred years before Christ, calculating eclipses that even now form the basis of historical calculation to chronologers; and we perceive him also seeking, with genuine Greek subtlety, after one original ἀρχή, or fundamental principle of all things, and recognising that principle in WATER. Much, no doubt, could be very ingeniously said in favour of this doctrine; but Anaximenes, a townsman of its author, could, without much difficulty, say many things even more ingenious, and not less true, in favour of the finer fluid, AIR. Heraclitus of Ephesus, commonly called the weeping philosopher, carried this physico-metaphysical speculation to its highest point of refinement when he gave his suffrage in favour of FIRE, as the one elementary principle; for, if it was certain that water was only condensed air, it seemed equally certain that the power which kept water in this subtle form of gas, was heat; and this principle also, by the important part which it performs in the sustenance of animal life, seemed much nearer to the idea of an elemental ἀρχή than any other that could be taken cognisance of by the corporeal senses. It is manifest, however, that all merely material principles, would, as the process of speculative thought went on, appear inadequate to explain natural phenomena, of which a cunningly devised, and easily observed order, is one of the most striking characteristics. Whence came that ORDER? Pythagoras wisely noted the fact of its constant presence in creation, by announcing that ἀριθμός, or NUMBER, is the ἀρχή;[1] certainly a far more intelligible principle for reflection to act on than the ἄπειρον or INFINITE, of Anaximander; but it was reserved for Anaxagoras, the friend of Pericles, and the precursor of Socrates, to enunciate the fundamental idea, the key-stone of the Platonic philosophy, without which all other principles are mere explanations of what again requires to be explained. The philosopher of Clazomenæ taught that νοῦς or MIND, is the prin-

[1] Of the *Platonic* Pythagorean principle of ἀριθμός as the only true foundation of an intelligible doctrine of pleasurable emotion, including, of course, the fundamental postulates of æsthetics, which Lord Jeffrey completely ignored, Plato makes admirable use in the PHILEBUS.

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ciple which lies at the bottom of all things; and hereby, no doubt, as Aristotle and all the ancients thankfully acknowledge, he enunciated a great truth, and a truth which, leading directly to God, as the Primal Mind, based philosophy on its only sure foundation, that is religion; for which kind service to human intellect, and to intelligible piety, no man will be surprised to learn that he was accused of impiety by the Athenian δῆμος, and banished to Lampsacus; for it has always been the habit of the uninstructed majority of mankind to bring the charge of irreligion against those independent thinkers who have a more worthy conception of the nature of the Supreme Being than the received popular theology implies. Along with Anaxagoras, though in a more abstract and less intelligible form, must be mentioned, as a champion of the unity and immateriality of the Deity, Xenophanes of Colophon, though his system seems to partake more of a distinctly pronounced intellectual pantheism, which, fixing the eye on the permanent oneness of the creating cause, is inclined to look upon the multiplicity of created things, as a mere play of modifications in the eternally substantial, of which reality, in the strict sense, cannot be predicated. From him, as from its proper fountain, according to Plato, proceeded that school of philosophy of which Zeno of Elea in Calabria is generally recognised as the founder, and of which Parmenides was one of the most notable ornaments. This school completely removed from the view of philosophic contemplation the multitude of finite things; and all real existence, according to it, is essential unity, with which alone a wise man will occupy himself. This school, however, freed itself from the perplexing entanglement of the "MANY" only that it might learn to float about with a sort of dazed stupor in the undefinable element of the "ONE;" which being a barren and wearisome sort of life, they amused themselves by practising all sorts of logical postures and contortions, exploding metaphysical air-bags, and doing all sorts of unfruitful things, of which rare specimens will be found in the Parmenides and the Euthydemus of Plato.[1]

[1] Against this Attic rage for metaphysical hair-splitting—something quite analogous to the syllogistic refinements of the medieval schoolmen—Socrates protests, with his strong practical good sense, and quiet humour in the PHILEBUS, 15 E.

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The opposite of the Eleatic doctrine of the "one" was taught most decidedly by that same Heraclitus of Ephesus whom we have already mentioned as finding the principle of all existence in fire. For, in this subtle element, this thinker saw not only an all-pervading, all-working, and all-dissolving force, but a constant and unimpeded mobility, the unsleeping source of that ever-shifting variety which animates the face of all things, even those apparently the most permanent. In other words, mutability, as manifested in the eternal succession of an infinite "many," was the point of view which the philosopher of Ephesus seized as most congruous with his dark and sombre musings; and there can be no doubt that it is an aspect of things sufficiently fertile in the most varied illustration, which the superficial observer and the profound investigator will encounter with equal readiness. "One can never cross the same river twice at the same place," is a recorded saying of Heraclitus, characteristic enough for his point of view. The river that rolls and swirls and bubbles along; the clouds that chase one another round the globe, ever going and ever coming, dissipated only that they may be gathered, and gathering that they be dissipated again; the seed that bursts into a blade, branches into a leafy stem, and after being crowned with flower and fruit, ends in a seed again, in which the germ lies, ever watching for the first occasion to repeat the same series of mysterious evolutions: these, to the brooding eye of the Ephesian sage, were the ever-present natural types of his grand doctrine of mutability. Even the everlasting mountains, whose bare granite summits are washed by perpetual rains, and lashed by unsleeping storms, whose gigantic joints are riven by the expansive force of freezing water, and shivered by lightning, may be viewed as an enormous bruising machine, constantly enriching the valleys and plains with new supplies of finely-pounded loam. Such obvious phenomena of physical nature, to an eye altogether unpractised in tracing the curious transmutations and transitions which modern chemistry, physiology, and meteorology reveal, would supply ample texts for a philosophical doctrine of "BECOMING," which might be able to maintain its reputable place for a season, without any assistance from the other two more celebrated factors of metaphysics

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KNOWING and BEING. Nothing ever IS; but all things ever ARE BECOMING. Such was the doctrine of Heraclitus of Ephesus; and after him, of many of those famous Athenian sophists who have acquired so evil a reputation through their antagonism to Plato, and who have found latterly so zealous a vindicator in Mr. Grote.

Who were these SOPHISTS? In one sense of the word, and in the oldest and most popular sense, Plato himself was a sophist, and Socrates, and all who professed any sort of wisdom superior to the vulgar. But in the other and restricted sense, the Sophists were a class of accomplished and highly educated men, who, in a country and an age where there was a great demand for knowledge, and the art of using it, went through the principal cities of Greece, teaching ambitious and talented young men, for hire, the art of public speaking, and such knowledge as was most available for the purposes of popular oratory. They were a sort of itinerant teachers, combining the functions of university professors, and the writers of articles in our Quarterly Reviews, in an age when the written word, in the shape of books, had not yet usurped that supremacy over the spoken word, which our modern plan of education so generally concedes to it. Now this very function of theirs will at once reveal to a considerate student what their attitude was in reference to such a deep-probing speculator, and such a profoundly earnest moral reformer as Plato. A school of philosophical reformers certainly they were not, and in their capacity of teachers of public eloquence, giving their services for hire, could not be. Young men did not pay large sums to be indoctrinated with profound principles of philosophy, but to be fitted out with the accomplishments necessary for making a figure in public life. Here, then, was established, in the very position and attitude of these men, in their whole aim, purpose, and striving, an antagonism to such men as Plato and Socrates, of which it is not strange that the most striking traces are visible everywhere in the writings and conversations of these remarkable men. Socrates and Plato also were public teachers, but they were not teachers who taught the art of influencing democratic assemblies by spoken words for hire; they taught a much loftier and more difficult art, the art of

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self-culture, as the ultimate and only sufficient end for a rational being to pursue; and this without hire. That men acting from such opposite motives should have frequently clashed, should, in fact, have lived in a state of perpetual war with one another on some of the most important points of human interest and speculation, was unavoidable. To manage a popular audience is no doubt a delicate matter, and requires both talents and tact of no ordinary description; but to probe the deceitfulness of the human heart, and to unveil the splendid juggleries by which popular orators and popular audiences are often equally befooled, is a different and a much more difficult affair; and this is the business of philosophy. Neither does it require any peculiar perspicacity to perceive that, whatever other qualities may be necessary to enable a clever man to lead a popular audience, neither the profoundest thought, nor the highest character are indispensable for this business. On the contrary, profound thought will often put a man out of harmony with shallow hearers; and as for character, the multitude will never demand from those who address it a standard of morality much higher than that by which itself is regulated; that is to say, a public speaker, except on very rare occasions, when some fitful heroic impulse seizes the popular mind, needs not rise above those maxims of worldly wisdom, and that tone of respectable decency which the proprieties of common life require. In fact, a certain conformity to the low-toned morality, and the prudential wisdom of the many, may very often be necessary to a popular speaker, in order that he may reach his desired end. An appeal to the highest motives will appear ridiculous where only the lowest exist. All these considerations the very nature of the case supplies, without the necessity of formally citing any very erudite witnesses. From their very position, it is plain that the Sophists must often have been exactly what they are represented to be in Plato's dialogues, teachers of a very superficial wisdom, and of a very worldly morality. If any other charge has been brought against them by ill-judged panegyrists of Socrates and Plato, either in ancient or in modern times, we are content, with Mr. Grote, that it should be dropt, at least in so far as it affects the whole class. Individual Sophists of high respectability, and of an elevated

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moral tone, such as Protagoras of Abdera and Prodicus of Ceos, unquestionably did exist. But that their relation to the rich youths whom they taught was anything but favourable to the inculcation of the highest views of truth or virtue, seems manifest; truth and virtue, in the highest sense of the word, were not commodities in which they necessarily had any dealings, though, as men like to make a market with fair words, no doubt they would often use the same high-toned phraseology as men whose moral convictions were much deeper, and whose life was more pure. And herein lay the quarrel which Plato had with them, a quarrel which, after all that Mr. Grote has advanced, we must still hold with the great body of scholars, both old and new, to have been a very just one.[1] If a man wished to write a book (perhaps some German has written such a volume already) in vindication of those much maligned characters, the Scribes and Pharisees at the time of Christ, no doubt he could find ample materials for his justificatory pleading in Josephus, or, where the Germans find so many arguments, in the air, or even in the New Testament; for Gamaliel certainly, for one, seems to have been a most respectable character, and to have been as free from the violent persecuting spirit characteristic of the sect to which he belonged, as Prodicus, the author of the well-known apologue on the choice of Hercules, was from the crime of moral corruption, with which the Sophists have been so liberally charged. But whatever virtues Gamaliel might possess, and half a dozen more notable men of that sect, whom a zealous scholar might set upon the top of a hill, history has stamped on the Pharisees, as a body, a character which is none of the highest, and which is likely to be indelible. In the same manner, the virtues of many of the Sophists may be conceded, by a reasonable man, as high as the zeal of a democratic historian is willing to plant them; but, as a class, it will remain undeniable that they neither pursued the highest objects, nor attained the noblest ends; their very profession forced them to foster that master-vice, the vain display of half-knowledge, which, as patriots and

[1] See the excellent paper on the SOPHISTS, in answer to Mr. GROTE, in the Cambridge Journal of Classical and Sacred Philology. June 1854; by COPE.

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lovers of wisdom, it should have been their business to eradicate. If they were not an organized school of corruptors of youth, they were, at least, very dangerous teachers, as men whose leading principle was to have no principle at all beyond the local standard of respectability in the place where they might happen to make their wordy displays. Plato, no doubt, dips his brush in strong colours when he paints them, and runs occasionally perhaps, into caricature; but he was not a man to spend a whole life in fighting a series of terrible battles with straw-giants, created by himself for the gratification of his own spleen, or the exhibition of his own talent.

If we now inquire particularly what it was, in the midst of all this myriad-voiced babblement of strange opinions, that the comprehensive and harmonious soul of Plato really saw for himself, and settled for all future thinkers, we shall find no great difficulty in giving a distinct answer to honest inquiry on this point; for, as to the main characteristic of Plato's philosophy, the vulgar opinion is unquestionably right, so far as the mere adherence to an ill-understood traditional phraseology goes. Plato was distinguished from all previous philosophers by the prominence which he gave to the doctrine of "innate ideas." Now, the current opinion in this country certainly is, that these innate ideas were a sort of sublime phantasm blown to the winds by John Locke and the inductive philosophy of external facts which has been achieving such conquests in the modern world from the time of Bacon downwards. But the fact is, that the doctrine of innate ideas, as taught by Plato, never was touched either by Locke or Bacon, and never can be touched in substantials by any thinker who believes that he has thoughts, and that these thoughts have their root in a simple sovereign and plastic principle, which he calls his soul. No doubt there are some pleasant imaginations floating with iridescent colours round the border-land of the Platonic philosophy, which may be blown to the wind by the puff of any cheek, without special inflation from Locke or Bacon. When the great thinker, for instance, pushes his argument for the independence of mind so far as to seem to assert, in positive terms, the existence of ideas in the human soul in ready-made panoply transferred from a previous state of existence into the present, this must be regarded as a trick of the poet

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immanent in the philosopher, ever ready to mistake a beautiful analogy for a substantial argument. Wordsworth, as a philosophic poet, was certainly more at liberty to illustrate this pleasant fancy than Plato as a poetical philosopher.[1] REMINISCENCE, as explained by Socrates in the Menon, and elsewhere, is not a fact, if the word be taken in its natural and obvious sense; it is not true that a person studying mathematics, for instance, when the truth of any profound relation of quantity or number flashes upon his mind, is recollecting anything that he ever knew before in a previous state of existence; the simple fact is that he recognises the evolution of this truth from other truths of which he finds himself in possession, as a consequence that cannot be avoided when once his mind is set to work in a certain direction. As certainly as a sportsman's dog will raise game when it comes near the spot where the bird is lying, and the scent begins to tell on its eager organ, so certainly will an idea lurking in a man's mind be hunted out into startled consciousness by an able Socratic questioner. But the simile limps, like all similes, in one point; the hidden idea is not lying in the soul, like the bird in the heather, ready-made; it must be shaped, moulded, and evolved, by a long, and sometimes a very painful process. All that we can legitimately say therefore, is, that there lies in every normal human soul the dormant capacity of acknowledging every necessary truth; and that this capacity is not borrowed from without. In this sense, and in this sense only, are innate ideas true; and in this sense, unquestionably, they are very far removed from what can, with any propriety of language, be called a reminiscence. But limited as the doctrine thus becomes, and presenting nothing to which a consistent Lockist needs object, it is not the less important a fundamental truth to be held by, and fruitful of all noble consequences when consistently applied. "ON EARTH THERE IS NOTHING GREAT BUT MAN; IN MAN THERE IS NOTHING GREAT BUT MIND," is a sentence which the late Sir William Hamilton considered of sufficient significancy to paint in large letters on the walls of his class-room, as that text to which the whole of mental philosophy could

[1] See the beautiful poem entitled "Intimations of Immortality."

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most aptly be referred; but mind is not a passive and receptive substance, like a sheet of white paper, according to the famous simile of the Sensationalists, acting only in so far as it may be said to *act* at all, by absorption; it is rather a sleeping lion of enormous strength, which must be wakened indeed, in the first place, by the point of a pin, or the falling of a leaf, or a succession of such extrinsic influences, but when awakened, shakes its mane with a thunder which is the echo of no extraneous terror. Or take the case of a seed. There lies in every acorn the capacity of becoming an oak; the nascent mould, type, or "innate idea" of an oak (for ἰδέα, εἶδος, means only *mould, type, shape, sketch*); by virtue of which it can become such a specific tree, and none other—neither pine, birch, beech, lime, plane, nor any of the thousand varieties of the thing called tree. Now it is quite true that in order to evolve an oak from this acorn, a certain ascertainable accumulation of air, wind, rain, sunshine, and other external influences, is indispensable; but it is no less true that all the external influences in the world, accumulated to any conceivable amount, will not make that a birch which contains in itself only the innate type of an oak. This innate type, therefore, is entitled to be regarded as a thing not indeed independent of external influences for its development, but as existing *per sé*, and prior to all such influences—as that ineradicable, inconvertible, plastic something, which contains, so to speak, the very soul, substance, and essential nature of an oak-tree.

To direct attention always and everywhere to this innate type, as alone revealing the real essence of any object, and with which alone is given the possibility of scientific knowledge, was the great merit of Socrates, in the first place, in a popular way, and afterwards of Plato, with all the completeness of philosophic system. Nor was the service which they performed small. In all human knowledge and feeling there are two factors, precisely analogous to those intrinsic and extrinsic forces which we have seen at work in the growth of a tree. Mind and matter, thought and sensation, character and circumstances; these are some of the common terms by which this universally recognised antagonism in our mysterious double nature is designated. Now, though a perfect philo-

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sophy must of course adopt, and, if possible, explain both these factors, it is of infinitely greater consequence for humanity that the internal rather than the external factor should receive its fair prominence. For in the internal, as every one sees, lies all that characteristically distinguishes a man from a brute. No doubt the brutes also have their inner world; but it is of so small an extent, according to all appearance, and so completely enslaved to the external factor, that it is no more to be taken account of than the people are in a government of unmingled despotism. The external world is the tyrannical master of a brute—to man it yields itself in many departments as an obedient slave; and always the greater a man is the more decided is the supremacy which the thinking factor establishes over the sensational. This Plato saw and preached; for this Socrates lived and suffered. By asserting the legitimate sovereignty of mind as manifesting itself by ideas, over matter as manifested by sensations and passions, these great men published a gospel, so to speak, of the intellect, which made exactly the same claims for innate ideas, as contrasted with acquired experience, that St. Paul, and after him Martin Luther did, in behalf of faith contrasted with works. Both doctrines have been misunderstood and misrepresented; and naturally; because they are true only to thinkers and those who rise by meditation to that height, whence alone the confused sensuous details, of which our daily life is a part, become comprehensible. It is the philosophic doctrine of innate ideas only, as taught by Plato, that renders the details of a mighty plan comprehensible. Without ideas, sense may observe, and science may discriminate, but combination is possible only to philosophy. Every great original genius uses innate ideas, though he acknowledges no discipleship to Plato, but works under the mastership of that nature from which Plato drew, and of that God who is master of all.

The value of the Platonic idea may be shown by an illustration from the region of the Beautiful. The marble figure, which some stone-working poet has baptized a Corinna or a Sappho, and whose features, expression, and attitude, combine all that is most dignified in a queen, all that is most simple in a shepherdess, all that is most inspired in a poetic

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thinker, and all that is most attractive in a Venus; this figure, for the possession of which, to adorn their museums, the heads of great monarchies will contend with rival diplomacy and emulous gold, when dashed to pieces by a sudden precipitation, is only so much lime which the farmer may fling upon his land, like straw, or dung, or any other refuse. Its value is gone as soon as it has lost its form; the material is common and worthless. Whence, then, is this form, this ἔιδος (*species*), the superaddition of which imparts so much value to an otherwise trivial material? Whence did it come, and what is it? It is plainly neither more nor less than an image impressed by the plastic power of mind on a material utterly destitute of formative force; and the value of the work consists altogether in the amount of this formative force, or organizing intellectual energy, which has been made to act upon it from without. But this formative force is a thing altogether bodiless and untangible. Shatter the substance of the finest statue in the world to pieces, and the amount of calcine substance, or earthy matter of lime, remains the same as before the disintegration. It follows, manifestly, that the only real element in the admired object is that which, according to common phraseology, has no reality in it, viz., the idea in the mind of the artist which has been transferred to stone. This idea is, in fact, the alone thing which truly exists, so far as the work of art is concerned; it is the only thing also that possesses permanency; for whereas the marble may be broken at any moment, the idea may, at any time, be recovered from the intellect of the artist where it was originally generated and where it permanently resides.

That the ideas which belong to genius or original creative power are innate, in the highest Platonic sense of the word, most people will be willing to concede. For if not, why cannot every eye see in a daisy as much as a Burns or a Wordsworth saw? Why is not the physiognomy of every dog as eloquent and as pregnant with profound expression to me and to you as it is to Landseer? A common observer "wants the eye" to see in common objects what the great artist sees; that is to say, he wants an internal plastic and organising force; for it is by this mental force only, and not by mere pupils, corneas, retinas, and other apparatus of mere

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sensuous vision that the man of genius obtains his superior insight. This will be granted. But Plato goes further, and maintains, in the THEÆTETUS, that all knowledge, as distinguished from sensation, is innate, and possible only through means of a something altogether different from sensation, which we call MIND. It is a complete mistake to imagine that sensation conveys to our brain any ideas whatsoever. There are no "ideas of sensation" properly so called. When I feel a hard stone, a soft moss, I have a sensation, and a dog or a fly may have this *αἴσθησις*, as well as a man or a god; but this feeling is no idea. But when I talk of hardness and softness, this is an idea representing the common element in various separate objects communicating certain impressions to my sensuous organs; and like all ideas, it cannot possibly exist without the presence of a central presiding power, to gather, compare, collect, and unify a multitude of individual impressions, and designate them by a common epithet. A dog may perceive two sticks of equal size, but man only conceives the idea of equality, and on this, and kindred ideas builds up the sublime and stable structure of arithmetical and mathematical science. All knowledge comes through the senses only as an avenue, but from the soul as the only creative cause. This is the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas, which has been so ignorantly spoken against. It is a doctrine neither fanciful nor mysterious, if men will only distinguish what must be distinguished, and calmly look on the co-existent factors that belong to every act of cognition. Unquestionably, as we said, there are two factors; but Plato and Emanuel Kant and Professor Ferrier are certainly right in giving all the positive and imperial power to the intellectual factor, without which knowledge is not conceivable.

Another field in which we may become practically alive to the importance of the Platonic doctrine of ideas, is the domain of natural science, where the department of typology and morphology, as the very names show, contains nothing but a series of physical illustrations of the divine idea of which Platonists are always speaking. Plato, if he pleased, might have used *τύπος* and *μορφή*, as well as the word *ἔιδος*, for they mean substantially the same thing; and nothing could possibly have delighted him more than the beautiful doctrine

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of the metamorphosis of plants, first promulgated by a great German genius, who like himself, combined the external hardness of the severe man of science with the expanded blossoming beauty of the poet.[1] What do we mean by morphology in natural science? is it not this, that the whole animal and vegetable creation is formed upon certain fundamental types and patterns, which can be traced under various modifications and transformations, through all the rich variety of things apparently of most dissimilar build? and what else is this but the dominancy of the like amid the unlike, of the one amid the many,[2] that Socrates is continually using all his subtle Greek skill to evolve in the practice of his great art of intellectual midwifery? A typology of plants and animals is merely, in Platonic phrase, an ideology of the organised physical universe; nor is there any point in which a modern tracer of rudimentary organs, with all the most modern microscopic appliances to aid him, would differ from the great founder of the Academy, unless perhaps, the modern scientific man should here and there take it into his foolish head that there might be a set of moulds without a moulder, a calculated gradation of forms without a calculator, an ordered world, or *κόσμος* without an ordering God. To Plato's mind, atheistical science would convey about as much meaning as suicidal life; for science is possible only where there are ideas, and ideas are possible only where there is mind; and minds are the offspring of God; and atheism itself is not merely ignorance and stupidity; it is the purely nonsensical and the unintelligible.

We hope what we have now said may have rendered it sufficiently plain to the reader, what Plato's point of view was when he talked in such strong language as he generally does of the *real* existence of ideas, and the unreality of every thing else. If a man has a dog, and that dog dies, what remains? The idea of a dog in the Divine Mind, which originally stamped the form of that animal upon a certain composition

[1] "Goethe is a hard granite mountain covered with a rich growth of soft voluptuous grass."—CARLYLE. Never was a more true or a better thing said of the great German, but it applies almost equally well to Plato.

[2] See particularly the PHILEBUS, 16 D., and what follows on the *ἓν καὶ πολλά*.

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of nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon, and other animal stuffs, and will again stamp the same form on another composite of the same kind; thus supplying the loss of one dog by the creation of an infinite number, all of which live and die, and "have their day," while the divine idea out of which they sprang never can die, any more than the Divine Being himself can die who originated the conception. This idea, therefore, is the only permanent reality in the case; the only substantial immortal verity; for every individual dog perishes. This is Plato's way of viewing reality and illusion; and there surely needs be no difficulty in understanding it. But if his words be taken literally, and understood to say, that ideas have a separate existence of themselves independently of the Divine Mind in which they reside—that there really is a something called the idea of a dog altogether different from any individual dog, and from the pattern of canine nature in the divine intellect, we can only say that this is nonsense, and quite inconsistent with the massive sense and sound-mindedness which the Platonic writings every where display. Any strong expressions, seeming to imply such nonsense, must, in our opinion, be interpreted like the paradoxes of the Stoics or of the New Testament, of the Brahminical doctrines, and in fact all famous systems that have ruled the world, whether moral or intellectual. A paradoxical maxim is a strong one-sided statement, which, though not strictly true, serves the double purpose of amusing the proposer and stimulating the person to whom it is proposed.

We have stated Plato's theory of "KNOWING," and also, in the main, of "BEING." The mind only knows, and God only is; the knowing factor is the only substantial power in the universe. But what are we to make of the NON-I? of matter? of this table? of that granite rock? Here both Plato and Professor Ferrier are obliged to confess ignorance; the non-I is unquestionably something; but what it is, they do not tell us with satisfactory clearness. Plato avoided the barren fixation of the Eleatic school, who would have nothing to do with the "many" at all, and to whom, therefore, any occupation with physical philosophy could have been only the amusement of a dreamer dissecting his dreams. On the contrary, he has given us, in the Timaeus, a complete architecture

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of the material cosmos, from the flaming orb of a star to the stomach of a star-fish; which forms one of the most interesting portions of his richly varied works. But this framework, grand as it is, has by no means the stable and massive character about it, that belongs to the mental and moral speculations of the same great architect. We feel that many parts of it float loosely enough in the air, and might be blown away with a very small puff. And no wonder. The world was not ripe for physical researches in those days; and Socrates did not unwisely to interdict them altogether. But one thing is plain from this, and from other parts of Plato's writings, that he was not a mere subjective idealist, in the modern sense. He believed in matter, at least in a something, through and by which only mind manifests itself in the present imperfect state, and by the agency of which the free and pure action of mind is often strangely troubled and perverted. What, therefore was this matter, this body, or σῶμα which belonged to the universe as much as to the little world of individual men? There are only two ways in which a thorough and consistent theist like Plato could have conceived of matter. Either it is something altogether arbitrary and extrinsic which God, by a sovereign act of His will, has created for the special purpose of manifesting His perfections; a mere material which God made out of nothing; or it is essentially and eternally connected with the divine nature in a close and intimate relation, as the principle of vitality with the vital organism, forming with mind not two separate things, but only two poles of one thing, in such a manner, however, always as that mind is the dominant and disposing factor. The former method of philosophizing on matter is that which has been commonly used in the Christian church, and is, we believe, the only method which is considered orthodox; the other is Pantheism, and has been taught in modern times by Spinoza, Jacob Böhme, Hegel, Goethe, and other profound thinkers. Now, with regard to Plato, if the question be asked, what was his opinion with regard to the nature of this mysterious bond between what, in common language, we call mind and matter, the answer which the present writer must give is, that he cannot tell. There is a region where all human intellect, even the sharpest, ceases to act with a vigorous

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perspicacity; even as the horizon of the bodily vision loses its sharp line in a vague mistiness. Here also Plato becomes dim. To him, no less than to David Hume and Professor Fraser, there is "an insoluble problem," and an explosion of human theories in very sensible contradictions. When he approaches this region, therefore, Plato naturally loses the distinctness which always characterises him, where he keeps strictly within the bounds of the knowable. Sometimes he speaks of the body as if it were a mere prison-house, which the soul had only to burst in order to be perfectly happy and free. This, of course implies that matter is not necessarily connected with mind, but only in the way of an adventitious encumbrance. In the Timaeus, however, he tells us that the world is a divine animal, and the stars flaming gods, which plainly implies that the relation between mind and matter is by no means of that mechanical kind which seems implied in the received doctrine of modern Christian churches. On the whole, Plato's attitude seems to have been to believe mainly in mind, and to accept matter as a something that could neither be avoided nor explained, but which must be content to receive from the philosopher, a distant recognition only, not a cordial salutation.[1]

So much for the strictly metaphysical part of the Platonic philosophy. But great as he stands forth to all ages, the champion of the rights of sovereign intellect, in combat with the rebellious rabblement of the senses, he is yet greater as a purifier of the fountains of human passion, and a preacher of righteousness in that Heathen Church of which Socrates was the Messiah. If man be, as he has been defined, even more a practical animal than a reasoning animal, and if he is nowise a merely speculative or theoretical animal, then the greatest minds must always be those which breathe in the element of action, and whose profoundest speculations about faculty must never for a moment lose sight of that stable and well-

[1] The language of Plato in the Philebus, 27 seq., as Badham justly remarks in his introduction, is certainly anything but pantheistic. It does not appear to me, however, that Plato anywhere clearly sets forth his notion of the relation of mind to matter; all that he was concerned to maintain being the *absolute supremacy of intellect*, which a pantheist like Spinoza may maintain as well as a dualist.

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girt energy for the sake of which all faculty exists. Tried by this test, Plato will stand out a king of philosophers; superior, in some respects unquestionably, even to that stern and hard, cool, resolute, concise, and Wellingtonian Aristotle, whose famous principle of the golden mean in morals, recommends itself to our practical British intellect above all others, because it is the most useful in practice. Notwithstanding the pleasure which, as a genuine Greek, Plato always displays in the slippery gymnastics of a puzzling dialectic, a quality of mind which makes some of his dialogues not a little annoying to the broad, direct, and unrefining mind of the Englishman—the soul of his philosophy lies in morals, as every one must feel who will breathe for some time with serious sympathy the atmosphere of his works. In this respect there is nothing more striking than to compare the serious moral tone that winds up some of his dialogues with the chain of moral maxims, with which St. Paul generally concludes his doctrinal epistles. After eleven chapters of somewhat perplexed and puzzling argumentation, the great apostle—to take one example from many—proceeds, in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, to discharge a whole battery of the most important practical admonitions, as if eager to make it manifest to his readers that all argumentative theology is a necessary evil, which one must accept only as a traveller does a long dark tunnel, through which it is necessary that he should pass before he can emerge into the freedom of a broad and smiling landscape. In the same way the *Gorgias* of Plato—a dialogue which commences with a dialectical dissection of the idea of eloquence, annoying the British sense not a little with the seeming studied determination of Socrates not to see the plain truth when it stands before him, unless he can see it rigidly, according to the links of a strictly logical process—this ostensibly rhetorical *Gorgias* is led step by step into a purely moral vein of such sublime seriousness, that the most reputable modern reader, according to the maxims of worldly morality stands convicted before it, feeling much as Felix did when he trembled before St. Paul's lofty argument of temperance, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come. One feels the difference here between Plato the preacher of righteousness delivering his soul of a heavy moral burden, and that army of light-winged

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skirmishers, called Sophists, making a twinkling display of their wordy accomplishments, whom, nevertheless, as already mentioned, a recent notable historian of Greece in this country has thought worthy of placing under the ægis of his most special championship. Between the Sophists and Socrates there was just this very important difference, that to them the wisdom of words was often everything, while to Socrates and Plato, as many distinct passages testify, it was nothing. The Sophists, as a class, were men to whom intellectual display and mere verbal dexterity sufficed for the creditable exercise of their vocation. To Plato, though himself the most eloquent of writers, such accomplishments without truthfulness, sincerity, seriousness, and a high purpose in life, were of no greater value than they were afterwards to St. Paul. To a man who is in thorough earnest to reform, first his own moral nature and then the social world around him, the mere act of talking, to whatever height carried, will always appear a very flimsy affair.

There is one essentially Greek trait about the Socratic and Platonic morality (for they are fundamentally the same)[1] which deserves special mention. With Socrates, as with Solomon, virtue and wisdom are identical; and all vice is either stupidity, disease, or madness. It has been said that the way to a woman's head is through her heart, and the way to her heart through her children. In the same way it may be said that the way to a Greek's heart in Plato's day was through his head, and the way to his head through dialectics.[2] It was in the doctrine of intellectual ideas, and in purely rational sciences, such as mathematics and arithmetic, that Plato found the *πού στῶ* of his whole philosophy of personal and social reform; here was the training-school that redeemed a man from the slavery of sense, and brought

[1] The comparison between the Socrates of Xenophon and that of Plato is well made, and their substantial identity proved by Zeller, in his *Geschichte der Griechischen Philosophie*, a book which I have read with great care, and can conscientiously recommend to all students.

[2] In proof of this the *Philebus* may specially be noted, and the high position which in that most important dialogue is assigned to the *τό φρονεῖν*, intellectual insight, above every sort of *ἡδονή*, or pleasurable emotion. The sentimental and mystic persons, sometimes called Platonic in modern times, could hardly be made to digest this.

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him up by due degrees to the capacity of receiving the most elevated, the most comprehensive, and the least personal of all ideas—viz. justice. This method, we need scarcely state, is not to be found in the New Testament. There is no idea more foreign to the Gospel of Jesus Christ than that of leading to holiness through a syllogism. The New Testament goes direct to the deep fountain of all passion and action in the emotional nature of man. It breaks, by the mere assertion of the moral nature in man, the icy crust of self-righteousness which keeps the self-contained heart from being stirred by the breath of divine love; by the moral contagion of a superior nature it rouses the sleeping power of self-condemnation, the necessary postulate of a holy life; and commences violently a process of self-purification and regeneration, under the highly potentiated influences of the Divine Spirit. Now, there is nothing of the Socratic dialectic process in all this; and yet how potently the evangelic method works the moral history of nearly two thousand years can recount. In effecting moral reforms of great masses of men, the method of moral contagion will always be the most efficacious; but the method of the dialectic exhibition of the utter futility of unrighteousness before practical reason is not, therefore, to be considered useless, even under the Christian dispensation. There are some minds whom a fiery Whitfield may cause to feel uncomfortable for a moment, but he will not convert them. They have too much intellectual stoutness to be conquered by anything but hard logic; and to such minds it is necessary that Plato, and the Greeks, and Sir William Hamilton, should preach. The recognition of the importance of this intellectual avenue to the moral nature of man will show the significance of that question, which occupies such a prominent place in some Platonic dialogues, IS VIRTUE TEACHABLE? To us, who are continually employing the vast machinery of the Christian pulpit for the purpose of teaching it, the question seems a very idle one; but to the Greeks, who had no church of recognized authority, and among whom a mighty host of self-constituted teachers—the Sophists—had arisen, professing to teach not only eloquence, but wisdom and virtue, and making a livelihood by this profession, a more interesting question could not have been raised. On this

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subject, though in the Protagoras the matter is left undecided, there cannot be the slightest doubt what the real opinion of Plato and his master was. On the one hand, when the Sophist made loud pretensions of teaching virtue in so many lessons for so many drachms per lesson, just as a druggist might teach any man how to compound a medicine by taking certain proportions of certain given articles and triturating them all together, Socrates might well deny that virtue was teachable in this way, or that justice and temperance can be instilled into a man's soul as wine can be sent down his throat by the transference of liquor from the wine-merchant's cask, and of pence from the wine-consumer's pocket. But, on the other hand, whatever may be the tongue-fence of individual dialogues, it is indubitably plain that Socrates, who in *Xenophon* identifies virtue with *φρόνησις*, and Plato, with whom in the *Republic* and elsewhere the same *φρόνησις*, or *insight*, leads the van of all the virtues, could have held no other doctrine than that virtue is teachable, when taught in the right way—that is, from the commanding point of a great central principle, like the principle of faith in the New Testament, and the doctrine of eternal, innate God-generated ideas in the Platonic system. If virtue were, like poetry, not teachable—that is, capable of exposition by scientific reasons, why did Socrates and Plato spend their long and valuable lives in teaching it?

But the grand characteristic and essentially evangelic trait of the Platonic morality is its lofty supersensualism, or what we may, by a more familiar name, call unworldliness. In this respect it will be greeted at once with joy by every true Christian as full sister to the never-sufficiently to be venerated system of ethics, of which the most perfect type stands before us in the sermon on the Mount, and in the life of Christ. I said before, and I repeat it here, that the study of Plato is no mere headwork. It is a severe purification of the whole heart and life, or it is nothing at all. The apostle of the Academy is not a whit behind the disciple of Gamaliel in the demands which he makes for a regeneration, and a renovation, and a complete reconstruction of the whole fabric of human life, so far as that is based on a morality of mere customary and conventional respectabilities.

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"Be not conformed to this world!" is a sentence as frequent and as seriously meant in Plato as in St. Paul. In fact, there is in the world always a respectable sort of surface morality—and nowhere more than in this British world at the present hour—a morality of convenience and utility, which pays respect to the principles of right and wrong when generally formalized, but which recognizes them practically only in so far as local customs and decencies, proprieties, etiquettes, and the round of certain "inevitable charities" are willing to recognize them. With this morality the popular Greek Sophist in Plato's day was perfectly contented; he professed, indeed, in the very words of his highest eulogist Mr. Grote, no other virtue; and this morality, also, many a consumer of beef-steaks and swiller of porter in this lusty and material land accepts even now, after eighteen hundred years of Gospel preaching, as quite sufficient for all the purposes of a respectable English life. But how poor a thing it is, Plato in many places shows with a calm Titanic power that has never been excelled; and the perverse maxims and vicious practices with which our British society is rank, make it evident to the most superficial glance how far the current morality of our trades and parties is from seeking to accommodate itself to the principles of extreme moral purity laid down in every page of the New Testament. A sermon may be a very proper thing as Sunday work, and may help to bridge the way to heaven, when a bridge shall be required; but on Monday a man must attend to his business, and act according to the maxims of his trade, of his party, of his corporation, of his vestry. Then the respectable turf-hunter will stake his last thousand on the leg of a racing-horse, and think it quite like a Christian gentleman to allow his tailor's bill to lie unpaid for another year; then the respectable Highland proprietor will refuse to renew the lease to the industrious poor cottar on his estate, that the people, for whom he cares nothing, may make way for the red deer, whom it is his only passion to stalk; then the respectable brewer, instead of preparing wholesome drink from wholesome grain, will infect his brewst with deleterious drugs in order to excite a factitious thirst in the stomach of his consumers, and increase the amount of drinking; then a respectable corporation, to main-

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tain their own "vested rights," will move heaven and earth to prevent the national parliament from acting on the plainest rules of justice and common sense in a matter seriously affecting the public wellbeing; and the respectable members of society shall flutter round the gilded wax-lights of aristocracy, and perform worship at Hudson's statue, and have respect to men with gold rings and goodly apparel, and do everything that is expressly forbidden in the second chapter of the epistle of James, which they profess to receive as a divine rule of conduct. These are only one or two of the more glaring points in which our commonly-received maxims and practice of respectable British life run directly in the face of that highest morality, which the most religious and church-going Englishman professes to acknowledge as his rule of conduct. Exactly such an issue Plato had with the respectabilities of Athens in his day. "You are a fool," said his accusers to Socrates, "to exercise a vocation which can only expose you to annoyances, create enemies, and endanger your life." This is the advice of worldly wisdom, given as often in London and in Aberdeen in the nineteenth century after Christ as ever it was in Athens four hundred years before the Advent. "I am no fool," said Socrates, "because a true man will never consider whether death or life may be the consequence of his actions, but only this, whether they are right or wrong."[1] This is exactly what St. Peter said to the elders, "*Shall we obey God rather than man?*" "Do you pretend to be wiser than our great statesmen Pericles, and Cimon, and Themistocles?" says Callicles, a thorough-going man of the world, to Socrates, in the *Gorgias*.[2] "Certainly I do," replied the sage, "if Themistocles or Pericles, or any of your highest-vaunted politicians placed their glory in anything rather than in making the people as virtuous as possible; for without sobriety and righteousness a city filled with harbours and docks, harbour dues, and quays, and walls, is filled with mere magnificent lumber!" Did any Hebrew prophet ever lift up his testimony more stoutly? Does the solemn word in the Gospel mean anything more when it says, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his

[1] Plato, *Apol.* p. 28, B.

[2] 519, A.

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own soul?" or, to apply the text to the English nation in the manner that a modern Socrates assuredly would, what will it profit England to spin more cotton, to pile more money-bags, to set more steam-coaches a-going, if Mammon is to be worshipped publicly everywhere rather than virtue and wisdom; if religion is made to consist in keeping every good thing as much as possible within the pale of one's own party; and if the poor man is to be driven out of the land which he defended with his sword in order that a few idle and insolent lordlings may possess the hills for the pastime of racing after deer? Those who have studied Plato most thoroughly will acknowledge that in no way could the searching and evangelic virtue of his ethics be made more distinctly manifest than in the shape of such a plain practical question as that which we have here made.

There remains now only one thing, that we should say a single word on Plato as a political philosopher. A politician in the active sense of the word, neither Socrates nor Plato ever was. They both rather kept studiously apart from public life with a sort of philosophic isolation that to our practical British intellect appears, to say the least, not a little one-sided. We look with contempt on the German professor who shuts himself up among his smoke-infected folios, and writes books about every the minutest thing that happened in distant worlds three thousand years ago, unmoved by any breath from the great storms of the living present which are braying around him, or the earthquakes which are grumbling beneath his feet. But this isolation is not altogether a matter of choice, even in the case of the poor tobacco-smoking beer-besotted Teut; and with regard to Socrates and Plato, we may easily see that they had the best possible reasons for not mixing themselves up with the political factions and personalities of an age which, they were convinced, if saved at all from impending perdition, could be saved only by a radical moral revolution. The same wise abstinence from political questions is observable also in the preachers of the Gospel. For men, in the position of Socrates and Plato, to have come forward as active politicians, would have been pretty much the same as if bishops of the early Christian Church had accepted office under the hostile Roman Government, before

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Constantine. To take office is to accept a bribe. The dignified watch-dog who sits with a golden collar beside his master's mansion, is not so free to scour the country as the shepherd's collie, or the tinker's tyke. It was the love of freedom and a sure instinct of incongruity that made the great founders of Greek philosophy keep aloof from the political life of their age and nation. All the works of Plato, but especially the *Republic*, disclose a moral attitude towards the Athenian democracy, which must have rendered it impossible for the author to have any wish to participate in the management of a society which he regarded as based on principles fundamentally vicious, and contrary to the eternal proprieties of the universe. Whatever might be the case with Socrates, Plato certainly had not a single democratic element in his constitution. He is the most thorough and consistent intellectual absolutist that ever wrote. Not liberty, but order and harmony were the watchwords of that political constitution which he admired. We can easily imagine how little he felt himself at home among the very smart republican voices that found the wisest man of the age, so specially declared by the oracle of Delphi, guilty of corrupting the youth of Athens; and were willing to take their ideas of him from the ignorant jests of a writer of farces, rather than from the evidence of their own eyes and ears. There are many things, no doubt, in the immaculate mixed constitution of free Britain also, which from his lofty point of survey, Plato could scarcely have looked on with approval. Unquestionably he would have found a bedlam in our Parliament, an oligarchy in our peers, and a pandemonium in our populace.

The "Republic," in which the political views of the great philosophical reformer are set forth, is in one view the most magnificent, in another the weakest and most inefficient of Plato's works. It is magnificent as at once an ideal structure of the most perfect social harmony, and a grand architectural summary of the whole mundane system of the most lofty-minded of philosophers; inefficient as a practical exposition of social life, either in its origin, its complex existing relations, or its probable issues. The fact is, that in perfect consistency with the whole philosophy of innate ideas, it does not, and cannot, assume any historical position at all. It only projects

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a moral possibility, and it stands as invulnerable against the objections of so-called practical men, as the precepts of the morality of the New Testament do, against the common objection that they are too good for the world. Plato had a perfect right to project the scheme of a social existence, with an utter disregard of all that was or has been in actual government; which, useless to every other effect, might at least serve as an unattainable ideal of perfection, by comparative approximation to which the excellence of all-existing states might be measured; and he has done so actually in certain points of view, which will make his book useful as a moral measurer to the end of time. But, on the other hand, he had no right, as a political philosopher, to ignore certain fundamental principles of humanity, out of which as from a root our whole political and social nature grows, and to build up a social fabric of imaginary human beings, whose existence may indeed be supposed, but is altogether unknown. What should we think of an architect who should sketch out the plan of an aerial palace, on the supposition that stones might be got of sufficient magnitude, as light as air bubbles, as elastic as caoutchouc, and as radiant as the sun? But stones are stones; and the architect ought to know this. Not to mention the very wonderful misprision of the important element of family, there is one fundamental defect in Plato's *Republic*, which must ever stamp its author, amid wonderful richness and nobility, as one of the most one-sided and unpractical of thinkers. He is so carried away by his antipathy to the democratic practices then existing in Athens, that he actually sketches the outline of a perfect state, from which the ideas of free development, active citizenship, and public spirit, are completely excluded. No doubt he supposes a body of perfectly wise men as the rulers; but even with this provision, a society in which every individual was moulded by a fixed type from above, and no free play given to individual character, would be apt, amid extreme virtuousness, to sink into an utter stupidity, of which no perfect example has hitherto been found, even among the most consistently stupid absolutisms of modern times. The nearest realization of Plato's perfect republic on earth, as has been well remarked, is the Roman Catholic Church. There we find in the bishops

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and other High Church dignitaries, an aristocracy, founded professedly on the purest system of morality that was ever preached, from whom the mass of Christian men, sitting in a passive attitude, are to receive the most important wisdom and the most exalted virtue. How pleasant this is to an amiable female imagination, that God should commission a band of hoary-bearded, benignly-beaming, shovel-hatted men, to sit in Rome (the modern ὀμφαλός of the earth), and think, and see, and feel for us, the benighted millions, and save us from the disagreeableness of doubt, the labour of inquiry, and the delicacy of choice! But pleasant as this fancy may be, it can only be realized at a price too high to be paid for it, viz., universal apathy and stupidity. For if either the Roman Pope, or Plato, or Dr. Pusey, are to appoint boards of men, divinely commissioned to think for us in all important matters, what is the use of thinking? In that case, the King of Prussia might probably agree with these famous philosophers and theologers, that the shoemaker should think about his shoes, the sausage-maker about sausages, and the law-maker about his laws, in a word, as Plato is constantly saying:—*Τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πραττέτω ἕκαστος*, that "every man mind his own business;" but to whatever perfection such a system of harmoniously divided responsibility, might bring pin-heads and the public peace, it certainly would give the death-blow to all that we understand by the honourable phrases of citizenship, public duty, and public spirit. Where there is no freedom there can be no public, no people, only a compact organization of separate trades and professions. Verily, a strange world it would be, of which the wise men of Rome, of Oxford, of Berlin, or of Plato's *Republic*, should have the making!

We have thus finished a hasty sketch of the intellectual character and position of the great master-architect of the philosophy of ideas. I hope I have said enough to convince the intelligent reader that this philosophy is not in its essence a mere subtle crotchet of an over-refined mind, or the luxuriant efflorescence of a lofty imagination, but is in every view entitled to that high sovereignty over the human soul in its speculative struggles, which it has exercised more or less now during a period of above 2000 years. Plato, like Aristotle, has

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been used and abused by various parties; and the world, as is its wont, may often have taken more note of the abuse of what was noble in this case than of its use. But as the character of Aristotle has come unsullied from the cobweb weavings of medieval schoolmen, and the consequent vituperations of men like Luther and Bacon, who paint him chiefly after the caricatures of his pseudo-disciples, so Plato, after seeing his name used for centuries to stamp every idlest imagination that has steamed up from the diseased brain of every transcendental devotee, can still be recognised by all who wish to find him, as the great bearer of all the loftiest truths to which the human mind in its hours of loftiest exercise aspires. Behind the pure Doric temple of his intellectual system, when the mists of centuries of vain talkers are blown aside, the blue sky of sober contemplation shines as clearly now, as ever it did to the Alexandrian fathers, who recognised in the great preacher of ideas the preparatory Moses of the heathen world; and, from pillar to pillar of that stable architecture, festoons woven from the flowers of paradise blossom with the same brightness, and scatter the same fragrance, that belonged to them in their native gardens of the Academy. We may account ourselves particularly happy in the present age, when the whole tone and temper of those writers who are exercising the deepest influence on the expanding intellect of the generation to come, are all either profound disciples or spiritual brothers of the great apostle of innate truths. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, Carlyle, Kingsley, Maurice, Elizabeth Browning, are all fundamentally Platonic. The nation which produced minds of this class is not altogether "a nation of shopkeepers;" and the age which delights in the productions of their genius believes in something better than the mere mass of material "production" which is the idol of a certain school of political economists. Plato, I venture to predict, will be the favourite author of the men who read Greek in the very delicate and difficult transition epoch of the national speculation on which we seem to be entering; and the restored familiarity with such a thinker may not remain without some very sensible influence on our received formulas of expressiou in the highest regions of speculation and faith.

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EARLY ENGLISH LIFE IN THE DRAMA.

THE old historians narrate facts to us which might be safely predicated of any nation under the sun; the severe virtues of the Republic, the superb impurities of the Empire; how masses of men met together, and how stern discipline and the Roman square endured the assaults of barbarians; admirable lessons indeed, and deserving due consideration from all subsequent soldiers and statesmen. Still these are but the dry bones of history, from which the roundness of form and the light of life have departed, and something more is needed to refill the shrivelled husk of the past. Livy may write of dynasties, and Cæsar of battles; but a passing glimpse into an antique dwelling-house at Herculaneum or Pompeii brings us into more intimate contact, not it may be with royal or military formalities, but with quick-witted men who, along the white sands of their sea-girt Calabria, lived, and enjoyed life, sumptuously. And through this association the most trivial details are invested with significance and interest. The unstrung harp of the dancing-girl—lying there idle in the window, as it has lain since she cast it from her in the first terror of her flight—becomes tragic as Ophelia or Lear!

In English histories—whether literary or political—this connection has been too long neglected. Much of our ephemeral literature is of no value whatever, except as indicating the political faith of the society which produced it: and the problems of our political history cannot be interpreted aright apart from the effervescent table-talk which illustrates and explains them. Our social literature assumes an important

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function when regarded as the habitual expression of national life; and our political history ceases to be a record of hopeless and unintelligible conflicts when read by the light of the minor moralities.

Among ourselves such men as Hallam, Macaulay, and Froude have done good service by asserting this sound principle of historic criticism; but we must not forget that these writers have avowedly treated the connection, exclusively or mainly, from the political point of view. So that a history of "The Social and Political Literature of England"—a history, that is, where the characteristic forms of literary activity shall not be subordinated to the authoritative facts of public life—is a history that remains to be written. I have selected for analysis the era which followed the termination of the protracted conflict between the Houses of York and Lancaster, as one in which this union, especially as preserved in our dramatic literature, may be illustrated not without interest. And I purposely select the reign of Henry VII. because—as the breathing-place between the strife of the Roses and the strife of the Reformation—it supplies an age in which the forms of the old life, half military, half monastic, continued to exist; an age, therefore, which may be rightly regarded as typal in its essential conditions of several preceding centuries. The spirit of the living God already stirred upon the face of the waters; but that colossal system which the statecraft and priestcraft of seven centuries had consolidated, though stricken at the heart, remained to outward seeming in vigorous and obstinate vitality.

The changes that have taken place in the external aspect of this country since the close of the fifteenth century are sufficiently remarkable. A more complete metamorphosis has not been effected in the character of the English people than in the character of the land which they inhabit. Great forests, such as now clothe the American savannahs, stretched across whole counties. The traveller might wander for days through the open straths by which they were traversed without encountering a single human habitation, except the wooden lodges of the keepers who protected the game. The Normans, in their passion for field-sports, laid waste entire

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districts which had been rescued from sterility by the industrious energy of the Saxon; and though the later sovereigns had forced their nobles to adopt a more sagacious policy, so that large tracts in fertile situations had been and were being "disforested;" yet, to the end of Henry's reign, the woods and marshes occupied a good half of the land of England. The fens were of even greater magnitude than the forests. Many of them extended continuously for more than thirty miles, and travelling was much impeded, as it was necessary to skirt their borders. The city of Elie stood in the midst of one upwards of sixty miles in length, and was, like the ancient capital of Mexico, approached by three great dykes thrown across the marshes. The rich meadow pastures which now surround the town were overflowed for months together; the cormorant and other sea birds haunted the eaves of the abbey and the precipitous towers of the cathedral; and from the walls the eye embraced a vast expanse of water, dotted with green wooded islands, and traversed by the narrow lines of the causeways which led to the mainland. A desolate waste indeed!—and the picture of that inland sea which the old chronicle enables us to reconstruct, communicates a peculiar charm to the well-known fragment which describes King Canute and his knights lying on their oars, and listening to the even-song of the monks.[1]

Around the chief towns, and throughout several counties in the immediate neighbourhood of the metropolis, the country was tolerably cultivated. Even under the most enterprising landowners, however, the proportion of arable to pasture land was comparatively insignificant. It is impossible to ascertain the total amount of grain then produced in England; but from the extraordinary variations in the price of wheat which

[1] "Merie sungen the muneches binnen Elie,
The Cnut Ching rew there by;
Roweth, cnihtes, near the land,
And here we thes muneches saeng."

Harrison mentions the three causeways that led to Elie; the cormorant, he adds, was called the "night raven." "There is no cause wherefore I should describe the cormorant among hawks, of which some be black, and many pied, chiefly about the Isle of Elie, where they are taken for the night raven."

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generally took place during the year, and from the frequency with which we find the poorer classes reduced to bread made of "peasen, vetches, and fern-roots," we may infer that the quantity raised was hardly adequate to meet the necessities of a not very dense population. For more than three hundred years these fluctuations are observable; but as centuries elapse, and cultivation extends, they become less continuous and extreme. In the year 1246 the price of the bushel of wheat was sixteen shillings; three years before it had been as low as two. During 1254 it sold in the Northampton market at one pound; in the Dunstaple at a fourth of that price. At Leicester, in the early part of March 1317, it was fifty-four shillings; four days later it fell to fourteen; during the harvest it reached eighty; a fortnight afterwards, when the crop had been collected, it was under six. From these and similar statistics, we are entitled to conclude that the supply of grain was often insufficient for the demand; that at the commencement of autumn the nation was generally in great want, sometimes on the verge of starvation; and that, consequently, the extent of land under permanent cultivation must have been extremely limited.[1]

Dense masses of forest, immense breadths of moor and morass, narrow stripes of arable and considerable tracts of pasture ground—such was the aspect presented by England in the fifteenth century. The forests were stocked with the roe and the fallow, and the antlered red-deer, who has now retreated into the naked fastnesses of Athol or Braemar, then "haunted the fens of Doncaster, and the great meres thereabouts." Along the sluggish banks of the inland rivers colonies of industrious beavers had erected their lodges, "wherein," says an old naturalist, "their bodies lie drie above the river, although they so provide most commonly that their tails may hang within the same;" and no traveller could fail to notice "the fair warrens of conies," which met him wherever he went.

[1] *State of the Poor*, by Sir F. M. Eden, Bart., 1797. Appendix Table of Prices. *Local History of Chester* in the *Vale Royal*. It is necessary to remember, however, that an acre never produced more than twelve bushels of wheat or "one good load of hay." Of course, this difference in the rate of production must be taken into account when estimating the total extent of cultivation.

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Rabbits were then a valuable article of commerce, as the fur, especially the black, was in great repute for various articles of dress, and the production of "conies" had consequently become a stereotyped branch of trade. Among the fens, and upon the unenclosed commons, numerous birds which are now seldom or never met with in this country, then bred regularly, and remained throughout the year. Flocks of the great bustard strode ostrich-like along the downs; and from the meres, amid the cackling of an innumerable assemblage of the rarer wild-fowl, might be heard at times the solitary boom of the bittern, or the trumpetted alarm of the wild swan. No human intruder disturbed their solitariness, save where the unfrequent cabin of a half-savage waterman nestled among the reeds, or the evening bell rang from the white walls of an island monastery. For the uncompromising genius of the Church had penetrated these primitive seclusions, and men who shrank from the rough issues of common life, practised, upon the Marsh of Romney, or among the Lincoln Washes, the perilous virtues of the cloister.[1]

The English of the fifteenth century are naturally distributed into two great classes—the clergy and the commonalty. The distribution was patent at a glance. The manorial residence of the Norman baron, and the white conventual buildings belonging to the monks, which flanked the village on either side, and within the village itself the richly decorated chapel, whose rustic spire pointed heavenward, and the still effigy of the old knight underneath, with his nerveless fingers playing with the hilt of his half-sheathed sword, forcibly expressed the twofold influence—monastic and military—which then determined the characteristic details of English society.

All over Britain, the monastic bodies had secured for themselves the goodly places of the land. The number of the monks was almost incredible. Even in particular districts, and attached to single houses, they were to be estimated not

1 *Description of England* by W. Harrison—prefixed to Holinshed's Chronicle, 1574. Leland's *Itinerary*, 1538 (2d edition, Oxford, 1744). Ramsey Abbey was on an island in the Lincoln Washes, and the Franciscans had, in 1264, a convent on Romney Marsh.—*Mores Catholici*, iii. 260.

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by tens or by hundreds, but by thousands.[1] Such a drain upon the energies of an industrious population could ill be sustained, even under the most favourable circumstances; and when this immense array turned its arms against the society it had been instituted to protect, we need not wonder that the burden should have quickly become intolerable. But looking at its external aspect, the conventual system undoubtedly communicated an impressiveness to our public life which it has never since entirely recovered. That around it, therefore, many fond regrets and anticipations should linger, which the Reports of Royal Commissioners, and the Records of Consistorial Courts cannot quite remove, need not surprise us. There is much to excuse the artistic devotee, and Mr. Digby may be pardoned for the emotion he expresses when describing the evils that have come to pass in this country since it fell away from the Catholic unity of Christendom. In the old "ages of faith," the monks, he tells us, were in the habit of inscribing pious aphorisms upon the rocks and trees around their dwellings, for the solace and refreshment of the orthodox. When the way was steep and rugged, as in the ascent to Monte Calvaro at Domo Dossolo, the pious procession was comforted by the assurance that such-like was the path to heaven; or directed, when bewildered among the mazes of the forest, to the guidance of a spiritual power—

Sancte Michael Archangele, defende nos in praelio.

But among the alienated ruins of Nutley Abbey, Mr. Digby's devout enthusiasm can trace no reverent inscription; only at best a gruff Protestant intimation, warning all belated Anglicans, with English directness, that whoever does not keep the beaten path will be prosecuted according to law! A lamentable backsliding indeed, and genuine Catholics may reasonably lament the degeneracy; but it will take some time, we suspect, to convince our hard-headed countrymen that the English nation is less brave, or honest, or generous,

[1] In the Monastery of St. Finian, in Ireland, there were at one time 3000 monks; the Abbey of Bangor, near Carrickfergus, contained 4000; and Bangor, in Wales, was divided into eight compartments, to each of which 800 monks were assigned.—*Mores Catholici*, iii. 226.

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or practically devout, since it has ceased to practise these pretty and sentimental pieties.[1]

But it cannot be disputed that the life of a cathedral city in these days was a life thoroughly artistic. The ecclesiastical artist understood perfectly what was wanted, and every effect was characteristic and impressive. The most minute detail had been anxiously studied, even down to the melancholy warning of the death-crier.[2] And what a scene it presents! Within the cathedral itself, under the grotesque mouldings, and among the noble forms of Catholic art, that august inevitable ritual is being continually repeated. On the benches of the chapter-house, the policy of princes is freely canvassed by mitred ecclesiastics; in the adjacent cloister, the clergy solemnly exorcise a baron possessed by the devil; at the feet of a dirty devotee in rags the noblest damsel in the county seeks grace and absolution on her knees. Within the conventual buildings hard by, all manner of men are to be met with,—the patient illuminator of pious missals, the wily grey-eyed old abbot, the miscreant who cannot venture beyond the gate of the sanctuary, the faded beauty and the tainted politician who have retreated from the world to learn that for the broken heart there is no release "this side o' the earth." Beyond the immediate control of the higher ecclesiastic, the

1 *Mores Catholici*, iii. 271.—The "Ages of Faith" is a curious book, full of all manner of learning, Christian and Pagan, priestly and scholastic; there is power, too, of a rambling and discursive kind, and many of the descriptions of local scenery are admirably picturesque; but, on the whole, the book is painful, incomplete, illogical, and unsatisfactory.

2 In a statute passed towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII., it is ordered "that clarks are to ring no more than the passing-bell for poare people, unless for an honest householder, and he a citizen; nor for children, maydes, journeymen, apprentices, day-labourers, or any other poare person." Is this the first intimation of that "respect for persons" characteristic of Protestant sects, and which the arrogant impartiality of Catholicism repudiated—in theory at least? In 1662, the Bishop of Worcester asks, in his visitation charge:—"Doth the parish clerk or sexton take care to admonish the living, by tolling of a passing-bell, of any that are dying, thereby to meditate of their own deaths, and to commend the others weak condition to the mercy of God?"—*Annals of Worcester in the Olden Time*, 1849. Sir Walter Scott, in the *Border Minstrelsy* (ii. 33), asserts that the custom is still (1803) retained in many villages in Scotland.

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scenes, though still attesting the supreme authority of the Church, are not so artistically arranged. Pilgrims, swarming with vermin, swarm along the highways, filthy mendicants recount their filthy adventures at this or the other shrine, pardoners dispose of their stale charms cheaply to the nearest bidder. Crucified saints are stuck over the doorways of taverns, and emaciated Madonnas hang in stable windows. The crazy guesses and grotesque vagaries of men, partly sad, partly satirical, shape themselves into quaint combinations—Dances of Death and the like. Hoary Pagan superstitions and the obstinate charities of Catholicism, vices and virtues, penances and pardons, the seven sacraments and the seven deadly sins; all are huddled together, pitifully, impiously, ludicrously! Still that vagrant populace is controlled by one common impulse, and the tangled forest of Gothic foliage which sweeps into the evening sky, protects a society, which, throughout its intricate issues, is pledged to maintain the faith "once delivered to the saints."

Against the tyranny of this magnificent organization, the English layman opposed his natural sense of independence, and the action of his municipal system. Excepting the haughtier Norman nobility, who, in the civil wars, had nearly exterminated each other, the gentry were exclusively resident on their estates. Some of them occasionally proceeded to London for the transaction of public business; but the hardship of being sent there was considered so great—although the burgesses at least were *paid* for their attendance—that the Crown was frequently obliged to compel the shires and burghs to elect parliamentary representatives.[1] Impassable roads infested with highwaymen, wretched hostels infested with vermin, made it a matter of difficulty and peril to reach the metropolis from a distant county. Nor were natural obstacles considered sufficient to guard the provincial nationalities; artificial restrictions were added. The bye-laws of the county-courts and of the burgh-magistrates were conceived in a peculiarly jealous and hostile spirit. The most common articles of consumption, as wheat and butter, could not be

[1] The burgh representatives were paid for their attendance on Parliament at the rate of two shillings a-day.—*Social History of the Southern Counties*, by George Roberts; a work containing much curious information.

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transmitted from one county to another, except in small quantities and by special license. Numerous economic evils were no doubt produced by this rigorous surveillance—such, for instance, as the remarkable difference in the price of provisions which existed simultaneously in neighbouring markets—but, on the whole, it cannot well be questioned that the policy was dictated by sound and prudential considerations. It enabled, nay, indeed forced, each district of the kingdom to preserve within itself the elements of a healthy and independent society. The position, too, in which the landlord stood to his tenant, had long before been greatly modified, and villenage, in its oppressive forms, had been converted into a more humane and honourable relation. "Let no man, for the future," said a statute of the twelfth century,[1] "presume to carry on the wicked trade of selling men in market, like brute beasts, which hitherto hath been the common custom in England:" and from that time forward imperceptible modifications of the common law had secured the emancipation of the serf. The gentry thus appeared, not as scions of the nobility, but as leaders of the people, with whom, on their many national and religious festivals, they familiarly mingled. To the working classes themselves, especially to those engaged in commerce, the existence of the local guilds and of the great trading societies, supplied, besides, an obvious basis of co-operation and defence. The effect of a system which concentrates in the capital the minute machinery of government is invariably to weaken and enervate the national life; and had such been the secular policy of the middle ages, there can be no doubt that the yoke of the ecclesiastic would have been much more firmly rivetted than it was; but, fortunately, the discharge of provincial duties, and the exercise of local government, had made the English civilian, the yeoman as well as the gentleman, tenacious of his rights, and jealous of his liberties.

We cannot now form any very definite notion of the material comfort of the general population. The houses, we are aware, were built of wood; for although bricks were known in the reign of Henry VI., they were little used until the beginning of the next century. The cottages of the working classes (a few planks nailed together, and plastered

[1] 1102. 3 Henry I.

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over with mud to keep out the cold), were, of course, the most imperfect in construction; but, except in point of size, the residences of the country magnates would not have gained much by comparison. A pallet stuffed with straw, and a "good round log for a pillow," formed the usual couch of not a few who were certainly classed among the gentry. "Lattices, and fine rifts of oak, in checker-wise," supplied the place of glass, which was then only used for church windows. Even in 1567 it continued so rare and expensive a luxury, that stringent precautions were taken for its preservation. "It were good," says the steward, in his report on Alnwick Castle, "that the whole lights of every windowe, at the departure of his lordship, and during the time of his lordship's absence, *were taken downe and laid up in safety*, until, on his return, they be set up anew." Chimneys were little used, and the dense smoke of the wood or peat fire was allowed to escape as it best could. The people were, on the whole, well fed; rye and barley bread, bacon, cider and beer, and upon the sea-coast, herrings, forming their usual fare. A plain hospitality was at that time the fashion, but the rich soon became more fastidious, so much so, that, in the succeeding reign, "the cookes of the nobility were for the most part musical-headed Frenchmen and strangers." The people throve upon their homely fare, and do not appear to have been much afflicted by any general distemper until the end of the century, when the sweating-sickness broke out, and, with the plague, lasted almost uninterruptedly for one hundred and fifty years. "Early to bed, early to rise," was the universal maxim, and our forefathers had breakfasted, and begun the work of the day, at an hour when we are leaving the assembly or the supper-party. The wages of agricultural labourers were generally regulated by statute, and had been steadily increased from ten shillings, which was about the highest rate fixed in 1388, to upwards of one pound per annum, the maximum in 1490. But it was in the style of dress that the contrast between the rich and the poor was offensively marked. The Normans, whose taste was always gaudy and cumbrous, delighted in a rich and elaborate toilet, while they compelled the Saxons to retain the simple style dictated by primitive habits. Many sumptuary laws were passed for

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this express purpose, and the 22d Edward IV. cap. 1, for instance, enacted that only "gentlemen" should wear "pikes" to their shoes, boots more than eleven inches in length, or commit any other fashionable absurdity then current. Thus while the lower orders, in scanty and sad-coloured vestments of Kendal-cloth, retained no small resemblance to their forefathers who had fallen at Hastings, the attire of the upper classes, especially of the great dignitaries in church and state, had become superb and extravagant. The nobles clothed themselves in velvet gowns, lined with rich furs, and powdered with jewellery; to these their dames added the white satin hoods which they wore when travelling, and the evening head-gear, which, towering up to a peaked horn in the centre, like that in Michael Angelo's statue of Moses, fell on either side in showers of transparent folds, through which glittered the meshes of the golden caul of net-work which confined the hair. No doubt these fashions now appear sufficiently preposterous; but it is wonderful what puerilities a red lip or a pair of black eyes can redeem; and, notwithstanding the libels which the old portrait painters have perpetuated, it appears certain that the fair Englishwoman of the fifteenth century, in her hoops and horns, was not a whit less captivating than her demure and puritanic descendant. Indeed, in so far as a thorough understanding of the capacities of brilliant colouring, and the felicitous adjustment of rich and ponderous draperies went, our Norman ancestors were never surpassed; and we have to thank Cromwell and his Ironsides for the sombre and even ghastly sensations which any assemblage of well-dressed, well-educated, nineteenth century Englishmen inevitably produces on the artistic mind.[1]

To whom we are indebted for more important changes; for to the Commonwealth must be ascribed the morose and bitter sectarianism which saddens, to the present day, our English civilization. Happily the bloody and passionate Apocalypse of the Puritans was not yet realised; and Tribulation-Wholesome, and Praise-God-Barebones, "seques-

[1] Eden's *State of the Poor*, chap. i. and Appendix. Harrison's *Description*. Leland's *Itinerary*. *Northumberland House Book*, xvii. An. 1567. *Dress and Habits of the People of England*, by Joseph Strutt, 1799. *Costume in England*, by F. W. Fairholt, F.S.A., 1846.

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tered" from public life, continued to await, in some out-lying region of infinite space, the advent of better times. England was still the "merrie England" of history—the England of cheerful contentment and generous hospitality, of May-day festival and Christmas cheer, of old customs and habits, of antique sports, pastimes, and holidays. They were not, perhaps, very highly refined, or very widely cultivated, these old-fashioned rustics and gentlemen; but they were brave, healthy, athletic, sound in wind and limb, and enjoyed themselves thoroughly, as healthy men will do.[1]

I cannot, indeed, pretend to assert, on behalf of their moral and spiritual life, the claims which certain writers have not hesitated to put forward. When we say that they were healthy, happy, passingly honest and devout, I think we have said all that we are entitled to say. More than *that*, their ballads, their romance, their superstition, show us that they were *not*.

Most of their ballads, indeed, are strikingly prosaic—especially when compared with the Scotch. The poetry of the northern nation has all the elements of poetic power—genuine pathos and passion, sudden imaginative glimpses, a startled sense, at times, of the mysterious darkness round about. The supernatural, in particular, is gifted with a strange horror, which chills the blood, and even the volatile and capricious elfs (too unsubstantial, one would suppose, to be associated with the burden of responsibility, except by an intellect constitutionally morose and passionate) are allied with a gloomy destiny and a mysterious retribution. And the story is told so plainly, so directly, so simply, with such resolute homeliness, that we dare not disbelieve it at our peril.

Then darkness covered a' the hall,
Where they sat at their meat;
The gray dogs, youling, left their food,
And crept to Henrie's feet.

1 "Consider with thyself, gentle reader, the old discipline of England. Marke what we were before, and what we are now. Dion saith that Englishmen could suffer watching and labour, hunger and thirst, and beare off all stormes with head and shoulders; they fedde upon roots and barke of trees; they would stand up to the chin many dayes in marshes without victualles—the men in valour yielding not to Scythia; the women in courage passing the Amazons."—*The School of Abuse*, Stephen Gosson, 1579.

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And louder howled the rising wind,
And burst the fastened door;
And in there came a griesly ghost,
Stood stamping on the floor.

Such lines as these are worth a legion of modern ballad-mongers! The English poems have the same obviousness and directness of expression; but they proceed from an unimaginative and illiterate life, and are not homely, but commonplace. In the Border-romance, there is a curious difference between the Catholic or Royalist ballad and that of the Cameronian,—the former, like the fated cause it celebrates, bold, fervid, full of wild love or hate, ruth or revenge; the latter formal, precise, pedantic, and scrupulously suited to the monotonous snuffle through which Habakkuk Mucklewrath testified against the Amalekites. With rare exceptions the English poets are the poets of the Covenant, adapted to a different order of things. But there *are* exceptions, and *The Nut Brown Maid*, from the perfectly unselfish and sacrificial spirit which it breathes, remains for ever a noble and very memorable tribute to the age in which it was written.

From these ballads, and from other sources, we are enabled to form a pretty accurate estimate of the popular notions of the supernatural. There were, in the first place, scattered fragments of the old Breton romance—the King of Knighthood, the exploits of the Round Table, and,

Fairy damsels met, in forest wide,
By knights of Logres and of Liones,
Launcelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.

I do not think, however, that these romance-forms, or the peculiar demoniac agencies with which they were accompanied, retained, in the fifteenth century, much influence over the heart of the people. They were originally a foreign element, and had never been thoroughly naturalized, at least among the rustic population, without whose active co-operation no superstition can hope for permanence. "The Elf-Queen, with her jolie compagnie," was the true offshoot of the popular imagination; though even she and her subjects, the proper denizens of Faerie, were subordinated, with true English literalness, to the grotesque form of Robin Goodfellow. That "merry wanderer

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of the night" at least was thoroughly national, and, as the homely avenger of the more homely duties, the poetic justice of the peace, the mad humourist whose mirthful antics "frighted the maidens of the villagery," and to whose malicious intervention the trivial annoyances of domestic life were attributed, was undoubtedly the centre of a superstition always most authentic when most literal. Puck was distinctly a compromise, the recognized channel of intercourse between the common and the spirit world. But the English fairies themselves were not the elastic and evanescent creatures of the poetic imagination; they were gross, substantial, "of the earth, earthy;" the benignant promoting the performance of the plain domestic duties; the malignant, like those described by Gervase of Tilbury, who, when the household had retired, "came to the hearth at night, devoured frogs, were of antiquated countenance and wrinkled visage, diminutive, and clothed in rags," —not a very ideal conception surely. Queen Titania was in no way superior to her subjects, and the affection which, in the Midsummer's Dream, she lavished on an ungainly mortal, had not unfrequently, if we are to credit the popular authorities, been as indiscriminately bestowed.[1]

The union of the two elements, into which I would chiefly resolve the national supernaturalism, the King Arthur romance and the local fairy traditions, is strikingly illustrated in a very beautiful and curious fragment republished by Mr. Halliwell, "*The Adventures of Sir Gawen.*" Though the language has been modernised, the form of the legend, which can be traced back at least as far as the fifteenth century, has undergone little alteration. Arriving, towards the close of a summer evening, at the entrance to a forest, Sir Gawen, one of the heroes of the Round Table, alights, and tying his horse to a tree, threads his way through the dense vegetation to an old and ruinous castle. Here he incautiously enters, and the ghostly adventures which then ensue are narrated with great dramatic effect. As he groped his way through the dark

[1] Ritson's *Fairy Tales*, 1831. *Life of Robin Goodfellow*, 1628. *The Cosenages of the West*, 1613. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, s. i. c. 18. Percy's *Reliques of Old English Poetry*. *Illustrations of Fairy Mythology*, by J. O. Halliwell, 1845.

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vaults underneath, a sudden and agonizing shriek burst forth above him, and "something rudely brushing down grasped him with tremendous strength; in a moment he became motionless, cold as ice, and felt himself hurried back by some irresistible being; but just as he reached the vault, a spectre of so dreadful a shape stalked by within it, that, straining every muscle, he sprang from the deadly grasp." Seeing a faint blue light in an upper chamber, he went towards it, and beheld, from a distance, the form of a human corse simmering above the fire. He looked on with a horrible fascination, until, "as the last pale portion of the light died away, the scarce distinguished form of some terrific being floated slowly by, and again another dreadful groan ran deepening through the gloom." Whilst he was thus agitated with horror and apprehension, "a dim light streaming from behind, accompanied with a soft, swift, and hollow tread, convinced Sir Gawen that something was pursuing him, and, struck with bewildering fear, he rushed unconscious down the steps, and fell forward on the ground." When he returned to consciousness, the images of death, and the rites of witchcraft, had vanished, and he awoke among the soft, sweet, and tranquil scenery of a summer moonlight night. He had been guided to Fairy-land during his trance, and the vision of the Fairy-camp, pitched in the centre of a circular lawn, "whose tint and softness were beyond compare, and which seemed to have been lightly brushed by fairy feet," is charming. Not many minutes elapsed "ere he discovered, on the border of the lawn, just rising above the wood, and floating on the bosom of the air, a being of the most delicate form; from his shoulders streamed a tunic of the tenderest blue, his wings and feet were clothed in downy silver, and in his grasp he had a wand white as the mountain snow. He rose swiftly in the air, his brilliance became excessive from the lunar rays, his song echoed through the vault of night, but having quickly diminished to the size and appearance of the evening star, it died away, and the next moment he was lost in ether. Sir Gawen still fixed his eye on that part of the heavens where the vision had disappeared, and, shortly had the pleasure of again seeing the star-like radiance, which in an instant unfolded itself into the full and fine dimensions of the beauteous being, who, having collected

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dew from the cold vales of Saturn, now descended rapidly towards the earth, and waving his wand as he passed athwart the woods, a number of like form and garb flew round him, and then, shaking their wings, which spread a perfume through the air, burst into one general song." Then from the wood emerged fairy damsels clad in white, and warlike knights in mail of tempered steel, and in the centre arose a throne of ivory inlaid with sapphires, whereon sat a form of exquisite beauty; "a plain coronet of gold obliquely crossed her flowing hair, and her robe of white satin hung negligent in ample folds." The gold-crowned Queen of Faerie courteously addresses Sir Gawen, but, just as the knight is about to reply, she fades into the moonlight, the spirits disappear, and in the white light of the summer dawn, he finds himself beside his charger, who is cropping the grass by the side of a public thoroughfare. The story, of which I have selected a few prominent points, is striking, and admirably told, and deserves to be more generally known, as one of the most graphic and pictorial of our legendary superstitions.[1]

These demoniac and benignant beings constitute, as I have said, the principal *dramatis personæ* in the popular religion; but there are others, and even the machinery of Catholicism is not omitted. In an age, indeed, when every husbandman tied a stone with a hole in its centre round the neck of his cattle, "to allow the devil to goe through," it is not surprising that the Arch-fiend should have played a conspicuous part in any popular performance, as indeed he did. But the frequent allusion to the *Mater Unigeniti*, as in that old ballad of Thomas the Rhymer, where the poet mistakes the Queen of Faerie for the Virgin Mother, "that bare the childe that died for me," seem to me to prove that Madonna-worship must have existed at one time as a much stronger instinct among the English people than we are now inclined to admit. Selected to associate the secular supernaturalism with the ecclesiastical superstition—the only form which habitually appears in both—Mary was no doubt the object to whom the homely habitual devotion of the people spontaneously turned. Mariolatry,—an idolatry which repre-

[1] Halliwell's *Illustrations of Fairy Mythology*, p. 77.

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sents a great truth so long as it asserts that the characteristic virtues of manhood are imperfect and incomplete without the womanly tenderness, meekness, purity, but which becomes false and pernicious when it ceases to perceive that even the feminine side of human life has been more perfectly manifested in the comprehensive fulness of the Son's humanity than in any special form of womanhood, — Mariolatry has been represented as characteristic, in its more literal aspects, of the passionate idiosyncrasies of the south; but this, among many other facts, induces me to believe that faith in the Madonna was quite as genuine and intense with the Teutonic as with the Latin races.[1]

The trials for witchcraft supply another test by which we may gauge the poetic characteristics of the people,— the most trustworthy, perhaps, of any, as it owes nothing to the

[1] *Thomas and the Fairie Queen*, Halliwell, p. 55. All sects, however, repudiated the Fairies. Chaucer says that, in his time even, the Catholic friars, "thicke as mottes in the sune-beamme," had dispersed the fairy congregations; while the Protestants attributed their disappearance to the Reformation. In *The Shepherd's Dream* (1612), Robin Goodfellow, admitting in a somewhat *naive* aside the benefits of the Reformation, bewails the downfall of popery and the introduction of tobacco; and Bishop Corbett of Norwich, in his very graceful poem, *The Fairy's Farewell*, repeats the charge.

> Witness these rings and rondelays
> Of their's which yet remain,
> Were footed in Queen Marie's days
> On many a grassy plain.
> When Tom came home from labour,
> Or Ciss to milking rose,
> Then merrily went the tabour
> And nimbly went their toes,
> By which we note the fairies
> Were of the old profession;
> Their songs were *Ave Maries;*
> Their dances were procession.

Hades and Fairy-land seem to have been identified—purgatory being the Catholic compromise—and Pluto and Proserpina were the originals of Oberon and Titania.

> Pluto, that is the King of Faerie,
> And many a lady in his compagnie,
> Following his wife the Queen Proserpina.
>
> CHAUCER, *The Marchant's Tale*, i, 10, 101.

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artifice of the artist. So much, however, has been written upon them that it is unnecessary to refer in detail to the evidence they furnish, the substance of which it is impossible to mistake. The English supernaturalism of the fifteenth century, as of the sixteenth and the seventeenth, was the vulgar supernaturalism of a people, unimaginative and illiterate, and when forced into practical life, was characterized by the cruel and *commonplace inhumanity* which marks the habitual influence on the heart of a sordid and ungraceful ignorance.[1]

These, and such like, were the superstitious notions current in the fifteenth century, and it is fortunate for us and for them that they have been transmitted to us tried in the fire and permeated by the light of a royal imagination. *Our*

[1] Nothing, for instance, can be conceived more painfully prosaic than the evidence commonly tendered upon these occasions; from beginning to end of the history of witchcraft, I do not believe that a single imaginative narrative occurs. This may, perhaps, be attributed to the fact that the witches were selected, with some well-known exceptions, from the very dregs of the population; old, purblind, half-witted women, utterly ignorant of the world and of everything that did not relate to their own unhappy caste, being the usual victims. The motives and temptations are invariably of the meanest and most literal kind. "Being demanded," is the deposition of Temperance Lloyd, "who and what the said gentleman was who appeared unto her in black, the said examinant answered and said that it was the devil; and confessed, that the devil did ask of her whether she was a poor woman? unto whom she answered that she was a poor woman, and that thereupon the devil, in the shape of a gentleman, did say unto her that if this examinant would grant him one request, that she should neither want for meat, drink, nor clothes; whereupon this examinant did say unto the said gentleman (or rather the devil), In the name of God what is it that I shall have? Upon which the said gentleman vanished clean away from her."

On the scaffold the examination is resumed in this facetious way—

Mr. Sheriff.—In what shape or colour was the devil?

Temperance.—In black, like a bullock.

Sheriff.—Did you never see the devil but this time?

Temperance.—Aye, once before; I was gathering sticks, and he came to me and said—This poor woman has a great burthen, and would help to ease me of it; and I said, The Lord has enabled me to carry it so far, and I hope I shall be able to carry it further.

Sheriff.—Did the devil never promise you anything?

Temperance.—No, never.

Sheriff.—Then you served a very bad master, who gave you nothing.

"*And so,*" concludes the old reporter, utterly unconscious of the tragic hopelessness of the whole affair,—"*and so was executed.*"—*Proceedings against the Devon Witches.* Howell's *State Trials*, vol. iii.

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friendship is not with the "good people," who haunted the old wooden homestead of the rough rustic who fought his way to Richard's side on the field of Bosworth—fought for no good reason that he knew of, but merely from the inherent relish for hard knocks which seems natural to Englishmen—it is with the fairies of the *Tempest* and the *Midsummer Night's Dream.* Yet the two are not separate; for Shakespeare's, however transformed, are the creatures of the popular belief. They are the English fairies, that we cannot doubt. Puck, Robin Goodfellow, Oberon, these are the very names they bore when in the body; Titania only—it is interesting to know—being Shakespeare's own.[1] And yet how they are transfigured. The master appropriates the grotesque and homely forms, "the antiquated gait, the wrinkled visage;" and upon them he lays his hand—

> Marble-thewed,
> Yet passing lightly as a bird—

grandly, indolently, with supreme carelessness indeed, as it seems to us now, but with supreme authority. Oberon's, in the moonlight, becomes a kingly presence. Even with the common fairy he associates more poetic function—

> With female fairies will his tomb be haunted.

And how perfect is his conception of the unmalicious, though laughter-loving Puck, when compared with the coarse, boorish, unmannerly goblin of the old mythology.

That story of the fairy-world which Shakespeare has told us is probably the most perfect poem in the language. There it lies before us in its integrity, a moonlight dream, with the sunset and the sunrise on either side of it. Critics, however, are profane mortals, and this charming pastoral has not been spared. Mr. Hallam, for instance, has asserted that the introduction of the Ass's head is a great artistic blunder, entirely unfitting it for representation. Would Sir Edwin Landseer pronounce the same judgment? I think not.

[1] Spenser (in his *Epithalamium*) is the first, I believe, who alludes to Puck—

> Ne let the Pouke nor other evill sprighte
> Fray us with things that be not.

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Even for the requirements of the stage, that patient, sagacious, long-eared face, with its air of preternatural acuteness and solemnity, is, if adequately conceived, admirably suited. The features of any other animal would not answer so well, and for Titania's sake it is needful that some such should be found. For if she really loved the uncouth, unclean, ill-favoured Athenian weaver, the Queen of Faerie would forfeit our regard. The *mésalliance* would manifest so strange a lack of womanly taste and delicacy that we could never forgive her. Even the potent juice of "love-in-idleness" would not explain the infatuation. It is the ass's head that saves Titania from disgrace, and that alone. *That* removes her love out of the actual world, and makes it perilous no longer. There is such a delicious exquisite incongruity in her attachment to the long-eared monster, that we recognise without pain the delusion under which she labours, and, disengaging her at once from any notion of responsibility, are able uninterruptedly to enjoy the charming humour of the situation.

A more considerable objection to the *Midsummer Night's Dream* has been stated in an elaborate paper by Mr. Halliwell. The human action, he says, ought not to have been introduced, as its introduction prevents us from believing in the existence of the supernatural. "The man who wrought that fairy picture, and introduced into it a company of illiterate workmen, without shocking the ideal, what would he not have accomplished had he further isolated his enchantments from the external world?" This criticism appears to me singularly unhappy. Reverse the proposition, and we approach the truth. The introduction of these vulgar and unmannerly boors into that gossamer life does not lessen the sense of reality; on the contrary, it intensifies it. It is the perfect contact with the common and the human that makes it possible for us to believe in the existence of the supernatural. Remove Puck, and Oberon, and Titania from this actual world, and they will "melt into air, into thin air." But bring them back to the fair brakes of wood and meadow-land, through which are visible blue visions of the Ægean, the white marble-veined Athene, the Piræus with its countless masts, and Fairy-land becomes possible at least! Then distribute among them beings of a different order, men

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of narrow culture, coarse habits, vulgar literalness, and just in proportion as it is impossible to associate the element of poetic imposture with prosaic clowns, will the conception become real, positive, substantive—a fact and not a fiction. Were we to introduce a poet or a scholar into the fairy conclave, his imagination would at once discredit the genuineness of the scene; but no man can doubt that if Bottom's blind eyes actually saw Titania, Titania must have been visible. If the toilet of the phlegmatic and pedantic weaver was performed by Peas-Blossom and Mustard-Seed, without his being in the least surprised or embarrassed, does not such a circumstance vouch for and attest *their* genuineness and authenticity more authoritatively than any other could do? Thus, the art of Shakespeare is displayed, not by harmonizing "discordant materials," as Mr. Halliwell calls them, but by instinctively recognising that they are *not* discordant, by feeling that Bottom explains and justifies Titania, by apprehending the artistic fact that the introduction of the one communicates to the other a more intense and genuine vitality.[1]

Leaving these informal manifestations of the poetic and imaginative life, we now come to examine the strictly and rigorously dramatic. The early English, as I have said, were a cheerful people, and their national and religious festivals were, at this time, numerous: so numerous indeed, that in the petition addressed, forty years afterwards, by the Commons to Henry VIII., they asked, in consequence of "the great number of holidays with very small devotion that are solemnized and kept throughout this your realm, upon the which many great abominable, and execrable vices, idle and wanton sports, be used and exercised,"[2] that for the future the number should be limited. It was on these occasions that, besides other "idle and wanton" sports, the spectators, with their strong English enjoyment of the stage, eagerly crowded to witness that primitive form of the drama which the Church may be said to have created. Ages before the first Mystery was written, the ballad of the wandering *mynstrel* had been sung

[1] *Shakespeare Society's Papers*, vol. iv., art. 13.

[2] Petition of the Commons, 1533. Froude's *History of England*, vol. i. chap. 2, where the petition is quoted at length.

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in the castle-hall, and the exhibitions of the itinerant *jongleur* had taken place on the village common ; but these vagrant and desultory performances, though never entirely superseded, were eclipsed latterly by the elaborate machinery which the Church provided. The Roman clergy have been at all times skilful to avail themselves of national instincts, not unfrequently of national vices, and when they discovered that the English were passionately fond of dramatic representations, they at once appropriated the drama. The Church, in those early times, had practically undertaken both the secular and the spiritual education of the people, and the stage was not unwisely selected to play its part in the working out of this important duty. M. Guizot[1] appears to suppose that the existence of a religious drama is characteristic of the devotional tendencies of the German races. The explanation I believe to be more simple. It is quite true that if a Mystery were now to be reproduced—unless by Mr. Charles Kean, who would probably so far succeed in divesting it of its original peculiarities, as to make it palatable to a modern audience—it might not be popular ; and that the fact of such representations having once been so, proves that there was a certain aptitude on the part of the spectators for the devotional impressions it was desired to convey. But we must carefully distinguish between exotic culture and spontaneous growth. And the northern drama was a religious drama not in obedience to any "supreme necessity of the human intellect ;" but because the priest was the dramatist, and the parish-clerk the performer. The dramatic impulse itself was undoubtedly spontaneous,—the form it assumed must be attributed to the body who originally undertook the management of the theatre, and who naturally selected the themes which formed their special study, and which they deemed of paramount importance. I will consider more at length hereafter the connection which subsisted for several centuries between the Church and the stage ; in the meantime, seating ourselves on the walls of the Abbey Church of Chester, let us attempt to revive those pleasant Whitsuntide holidays of 1488, when the Chester Mysteries were played before the authorities, civic and spiritual, in the reign of his most gracious Majesty the Seventh Henry of England.

[1] *Shakespeare and his Times*, by M. Guizot, 1821, p. 5.

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It is a bright morning in the month of May,—such as May mornings used to be in the old time, before the east wind was invented,—and there is a goodly prospect from the walls. Great masses of greenwood stretch across the wide fertile plain, through which the Dée weaves its tangled meshes. On all hands rise, sombre in their isolated supremacy, the feudal castles of the great northern nobles. Far in the west the stronghold of "the warden of the Marshes," among whose inaccessible turrets the golden eagle has its eyrie,[1] creeps panther-like along the green and wooded precipices of Beeston. The Welsh mountains, wrapt in their veil of blue morning mist, seam the southern horizon, and on the other side the surf of the Irish Sea breaks whitely along the desolate sands of the Wirrol, and the low-lying thinly-peopled marshes of the mainland.

In the fifteenth century extensive tracts of country, which are now reclaimed and cultivated, lay within the sea-margin, and a wide expanse of blue water must have been distinctly visible from the walls of the ancient Cestrense. The city, which, by the retreat of the tide, has been left stranded in the interior, was at one time literally a seaport. "Great stores of shippes," we know, arrived at it by the Dee, when it had become the most important town on the Western frontier; and before that period the salt water perhaps washed its walls. During the reign of Edward III., at least, the Abbot of Chester claimed *wrecum maris*, the wrecks cast by storms upon his lands of Chevely and Huntingdon—lands which are now many miles distant from the tideway. The Wirrol, which skirted the northern margin of the estuary, was a wild and desolate region, not yet "disforested," and inhabited by a few savage and ferocious outlaws. The nature of their pursuits is vividly set forth by the frequent entries in the local histories, which relate to "the pirates of the Worral;" and the terror which this wild and plundering race inspired, probably accounts for Leland's anxiety, fifty years afterwards, to avoid the inhospitable locality. Even towards the close of Elizabeth's reign their social condition does not seem to have improved, and as late as 1585 we find "sixteen pirates executed for taking a ship out of the Worrol." This desolate Chersonese

[1] Harrison (p. 225) says that the eagle built on a castle near Chester.

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approached to within a few miles of the town, from which, it was separated by the waters of the Mersey, whose present channel was originally clothed with an ancient forest of oak, scarcely more impenetrable, however, than the dense thicket of masts which lines the wharfs of the modern Liverpool.[1]

The city itself had witnessed many of the fluctuations of fortune. Its position as a frontier stronghold always made it important. Before the Conquest it was the scene of perpetual conflicts between the Cymry and the Saxons. The dictatorial power conferred by William on the Constable of Chester was justified by the unsettled habits and the incessant hostility of his Welsh neighbours, who, even by Edward I., were little more than nominally subdued. Since that time it had formed the usual rendezvous for troops, whenever an expedition was meditated against the Scotch or Welsh border; and during the bloody conflict which the death of Richard terminated, as its authorities arrayed themselves on either side, the red rose of York, the white-swan badge of the House of Lancaster, were alternately dominant in the city. These circumstances of strife and danger had sensibly impressed their characters upon its face, and its skilful position in a curve of the river, its fortified castle, its massive ramparts, spoke of a garrison dangerously exposed, frequently assailed, continually on the alert. It is interesting to know that the precipitous terrace, with its arched arcade, which rises on either side of the street—"a singular praise or property to this city," as an old Chesterman has it, and which renders its thoroughfares as picturesque to the modern traveller as those of Berne or Bologna—was originally erected to enable the inhabitants on more equal terms to defend their town against the rapid falcon-like swoop of the guerilla horsemen of the Border.

Around the Abbey-church, and along the northern and eastern walls, stretched the long lines of the conventual buildings, which then occupied more than a fourth of the whole town. The original abbey was of great antiquity, having

[1] *Memoir of the Rapid and Extensive Changes that have taken place at the entrance to the River Mersey*, by Jos. Brookes Yates, Phil. Soc. Liverpool, 1843. Mortimer's *History of Wirrol*, 1847. "Lyrpole *alias* Lyverpole," says Leland, "a pavid towne, hath but a chapel. At Lyrpole is small custume payid that causeth marchantes to resort."—*Itinerary*, vol. vii.

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been founded, it was said, in 666, by Walperius, king of the Mercians, for his fair and devout daughter St. Wertburg, from whom it derived its name. Very beautiful to those old monks in their lonely stronghold must have been that white vision of pitying womanhood, leaving meekly her queenly state for the bleak austerities of the cloister! The corroded, copper-coloured, time-stained edifice with which we are acquainted, was then being erected. Edward I. had granted the monks "venison" from his forests of Delamere and Wirrol to assist them in rebuilding their church, abbot after abbot had striven for two hundred years to bring the good work to a close, and the present occupant of the chair, Simon Ripley, had undertaken the nave, the southern transept, and the central tower. The massive and gloomy pile, however, still remained unfinished, and the Reformation prevented the completion of the great cross of the cathedral according to the original design. Beyond the high wall which fronted the north side of the building lay the North-Gate, a spacious piazza, where the booths of the merchants who attended the Abbots' Fair were periodically established. Thatched with reeds, which the monks were empowered by charter to gather from Stanlaw Marsh, and of the very slightest architectural construction, these stalls contained every necessary, and almost every luxury, of that primitive life; and the itinerant trader, who wandered from fair to fair, often carried in his leathern wallet what would have been reckoned a fortune by any baron in England. The booths, however, have been cleared away this May morning, and a motley multitude—friars, pardoners, belted nobles, honest rustics, wild-looking scamps from the marshes of the Wirrol and the Welsh border—wait eagerly the approach of the pageant. The whole town indeed is crowded with visitors. Some have come to meet their friends; others to purchase food and raiment, armour or weapons, whatever they may require during the next twelve months; others, of a more devout turn, to avail themselves of the "one thousand days of pardon," granted by Clement, Bishop of Rome (not to mention the additional month guaranteed by "the Bushop of Chester)" to whoever should resort "in peaceable manner with good devotion to heare and see the sayd playes from tyme to tyme,"—an effective and characteristic mode of soliciting public support. Along the broad wall where we are seated the monks

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themselves are arrayed,—stout, ruddy, hale, and honest gentlemen, if one may judge of them by their looks. Which, perhaps, it may be as prudent not to do; for I find, in a collection of old trials, that of "dyvers wymen," who, during the previous summer, had been indicted and condemned as "paramours of the monks of Chester,"—a creditable proceeding in itself, perhaps, but which looks to us now just a little like punishing the wrong parties.[1]

Of what may be called the stage-business of this early drama it is difficult to obtain any ample or trustworthy account. The more characteristic of the meagre particulars which have been preserved, may, however, be condensed into a brief paragraph.

The Whitson Plays were acted at Chester, seven or eight on each day, during the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the Whitsuntide week, by the various crafts in the city, to each of whom a separate mystery was allotted. The drapers, for instance, exhibited the Fall of Lucifer; the water-carriers of the Dee reproduced the Deluge; the cooks had the Harrowing of Hell. The performers were carried from one station to another by means of a moveable scaffold, a huge and ponderous machine, mounted on wheels, gaily decorated with flags, and divided into two compartments, the upper of which formed the stage, and the lower, defended from vulgar curiosity by coarse canvas draperies, answered the purposes of the green-room. The performers began at the Abbey gates, where they were witnessed by the dignitaries of the Church; they then proceeded to the High Cross, where the mayor and the civic magnates were assembled; and so on throughout the city, until this motley history of God and his dealings with man had been played out.

The production of these pageants must have been attended with considerable outlay; "to all the city," says the old proclamation, "follows labour and cost." Probably, the

[1] Webb's *Description*, 1620. Archdeacon Rogers, 1581. King's *Vale Royal*, 1656. *The Life of the Glorious Virgin St. Werburg*, London, 1521. Ormerod's *Cheshire*, 3 vols. 1819; the most magnificent of the local histories. *Royal Visits and Progresses to Wales*, etc., by Ed. Parry, 2d edition, 1851.

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expense of each Mystery was not less than fifteen or twenty pounds, estimated according to the present value of money. The dresses had been originally obtained from the churches, but the practice seems to have occasioned much scandal among the stricter clergy (William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester in 1384, denounced the priests who were in the habit of lending holy vestments for this purpose as guilty of sacrilege); and the guilds had been latterly obliged to provide the dresses as well as the other properties for themselves. The old registers of the trading companies contain many entries relating to these expenses, some of which are curious, and many not a little profane. Our Lord was commonly represented wearing a gilt peruke and a sheep-skin coat, which was either painted or brilliantly illuminated. Lucifer appeared in his stereotyped costume, horns and a tail, cloven feet and a red beard, illustrating, in the latter particular, the clumsy Pluto of the *Gierusalem*, and in the others the grotesque conception of the *Rennaissance*. The item, "Payd to Wattis for dressing the devil's head," seems to indicate that an accomplished *artiste* was specially engaged to perform this delicate and responsible duty. The close connection between Judas Iscariot and the evil principle was typified, moreover, by *his* red hair, against which colour, latterly modified into the bewitching auburn of the Venetian artist, the illiterate in these days entertained a curious antipathy. Besides the expenditure on dress, the players had to be remunerated for their attendance at the rehearsals as well as at the public performauce. The pageant accounts contain many entries which relate to this subject—"*Payd to the players for rehearsal—Imprimis, to God*, iis. viiid.; *itm. to Pilate his wife*, iis.; *itm. to the Devil and Judas*, is. vid."—only eighteenpence, as it was probably considered inexpedient to incur much outlay on such disreputable characters. There was, indeed, a regularly graduated scale of remuneration; so that while Herod and Pilate fared sumptuously every day, the cock that crew when Peter denied his Lord starved on a miserable pittance—"*Payd to Fauston for coc-croying*, iiijd." This Fauston seems to have had a kind of available talent, for we subsequently meet him engaged in a different department of the drama—"*Payd to Fauston for hanging Judas*, vd."

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Nor were scenic effects altogether neglected. "The cross, with a rope to draw it up," and "two pair of gallows," are prominent items in the old accounts. But it was on "hell-mouthe" that the stage artist lavished his resources, and that he depended for his principal points. "*Payd for mending of hell*, ijd.; *itm. for painting of hell-mouth*, iijd.; *itm. for making of hell-mouthe new*, is. ixd.; *itm. for keeping fire at hell's-mouth*, iiijd.; *itm. for setting the world of fyer*, vd. (this last was another of Fauston's performances), are entries which occur upon every page. "Hell-mouthe," according to the old authorities, and as it is preserved in the early engravings, represented the head of a devouring dragon, whose red eye-balls glared fiercely on the spectators, and whose open jaws disclosed a murky cavern, wherein were stationed "a great company of devils," and from which issued the despairing groans of the tormented. This diabolical contrivance in behalf of the better life, probably proved a source of emolument to the Catholic clergy, and in that light can be intelligibly understood; but why, after pardons and masses have been abolished, "Hell-mouthe" should be perpetuated as the supreme motive of Christian conduct, does not at first sight appear.[1]

Most of the forms of our primitive literature are steeped in an atmosphere of romance. A nation, in the spring-time of its years, expresses its cheerfulness, if rudely, yet with boisterous animal delight. The early drama, however, is destitute of this animated simplicity. Throughout the Mysteries we desiderate the bloom and perfection of the child-life, the rosy health and the exuberant vitality of a people girding up their loins for the race, playing with the materials of life, rejoicing in those bright lines of dawn wherein the traveller can detect no trace of the noontide toil. Written by monks, who often did little more than the modern English dramatist does—translate from the French,—a Miracle-Play is merely a portion of the Scripture narrative manufactured into a doggerel drama. A plain and homely exposition, it is, like the lesson in a school-book, designed to teach, and makes no pretensions to literary refinement. Yet, even in the most prosaic, we are sometimes

[1] Sharp's *Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries*, 1825. *Illustrations of the Manners and expenses of Ancient Times in England*, 1797.

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arrested by a gush of genuine poetic feeling, welling like a clear spring through the thick crust of clownish humour and monkish superstition, as though the human heart beat underneath after all!

The Miracle-Play has been severely condemned on moral and artistic grounds, more especially by those who are not perhaps best qualified to judge of such matters. Of course, if we care to study the literature of Catholicism, we must come prepared to encounter many Catholic legends and superstitions; as indeed we do. In the Mystery its fictions continually recur. There is the cherry-tree that blossomed and bore fruit at Mary's desire, and the elder-bush on which Judas hanged himself. The forbidden fruit sticks in Adam's throat as he attempts to swallow it, and is the cause of the lump in the man's gullet, which continues even to this day. The Sybil—during the middle ages a familiar Catholic influence,

> "Dies irae, dies illa
> Teste, David, cum Sybilla,
> Solvet seclum in favilla,"—

prophesies, before Octavian, of Jesus and the judgment. A drama is appropriated to the Assumption of the Virgin, and another to the Harrowing of Hell; the latter a dogma of Rome, no doubt, but preserved in England long after the Reformation, and condensed by Spenser into one of his terse couplets—

> "And thou who harrowed hell with heavie stour,
> The faulty souls from thence brought to thy heavenly bower."[1]

Few of these legends, however, can offend even the most fastidious taste; and it is consequently against the *buffoonery, indecency, and profanity of the Miracle-Play, in its treatment of the Scripture narrative*, that the charge has been specially directed. It is said that the men who composed such dramas must have been utterly devoid of any religious impressions, and that the representation of such spectacles must have had an injurious effect on those who witnessed them. Many absurd, profane, and indecent passages can no doubt be

[1] *The Faerie Queen*, canto x. stanza 40.

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selected; but even if these had been more numerous than they are, I am doubtful whether it would be right at once to assert the large conclusion to which they seem naturally to point. The question is indeed one of the greatest intricacy, for, in settling it, many conflicting issues require to be adjusted. I will consider it in reference to the three charges I have indicated—Buffoonery, Profanity, Indecency.

That a good deal of what we call buffoonery was introduced into this drama cannot and need not be disputed; and some specimens of the burlesque spirit in which the Scripture narrative was treated will prove characteristic, and enable us to form a more accurate opinion on the point at issue. In the "Fall of Lucifer," the Deity "descends from his throne and goes out," and during his absence, the ambitious archangel, like a mischievous school-boy, appropriates the master's seat, for which he is rusticated from heaven. Milton is said to have founded some of his most noble pictures on the rude groundwork of the Mysteries; there is, for instance, a curious entry in the Coventry accounts, which alludes to "the Mother of Death;" and it is quite possible that in some cases he may have been indebted to them; but the magnificent Lucifer of the "Paradise Lost,"

> "Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven,"

bears indeed little affinity to the poor and spiritless fiend of the religious drama. The *Processus Noe cum filiis* gives a rude but graphic account of the circumstances attending the flood. The principal character in it is Noah's wife, who is not very favourably or gracefully conceived. Positive, sensible, and matter-of-fact, she has adopted the Baconian method of investigation, and is very vehement in the expression of her disgust at the ark. Her husband, she affirms, is neglecting his business and sacrificing his family for a capricious and chimerical crotchet. When all the needful preparations have been concluded, she swears by the Virgin Mary that she will never enter the ark, and Noah is ultimately forced to make use of his whip. This shrewish personation of the patriarch's wife is very common in the old plays, and seems to have been considered, both by

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audience and author, as eminently comic. Balaam and his Ass was another favourite topic; and the conversation between the two, in which the ass expostulates with great force, is not destitute of humour—

> "Am not I, master, thine own asse,
> To bear thee whither thou wilt passe,
> And many winters ready was?
> To smite me it is shame.
> Thou wot'est well, master, pardy,
> Thou had'st none ever like to me,
> Ne never yet so served I thee,
> Now am I not to blame."

The play of *The Shepherds* introduces the nativity of the Saviour. After a prolonged conversation upon the troubles of their domestic life, the shepherds, who are watching their flocks by the starlight, fall asleep, and are forthwith informed of the birth of Christ. One of their sheep having been stolen during the time of the vision, the recovery of the property, and the capture of the thief, form a very ludicrous episode. Having beaten the rogue heartily, they again lie down, when the star in the east appears, and *Angelus cantat gloria in excelsus Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.* According to another edition of the same Mystery, the shepherds have a quarrel and a fight just before the appearance of the star. Being thereby admonished, they go and present themselves and their gifts at the stable in Bethlehem. These gifts are coarsely and absurdly burlesqued; one of them, for instance, being a nut-hook, so that, says the donor to our infant Lord—

> "To pulle down apples, peares, and plombes,
> Old Joseph shall not need to hurt his thombes."

The buffoonery, exaggeration, and total absence of all dramatic propriety which are found here are even surpassed in another, entitled *The Oblation of the Kings.* King Herod, who is introduced into it, swears by the devil and "his cousin" Mahomet, and rewards the councillor who suggests the slaughter of all the children in Bethlehem by promising to make him "the Pope." This primitive founder of the papacy afterwards dies in great agony; and at the end the

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Protestant reader is gratified to learn that "the devil carries him away."[1]

Such buffoonery is certainly amenable to criticism. But we must remember, in the first place, that it was introduced to amuse the spectators, which it no doubt did; the audience listening, says an old writer, "*nunc silentes, nunc cachinnantes;*" and moreover, that many of the particulars which seem to us most ludicrous were originally spoken in perfect good faith. The premeditated burlesque is often the least grotesque; to the modern reader it is the genuine and exquisite *naïvète* indeed that proves most extravagant.

Further, it is not the characteristic machinery of Christianity that is made use of in this connection, but the subordinate scriptural characters—Noah's wife, the Shepherds, Herod, Balaam and his Ass. Unless we require the Bible narrative to be preserved inviolate, and removed entirely from the sphere of secular art—an isolation indeed demanded by certain people, who habitually confound the common and the unclean—I do not see that we can consistently object to the principle which this connection asserts,—a principle which lies at the very root of the English character, and of the great English Drama. In the French classic tragedy any feeling which is not in harmony with the central emotion is scrupulously avoided; a jest in *Phèdre* or *Athalie* would be regarded as an unpardonable impertinence, insulting the solemnity of the occasion. To the Englishman, who looks the world full in the face, the law is different. In

[1] *The Chester Plays*, edited by Thomas Wright, 1843. *Ludus Coventriæ*, edited by J. O. Halliwell, 1841. Collier's *History of Dramatic Literature*, 3 vols., 1831. Many miscellaneous contributions to the early literature of the drama have been recently published, and an immense mass of undigested *materiel* has been thus collected into an accessible shape, chiefly through the medium of the publishing societies. To Messrs. Dyce, Collier, and Halliwell, those who take an interest in the subject are specially indebted. It is much to be regretted that the valuable library of the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, is so deficient in the literature of the drama. Of the voluminous literature of *Euphuism* there is scarcely a single volume. It possesses no early editions of the works of any of our greater dramatists, and, excepting Mr. Dyce's edition of Marlowe, none of Mr. Pickering's (now) invaluable reprints. A small annual contribution, continued for a few years, would serve to put this department in tolerable efficiency.

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his wide and ample estimate of life, the comic appears side by side with the tragic; his drama goes on with courageous resoluteness, shining, like the sun, equally on the evil and the good, the noble and the ignoble, the terrible and the grotesque; and to his mind there is no incongruity in an association which has existed since man was created. That by sanctioning such an innovation he transgresses the stereotyped formalities of art is to his strong practical sense a matter of perfect indifference; he knows that he relishes the Shakespearian stage, not in *spite* of its disregard of the unities, but because (whatever may have been true of the Greeks, whatever may be true of the Frenchman), in so far as he is concerned, it is quite right that they should be disregarded. It is therefore interesting to learn that this striking idiosyncrasy of the national temperament is observable in the earliest developments of the national imagination. We have not to wait for Lear or Macbeth ere we find grief and joy, pathos and humour, the king and the clown mingling in the motley pageantry of the stage as they mingle in the motley pageantry of life. On the contrary, in the most primitive form of our drama—a form for such a purpose peculiarly unpropitious—the germ of this wise, unsectarian, and thoroughly English insight may be detected. That the early drama was a religious drama is of course no argument against the practice. Religion has no right to separate itself from the facts of life, and a spiritual is just as pernicious as a bodily asceticism. If it is not impossible that Noah's wife was a shrew—as matrons have been, undoubtedly, both before and since the Deluge—surely it cannot detract from the practical value of the Deluge as a scriptural fact to represent her as such?

And as this profound necessity for the exhibition of real life explains and justifies the comic element which we find in the English as distinguished from the French Mysteries, it also explains the anachronisms, in reference to time and place, which abound throughout the former. Noah's wife might so far forget what was due to herself and her chronological position as to swear by the Virgin Mary; what cared the spectators for that? Such expressions they used to each other every day, and the employment of the phraseology

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of their familiar life on the stage only intensified the impression of its reality. The play of The Shepherds was the most popular of the series; at Chester it was frequently acted by itself; when any august personage visited the city he was certain to be invited to witness it. And yet it is in its incidents the most outrageously extravagant of them all. Wherein lay the fascination? Mainly in this, that the Syrian Shepherds represented English rustics; a fact which accounts for the special value it continues to retain to us; preserving, as it does, a rude but elaborate picture of the old country life of England. We hear about the shepherds and their sheep; the distempers from which the flocks suffered, and the remedies—such as hot tar for the rot—which were considered efficacious; how the women sewed their untanned leathern socks with crows' feathers instead of thread; how the men had green cheese and sheep's head for their dinner, and how they washed it down with sour milk and Halton ale. It was most improbable, no doubt, that a Syrian shepherd, during the reign of Tiberius, could have obtained a supply of the latter article — most improbable; but the audience, for their part, were perfectly content, since they were thereby brought into more direct contact with human life than they could have been although chronological accuracy had been scrupulously observed, and the manager, in the printed preface to his play, had presented them with his classical authorities.[1]

The next charge is a delicate one, on which, from our modern spirit of prudery, it is almost impossible to touch. I must, however, be permitted to allude to it in passing. Dr. Marriot, in the preface to his collection of Miracle-Plays (Basel, 1838), asserted that an exact representation of the primitive state of our first parents in the Garden of Eden was exhibited on the English stage as late as the close of the sixteenth century. Though this modern instance has been disputed, it seems difficult to doubt that such representations actually did take place at an earlier period. John of Salisbury[2]

[1] *The Winter's Tale*, as represented at the Princess' Theatre, with Note Historical and Explanatory, by Chas. Kean. John K. Chapman. 1856.

[2] *De Nugis Curialium*, lib. i. cap. 8. Mr. Dyce has satisfactorily disposed of Dr. Marriot's assertion, which rests upon a passage in an old

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expressly alludes to the indecent attire of the actors; and the stage directions to the old Mysteries supply internal evidence which appears to substantiate the charge. In the first of the Chester series, we are informed that Adam and Eve *stabunt nudi, et non verecundabuntur*, and the fact appears still more indisputably from a subsequent passage which refers to the disposition of the fig-leaves. Again, in the crucifixion, this direction occurs—*Tunc spoliabunt Jesum vestibus, et stabit nudus quousque sortiati sunt;* and that he remained unclothed till the conclusion is evident from what "Caiphas" says afterwards—

> "Men for cock's face,
> How long shall Pewdreas
> Stand naked in that place?
> Go traile him to the tree."

These specimens are selected from the Chester Mysteries; the Coventry furnish illustrations of the same kind, which, however, it is unnecessary to quote. Such an accumulation of evidence undoubtedly makes out a strong case; it is difficult to see how it can be explained away. Still I accept the statement very reluctantly, and not without a hope that, were our information more ample, the conclusion to which it forces us might be avoided. Reluctantly; for how are we to reconcile the fact, if fact it be, with our conceptions of old English purity? The liberty which is extended to the sculptor, who, in the calm and tranquil exercise of his art, represents the unveiled and unblushing Aphrodite, will not, for obvious reasons, be extended to the flesh and blood of the stage, except by a very primitive or corrupt society. In the present case, no foreign motive can be assigned for the introduction of such gratuitous immorality; and as any exhibition that takes place on the popular stage must be in accordance with popular habits, and popular associations, it seems to me quite clear that if this indecency was habitually tolerated on the platform, it must have been previously tolerated in the household. If the case be made out, we are certainly forced to conclude that there was not throughout

play, entitled, *The Travailles of the Three Brothers*,—a passage, the import of which is so obvious, that it is curious how even an editor could have misunderstood it.—*Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder*. Camden Society, 1840.

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the ordinary relations of English life the fastidiousness, the scrupulousness, the horror of the nude, which are now regarded, whether justly or unjustly, as characteristic of a sound and temperate society.

That there is in this drama much practical *profaneness* those who are best acquainted with its history will be least inclined to assert. A few specimens may, no doubt, be selected for rhetorical or argumentative effect; but there are few, I venture to say, where the blasphemy is intentional or premeditated, and none in any measure approaching, in revolting outrageousness, the passages which Mr. Lewis, in his characteristic life of Goethe, has translated from an old German play.[1]

The last, and perhaps the most serious objection, applies, therefore, not so much to the manner in which the divine is introduced, as to its introduction under any circumstances, not so much to the precise practice as to the abstract principle. This simplifies the matter, and leaves for us a plain issue to decide upon. Was it or was it not expedient that the Creator should be introduced upon the stage? Was it or was it not right that the principal events in the life of our Saviour should be presented in the religious drama? With all respect for the scrupulous piety of those devout souls who are shocked and distressed when they peruse a Miracle-Play, I think we are entitled to answer that it *was* expedient, that it *was* justifiable.

The Mystery, as we have seen, was employed by the clergy to teach the doctrines of the Church. It was a characteristic portion of the secular economy of the Roman Catholic system, perfectly in harmony with the theory upon which that system was constructed. And we are not entitled to say that that system has failed; it did not fail when brought into contact with a gross and sensuous society; and with a view to such a society we must remember that it was originally designed. Roman Catholicism now degrades our conception of the divine economy; but Roman Catholicism succeeded at a time when the naked simplicity of Puritanism could have done nothing. And the rude sketches of the Mystery did undoubtedly convey

[1] Lewis' *Life of Goethe*, ii. 288.

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to a large class of an illiterate population any definite conception it possessed of the divine government of the world.

But it is said that the knowledge thus coarsely taught could not have proved efficacious. Now it is no doubt perfectly true, that, in certain cases, the direct homeliness of the narrative may have introduced into the intercourse between man and his Maker an undue and perilous familiarity. It is difficult to believe that the writer who habitually entered such items in his day-book—"Pay'd for a payre of gloves for God; Pay'd for gilding God's coat; Divers necessaries bought for the trymmyng of the Father of Heaven,"[1] —did not thereby contract a grossness of conception in regard to the attributes of the Divine Being which must have exerted a pernicious influence over the functions of his moral life. This, however, is an extreme case; and the *audiences* at least were not exposed to the same temptations. The story was rudely told, but, in its essential points, it was told with exact veracity. Though God "rose up from his throne, and went out," yet they, in their strong Saxon simplicity, did not the less believe that he remained the Almighty Governor of the world. They were required to accept the narrative of our Lord's earthly passion in its most perfect homeliness; but the great lesson which it taught of a love stronger than suffering and triumphant over death did not come to them with a whit less force. Nay, it is quite possible that they thus obtained an insight of more thorough practical value into the significance of that life than any we now retain. For would the literalness and precision of the narrative shock us so much if we did not make the whole existence of our Redeemer something essentially different from that which it was, and by overlaying it with formalities and abstractions of our own, deprive the divine example of the man Christ of its true practical homely helpfulness? Our ancestors did not extinguish that noble career of charity and self-sacrifice in a theological dogma, and perhaps they were none the worse, either morally or spiritually, that they found in Revelation the toil and triumph of a human spirit, the profound experience of a man who, tempted like as they were, was yet without sin. One is often inclined to conclude, from the prevailing tone of our

[1] Sharp's *Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries.*

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theological literature, that the thirty years witness to the truth were just so many years thrown away ;—as if our Lord lived solely that he might die ; as if the arbitrary fact of the divine martyrdom, apart from the richfulness of the divine life of which it is the highest expression, would have served to release man's heart from the thraldom of the devil ; as if the virtues of Christ had no real or vital connection with the public morals of Christendom. We have thrown our religion and every thing else that concerns us into schemes and doctrines, and have utterly forgotten that there was really some human truth in them once. After all, there may be worse teachers, even from the pulpit, than the rude realists of the early stage.

But it is quite another question, whether we are now entitled to reproduce the characteristic forms of the Mystery, and one much more difficult to decide. The *Prologue in Heaven* in Goethe's *Faust*, and *The Nativity*, in *The Golden Legend*, are well-known specimens of recent imitations. Mr. Longfellow cannot help adding to the old drama the grace, purity, and refinement of modern poetry; but he cleverly preserves many of its familiar features—its simplicity, its profane directness, its homeliness both of thought and narrative. Goethe, on the other hand—the greater artist—thoroughly realises the situation, and the Beelzebub of the primitive stage could not address the Almighty with more perfect composure than Mephistopheles does. This is even somewhat too much the case perhaps. In the real zest and relish with which the author of *Faust* treats the profane, there is something more than the historic impartiality of the artist. And in a matter of this kind we are entitled and called upon to judge the modern much more rigorously than the mediæval playwright. The most profane of the Mysteries may be read without pain, if we recognise the simplicity of purpose, the honesty of the motive ;

> For never anything can come amiss,
> When simpleness and duty tender it.

But the modern artist is deprived of the refuge of sincerity. He feels that to him and to his age many mediæval forms, many antique types of thought, have become, in a certain

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sense, profane; and he knows that it is so when he writes. So that the answer to the question must ultimately rest on the intrinsic worthlessness or worthiness of the subject itself. "Many accounts there are in history," says Sir Thomas Browne, "scandalous unto Christianity, and even unto humanity, whose not only verities but relations honest men do deprecate. We desire no record of such enormities; in things of this nature silence commendeth history."[1] The Mystery, however, can hardly be included, with any show of justice, in the Index Expurgatorius of history. It is not in its own nature so objectionable as imperatively to force us to exclude it from any authentic or artistic reproduction of mediæval life. And I believe most candid readers admit that Mr. Longfellow, in a work which restores the motley activities of that life better than any other work I know, has satisfactorily shown that the old play may be handled so tenderly, and yet so honestly and conscientiously, that it need not shock the scruples of the most fastidious Puritan.

Such was the Mystery, which for three hundred years held undisputed possession of the English stage. It ceased to be generally represented early in the sixteenth century, but it was not entirely discontinued till a much later period. In 1567, the Whitson Plays, with the exception of those deemed "superstitious," were acted at Chester, in spite of an inhibition from the Archbishop of York; in 1575, the mayor, Sir John Savage, again set at defiance the clerical interdict; and in 1577—and this was probably the last official representation—the play of *The Shepherds* was acted at the High Cross before the Earl of Derby. But if we may trust the terms and contents of a play-bill printed in the beginning of last century, the Miracle-Play was preserved in England, though under a very different form, till the reign of Queen Anne:—"*By Her Majesty's permission. At Heatly's Booth, over against the Cross Daggers, next to Mr. Millar's Booth, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be presented a little Opera, called The Old Creation of the World, newly reviv'd—with the addition of the glorious battle obtained over the French and Spaniards by His Grace the Duke of*

[1] Sir Thomas Browne's *History of Vulgar Errors.* Book viii. chap. 19.

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Marlborough—compleated with the Merrie Humours of Sir John Spendall, and Punchinello!"[1] This is the closing scene in the career of the religious drama.

"To such base uses may we come, Horatio!"

The Moral-Play—the introduction of which can be traced to the reign of Henry VI.—followed the Miracle-Play, but for many years the two flourished together; the new form, under the patronage of the Court, continually gaining ground upon its predecessor, especially among the more cultivated and studious classes. In the Moral-Play the vices and the passions were personified. The cardinal virtues and the deadly sins strutted "their little hour" upon the stage. One characteristic influence was transmitted from the Mystery,—"Sathan the Dyvill," whose assistance could not well be dispensed with, and who appeared accompanied by the "Vice," a sort of envenomed parasite. By slight gradations the Moral-Play was modified into the Interlude, a work wherein greater latitude of thought and subject were permitted, where abstractions were thrown into the background, and the real brought prominently forward. The Interlude was the favourite Court entertainment during the reign of Henry VII. and of his son, both of whom relished the drama, a taste which they transmitted to Elizabeth. Several companies of actors were attached to their service, the "Players of Interludes," and the "Gentlemen of the Chapel," being those of whom the most authentic information has been obtained. John Heywood, "Player of the Virginals" to King Henry VIII., at a half-yearly salary of £6 : 13 : 4, and John Skelton, the poet-laureate, are the only composers of Interludes whose names are now remembered. Heywood was a man of considerable endowments, and his plays are characterised by so much spirit, vivacity, and humour, that he is entitled to be considered the Father of English Comedy. Skelton is better known as a poet than as a dramatist. "Magnificence"—the

[1] The contents are such as these:—"The Creation of Adam and Eve;" "The Intrigues of Lucifer in the Garden of Eden;" "The Three Wise Men of the East."—*Strutt's Sports and Pastimes.* Ed. Hone, p. 166.

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only Interlude of his which has been preserved, although it is known that he composed several—has nothing to distinguish it from the mass of such productions. But as a poet it may be questioned whether he has been sufficiently appreciated. There is, undoubtedly, in his works a vast amount of coarse and offensive buffoonery; but, attached, like Rabelais, to the principles of the reforming party, and suspected by the authorities of the Church in which he occupied a subordinate position, this may have been in part assumed to cloke the daring spirit of inquiry which would not have been permitted to a grave and moderate thinker. When we penetrate beneath the crust of extravagant burlesque, we reach a vein of sound sense, lively humour, bitter, sometimes even brilliant, wit. The whole character of the man, indeed, is strongly marked and graphic. He hates quite as warmly as he loves, and that he loved may be gathered from the passage in which old Anthony Wood tells us that he was suspended from his office, "having been guilty of certain crimes, as most poets are." The things and people that he hates are manifold—the Scots, the Mendicant Friars, the Cardinal Wolsey, Lily the grammarian. And of all things and people whom he hates he speaks his mind with a boldness rare in those days. The man is perfectly fearless. He is always at war with Wolsey; is always denouncing the pride, arrogance, ostentation of the great minister. Wolsey, however, I can believe, rather liked the laureate,—as he did any thoroughly strong and honest man,—and coldly tolerated that mosquito-like hostility, ready to crush it at a moment's notice whenever it became really dangerous. And until he got hold somehow of Skelton's masterly piece of abuse, "*Why come ye not to Court?*" the wily Cardinal was content to disregard it. But by that time the situation had become difficult; the poem exactly expressed the feelings of the most numerous and influential class of Henry's subjects, who abhorred the minister quite as much for "his base progeny, his greasy genealogy," as for his inordinate ambition and masterly insight into European politics; and the crisis had arrived when the nuisance must be briefly and finally put down. So Skelton was forced to fly to the sanctuary at Westminster (from which his animated pasquinades against "The Sorcerer" were indefatigably dis-

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charged into the city), there to await the fall of that sagacious and confident ambition. Altogether, as I have said, the laureate is a likeable man. Sharp, scornful, and bitter, no doubt, —as such a man could not then well help being, especially if within the Church, and hating the scandals of the Church,— but, at the same time, blunt and honest; there is humour underneath those shaggy eyebrows, and tenderness, even, of a rough homely cast; a tenderness, however, that will grow indignant and passionate when the conviction dawns upon him that God's most righteous law of love,—quite as needful as a law of life, then, as now,—has been to him and to his brethren tainted and defiled by the mischievous ordinance of man.[1]

Of the Moral-Play, little more requires to be said, and that mainly in the way of illustration. Of the very considerable number that have been preserved and published, *Everyman*, and *Lusty Juventus* are probably as complete and characteristic specimens as we could well select. *Everyman*, published early in the reign of Henry VIII., is, in many respects, a very effective allegory, intended to depict the transitoriness of all earthly blessings:—

> Man in the begyinning
> Look well and take good heed to the endying,
> Be ye never so gay;
> Ye thinke sinne in the begyinning full swete,
> Which, in the end causeth the soul to weep,
> When the body lyeth in clay.

God finishes a soliloquy upon the justice of his government of the universe, with which the play opens, by despatching Death to summon *Everyman*—the representative of human life—to his presence:—

> *God.* I must do justice
> On every living creature without fear.
> Where art thou Death, thou mighty messenger?
>
> *Death.* Almighty God, I am here at thy will,
> Thy commandments to fulfil.

[1] *Household Book of Henry VIII. Skelton's Works*, edited by Rev. A. Dyce. Anthony Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*, i. 50. There is a portrait of the "famous old poet" in Sir Egerton Brydges' *British Bibliographer*.

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God. Go thou to Everyman,
And tell him, in my name,
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in nowise can escape.
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning,
Without delay or any tarrying.

Death (whose introduction here seems to disprove Mr. Douce's assertion that the last enemy was never represented in the old religious drama), courteously allows the affrighted sinner leisure to discover whether any of his friends will undertake to accompany him. Friendship, Kindred, Goodes, Beauty, Strength, one by one forsake him, when they learn by whom he is summoned, until his "Goode Deedes," "who is so weak that she cannot stand, verily," is alone left with him. The rest of the play, till within a page of the close, consists of an exposition of several of the more prominent doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, not omitting that doctrine of all catholic churches down to the present day, which sets forth the privilege of contributing to the necessities of the saints, and the other ecclesiastical office-bearers. Having received the sacrament, Everyman, probably exhausted by the weight of this protracted discourse, gives up the ghost in a penitent and edifying way; while his medical attendant informs us, in manner of epilogue, that, when a sinner dies, nothing

"Save his good deedes with him doth he take;
Which, if they be small,
Before God he hath no help at all."

Lusty Juventus was written during the reign of Edward VI., and may be looked upon as a defence and exposition of Protestantism, as *Everyman* is of Catholicism. The *dramatis personæ* form a very motley group—Good Counsel, Hypocrasie, Abominable Living, God's Merciful Promises, and "Sathan the Dyvill," being among the more conspicuous. The story is a repetition of the old conflict. *Lusty Juventus* is led astray by the seductions of the world and the flesh, but is ultimately rescued from utter ruin by the intervention of Good Counsel and his divine associates. The work bears constant traces of the great revolution which had been partially accomplished. The devil is represented as regretting the overthrow of the Catholic religion, and the consequent

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spread of enlightenment throughout the masses of the nation. The "mummeries of superstition" are included in a denunciation quite as comprehensive as Lord John's:—

"Holy pardons, holy beades,
Holy saints, holy images,
With holy, holy blood,
Holy stocks, holy stones,
Holy cloutes, holy bones,
Yea, and holy, holy wood."

The author dwells besides on the necessity of a rigid adherence to the pure and simple Word of God; and as example is more efficacious than precept, makes every quotation from Holy Writ with scrupulous accuracy, and an edifying disregard of the metre,—

"The reward is given us,
As St. Paul declareth in the IIII chapter of the Romans."

"Read the Vth to the Galatians, and there you shall see."

"I will show you what St. Paul doth declare
In his epistle to the Hebrews, and the X chapter."

"My meaning is as Christ saith in the 6th chapter to Matthew;"

and so on. Good Counsel is already affected with the Puritan austerity which seems in some measure characteristic of Protestantism; he objects to the recreation of dancing, "for," says he, "there is no such passing of the time appointed in Scripture." Upon the whole, the Protestant play, if more orthodox, is heavier and more undigested than its Catholic predecessor.[1]

The history of the English drama, so long as its history retains any national importance, is the history of a people struggling towards reality. Nowhere else is the thoroughly practical character of the English mind more clearly manifested. Even in the Miracle-Play we have had occasion to note this necessity. The Moral-Play, at first sight, might appear susceptible of a different interpretation. Was it not, indeed, a step in a different direction when vices and virtues,

[1] Dodsley's *Old Plays. Collections of Old Plays*, 1780. Douce's *Dance of Death*, 1831. In Vol. iv. of the *Shakespeare Society's Papers*, another edition of the latter part of "Everyman" has been published, which differs somewhat from that generally known.

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passions and principles, were substituted for kings and apostles? The objection, however, is not good. In the Moral-Play the spectators descended from the beings of another life to the passions which agitated their own. The giants that were before the flood, the prophets and holy men of old, the powers and principalities in heavenly places, were separated from them by a gulf which they could not cross. But the Moral-Play brought upon the stage the practical motives and emotions of the present; and, when this was once accomplished, the Interlude, where these were associated with certain large and stereotyped forms of English life, was the immediate and logical result. Between the Interlude, stilted and rudimentary as it was, and our modern drama, with its abundant and versatile life, and its subtle analysis of motive and character, the interval is not great. The one was the true off-shoot of the other; with this change only, that the latter delineated the *real* in firmer and more delicate lines.

The light in which the early drama was viewed by the "religious public" of the day, is a matter of some interest, or at least curiosity to us. The Catholic clergy, as we have seen, exerted themselves strenuously for many centuries in its behalf, gave absolution to those who attended, permitted the players to perform in the churches and cemeteries, were sometimes themselves the performers. To the stricter ecclesiastics, however, this intimate connection soon became repugnant; and many of them even went as far as the followers of Wickliffe, who, had they possessed the power, would have entirely suppressed it, as injurious to the public morality.

> "Inglond goith to nought, plus fecit homo viciosus.
> To lust man is brought; nimis est homo deliciosus.
> Goddis halidays, non observantur honeste,
> For unthrifty plays, in eis regnant manifeste.[1]

And this antipathy naturally increased when the theatre was removed from their immediate superintendence, and made over to the trading companies and guilds; societies whose popular constitution nourished and developed the spirit of liberty. There had been always a certain wilfulness and restiveness in the sturdy English Catholic; he had never

[1] *Satirical Poem*, temp. Henry VI; Collier's *History of the Stage*, i. 25.

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accepted the slavish limitations of the ultramontane school; and the drama furnished a favourite channel through which to attack those defects of ecclesiastical discipline which aroused the antipathy of the populace. But it was not until the near approach of the Reformation that it was considered prudent to check, by direct legislation, the abuse of the stage. In 1533, a royal proclamation, prevented evil-disposed persons from "preaching after their own braine, and from playing Interludes concerning matters now in question and controversie." And a subsequent statute,[1] which was not repealed till the reign of Edward VI., after stating, in the preamble, that the drama had been used to subvert the true religion, goes on to enact, that no person "shall play in interludes, sing or rhyme any matter contrary to the doctrine of the Church of Rome." Orthodox performances, in which Luther and his German Frau were held up to popular ridicule, were still patronised by the clergy, and the reformers bitterly complained that, no matter how licentious the spectacle might be, if the practices of the Church were not discussed, the authorities remained mute and complaisant. Edward Stalbridge, writing from Basel in the year 1543, says to the clergy,—"So long as the players played lies, and sang bawdy songs, blasphemed God, and corrupted men's conscience, ye never blamed them, but were very well content. But since they persuaded the people to worship their Lord God aright, without your lousie legerdemains, ye never were pleased with them." After the victory had been won, the reformed ministers seem to have used their influence to effect the discontinuance of the drama, holding, probably, with Stephen Gosson, that there was a graduated descent,—"from pyping to playing, from playing to pleasure, from pleasure to slouth, from slouth to sleepe, from sleepe to sinne, from sinne to death, from death to the devil." In 1571, and again in 1575, the Whitson Plays were represented at Chester, in spite of an injunction from the Archbishop of York, which, as we have seen, the mayor, Sir John Savage, took the liberty to disregard, probably relying upon the support of his townsmen. But the lay authorities were often quite as hostile as the clergy; and in most of the larger towns the unlicensed

[1] 34 and 35 Henry VIII. cap. i.

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players were strictly prohibited. Even the players of the Queen and the Lords of the Council were there barely tolerated; and in 1582, we find the mayor of Leicester giving the Earl of Worcester's company "an angel towards their dinner," to induce them to quit the town without performing. The compromise, however, proved ineffectual, and the performance took place in the town-hall, the actors, at the same time, "acknowledging his worship's authority." The metropolis was invariably foremost in any hostile demonstration, and for many years during Elizabeth's reign, plays were entirely prohibited within the liberties. The city, from its extensive intercourse with Flemish traders, had been tainted, at an early period, with the gloomy doctrines of the German sectaries; in the city, the gruff burgher nourished in secret his wrath against the levities of the court and the vices of the Amalekites; in the city, Puritanism was organising its ranks for that memorable conflict, out of which, in the next century, it was to come conquering and to conquer. So powerful was the influence of the fanatic party, that even Elizabeth, with her artistic prepossessions in behalf of the stage, was frequently forced to give way, and to sanction, under certain limitations, stringent enactments for the repression of public exhibitions.[1]

A very singular article has been published recently, in which the relations that existed between "Plays and Puritans," at a somewhat later date, are analysed and defended,—an article pervaded by the fervid illogic of Mr. Kingsley's mind.[2] The drift of the argument seems to be that the protest of Puritanism was founded on truth, and has since obtained the common consent of Englishmen. We don't swear — we don't go to the theatre—we dress in sad-coloured raiment. Such an argument is surely very contracted, superficial, and disingenuous. No one denies that Puritanism had some good points; it would be an anachronism in history if it had not.

[1] *The Epistle Exhortatory of an English Christian to his dearly beloved Country*, 1543. *The School of Abuse: containing a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth.* By Stephen Gosson, 1579. Archdeacon Rogers (in Ormerod's *Cheshire*) 1581. *Shakespeare Soceity's Papers*, vol. iv. art. xii.

[2] *North British Review*, No. xlix, March 1856.

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But the real question is, whether the view of human life which it adopted was not partial, rigid, fanatical, wanting in breadth and charity, in love and wisdom; whether its theory of man's mind did not tend to exclude from the subjects of legitimate enjoyment many of his noblest pleasures, many of his highest instincts; whether, in short, it would have made society into that which God intended it should be, or into that which Simon Stylites made it on the top of his granite column? The social literature of the Puritans—and no one except Mr. Kingsley would have included the *Paradise Lost* within that category—emphatically proves that all those pursuits which are not directly or specifically religious, but which are the natural development of our æsthetic and artistic nature, were deemed by them vain, frivolous, pernicious, of the devil and not of God. A Greek statue or an Italian picture-gallery was quite as obnoxious as the Gothic aisle, with its painted Madonnas and mystic idolatries. Stephen Gosson denounced the poets and sculptors, —"caterpillars of a commonwealth,"—as well as the players.[1] Is this the theory of human life which is now currently sanctioned? If it is not—and in these days of crystal palaces, national galleries, schools of design, harmonic festivals, who will venture to say that it is?—Mr. Kingsley is hardly entitled to affirm that the principles of Puritanism have been ratified by the consent of modern England. In certain minor and sectional details we may have accidentally

[1] John Northbrooke (1577), Stephen Gosson, Philip Stubbles, Whetstone, William Rankins, and the anonymous author of *The Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres*, 1580, were the first assailants of the stage, and their works bear out the statement made in the text as to the indiscriminate hostility of the Puritans to every form of art. Mr. Kingsley asserts that Prynne's opinions, as set forth in his celebrated *Histrio-Mastix, or the Player's Scourge*, were fully justified. So that Mr. Kingsley approves, and would adopt, had he the power, the discipline sanctioned by the determined old Roundhead. "They (the players) may be sent to the House of Correction, set in stockes, and whipped; and if they still persist in playing after these corrections, they may be burned with a hot-burning iron, of the bredth of an English shilling, with a great Roman R on the left shoulder, which letter shall there remain as a perpetual mark of a Rogue; and if this will not reforme them they may be banished, and after, if they return again and persist incorrigible, *be executed as felons!*"

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adopted the fashions of Puritanism. We may cut our hair and our doublets as the Roundheads did. But is this done under the influence of the same abstract spiritualism, or solely because we find these habits better suit our convenience and our indolence? *They* believed that miserable, unregenerated, and rebellious sinners insulted their Maker when they appeared in the rich clothing which the Cavaliers habitually wore,—is this the reason that a modern gentleman goes to a marriage or a dinner-party in a suit of black cloth, as though he proposed to enact the part of a mute at a funeral? Most artists, I believe, are of opinion that in the article of dress the Norman cavaliers exhibited better taste than we do. If our modern sobriety, therefore, is due to the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth must have corrupted us,—corrupted, for in such questions as these it is not religion, but art, correct judgment, sound taste, that is the only competent court of appeal. But even in regard to the *details* of social life, is it true that modern society has accepted the limitations of Puritanism? Is dancing prohibited in polite circles? On the contrary, have not new fashions been introduced which might shame the shameless beauties of the Restoration? We have given up swearing certainly; but have we adopted the Scriptural nomenclature of the Commonwealth? We do not frequent the theatre; but because we prefer an Italian ballet to a Shakesperian drama, is it to be said that we are afflicted with the religious scruples of Mr. William Prynne? There is not that grossness in our literature which disgraced the literature of the Stuarts; but Mr. Kingsley has himself composed plays and poems which would shock the soul of an honest Roundhead quite as much as anything that Suckling or Sedley ever wrote. Thus, in our wider and truer estimate of man's spiritual nature, we have discarded the characteristic limitations of Puritanism; and while certain particulars in our society which bear a certain resemblance to Puritanism are to be attributed not to it, but to altogether different agencies, in others we have diverged further from the Roundhead than from the Cavalier, inasmuch as *his* theory of human life was of the two the more partial and sectarian.

The facts to which I have alluded show that, previous to the Reformation, the dramatist had undertaken to expose the

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vices of the ecclesiastic. At the same time there are comparatively few traces of this in that portion of the dramatic literature which has been preserved, and none of any large or conscientious antagonism to the *principle* of Catholicism. Had there been any wide-spread repugnance to the *doctrine* of the Church of Rome, the evidence would certainly have been more abundant. But what valid facts remain, go to prove that, at the era of the Reformation, the people, though disgusted with the special nuisances aud iniquities of the monastic system, remained loyal Catholics at heart. Heywood, for instance, often directed his vigorous ridicule against the mendicant monks and pardoners of his day. Into the "newe and very merry Enterlude of the Four P's,"[1] one of the latter is introduced who displays a most filthy and preposterous store of relics, among which are the French-hood and bon-grace of the Virgin, the great toe of the Trinity, the jaw-bone of All-Saints, and the bees that stung Eve when she eat the apple ;—

Pardoner. Here is a boxful of humble bees,
That stange Eve as she sat on her knees,
Tasting the fruit to her forbidden.
Who kisseth the bees within this hidden,
Shall have as much pardon of right,
As for any relic he kiss this night.

To which the Apothecary modestly replies,—

I am not worthy; nay, let be,
Those bees that stange Eve, shall not sting me.

Again, in the same play, we have this sarcastic appreciation of a famous clerical luxury—

With small cost, and without any paine,
These *pardons* bring them to Heaven plaine;
Give me but a penny or two pence,
And as soon as the soul departeth hence,
In half an hour, or *three-quarters at most*,
The soul is in Heaven with the Holy Ghost.

But Heywood was himself a conscientious Roman Catholic, and suffered for his attachment to the faith. It was against those external accessories alone, which were not, in his opinion, a necessary element of his creed, and which were calcu-

[1] Dodsley's *Old Plays*, vol. i.

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lated to impair the authority of an old and august communion, that his satire was directed. The evidence is of a similar tenor throughout. The Reformation was not the result of any general conviction among the English people of the unfitness of Catholicism to satisfy the demands of their religious life. Compliance with the scrupulous morality of an unscrupulous monarch; resentment at the secular pretensions of the Roman Pontiff; vehement hatred against a clergy who shackled their intellectual life, and defiled their household purity; these, if we are to credit the testimony of our national drama, the verdict of our social literature, were the causes which led to the downfall of the Catholic system in England.[1]

It is often asserted, on behalf of Catholicism, that it has proved itself better fitted than Protestantism to nourish the more graceful arts of life. Such a statement is curiously fallacious. For the patronage which it has bestowed has always

[1] The reports of the commissioners appointed by Cromwell to inquire into the state of the monasteries, prove that Heywood's satire was not overcharged. The "Pardoner's" collection of relics is not more preposterous than those which Langton and Loudon scattered. "By my servant," says Langton, writing to Cromwell, "I send you reliques; first, two flowers wrapt in black and white sarcenet, that on Christynmus evyn, *hora ipsa qua Christus natus fuerat*, will spring or burgen, and bear blossoms, *quod expertum esse*, saith the Prior of Maden Bradeley. Ye shall also receive a bag of reliques, wherein ye shall see strange things, as shall appear by the scripture, Our Ladies smock, Parte of God's supper *in cena domini*, *Pars petre super qua natus erat Jesus in Bethelem*, belyke there is in Bethlehem plentie of stones, and they make their mangers of stone. The scripture of everything shall declare to you all: and all this of Maden Bradeley, where is an holy father prior who hath but vj children, and but one daughter married yet of the goodes of the monastery,—hoping shortly to marry the rest. I send you also our Ladies gyrdell of Bruton, rede silk, which is a solemne relique sent to women travelyng, which shall not miscarry *in partu*" (page 58). "I have sent up," writes Dr. Loudon from the abbey of Reading, "the principal relique of idolytrie within this realm, an angel with one wing that brought to Caversham the spearhede that percyd our Saviour his syde upon the Crosse. I have required of my Lord Abbot the reliques of his house, and I have taken an inventory of them." In the accompanying inventory we find—"two peces of the Holye Crosse," Saynt James his hand," "a bone of Mary Magdelene," "a chow-bone of Saint Ethelmolde" (page 227). The mendicant pilgrims were considered a nuisance by the clergy as well as the laity. Bishop Barlow in petitioning for the translation of his See, complains that in the desolate and unfrequented place where it is situated, "vacabounde pilgrimes" are his only visitors (page 207).—*The Suppression of the Monasteries*, Camden Society, 1843.

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been arrogant, ostentatious, insulting, and, from its very nature, calculated to cramp the freedom of the judgment, to petrify the versatile life of the imagination. Catholicism *preserves* admirably, it is the most conservative of institutions, and it was consequently pre-eminently fitted for the work which it undertook before the revival of letters. But to develope the taste or the intellect is not its appropriate function, and when it has affected to do so, the attempt has proved either ineffective or insincere. Its best literature is the literature of those of its members, who, like Pascal and Bossuet, asserted their intellectual and political freedom in opposition to the exacting claims of the Church. Even in its relation to the great masters of the Italian school, the case on which its advocates chiefly rely, even there the instincts of the artist were sacrificed to the interest of the priest. The loving insight which might have charmed us with exquisite studies of the familiar life of Italy—a life more pictorial than the poetic life of other people—was spent upon decrepit martyrs and emaciated saints, was forced to move within the narrow limits marked out by the meagre asceticism of the monk, and created an art which, great in the genius and capacity of its masters, was great *in spite* of the coarse tyranny which it served slavishly. To the Reformation, letters, learning, language in England, are incalculably indebted. While it saved our liberties, it emancipated our art, and created our literature. The impressive unity of Catholicism had required throughout Christendom the preservation of one common language; the Reformation introduced into the national literature the habitual use of the national speech, a speech not now surpassed by any in Europe for its varied harmonies, its rich and versatile combinations. Men *think* more freely, more eloquently, more earnestly, in their own than through the fetters of a foreign tongue; so much so, that had the Latin not been abolished by the Reformation, it is quite certain that *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, would have been postponed—*sine die*.

The emancipation of English literature, was however, somewhat sudden. The weight was abruptly removed, and the recoil was violent and excessive. But the most severe and hostile historian cannot criticise very harshly the extravagances which followed. These extravagances, as we know,

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broke out in every direction; in thought, in speech, in the habits of dress, in the usages of society, in Euphuisms by Lily, in Arcadias by Sidney; "whereby," as old Harrison drily concludes of his contemporaries, "they imagine the workmanship of God to be not a little amended." "Except," he goes on, "it were a dog in a doublet, you shall not see anie so disguised as are our countrymen of England; women are become men, and men transformed into monsters." His invective need not have been limited to dress, for the spirit was the same throughout, and Euphuism,—into an examination of which I regret that I cannot now enter,—was its literary representative. These extravagances,—the inevitable issue of an exuberant and suddenly enlarged intellectual activity,—might have done lasting harm to our society; but they were luckily nipped in the bud, and the popular sympathies diverted from the artificial to the real by one who, utterly disregarding the mechanic unity of *form*, contrived to reach by a peculiarly subtle and penetrating insight, the organic unity of *life*. An age of daring license and reckless originality was prevented from permanently injuring the national taste, by the perfect tact and temperance of SHAKESPEARE.

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HOMŒOPATHY.

OBSERVATION, meditation, and experience," writes Hahnemann in the introduction to his chief work, the *Organon of the Healing Art*, "have discovered to me that, according to the precepts of homœopathy, the course to be followed in order to obtain gentle, swift, sure, and durable cures consists in choosing, in each case of disease, a remedy capable in itself of producing an affection similar to that which it is desired to cure. This homœopathic method had not been taught by any one before me; no one had put it in practice. But if it alone be consistent with truth, (as every one may be convinced as well as I), we may expect that, notwithstanding its long concealment, every age will, nevertheless, offer palpable traces of it. This has, in fact, been the case. In all times, all diseases which have been cured really, promptly, durably, evidently, by medicines, and which have not owed their cure to the accidental concurrence of some favourable circumstance, such as the natural termination of an acute disease, or the gradually reinforced bodily powers obtaining a mastery over the disease during an allopathic or antipathic treatment (for a direct and an indirect cure are very different),—all such diseases, I say, have yielded, although the physician did not know it, to a homœopathic remedy, that is to say, to a remedy having the power of exciting of itself a disease resembling that of which it caused the removal."

In another passage, Hahnemann thus briefly expounds the results which he ascribes to the homœopathic method. "When the application of a medicine, chosen so as to be perfectly homœopathic, has been well made, the natural acute disease

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which it is intended to cure, however malignant and painful it may be, is dissipated in a few hours if it be recent, and in a few days if it be of somewhat longer standing. . . . Chronic diseases, and especially those which are complicated, demand more time. Those chronic medicinal diseases especially, which allopathic medicine engenders in addition to the natural disease which it has been unable to cure, demand a very long treatment, and are frequently incurable."[1]

In the above extracts we strike, as it were, the key-note of the passage in the history of medicine which it is proposed to examine in this article. We are enabled, in particular, to appreciate two of the characters by which it is distinguished. Homœopathy is a *universal* and an *exclusive* system. It professes to meet the case of every curable disease; and to be the only method by which diseases are really curable. It assumes, in other words, to have reduced the entire cure of disease by medicines to a single therapeutical law; and it puts forward that law as a new discovery. In submitting ourselves, therefore, to the guidance of homœopathy, we cannot avoid rejecting all other medical doctrines, in so far as they relate to the action of remedies. We are led to the conclusion that medical truth is a thing of yesterday; that up to the promulgation of the "homœopathic law," the cure of diseases was the result of accident, or of a blindly-working and fluctuating experience; but that it is now based on principles as secure as they are simple, and requiring for their application only an exact knowledge of the properties of drugs on the one hand, and the symptoms of diseases on the other.

Hahnemann did not shrink from maintaining the total and irreconcilable antagonism of his own system of doctrine to all those current in his own day. In his classification and nomenclature of therapeutical methods, Homœopathy, Antipathy, and Allopathy appear to exhaust the possible applications of remedies to the cure of disease. The first of these terms, which he derives from the Greek words ὅμοιος, *like*, and πάθος, *a morbid state*, he applies to his own system, the formula of which is contained in the words "similia similibus curentur," *let like things be treated by like*. To the second term, from ἀντι, *opposed to*,

[1] *Organon*, § 149.

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and πάθος, he assigns an exactly opposite formula, viz., "contraria contrariis curentur;" and of this mode of practice he professes to find numerous examples in the medicine of the past. All medical practice and all therapeutical doctrine not coming under either of these formulæ is, according to Hahnemann, only to be regarded as a blind attempt to discover the proximate or hidden causes of disease; remedies being then applied according to their presumed influence upon these causes, and not from any relation of their effects to the obvious symptoms. On this ground, Hahnemann termed the great mass of medical practice Allopathy, from ἀλλοιος, *different*, and πάθος, and he finds constant employment for his sarcastic pen in contrasting its complexity and confusion with the simplicity of the homœopathic system, which, according to him, stands alone and apart, refusing to ally itself with other methods, or even to accept from them that temporary aid which, in some instances, they appear to be capable of bestowing. Hahnemann repeatedly asserts, that allopathy and antipathy, while occasionally purchasing a very slight and temporary relief from suffering by subsequent aggravation of the disease, are responsible for a large proportion of the sickness and mortality from chronic diseases; of which a great number, and these the least remediable, spring solely from the use of active drugs by physicians and apothecaries. The homœopathic law, on the other hand, is, according to Hahnemann, of universal application in theory, and is limited in practice only by the limited number of remedies, and by our imperfect knowledge of their action upon the human body. It claims as its own every real cure; it excludes, within the limits of its application, every possibility of failure. It condemns with equal severity the dissentients from its own exclusiveness, whether they range themselves among its avowed opponents, or attempt to bring about a compromise of opposing theories. "It is as impossible," says Hahnemann, "to conceive of another true method of curing dynamic diseases, as it is to draw more than one straight line between two points."[1] As to the practitioners who pursue a mongrel system, and, by calling in the resources of allopathy or anti-

[1] *Organon*, § 109, note.

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pathy, acknowledge the insufficiency of the homœopathic law, there is no excuse for them. They are no true homœopathists, and are, if possible, worse than the partizans of the "hateful methods" to which it is so diametrically opposed. "The pure homœopathist, who almost never misses his mark, who succeeds almost always, will never consent to an association of this nature."[1] The homœopathic law, therefore, is, according to Hahnemann, the single "Organon" of medicine. It is the exclusive and universal method of cure. It is a system "of great simplicity, always the same in its principles and in its practice, forming a separate whole, perfectly independent of other systems, and refusing to associate itself with the pernicious routine of the old school."[2]

I have been thus particular in insisting on the universality and exclusiveness of the so-called homœopathic law, because it is evident that a system so characterized cannot be tried by the ordinary canons of criticism. Not only is the great experience of the world against it *primâ facie*, but the assemblage of instances in its favour will prove nothing, unless the opposing instances are satisfactorily explained away. When it is asserted that bleeding is useful in certain inflammations, or opium in certain diseases of the nervous system, it is not necessary to demonstrate that over the whole range of these diseases, still less in each individual case, the fact asserted holds good. It is enough if we succeed in showing that, in some cases of inflammation or of nervous disease, bleeding and opium respectively are used with good effect. Very different is the position of the homœopathist. He has bound himself over to establish, by sufficient proof, not a more or less particular fact, but a general law of nature, including and superseding all others within the sphere of its operation. He has himself chosen this issue, and must abide by it. Had Hahnemann asserted only that *certain* remedies resemble, in their operation upon the healthy body, the diseases they are employed to cure, he would have but asserted a truism; for every one knows, and no one disputes, the action of ipecacuanha in some kinds of sickness, and of rhubarb in some kinds of diarrhœa. It is the assumption that we can

[1] *Organon*, § 109, note.

[2] Preface to the *Organon*.

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generalize this fact into a universal principle or law that constitutes the peculiarity of the homœopathic system, and at the same time gives rise to the difficulty of dealing with it by means of instances.

The contumely which Hahnemann's pugnacious nature and lax style of declamation led him to pour out so freely upon the systems which he ascribed to his opponents, increases not a little the difficulty of submitting his works to a calm and serious examination. There are few medical writings in any age so careless of logical method, and so fruitful of bitter invective as his; and, even in the ecclesiastical arena, it is rare to find a disputant so ready to foreclose argument by strong assertions; so little anxious to convince, so forward to strike and to wound. The thunderbolt of an assumed infallibility is never out of his hands. In perusing his writings, we seem to see the opponents of the new theory pursued by an avenging Nemesis, from which there is to be no appeal. The experience of ages is no defence, but an aggravation of their crime; the multitude of witnesses on behalf of the "ancient medicine" does not entitle it to a more respectful consideration, but rather calls more loudly for that summary vengeance which their great conspiracy against the truth is sure to call down on the head of "allopathic" physicians. It is difficult, it must be confessed, to preserve one's equanimity in the midst of such a highly-charged electrical atmosphere as that of the Hahnemannian polemics; but we shall do our best.

> "Could great men thunder
> As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
> For every pelting, petty officer,
> Would use his heaven for thunder; nothing but thunder!"

The following passage may serve as an example of the "*saeva indignatio*" alluded to. It occurs in the preface to Hahnemann's chief work, the "Organon der Heilkunst."

"The end of the fatal efforts of the ancient medicine would appear to be not less than this,—to render incurable, perhaps even mortal, ninety-nine hundredths of the diseases which assume the chronic form; and this end is attained without difficulty when the practitioner is fully acquainted with the accredited methods of treatment, and has become deaf to the

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voice of conscience. He then either weakens or torments unceasingly the feeble invalid, already overwhelmed by his own misfortunes, or he brings upon him new and terrible diseases. Arguments are not wanting to the allopathist to defend all the mischief he does; but he never seeks support save in the prejudices of his masters and in the authority of his books. . . It is not until (being convinced by long practice of the dreadful effects of his pretended art) he limits himself to insignificant drinks (that is to say, to doing nothing, even in the gravest cases) that his patients begin to be less frequently rendered worse, and cut off in his hands. This fatal art has, for a long series of ages, wielded arbitrary power over the life and death of the sick; has destroyed ten times as many men as the most murderous wars, and enormously increased the sufferings of many millions of others."

One is frequently reminded, in reading these and other similar passages, of the sledge-hammer style of eloquence which procured for Paracelsus among his followers the title of "Lutherus Medicorum." Hahnemann was a ready penman, and an able, though unscrupulous, controversialist; and there can be no doubt that, by his virulent opposition, extravagant as it was, the overweening pretensions and unstable theories of medicine, which have been ever too much in favour, and were current to an unusual degree at the time he wrote, received a check which was needed, and which has, on the whole, been useful to the medical art. Nor is there wanting in some of these tirades, even amid the predominating bitterness of spirit, a certain grim humour which entitles Hahnemann to a place among the satirists. In a literary point of view, however, they do not rank very high among the numerous assaults on medical pedantry and absurdity. The accurate and profound erudition of Rabelais, the delightful frankness and amiably egotistic philosophy of Montaigne, the thoroughly laughable and effectively broad caricature of Molière, are wanting to point the ridicule of Hahnemann, and to temper his vehemence. Instead of these, we have ponderous displays of ill-digested reading, guided by no critical faculty, and tending to reduce all testimony to a dead level; systematically distorted reflections of medical science: with an amount of arrogant dogmatism, and self-

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confident assertion, to which it is very difficult to accord the credit of sincerity. We are never allowed to forget that we are in the presence of one who claims to be the possessor of exclusive truth, and with whom the sacrifice of a hecatomb of reputations is but the logical consequence of an inexorable system—the necessary means to the exaltation of the "new medicine, which *alone is true.*" We admire the strength of will—we smile at the boastful pretensions—we indulge a momentary feeling of indignation at the sweeping and virulent invective; but we find little in these boisterous outbreaks of medical fanaticism to satisfy either the reason or the moral sense. The special pleading of an advocate is manifest throughout; and of an advocate compelled, by want of materials for a calm and reasonable appeal, to resort to indiscriminate abuse. The line of argument (so far as such a thing can be traced in these torrents of invective) is as follows:—The causes of all diseases, except surgical or mechanical diseases, are hidden; and hence allopathy (that imaginary system which Hahnemann everywhere sets up as a target for his sharpshooting) is nothing but a system of complicated absurdity, in which remedies, themselves productive of disease, are given in a cumulative manner; so that the original symptoms are lost in the crowd of artificial maladies, and the last state of the patient is worse than the first. Thus, opium may be selected to procure sleep, and may succeed in accomplishing this single object; but as opium is known to act upon the skin, the kidneys, the intestinal canal, as well as upon the nervous system, other drugs are associated with it for the purpose of preventing these collateral effects; these drugs are productive of a host of disorders, which, in their turn, require renewed interference, and in this manner are engendered all those complicated, functional, and organic affections which usually mark the course of the most severe and fatal diseases. Allopathy, by its blind routine, by its large doses of active drugs, and by its complex prescriptions, is therefore not only ineffectual as a curative system, but becomes the fruitful parent of disease. In all these respects it is opposed to homœopathy, which, besides a curative power unknown to any other system, can lay claim to the virtues of

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perfect simplicity and perfect safety. We shall have occasion to consider some of these assertions in the sequel.

Having thus endeavoured to define the position which homœopathy claims for itself in relation to medical systems and medical practice in general, I shall proceed to consider the evidence by which its claims are supported. We may divide this subject conveniently into two portions: *first*, the homœopathic law in the abstract, or as inferred from selected instances; *secondly*, the homœopathic practice, as bearing on the truth of the alleged universal law on which it is founded. It is evident that these two inquiries are not only capable of being distinctly pursued, but that they will produce confusion if mingled together; for it is possible, on the one hand, that the law may be well founded, although its general application in practice be unattainable; or, on the other, that the law may have been inferred on insufficient evidence, although the practice be on the whole good, *i. e.*, an improvement on that ordinarily pursued.

I. *Examination of the homœopathic law.*—Let us now see how Hahnemann builds up the doctrine which is in fact the foundation of his system. We are justified in looking to Hahnemann's writings as the most authoritative exposition of this doctrine, because neither he nor any of his followers professes to find a distinct expression of it in previous medical history; but, on the contrary, as we have seen, put it forward as a direct contradiction to all antecedent generalizations. Nor am I aware of any attempt on the part of the homœopathists to revise the process of reasoning by which this doctrine is alleged to be established on the ruins of the past. On the contrary, the latest, and unquestionably the ablest and most distinguished of the homœopathic controversialists, has, in great detail, and without one word of unfavourable commentary, narrated the whole process of this investigation according to the account given by Hahnemann himself. "The idea of the homœopathic law was reasoned out," says Dr. Henderson, "*before a single testing experiment was made.* The first experiment was made with cinchona bark."[1] The

[1] *Homœopathy fairly represented;* by William Henderson, M.D.

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narrative to which this remark applies is to be found in the letter of Hahnemann to Hufeland, quoted by Dr. Henderson. But this was one of the earliest publications in which his ideas were expressed otherwise than in a fragmentary form. My observations will, therefore, for the most part, be founded on the *Organon*, the author's most important and most matured work.

I propose first to examine the logical process by which the law of homœopathy was "reasoned out before a single testing experiment was made." This abstract conception of the law occupies the first place in the history of its discovery. The value attached to it by Hahnemann, however, was not merely historical, as we find it occupying the first place even in the *Organon*. Hahnemann's first thesis, therefore, with respect to the homœopathic law, professes to be a logical deduction, from the nature of disease, and the nature of remedies in general. Let us see how he establishes his position.

All disease, according to Hahnemann, is a modification of the vital force (which in health determines the functional activity of the organism), by external influences of a deleterious or morbific kind. But as the deranged vital force is at the root of all disease, and as the vital force is an immaterial force ("a spiritual dynamis," according to Dr. Dudgeon's translation), it follows that morbific influences can only act in an immaterial (or "spiritual") manner on the vital force, and likewise that "curative agents are able to re-establish, and do actually re-establish health and harmony, only by their immaterial (spiritual or dynamic) action on the vital force." Now, as everything immaterial is, of necessity, beyond the reach of the senses, it follows that the original disturbance of the vital force, as well as the essence of its cause and of its cure, must always be hidden from our direct observation. But the Author of nature has so arranged that the hidden modifications of the vital force in disease find their perfect exposition in the form of symptoms, *i. e.*, morbid phenomena accessible to the senses. To our senses, therefore, *the symptoms are the entire disease*, and each separate alteration of the vital force is manifested in a special series of symptoms corresponding in character with the nature of the morbific influence. It is

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of no avail, according to Hahnemann, to inquire how the altered vital force produces diseases. Still less philosophic is it to ascribe to disease a separate material existence within the organism, as is often done by medical theorists (allopathists.) "The Master of life has rendered accessible to the senses only those phenomena of disease, the knowledge of which is necessary and sufficient for the cure; and the cure, accordingly, consists solely in the removal or annihilation of the symptoms, which, when taken as a whole, represent accurately the whole of the disease. All speculation beyond this is futile and absurd."—*Organon*, §§ 6-18.

Observe, before going further, that to this general exposition of doctrine, Hahnemann incidentally admits two classes of exceptions, which may, however, perhaps be considered as the same. The one is that of surgical or mechanical diseases (§ 13), in which the essence of the disease may be accessible to the senses, and therefore amenable to mechanical processes of cure; the other, where a *causa occasionalis*, or manifest exciting cause of disease (§ 7) exists, and is capable of being removed. Of these exceptions, there is more to be said hereafter.

To pursue Hahnemann's reasoning. As the only knowledge we have of disease is through symptoms, and the only knowledge we have of the effect of remedies is through their effect on these symptoms (the curative or dynamic essence being, like the vital force on which it acts, immaterial and hidden), it follows that remedies can only act on diseases in virtue of their power to alter the vital force, *i. e.*, "to produce (in healthy persons) certain accidents or symptoms, or, to express it more clearly, a certain artificial disease which destroys the natural disease already existing." It follows also that, to annihilate the totality of the symptoms of a malady, we must seek a medicine which has the power of producing either *similar* symptoms, or *contrary* symptoms, to those of the disease, according as experience teaches us to use the one or the other. Experience, however, has already pronounced a verdict upon this issue, by showing, as the result of all careful trials, that morbid symptoms can only be temporarily palliated, while they are in reality aggravated, by remedies administered on the antipathic system. The allopathic

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system, again, is a mere imitation of the blind efforts of the vital force to get rid of a noxious influence by creating, at all costs, a disturbance in the organism; it can never do good except by chance. The homœopathic method, then, of adapting remedies to symptoms is the only one which remains. Therefore, *per viam exclusionis*, it is the only true system. —*Organon*, §§ 19-24.

Should the reader be astonished at this strange specimen of medical logic, I beg to assure him, nevertheless, that, to the best of my understanding, I have faithfully reported it. In doing so, it has been necessary to reduce a great deal of repetition and *verbiage* within a moderate compass; but I am not aware of having suppressed or understated a single point in the original argument. In the letter to Hufeland, most of the same reasoning reappears in a less abstract form. The ultimate appeal, as in the above passages, is to the alleged failure of the ordinary practice (allopathic and antipathic). This failure being assumed, it is "blasphemous" to conceive that the medical art is incapable of greater certainty; "that the infinite wisdom of the eternal Spirit that animates the universe could not produce remedies to allay the sufferings of the diseases He allows to arise;" or that God "was capable of the tyranny" of leaving the cure of any disease an insoluble problem. "There must be a sure and trustworthy method of treatment as certainly as God is the wisest and best of beings;" for it would be "indifference to the tortures of His best beloved creatures" to have denied to the genius of man the discovery of positive and certain remedies, with their "easy, sure, and trustworthy" application to the cure of disease. The arcanum thus yielded, after centuries of darkness, by the divine beneficence, is, of course, Homœopathy. I confess to a degree of reluctance in quoting even so little as is here given of these fanatical, and, as it seems to me, almost impious reflections upon the divine government of the world. They afford a striking illustration of the license allowed to itself by an ill-regulated intellect, acting in a self-willed and arrogant nature. We have already seen how Hahnemann dealt with human science and learning; in these passages we see the same scornful and vehement spirit attempting, as it were, to scale the heavens—to lay down

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laws for the Creator of the universe, and to pluck from His grasp, under the threat, as it were, of an accusation of injustice, thinly disguised in reverential language, the elixir of life for which the alchemists laboured in vain. We are shocked by the thought that the "tyranny" and "indifference" against the imputation of which Hahnemann seems, in the above sentences, to defend the Deity, have actually been displayed towards mankind for several thousand years, during which they have, according to Hahnemann, lived in a state of medical darkness. It is painful to find these fanatical aberrations quoted approvingly by Dr. Henderson as evidence of a "lofty piety," and as "the solitary instance" of arduous medical researches undertaken on the special ground of a deep sense of the divine goodness. The whole passage reminds one forcibly of the words put by Goethe into the mouth of Prometheus, and intended to give expression to the passionate outpourings of a strong and rebellious will.

"When I was yet a child,
And knew no better,
Wildered, I sought above
An ear to hear my plaint—
A heart, like mine,
To pity the oppressed."
"Who helped me then
Against the Titan's insolence?
Who rescued me from death—
From slavery?
Hast thou not, thou thyself, done all,
Thou glowing heart of mine;
Glowing with reverence,
Glowing with youth and love,
With foolish thanks for safety,
To him that *sleeps* above."

With regard to the argument, or rather the hypothetical basis on which the homœopathic law is made to rest in this portion of the *Organon*, I have only a few remarks to make.

First, This argument assumes as proved a theory of disease which never can be proved, and which can, at most, be only partially true, inasmuch as it is clearly untrue of some diseases, and probably not entirely true of any. That

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in all diseases, whether of function or structure, there is some modification of the forces of life, or of the conditions under which these forces act, is true; but this is simply a definition of disease, not an inquiry into its nature with a view to its cure. Disease is disordered function; disordered function implies a modification in the action of those forces which preside over function in the living being—a modification, in other words, of the vital activity, or vital force. But in the raising this vital force to the rank of a metaphysical entity; in endowing it with powers of acting and suffering distinct (in theory) from those of the bodily organization in which and through which it acts and suffers; in assigning to it, in short, a spiritual or immaterial essence, from which disease *directly* springs, and on which remedies *directly* act, Hahnemann has transcended the sphere of science, leaving behind him the whole of the facts which it was his duty to investigate, and if possible to make the basis of his theory of disease. He has, in fact, committed the same error as Van Helmont and his predecessor Paracelsus, when they ascribed the whole phenomena of health and disease to an Archæus; who, from his unseen throne in the centre of the Microcosm, gave and administered laws, suffered and struggled, was oppressed or victorious, angry or pleased, restless or at peace. The results of this fundamental error are plainly visible in every step of the subsequent reasoning. To connect symptoms with the immaterial essence of disease, Hahnemann has to call in the aid of a special arrangement of divine providence, by which, as the keys of an instrument are made to correspond with the chords (*i. e.*, artificially and for a specific purpose), the symptoms are placed in relation with the states of the vital force, only that we may be informed of so much as is necessary to the cure of disease, which is in itself an inscrutable and intangible essence. In like manner, in order to connect the curative virtues of material remedies with the aberrations of an immaterial vital force, Hahnemann is compelled to avail himself of another assumption, not less violent than the former,—that remedial substances, known as they are to act upon the healthy organism, are endowed with the physiological properties simply as an index to their therapeutic virtues, which are not capable of being the subject of direct physical

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demonstration, but are occult, dynamic, immaterial, specifically adapted to the specific changes in the immaterial vital force. In criticising the ordinary imperfect theories of disease as not justified by our knowledge of its phenomena, Hahnemann may not be very far wrong; but he only escapes the error which he ascribes to allopathy by plunging into a sea of abstract speculations, founded on assumptions without proof, having no actual or possible place in demonstrative science; which it is, therefore, impossible to confirm, and equally impossible, as well as useless, to confute.

Secondly, The argument of Hahnemann breaks down at every point when applied to certain well-understood forms of disease, some of which he has himself indicated. Thus, mechanical diseases requiring surgical appliances are excepted from its operation. But why? Is not a stone in the bladder a most palpable disease, and is it not removed by a most palpable remedy? Do we not touch here, by means of knife and forceps, that very proximate or essential cause of disease, *quæ præsens morbum facit, sublata tollit?* And do we not, having this proximate cause or essence in our view and in our power, practically determine to leave the mysterious vital force, with all its occult operations, to shift for itself, while we lay hold of the mechanical and tangible obstruction, and by removing it, cure the patient? Now, suppose the obstruction to be of a different kind—a tapeworm in the intestine, an acarus in the skin, a gallstone in the biliary duct, an undue fermentation of the food, an indigestible mass in the stomach, a poison in the blood. Of most of these sources of disease, considered as essential causes of certain symptoms, we have incontrovertible proof; some of the causes we can remove by medicine, thereby removing the disease, some of them we cannot so remove. But with most physicians the same *principles* apply to all, *i. e.*, removal of the cause, if that be possible—palliation of the symptoms, if not. Hahnemann, on the contrary, divides these precisely similar cases into two, or perhaps into three classes. Where the cause (*causa occasionalis*) can be directly removed, he will not absolutely shut his eyes to the necessity of this proceeding; but where it cannot, or where the nature of the cause is only a shade less palpable than a stone in the bladder, *i. e.*, where the

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disease is internal, and without an evident *causa occasionalis*, he will refuse to seek it further, and will take refuge in the mist of an immaterial essence, only to be reached by specific remedies. Palliative remedies and empirical attempts at cure he equally repudiates. Disease *must*, above all, be *certainly* and *easily* curable; if possible, by an intelligible theory, if not, then by a theory founded on gratuitous assumption, and clothed in the panoply of a scholastic logic worthy of Thomas Aquinas. Yet who shall say that we are wrong, if we assert in opposition to Hahnemann, that the great mass of the ills that flesh is heir to occupy precisely this middle position, which Hahnemann will not admit? Their cause is, to a certain extent, removed from observation, and perhaps still further removed from the action of remedies; or it is complex, and is only in part within our reach; but it is still a material cause, as cognizable in theory, possibly as amenable to practice (if we only knew what it was) as the stone, or the acarus, or the tapeworm.

Thirdly, Admitting that Hahnemann's theory of disease and of cure in general were as sound as I have shown it to be unsound, the special application of it is a *petitio principii*, or unproved assumption, of the most gross and indefensible kind. It amounts to this, that as the Author of nature has established for our guidance a relation between the symptoms of natural diseases and the artificial symptoms excited by remedies, it is our duty to discover this relation; but as the two classes of symptoms (according to Hahnemann) must be either *similar*, *dissimilar*, or *contrary*, our choice of remedies must also be either homœopathic, allopathic, or antipathic. Both of the latter, however, have been tried and found wanting; therefore the former is necessarily, exclusively, and universally true.

Such is the argument. To every step in it I object. Not to press for the present the consideration that this argument is, at best, a leap in the dark from allopathy and antipathy, presumed on insufficient grounds to be false, into homœopathy, presumed on equally insufficient grounds to be true, I protest against the endeavour to exhaust the possible relation of symptoms to each other in the above three formulas. The experienced and scientific physician well

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knows that relations of the most unquestionable and definite kind have been discovered between symptoms,[1] which are not to be expressed in the idea of mere likeness or unlikeness; just as the mathematician knows that there exist among numbers relations of the most complex and exact kind, which are not to be expressed in the old and crude Pythagorean formulæ of equal and unequal, male and female, generated and not generated. These relations are, in both cases, the object of legitimate science. But the science of *pathological* relations is repudiated by the homœopathist, who shuts himself up in the prison of his own crude conceptions, and puzzles himself in the vague search after mere analogy, the most lax and fluctuating of all foundations for scientific knowledge.[2] The law of homœopathy could only be proved in theory, according to the scheme of Hahnemann, by disproving every other possible relation between the symptoms of the remedy and the symptoms of the disease. But so far from doing this,

[1] For example:—Blindness is a symptom or a form of disease. Of course, one case of blindness may be said to be similar to another case of blindness; and in the ordinary homœopathic sense, it can scarcely be said to be similar to anything else. It is not very similar to a case of deafness, or loss of smell, or of taste, or of touch, or of motion. Yet, with all of these, it may present pathological relations of the most close and intimate kind. *Given*, several cases of blindness. The patients are all deprived, or partially deprived, of the light of day; the forms and colours of objects, the gay mantle of nature, the varied works of art, are shut out from the conceptions of all; they are "similar" cases. But one patient may be blind from cataract, one from palsy of the retina, one from inflammation of the cornea, one from adhesion of the pupil, one from tumour of the brain, one from total destruction of the eyeball. How much more really unlike each other are these "similar" cases than many others which, to the common view, present no such similarity at all? Again:—How much more resemblance between a case of blindness and lameness, both dependent on diseased brain, than between the former, and a case of blindness from cataract?

[2] In the very great difficulty of dealing with analogy as a principle for the establishment of truth, may be found the explanation of the fact, that homœopathists rarely meet with any insuperable obstacle either to drawing their own conclusions from apparently adverse instances, or to explaining away the cases where homœopathy has been alleged notoriously to fail. Who can tell when a remedy has been homœopathically chosen? I have shown, in the preceding note, that the most dissimilar things may appear similar, and *vice versa*, from a slight change in the point of view. The more complex the symptoms, of course the more involved and difficult the argument.

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he has not disproved, any more than he has hitherto proved, anything at all. He has assumed much, he has guessed at more, and he ends with making the assertion that homœopathy must be true because allopathy and antipathy are false. And this is what we are told to consider a logical exposition of the homœopathic law, independently of experiment!

I have next to consider the homœopathic law in the light of positive experiment. But here my limits forbid me to enter at all into the discussions which have arisen upon almost every one of those instances which have been adduced by Hahnemann himself, and by others, as the *instantiæ crucis*. I have already alluded to the ease with which vague analogies may be converted to the support of a pre-conceived opinion. The controversies in question afford constant proof of this tendency, which Dr. Simpson has happily compared to the easy and courtier-like acquiescence of Polonius in the doctrine "*similia similibus*," when proposed to him by Hamlet:—"Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in the shape of a camel?" "By the mass, and it is like a camel indeed." "Methinks it is like a weasel." "It is backed like a weasel." "Or like a whale?" "Very like a whale." Any one who is at all accustomed to weigh medical testimony in relation to the therapeutical effects of remedies, and who will read over the introductory chapters of the *Organon* of Hahnemann, or any considerable passage of his *Materia Medica*, cannot, I think, fail to wonder at the laxity with which facts are admitted and conclusions set down upon authority, and under circumstances of contradiction and doubt which would damage a case of much stronger character than I have shown homœopathy *prima facie* to be.

When, for instance, we are told that a fatty discharge from the intestine is cured by olive oil; that measles cured a chronic herpetic eruption, and was found a preventive of hooping-cough; that small-pox is a homœopathic cure for inflammation of the eyes, blindness (paralysis of retina), deafness, difficulty of breathing, dysentery, etc.; that arnica is adapted for the healing of wounds and contusions, because it produces stitches in the side, sickness, anxiety, and other nervous symptoms which *sometimes accompany* wounds and

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bruises; that belladonna is said to have cured hydrophobia (?) and to produce symptoms in the healthy *somewhat* like hydrophobia (about as like as the cloud to the whale); that squill cures pleurisy (?), because J. C. Wagner saw "a sort of pleurisy" come on under this commonest of all remedies (which was never accused of such a thing before or since); that camphor cures typhus fever (*febris nervosa lenta* of Huxham), because it produces insensibility, prostration, and diminished temperature in poisonous doses; and that it also cures cholera (I presume, for similar reasons); that wine is a good (homœopathic) remedy for inflammation (!)—(Crivellati, Augenius, Mundella, two other unnamed persons, and Asclepiades, are adduced as the authorities); when we hear these things, we are tempted to ask, what doctrine could possibly be named so absurd as not to admit of something like evidence on similar terms? But the climax is not yet reached. Hahnemann gravely proposes, as illustrations of the homœopathic law, the effect of the sunlight in extinguishing the brilliancy of the stars; of snuff in removing the impression of fetid odours; of the drum in preventing an army from being *terrified* by the roar of distant cannon; and other examples equally convincing!

Perhaps the most celebrated instances of the homœopathic law given by Hahnemann himself, and adopted with tolerable unanimity by his followers, have been these three:—quinine, or Peruvian bark, against intermittent fever or ague; belladonna, against scarlet fever; and vaccination, in reference to small-pox. In regard to these three instances, I shall make a few very brief remarks, without venturing on a detailed consideration of any of them.

The utmost that is asserted with any show of probability in the case of quinine, is that, when taken in considerable quantity in a healthy person, it is apt to induce *feverishness* and *headache*, with *furred tongue* and *nausea*. On these grounds, which are more or less plausibly maintained, it is asserted that quinine is homœopathic to ague. Here, however, it is to be observed that, on the same grounds on which quinine is asserted to be homœopathic to ague, it may be with equal propriety maintained that it is homœopathic to ephemeral fevers of all kinds, and even, inasmuch as all fevers

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are "similar" in these respects to the alleged action of quinine, that its curative power ought to extend very widely over the range of febrile diseases; whereas we know that this therapeutic value of quinine, or of Peruvian bark, is actually circumscribed within very narrow limits; these remedies being quite as useless in most other fevers as they are useful in those of the aguish type, to which in reality their effects on the healthy system bear no *special* resemblance whatever. The whole case, therefore, as regards quinine, is this—that a substance which, in very large doses, *occasionally* produces feverishness, along with other effects, in the healthy is applicable to the cure of one particular class of fevers only.

The power of belladonna to prevent scarlatina when epidemic, and sometimes to cure it, was maintained by Hahnemann soon after the celebrated discovery of Jenner. Now, the homœopathic character of this instance depends upon two circumstances, both of which are, unluckily, after years of controversy and experiment upon both sides, still rather more than doubtful. The power of belladonna to produce a morbid state having any considerable resemblance to scarlatina,[1] is one so rarely observed, if it really exist, that many physicians have used belladonna largely both in acute and chronic disease, and not unfrequently also in healthy persons, without once seeing such an effect. On the other hand, the action of the remedy as a prophylactic in that disease has, in my opinion, been clearly shown to be quite visionary.[2]

The admitted power of vaccination as a prophylactic or preservative remedy against small-pox is claimed by Hahnemann as an illustration of the homœopathic law. Let us see by what reasoning this claim is maintained; premising that the most trustworthy medical authorities are content, in the first place, to admit the fact as a fact proved by experience; and in the second place, to connect it with the very reasonable, though

[1] We have seen above that belladonna is likewise homœopathic to hydrophobia. Now, as Hahnemann always professes to judge of the application of a remedy by the *totality* of the symptoms, and as there are few diseases more unlike than scarlatina and hydrophobia, it is difficult to understand this double curative action of belladonna.

[2] See an article by Dr. Warburton Begbie in the British and Foreign Med. Chir. Review, Jan. 1855, p. 77; and the succeeding controversy in the Homœopathic Journal and Monthly Journal of Medical Science for 1855.

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not by any means certain, theoretical argument, that the vaccine disease *is*, in fact, small-pox under a modified form—less dangerous, both to the patient and to others—strictly local and non-infectious under all ordinary circumstances—but identical in essence with its prototype, and therefore carrying (as small-pox itself would do, and as most other contagious fevers do) the mysterious but well-ascertained power of protecting, within certain limits, against a renewed attack. If this theoretical explanation of an admitted fact be unsatisfactory (and I shall not presume to assert the contrary), what shall we say of Hahnemann's, which denies to the vaccine disease *identity* with small-pox, but asserts that it is *similar*, and because similar, curative. It is to me very clear that if the vaccine disease do not stand to small-pox in a relation of *pathological* identity, or similarity, that is, a relation founded on a common or a nearly common cause, it is scarcely possible to find two diseases, or at least two eruptive diseases, more widely different in that totality of symptoms to which Hahnemann refers as alone giving *homœopathic* similarity. Nay more, I maintain, and I think most practical physicians will bear me out in asserting, that there are diseases having greatly more resemblance, as regards symptoms, to small-pox than vaccinia has; diseases which are apt to be mistaken for small-pox (which vaccinia never is), even after close observation for some days, but which are not in any degree protective, and which may be followed by the true small-pox (if the patient be exposed to its infection), within a very few days. Further, Hahnemann admits that vaccination *does not cure small-pox when present.* It does not, therefore, perform the true office of a homœopathic remedy, according to the homœopathic law; it performs a totally different office, an office which homœopathic remedies generally do not perform; while these do possess, according to Hahnemann, that curative virtue which the vaccine disease confessedly has not. "To produce this effect (of cure)," says Hahnemann, "it *only wants that excess of power* which ought to accompany the homœopathic resemblance in order to effect a cure." He goes on to explain that, although deficient in power to cure, it is powerful enough to excite a disease similar to small-pox, and

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so similar as to possess even that most mysterious and inexplicable of all the qualities of small-pox, protective virtue against a recurrence of the disease. Let those accept this explanation who will; to me it seems the mere jangling of meaningless words, alike incapable and undeserving of being treated as an argument.

But suppose that in these three instances, or in many more instances, a similarity between the action of the remedy and the symptoms of the disease had been pointed out, would that similarity establish the homœopathic principle in therapeutics? Most certainly not; because, amid the complex phenomena of disease on the one hand, and of remedial actions on the other, it can hardly happen otherwise than that there should be accidental resemblances; as there is, for example, between the action of an emetic and the sickness caused by the surfeit for which the emetic is plainly the proper remedy. To establish the homœopathic principle as regards this particular symptom, it would be necessary to prove, that in *all* cases of stomach-sickness the cure is to be sought in the artificial use of substances tending to stomach-sickness or something like it; and that the more sick the stomach the more is the homœopathic remedy in question indicated. The fact is, however, that the evidence of the homœopathic theory stands before us in "shreds and patches" only; we are never invited to take up any single class of symptoms, much less any single symptom, and to exhaust the consideration of it in relation to its appropriate remedy or remedies; on the contrary, we are asked to view symptoms in their most intricate combinations, and to seek for traces of similarity between the *totality* of the symptoms ascribed to the disease, and the *totality* of the symptoms ascribed to the remedy. Let any one, keeping this in view, look at a homœopathic work on the Materia Medica on the one hand, and a somewhat elaborate and learned exposition of nosological science on the other, and he will be at no loss to discover how systems are built up in medicine, and why they are of so unstable a character when built. The pedantry and cumulative labour of ages have given to each disease a farrago of characters of almost hopeless complexity; and the imagination of homœopathic "provers," which has ascribed to charcoal 930 symptoms, to

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oyster-shell, 1090, to cinchona bark, 1143, has made the search after illustrations of the homœopathic law merely a matter of time and industry. To seek either the establishment or the rejection of that law by individual instances, therefore, seems to be a very unsatisfactory way of arriving at the truth. And with these remarks I close this part of the investigation.

II. *Examination of the Homœopathic Practice.*—Is homœopathic practice generally, or in particular hands, so successful and so consistent with the principles on which it professes to be founded, as to form a ground for admitting those principles to be true, independently of the evidence which we have already discussed? Such is the inquiry to which I now proceed.

The inquiry is one of considerable difficulty; but it may tend to lessen that difficulty if we observe that homœopathy must do much more than prove a *moderate* amount of success in order to entitle it to consideration from its own point of view. If homœopathy be that universal, sure, and trustworthy system which it claims to be, and if it be opposed to a system radically wrong in theory, and murderous in practice, as Hahnemann asserted, the difference between the results of the two methods ought to be the difference between food and poison, between light and darkness, between absolute success and utter failure. Further, we have a right to expect, as a legitimate consequence of the position claimed by homœopathy, that its professors shall have followed out its principles, and shall not shrink from their application in practice, either in acute or chronic, in severe or trivial diseases. With these preliminary remarks, I proceed to consider, in the first place, some of the practical results obtained by Hahnemann, as recorded by himself.

The first point to which it seems necessary to direct attention, is the degree of confidence with which Hahnemann carried out in practice his preconceived law of homœopathy and the range of diseases over which he extended it. There seems no reason to doubt that Hahnemann rigidly abstained from anything at all approaching to the ordinary use of drugs. At least, I am not disposed to question his state-

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ments on this point. That he was very careful and precise in his dietetic regulations, and caused his patients to adopt a very strict regimen, is generally admitted; and that his energy of character, high pretensions, and great celebrity, induced many of them to repose unbounded confidence in him, is also more than probable. That he possessed, with a degree of that metaphysical haze so prevalent in the German mind, uncommon tact in shaping his course according to circumstances, is clear from every part of his writings. I think, therefore, that *apart from his use of medicines*, Hahnemann was probably a successful practitioner in a considerable proportion of the cases in which he was ordinarily consulted. This success he had in common with all other practitioners who obtain the confidence of their patients, and establish for them fitting rules of life.

When we come to consider his use of remedial agents, the first peculiarity, beyond the homœopathic law itself, which strikes us is the tenuity of the doses. The method of infinitesimal doses, as it is called, was not originally part of the homœopathic system, with which it has apparently no very obvious or necessary connection; nevertheless, it formed in the end a part of Hahnemann's creed, to which he was not less devoted than to the law of "*similia similibus curentur*" itself. The system of minute doses has moreover been embraced by most of Hahnemann's followers, some of whom, indeed, have pursued the idea of attenuation to a degree almost inconceivably beyond the most inconceivable of the original infinitesimal dilutions, while others have tended to revert towards more palpable quantities. I shall not follow out all the details bearing upon the process of attenuation alluded to; they are for the most part well known. A grain of the medicine is dissolved in 99 grains of alcohol, or alcohol and water; then one drop of this solution (1st dilution) is mixed with 99 drops more of alcohol; one drop of this further attenuation (2d dilution) with 99 drops more of alcohol; and so on to the 10th, 20th, 30th, or 600th to 1000th dilution as the case may be. The result of this extraordinary and inconceivable process of subdivision is stated by Dr. Simpson in the form of a calculation revised by competent mathematical authorities, and from which I shall give only the following illustrations:

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—At the 6th dilution, had the entire original grain been furnished with its proper amount of alcohol, that quantity could have amounted to 13,000,000 gallons; at the 12th dilution, to a sea six times the size of the Mediterranean; at the 15th, to 46,000 times the whole waters contained in all the oceans of the globe; at the 30th dilution (the ordinary one employed by Hahnemann, but very much below those recommended by some of his followers), to a "quantity sufficient to make one hundred and forty billion spherical masses extending from limit to limit of Neptune's orbit, or a quantity equal to many hundred spheres, each with a radius extending from the earth to the nearest fixed star."[1]

A consideration of this strange doctrine (which was only feebly expressed by Lord Jeffrey when he said that an ounce of medicine, put into the Rhone at the upper end of the lake of Geneva, would physic all the Calvinists at the lower end,) excites a natural curiosity to know how Hahnemann was led so far (apparently) out of his way. The answer to this question is important.

Hahnemann did not fail to discover, as he has told us in the *Organon*, § 276, *et seq.*, that a homœopathic remedy "*always does harm when given in too large a dose, and does harm all the more in proportion as the dose is larger.* Moreover, the *more homœopathic* the remedy, the greater is the injury from too large a dose; the effects of a homœopathic remedy, under these circumstances, *being much worse than a similar dose of an allopathic medicine.*" From this proposition Hahnemann was gradually led into a series of experiments (for he says it is impossible that theory could decide the matter,) as to the necessary attenuation of a homœopathic remedy to avoid the consequence above indicated, viz., of its being more hurtful than an allopathic remedy in like quantity. The precise evil effects ascribed to the over dose of the homœopathic medicine are detailed elsewhere (*Organon*, § 156-7); they include not only the development of those powers of the drug which do not stand in exact relation with the symptoms, but in almost every case an *aggravation of the original symptoms;* or, as Hahnemann expresses it, "a small aggravation, which so closely resembles the primitive affection, that the patient

[1] *Homœopathy, its Tenets and Tendencies;* by Professor Simpson, p. 285.

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himself supposes it to be an increase of his disease; whereas it is, in fact, a medicinal disease, very like the primitive disease, and surpassing it a little in intensity."

On the strength of these admissions, I claim Hahnemann as the first witness against his own system. It is plain that the reduction of the homœopathic dose to an insensible and preposterous minuteness, was determined by a fact which ought in reality to have determined the rejection of the system, founded, as we have seen it to be, not upon experience, but upon abstract reasoning. The first experiments, doubtless, revealed what subsequent experiments corroborated—that homœopathic remedies invariably aggravate the diseases they are intended to cure;[1] or, as he somewhat naïvely says, that "the artificial disease which the remedy has excited in the most suffering parts of the organism, goes the length of being hurtful." Hence the necessity of reducing the doses. And once involved in this train of false inference, Hahnemann did not hesitate to spring from one absurdity to another. The idea, indeed, that the curative virtues of remedies are *spiritual* or *immaterial*, led him to look on them as bearing no fixed relation to the bulk of the medicine; and all the nonsense about the influence of shaking and trituration in developing these "dynamic virtues," naturally followed.

Another point in which Hahnemann's system evidently gave way beneath his feet, was in relation to chronic organic diseases. It was impossible to assert that there existed any remedy directly homœopathic to cancer, caries, disease of the vertebræ, etc., etc. The consequence of this vital defect in the system (in connection with the general idea that remedies *must* be found for every disease) was the invention of a class of *antipsoric* remedies, as he called them, and the celebrated "*psoric hypothesis*," which even Dr. Henderson, who, after a

[1] Hering, a homœopathic expositor of Hahnemann's doctrines, is so distinct and concise in his statement on this point, that I quote the following passage, as given in the work of Dr. Epps, *Homœopathy and its Principles.* The "almost constant aggravation of the disease by the remedies which were chosen according to the new law, threatened to embarrass very much their trial, if not to render it wholly impracticable. To avoid these disagreeable results, Hahnemann adopted the most simple and natural expedient, viz., that of lessening the dose."

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fashion, defends it, calls in one place, "perhaps the most unfortunate of his speculations." By this hypothesis, for which Hahnemann takes to himself immense credit, he refers all chronic diseases indiscriminately, with the exception of those due to syphilis and sycosis, and a few others, to a *special chronic miasm*, on which he confers the ancient name "*psora*."[1] This *psora* is the "single source of innumerable morbid forms," and is to be attacked chiefly by a single remedy, sulphur, which Hahnemann maintained to be antipsoric, and homœopathic to the miasm of psora, though not presenting the usual homœopathic relation to the multiform symptoms of this disease.

In the case of the psoric hypothesis, there can be no doubt that Hahnemann falls into exactly the same course of reasoning which he inveighs against in the case of the allopathist—searching into the hidden causes of diseases, and placing the remedy not in relation with the manifest symptoms, but with the supposed nature of the disease.

On comparing, therefore, Hahnemann's practice with his theory, I find the latter to be contradicted by the former; firstly, because the theory of infinitesimal doses is clearly only a gilded mask to cover the bad effects which he is himself obliged to ascribe to sensible doses of homœopathic remedies; secondly, because the psoric hypothesis is clearly an evasion of the homœopathic principle in relation to a vast tribe of diseases, which it is to be presumed were rebellious to the homœopathic law. I therefore claim Hahnemann's practice unhesitatingly as a refutation of his own system; and ascribe so much of its success as was real to the operations of nature, aided by the hygienic, and especially the

[1] Dr. Henderson is quite correct in pointing out that Hahnemann's "psora" had no real relation to the *modern* "scabies." But it is inexcusable to affirm, as Dr. Henderson does, that the psoric hypothesis of Hahnemann was not, in fact, Hahnemann's. Among others, he has Hahnemann himself against him. "It has cost me twelve years of researches," says Hahnemann, "to discover this great truth, which was *unknown to all my predecessors and contemporaries.*" (*Organon*, § 80, note.) The fact is, that Hahnemann's doctrine is quite different from any of those which Dr. Henderson has quoted as resembling it. To saddle Hoffmann with Hahnemann's doctrine, simply because it is absurd, is too bad. Hoffmann had quite enough of nonsense of his own to answer for.

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dietetic and mental influences to which I have adverted above. To the infinitesimal doses, *as medicines*, I ascribe simply no effect whatever.

Having thus examined my subject from every point of view to which there is access in the writings of Hahnemann himself; having carefully weighed the claims of homœopathy to consideration, both as a system of doctrine and as a method of practice; having found it to be, on the one hand, based upon assumptions destitute of proof, and inconsistent with known facts; while, on the other, it stands condemned by the very experimental evidence which has been adduced in its support, I might perhaps bring this inquiry to a conclusion. But it cannot fail to have struck those who are familiar with the position of homœopathy in the present day, that there is an obvious disposition, on the part of its adherents, to avoid the discussion of principles and of elementary facts, and to invite attention chiefly to the general results of practice in homœopathic hands, as the only true test of the value of the system. We hear every day of wonderful cures of isolated cases; of desperate diseases which yield to homœopathy in a way unknown to the old practice; of homœopathic hospitals in which the ratio of mortality is surprisingly low, and in which the most acute and formidable diseases are cured in the most astonishing manner. Statistical tables are presented to us showing the results of treatment in homœopathic and in "allopathic" institutions; and we are told that whatever becomes of the homœopathic law, a system must be known by its fruits, and of these the public can judge for themselves from the facts presented. "Common sense," says Dr. Henderson, in one of his earlier publications, "is *quite competent to decide* which of two systems of treatment is the best—that which has the greatest number of recoveries, or that which has not;" the *numerical* advantage being, of course, attributed to homœopathy, on the faith of the statistical tables to which we have referred. Besides this, the horrors of bleeding and blistering, bolus and draught, pill and powder, are constantly brought before us, and contrasted with the amenity and the slight disturbance to the system of the small sugared globules, or the colourless and tasteless solutions

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in which the infinitesimals of the homœopathist are diffused. And upon these materials the public is invited to give its verdict, while the homœopathic law is thrown into the background.

I am in no way disposed to shrink from this aspect of the question, any more than from the others which have been already discussed. But I take leave at the outset, before stating the very few considerations for which there is room, to remark, that if there be anything which requires the exercise of a skilful judgment, and a specially educated critical faculty, it is precisely a question of this nature—one involving considerations of the most delicate, and moreover the most technical kind that it is possible to conceive. To refer the question between two systems of treatment, therefore, to "common sense," on the faith of *ex parte* statistics, implies a degree of insensibility to the true conditions of the inquiry, which only the blinding influence of party could possibly have produced in a mind naturally so acute and so critical as that of Dr. Henderson.

I shall take a single instance of the fallacy which may lurk under such a numerical statement as that to which Dr. Henderson refers. I select this instance from one of his own writings, not only because he is "*facile princeps*" among the homœopathists, but because, in questions necessarily to a certain extent personal, it is desirable to deal with those, and those only, whom we believe to be above the suspicion of intentional unfairness, however much warped and biased by what we cannot but regard as a false position. Dr. Henderson has taken occasion to inform us, in one place, obviously, though not statedly, for purposes of numerical comparison, that he had treated *homœopathically throughout* 16 cases of pneumonia, with *one* death. To this statement, considered merely as a statement, I do not object; but if we are intended to draw the inference from it, that the homœopathic mortality of pneumonia in Dr. Henderson's hands has been 1 in 16, then I must observe that such an inference, however naturally resulting from the facts stated, would be grossly incorrect. For in a detailed record of eleven cases of pneumonia, homœopathically treated, published in

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the *Homœopathic Journal* for 1850, Dr. Henderson incidentally notices *two* very severe and complicated cases, in one of which he himself, in the other the friends of the patient, became dissatisfied with the results of the homœopathic treatment, and both of which cases ended fatally, after passing into the hands of another physician. Such events are known to be common in the practice of most homœopathists; the alarm of a really severe disease being generally all that is required to send men away from infinitesimals in quest of active remedies. Indeed, I suppose that few instances of really severe and fatal disease are ever treated "homœopathically throughout" in private practice; at least among those able to have a choice of physicians. But it is evidently a most erroneous calculation which would pass over these palpable failures of the homœopathic treatment, simply because they were transferred, possibly when beyond hope, into other hands. Had the two cases alluded to (and we have no security that there were not others) remained under Dr. Henderson's treatment, and died (as they most probably would in any hands), the mortality of his cases would at once have been altered from 1 in 16, to 1 in 6; which, considering the character of the cases reported, would have been a very high average indeed.[1]

A not less striking exhibition of the fallacies inherent in statistical statements of this kind, put forward in the interest of a system, is afforded by an examination of the results of treatment in the Vienna Homœopathic Hospital. It is now some years since I had occasion to publish an analysis of the reports of that much vaunted institution; and I

[1] A word of personal explanation may here be permitted to the author. Dr. Henderson will remember having made him the object of a very bitter, but, under the circumstances, not unnaturally violent remonstrance in a controversial work, as having publicly questioned his (Dr. Henderson's) good faith in relation to the above subject. The fact is, simply, that Dr. Henderson wrote under a total misapprehension, and evidently from a very unfaithful report, of the public lecture on which he comments. The author never did, either in public or private, at any time or in any place whatever, use language intended or, he thinks, calculated to bear such a construction. And as he never made the attack attributed to him, so he has never felt aggrieved by the retaliation. No names having been mentioned on either side, he has never alluded to the matter until now, and will not now go into any details.

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am not aware of any reply to my criticisms in the least deserving of, or requiring, notice. It had been customary for the homœopathic writers and journalists to point triumphantly to these reports, as indicating results "far beyond the reach of any other mode of treatment;" and this on two grounds, 1st, that the general mortality was $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, which was vaunted as surprisingly low; 2d, that in particular, pneumonia, pleurisy, peritonitis, and other acute diseases, were treated with a success unknown in other hospitals. So prevalent was the idea that these statistics were unassailable, that several writers not favourable to homœopathy were led into giving almost unlimited credit to their results. Yet so completely has this credit broken down, as regards the first point at least, that Dr. Henderson himself (while defending, as it were, every inch of defensible ground) now admits the unfairness of the original comparison instituted by the homœopathists on this point.[1] The homœopathic hospitals have, in fact, by a somewhat strict comparison with those of ordinary physic, been shown to be systematically filled with those trivial and easily curable cases, which all considerable and well-filled hospitals are compelled, by the pressure of severe and fatal disease, to exclude. Thus, in the Vienna Homœopathic Hospital, consumption and organic disease of the heart, liver, and kidney, find place in exceedingly small proportion; while colic, diarrhœa, headache, sore-throat, chicken-pox, affections of the skin of an acute and curable kind, and similar diseases of other organs, swell the lists to a degree unknown in any considerable hospital established for purely charitable purposes. To give but one or two instances—out of about 6500 cases, the accumulation of several years, the *homœopathic* hospital at Vienna had 300 of sore-throat; while the *general* hospital of Vienna, admitting not less than 21,400 cases in a single year, had, in this enormous number, only 216 cases of inflammation connected with the mouth, gums, teeth, palate or tonsils, or about one third less than the cases of sore-throat alone in the homœopathic institution. Again, in the homœopathic hospital, there were 110 cases of chicken-pox, while in the Edinburgh Infirmary, there were

[1] *Homœopathy Fairly Represented*, p. 82.

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only 2, out of a nearly equal aggregate of cases. On the other hand, for 276 cases of consumption in Edinburgh, there were only 98 so called in the Vienna Homœopathic Hospital; for 159 cases of diseased heart, 15; for 82 cases of diseased kidney, *none;* for 103 of paralysis, 5; for 33 of disease of the liver, 1; for 17 of diabetes, *none;* for 14 of neuralgia, *none;* for 18 of internal aneurism, 1; and so on. Yet with this very remarkable selection of cases, the mortality was actually higher by one-third than that of the average of English provincial hospitals; and was in fact shown to be only exceeded by those hospitals, in this country and abroad, which, from their situation and other causes, receive an enormous proportion of severe and incurable cases.[1]

Then, as regards the cases of acute disease supposed to have been treated with such surprising success in the Homœopathic Hospital, one fact may suffice to indicate the bias in the numerical statements. All the world over, catarrh of the chest or bronchitis is a very frequent disease, while pneumonia, as well as pleurisy, are comparatively rare. Vienna is no exception to this rule; for, in the general hospitals of that city, there are admitted 2078 cases of catarrh for 509 of pneumonia, and 427 of pleurisy. In the Homœopathic Hospital, on the contrary, the proportion is so completely inverted, that for 300 cases of pneumonia and 224 of pleurisy, there are only 15 of acute bronchitis mentioned, while all the other diseases of the chest together do not make up nearly the difference; thus showing clearly that every example of curable disease which could, however violently, be twisted into the semblance of pneumonia or pleurisy, was made to swell the list of these two formidable diseases, and thus to increase the apparent success of the homœopathic experiment. The case is even worse as regards peritonitis, a disease undoubtedly rare both in hospital and general practice; of which, nevertheless, 105 cases appear among 6000; the Edinburgh Infirmary showing in a similar total number only 19 of peritonitis.

These remarks will, I trust, suffice to show how very unsatisfactory are the results to be deduced from the exami-

[1] For the more full statement of the whole question, see the author's article on "Homœopathic Hospital Statistics," in the *Medical Times* for April 3, 1852, p. 341.

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