The Growth of Thought eBook

The Growth of Thought

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Preface.

A contemporary thus reveals the state of mind, through which he has come to the persuasion of great insight into the realities, which stand behind the veil: "What more natural, more spontaneous, more imperative, than that the conditions of his future being should press themselves on his anxious thought! Should we not suppose, the 'every third thought would be his grave,' together with the momentous realities that lie beyond it? If man is indeed, as Shakespeare describes him, 'a being of large discourse, looking before and after,' we could scarcely resist the belief, that, when once assured of the possibility of information on his head, he would, as it were, *rush* to the oracle, to have

his absorbing problems solved, and his restless heart relieved of its load of uncertain forebodings."* [Bush's Statement of Reasons, &c., p. 12.]

Not less frequently or intensely, the writer's mind has turned to the problem of applying know truth to the present, reconciling self-love with justice and benevolence, and vindicating to godliness, the promise of the life that now is. If, meanwhile, he has been "intruding into those things which he hath not seen," like affecting an angelic religion,—-then it were hardly possible but that he should mistake fancy for fact. But if his inquiries have been into what it is given to know, then he cannot resist the belief, that some may derive

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profit from the results of many fearfully anxious years, here compressed within a few pages. He might have further compressed, just saying: Mainly, political wisdom is the management of self-love; civilization is the cultivation of self-love; the excrescenses of civilization are the false refinements of self-love; while unselfish love is substantial virtue,—the end of the commandments,—the fulfilling of the law: Or, he might have enlarged indefinitely; more especially might have been written on practically applying the principles to the advancement of society. He may yet produce something of the kind. Of the substance of the following pages he has only to say, that, if false, the falsehood has probably become too much a part of his nature to be ever separated. As to such minor considerations, as logical arrangement and the niceties of style, he asks only the criticism due to one, whose hands have been necessitated to guide the plough oftener than the pen, through the best years of life.

The Growth of Thought, As Affecting the Progress of Society.

Part I.

Introductory.

The meditation on human life—on the contrast between what *is*, and what *might be*, on supposing a general concurrence to make the best of things-yields emotions both painful and pleasing;—painful for the demonstrations every where presented, of a love of darkness, rather than light; pleasing, that the worst evils are seen to be so remediable; and so clear the proofs of a gradual, but sure progress towards the remedy.

The writer is not very familiar with those authors, who have so much to say on the problem of life—the question, What is life? He supposes them to follow a train of thought, something like this: The life of a creature is that perfection and flourish of its faculties, of which its constitution is capable, and which some of the race are destined to reach. Thus, the life of the lion is realized, when the animal ranges undisputed lord of the sunny desert; finds sufficiency of prey for himself and offspring, which he raises to inherit dominion; lives the number of years he is capable of enjoying existence, and then closes it, without excessive pains, lingering regrets, or fearful anticipations.

Life differs from happiness. It is supposable, that the lion, tamed and petted, trained to feed somewhat after man’s chosen manner, may be as happy as if at liberty in his native range. But such happiness is not the animal’s life; since this implies the kind of happiness proper to the creature’s constitution, in distinction from that induced by forced habits.

To happiness add knowledge and intellectual culture, and all together do not realize the idea of life. The tame lion may be taught many arts, assimilating him to the intelligence of man; but these remove him so much further from his appropriate life. Thus there may be a cultivated intelligence, which constitutes no part of the creature's life; and this without considering the same as a moral agent.

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Macauley remarks, that the Jesuits seem to have solved the problem, how far intellectual culture may be carried, without producing intellectual emancipation. I suppose it would be only varying the expression of his thought to say, Jesuitical education strikingly exemplifies, how much intellectual culture may be superinduced upon the mind, without awakening intellectual life—without developing a spontaneous aptness to appreciate, seek, find, embrace the truth. The head is filled with the thoughts of others-many ascertained facts and just conclusions. It can reason aright in the circles of thought, where it has been trained to move; but elsewhere, no spontaneous activity—no self-directed power of thinking justly on new emergencies and questions not yet settled by rule—no spring within, from which living waters flow.

The difference between intellectual culture and intellectual life appears in the fact, that in regard to those mastering ideas, which to after times mark one age as in advance of the preceding, the classical scholars, the scientific luminaries, the constitutional expounders of the day, are quite as likely to be behind the general sense of the age, as to be in advance.

The question, What is human life? arises on a contemplation like this: There is no difficulty in determining the life of all the other tenants of earth; unless, indeed, those which man has so long and so universally subjected to his purposes, that the whereabouts, or indeed the existence of the original stock, remains in doubt. The inferior animals, left to themselves in favorable circumstances, manifest one development, attain to one flourish, live the same life, from generation to generation. Man may superinduce upon them what he calls *improvements*, because they better fit them for *his* purposes. But said improvements are never transmitted from generation to its successor; left to itself, the race reverts to proper life, the same it has lived from the beginning.

Man here presents a singular exception to the general rule of earth's inhabitants. The favorite pursuits of one age are abandoned in the next. This generation looks back on the earnest occupations of a preceding, as the adult looks back on the sports and toys of childhood. It is more than supposable, that the planning for the chances of office, the competition for making most gain out of the least productiveness—these earnest pursuits of the men of this age—in the next will be resigned to the children of larger growth; just as are now resigned the trappings of military glory. Where then is the human mind ultimately to fix? Where is man to find so essentially his good, as to fix his earnest pursuit in one direction, in which the race is still to hold on? Such seems to be the question, What is life?

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The elements of that darkness, which excludes the light of life, may be considered as these three: First, the excessive preponderance of self-love, as the ruling motive of human conduct. Secondly, the short-sightedness of self-love, in magnifying the present, at the cost of the distant future. And, Thirdly, the grossness of self-love, in preferring of present goods the vulgar and the sensible, to the refined and more exquisitely satisfactory. And there are three ways, in which we may attempt the abatement of existing evils; or, there are three agencies we may call in for this purpose.

In the first place, leaving individuals to the operation of the common motives, we may labor at the social institutions, to adjust them to the rule, that, each seeking his own, after the common apprehension of present interests, may do so consistently with acting the part of a good citizen—contributing something to the general welfare; or, at least, not greatly detracting therefrom. Here, the agency employed, the Greeks would have called by a name, from which we have derived the word *politics*; which word, from abuse, has well nigh lost its original sense, *The science of social welfare*. *Policy*, we might say, for want of an exacter word.

The second way, in which we may seek the same result, is, to inculcate juster apprehensions of present good—to inform and refine self-love; to show, that the purest of present enjoyments, are like the loaves and fishes distributed by divine hands, multiplying by division and participation—the best of all being such as none can enjoy fully, till they become the common property of the race. For want of a more accurately defined term, the agent here introduced may be called Philosophy; understanding by the term, the search, what would be the conduct and preferences of a truly wise man, dispassionately seeking for himself the best enjoyment of this life, uninformed of another to follow.

Or, thirdly, we may seek to infuse a nobler principle than self-love, however refined—-even the charity, whose essence is, to love one's neighbor as one's self; while, at the same time, this life being earnestly contemplated as but the introductory part of an immense whole, additional security is provided for the coincidence of interest with duty. In a word, the third agency to be employed is *Religion*.

The whole subject thus sketched is one of which the writer is not aware, that it has been distinctly defined, as a field for thought and investigation. He has little to learn from the successes or the failures of predecessors. Be this his excuse for seeming prosy and dull; possibly for mistakes and crudities. He has the doubly difficulty of attempting to turn thought into trains to which it is not accustomed; and yet of offering no results so profound as to have escaped other observers; or so sublime as to be the due prize of genius, venturing where few can soar.

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If he offers any thoughts new, just, and important, they have rather been overlooked for their simplicity and obviousness. One may dive too deep for that which floats on the surface. Here are to be expected none of the splendid results, which dazzle in the popular sciences. The cultivator of this field can hope only to favor, imperceptibly it may be, the growth of thoughts and sentiments, tending slowly to work out a better condition of the human family. And he begs to commend that advice of Lacon, which himself has found so profitable: "In the pursuit of knowledge, follow it, wherever it is to be found; like fern, it is the produce of all climates; and like coin, its circulation is not restricted to any particular class. * * * * Pride is less ashamed of being ignorant, than of being instructed; and she looks too high to find that, which very often lies beneath her. Therefore condescend to men of low estate, and be for wisdom, that which Alcibiades was for power." (Vol. I., p. 122.)

The difficulty with us Americans, in the way of being instructed, has been, that too proud, as if already possessed of the fullness of political wisdom, we have withal cherished a self-distrust, forbidding us to harmonize our institutions and modes of thinking into conformity with our work and altered situation. We have seen the British nation, choosing by the accident of birth a baby for its future sovereign, and training it in a way the least possible calculated to favor relations of acquaintance and sympathy with varied wants of the many; and our first impression, I fear, has been our last: What drivellers! Obstinately blind to the clearest lights of common sense! Whereas wiser for us would it be, to derive from the spectacle these general conclusion: that hard is it for the human mind to proceed in advance of ideas received and fashionable; that the so-called independent and original thinkers—leaders of public sentiment-are such as anticipate by a little the general progress of thought, as our hill-tops catch first by a little the beams of the rising sun, before they fill the intervening valleys; that men's superiority in profound thought or liberal ideas, in one direction, affords no security for their attaining to mediocrity in others; and that one familiar with the history of thought, may pronounce, with moral certainty, that such and such ideas were never entertained in such or such society, where due preparation did not exist. As we may confidently say, No mountain-top can tower high enough, to catch the sunbeams at midnight; with equal confidence we may say of many ideas now familiar as school-boy truths: no intellect in ancient Greece or Rome soared high enough above the mass to grasp them.

Part II.

Welfare as Dependent on Policy.

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As generally at all points, so the materialism of the age particularly appears, in that the political economists take *wealth*, defining their science in the vulgar acceptation, rather than in the good old English sense, *welfare*, *well-being*. If they occasionally venture a remark of a more liberal bearing on the general subject of public welfare; such is the exception to the general rule. Money, with its equivalents and exchangeables, is their usual theme in treating of wealth; thought the common use of the word economy might suggest a higher science. For he does not exhaust our idea of a good economist, who manages to have at command abundant materials for rendering home happy; while, for lack of wisdom to turn such materials to account, that home may be less happy than the next-door neighbor's, where want is hardly staved off. We exact, for fulfilling that character, wisdom in using the material means—provision for physical, intellectual, and moral training of the household—the just apportionment between labor and recreation-the true contentment, which frets not at present imperfection, while it still presses on to that perfection conceived to be attainable. Our writers on political economy would do well, to give the word as liberal a latitude of sense, as it legitimately assumes, when used in its primitive meaning of *household management*.

But, rather than attempt to raise a scientific term so much above its received sense, I use another word, and say, Policy must begin with the admission, that self-love is the mightiest mover of human conduct; and not a self-love enlightened, deep, calculating, directed to the sources of fullest contentment; but following the groveling estimate, that riches, power, office, ease, being the object of envy or admiration, are the chief goods of life.

Every business man admits, that his security for men's conduct must be found in their self-interest. He admits thus much practically, so for as his own business is concerned; the exceptions being so rare, as not to justify neglect of the general rule. Yet, neither business men nor politicians grasp the principle clearly, nor consequently apply it consistently. And he who would make a new application of it, is met with charges of great uncharitableness.

This backwardness to generalize a rule, found so necessary practically to be followed, may be resolved into that flattering conceit of human dignity, which is yielded reluctantly, inch by inch, as plain demonstration wrests it away. And further, self-love conceals itself, because generally it operates first to pervert the judgment. The consciousness of preferring private interest to worthier considerations, is too painful to be endured. The man therefore strives, but too successfully, to misrepresent the case to himself. He contrives to make that seem right, which tends to his own advantage. But though indirect, the operation of self-love is none the less sure. Whether the individual be any the less blamable, because self-love assumes this disguise, is not now to be considered.

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There are individuals, to whom implicit confidence in their unguarded honesty, proves but an added motive to be more tremulously sensitive, not to abuse such confidence. There are, whom respect for their calling binds wholly to more carefulness, to prove worthy of such respect. So always if one is thoroughly pervaded with the right spirit. But dealing with bodies of men, as men yet are, these two rules should shape political institutions and social relations.

First, so far as men can command confidence and respect, for the sake of birth, calling, or office, so far they are relieved from the necessity of seeking the same by personal qualifications; and accordingly a body of men so protected, will perceptibly fall short of the average, in the staple elements of respectability.

Respect for station or calling so ample is here meant, as to satisfy the average desire of approbation. The extent, to which this is satisfied by the respect paid by the child, to the parent, for the relation's sake, is so moderate, as one of the elements tending to the formation of character, that it may be expected to operate generally as it universally would, where the right spirit fully reigns. The remark holds good, with moderate abatement, in the relation of teacher and pupil.

In the infancy of the Christian church, the relation between pastor and flock was closely analogous to that between parents and children. On the one side were men of a disinterested and paternal spirit, so earnestly living the new life hid with Christ in God, that hardly the possibility could be conceived of a desire to exalt and magnify self, over the ignorance and degradation of their spiritual charge. On the other side were men, children in knowledge, incapable of estimating the ministry simply after the consciousness of benefits received. We are not then to condemn the arrangement, which clothed the ministry with an official dignity, the office being revered independently of the claims of the man; nor to wonder, if the arrangement outlived the necessity, or passed the bounds of moderation; or if it was not fully calculated, the danger, lest men of the primitive spirit yield places to those of an inferior stamp; and how truly eternal vigilance is the cost, at which all things here must be saved from their tendencies to deterioration. Accordingly the history of the Papacy for centuries has been, that its ministers are sure of unbounded respect from the populace, independently of their personal claims. The consequence is, that while a few are thus moved to heroic and almost angelic devotion to the spiritual good of their flocks, the many would never command respect for what they are as men.

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Similar remarks may be applied to the infancy of civil society. The prevalence of monarchy and aristocracy has been too universal, to be charged wholly upon force or chance. And yet in the origin, rational considerations can hardly be supposed to have been distinctly entertained. Still there may have been a dim consciousness of thoughts like these: It is so necessary that civil rulers be at all events respected, and so uncertain how to secure due respect to men meriting it, that we must invest a class of men with a factitious official dignity, and take the risk—rather the certainty—of its proving, in most cases, a cover for personal unworthiness, some degrees below the ordinary standard of humanity. If there existed a dim consciousness of such reasoning, it might have been well entertained.

The second rule of Policy—the master maxim of political wisdom—is, that no class of men must be expected to concur heartily, for extirpating the evils, from which its own revenues and importance are derived. Speaking of men acting in a body, there is no room for the many exceptions, necessarily admitted to the rule, that with the individual self-love is the ruling motive. The individual sometimes yields to nobler considerations, than the calculations of self-interest. In the corporation, the *esprit du corps*—the clannish spirit—is sure to master it over public spirit. Devotion to the honor, aggrandizement, wealth and power of the order, company, or corporation, is more sure to control their acts as individuals. It is less liable to self-rebuke for conscious meanness. It looks somewhat more like the public spirit which ought to be. It is less liable to occasional counteractions from impulses of honor, humanity, or regard to reputation.

Accordingly a body of men, so constituted as to find its best flourish short of the perfection of the whole social system, will inevitably, sooner or later, prove an obstacle to the onward march of improvement.

A corporation is not necessarily a grievance and a sore on the body politic. If it can have its full flourish, without let to the progress of society, it may be harmless or beneficent.

"*Sooner or later*;" be this condition marked, in estimating the spiritual policy of Rome. The body of reverends, which mediates between God and men, finds its best flourish, in just such degree of popular intelligence as suffices for comprehending the specious arguments, on which rest the claims of Holy Mother Church; and such amount of conscientiousness as galls the offender, till he has purchased absolution. More intelligence generally prevailing, and better appreciation of the divine law as a living rule of duty, would abate the awe in which the priesthood is held, and diminish the revenues accruing from mediating between offending man and his offended Maker. But Christianity found the world sunk below this moderate standard of intelligence and morals. The best flourish of the priesthood required in the people cultivation of understanding and conscience, up to the point of caring for their account in heaven's

record. So the faulty relation between priesthood and people did not at once appear in the results; and, accordingly, the weight of the qualification, *sooner or later*.

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But in the early growth of society, considerations like the above have been little attended to, compared with the obvious advantages of the division of labor. As ordinarily each handicraft is best exercised by those earliest and steadiest in their devotion to the trade; so it is argued, universally, that the several departments of the public service will be best attended to, by being left to their respective trades, guilds, faculties, orders, or corporations, each strictly guarded from unhallowed intrusion. So religion has been left to its official functionaries, prescribing articles of belief and terms of salvation by a divine right,—legislation to princes and nobles, equally claiming by the same right to give law in temporals; and so of other general interests.

Now a movement has been slowly going on, through some centuries, for working society into conformity with a rational rule; a rule not overlooking the advantages of the division of labor, but taking in too such qualifying considerations as the healthful stimulus of free competition, watchfulness over public functionaries, and the necessity of harmonizing private and corporate interests, with public duty.

The movement has been slow; for the actors have dimly apprehended the part they were acting, and the principles by themselves vindicated. It has consisted of two principle acts. The Reformation carried republicanism into religion: our own Revolution into legislation. The two movements were parts of one whole; and, to get at the principles at bottom, either will serve for both, as well as for what may remain for finishing the work begun.

The Reformation having been conducted by theologians, it was natural that disproportionate importance should have been attached to theological niceties. So far as Luther was right in regarding the doctrine of justification by faith only as the great article at issue, it must have been, because the opposite doctrine favored the conceit of a mysterious mediating power vested in a priesthood—a conceit so favorable to the aggrandizement of the order thus distinguished. But considered as a *politic* movement —as an advance in rightly adjusting the social relations—the Reformation aimed principally at that ill arrangement, by which the authorized expounders of the law divine found their account, in involving that law in a glorious uncertainty, and entrapping people in a frequent violation thereof. Considered as a politic institution, Protestantism differs essentially from Popery, in that it makes more of prevention than of remedy; gives the ministry its best flourish, in the best welfare of the whole body; and pays for spiritual health, rather than for spiritual sickness. If all Protestants do not consistently so, the fact accords with the dim understanding, on both sides, of the essential points contested.

This dim understanding further appears, in that after all the political discussion which has been, the success of republican institutions is still appealed to, as vindicating the reign of justice and benevolence in the public mind; mankind have within so much of the divine, are so self-disposed to do right, that they do not need much control, but may

pretty safely be left to their own guidance. Nor is it left to the mere demagogue to talk thus.

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Doubtful it may be, whether it should be called dimness of understanding, or rather perverse ingenuity, that men reason thus, when the facts are: So general is the disposition to abuse power, that wherever it is accumulated, it will surely be abused; accordingly it must be distributed as equally as possible. If government be made the business of one part of the community—one tenth, or one hundredth, or one thousandth—that part will inevitably exalt self, at the cost of the others. So strong is self-love, turned towards temporal interests, so acute to discern what tends to the one desired end, and so sure to bend every thing that way, that men's temporal interests are pretty safe in their own hands, and safe no where else. Now the legitimate end of civil government being, to secure the temporal welfare of *all*, *all* must have a share in it, or the excluded portions must find their rights neglected.

It may have favored the common mistake, that the leaders in successful republican movements have so often shown a heroic self-devotion and disinterestedness—men like Luther, and Washington. But these are the exceptions, the rare gems of humanity. If they were the fair specimens, their work would never have been needed. Then we might leave to a class the regulation, whether of our spirituals or temporals, with the like advantage, that we leave the making of our watches or our shoes to their respective trades. But the indistinct apprehension, why the advantages of the division of labor fail in the matter of government, accords well with the observation, that republican principles make slow progress in the world, are held in gross inconsistencies; and the most zealous assertors thereof in one department, are oft found most strenuously opposed in others.

It is thus that we are so slow to conform to one rule, our arrangements for spiritual instruction; for preserving health; for preventing crime; for cheaply, expeditiously, and satisfactorily settling disputed claims; for furnishing the whole people with instruction in their rights, interests, and duties; as well as that thorough cultivation of the whole man, which the full success of republicanism requires.

Part III.

Welfare as Dependent on Philosophy.

But the whole office of Policy, in arranging the social relations, supposes the prevalence of an ill-informed and misdirected self-love. And, accordingly, the second way of attempting the promotion of general welfare is, to convey and impress just estimates of its constituents. Such is the office of Philosophy: the study of the truly wise man-wise for the present life—still leaving out man's hold on a future, and his relations to his Maker. What would such an one pursue; as life's chief ends—covet, as life's best goods?

We still suppose self-love to be as really as ever the main-spring to human conduct; but that self-love enlightened, regulated, refine— choosing first the goods which satisfy the nobler parts of man's nature, and on a liberal estimate of the ties which bind society together; in virtue of which, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.

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The items, claiming to constitute life's happiness, may be divided into two classes, distinguished by this important difference: one class essentially such, that only a limited number of mankind can obtain them;—if some succeed in the pursuit, their success involves the failure of others: The other class are such, as to involve no contradiction in the supposition of their becoming the common property of all. The success of a part, far from obstructing, rather facilitates the success of others; they constitute a store of wealth, from which each may take his fill; and the more he takes, the more he leaves, to satisfy the desires of all who come after.

Now, in view of the case, Philosophy inquiring for life's chief goods, cannot make them to be fortune's prizes, scattered to tempt the cupidity of all; but which a few only can catch, while their luck proves the disappointment and vexation of the many. The supposition were monstrous. We so instinctively recoil from supposing such to be the appointment of nature's Author, and so consciously grasp it for a truth clear by its own light—the conviction of a provision fully made in nature for all, whenever nature's wants are truly consulted—that we may safely reject, by this test, every notion of temporal good, which makes it consist preeminently in whatever, by the nature of the case, can be the lot of but a limited number.

Eminent above all other conceptions of temporal good, is that which makes it to consist emphatically in the possession of money, or the ability to command it by its equivalents. And because the capacities of enjoyment have never been measured, nor material wealth rationally estimated as a means of meeting those capacities, riches are prized, not as a means, but an end; and becoming themselves the end, no amount of possession lessens the desire to accumulate.

A just philosophy argues on the case, that all cannot be rich, in the common acceptation of the term, whether be considered the limits to earth's productiveness, and the possibility of increasing material wealth; or whether, *rich* being more a relative than an absolute term, that the supposition of *all rich* is self-contradictory: therefore, in a juster sense, the supposition of all rich must be admissible;—the sense, namely, that whenever riches shall be reasonably estimated simply as the means of meeting capacities of enjoyment surveyed and known, then it will be found that the earth's productiveness, and the stock of material wealth, admit each to take to the fullness of his wants, leaving enough for all who come after.

It is further the office of Philosophy to show in detail, what is thus wrought out as a conclusion from general principles; to show how much is consumed by artificial wants, and subjection to the tyranny of fashion; to show how the correction of factitious desires would leave natural and rational desires for better enjoyment than is now found, so that self-love would find not occasion for envy, or repining at a brother's prosperity.

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The unceasing desire to become richer would be, however, but a mitigated evil, if men sought only wealth by production. The aggravation of the case is, that they whom the desire most impels, seek the increase of their own store, not by producing, but by contriving to turn to their own stock the avails of the industry of others. Our young men, in deplorable numbers, slide into the persuasion, that any means of living and thriving are better than productive industry. Hence the rush into trade, the professions, into speculations, where the hazards are such, that the cool calculations of pure avarice would rather incline a man to prefer the prospect of growing rich by digging the earth. So much the preference of contrivance to labor overmaster the mastering desire to become rich.

But there is a strange hankering after whatever is of the nature of a lottery. So the prizes are but splendid, no matter, if they are but few compared with the blanks. We are given to presuming each on his own good fortune. "Nothing venture, nothing have," has become a proverb. So agriculture is treated as if it had no rewards, because one ventures so little by engaging therein. And one might almost think that the conscious earth resented the indignity.

Aided by Philosophy, we shall argue on this matter thus: All cannot live by their wits; the many must produce with the hands; and, the greater the part who shuffle off the charge, the more heavily it falls on others. The first law given to man in innocency, was, to keep the garden and till it; the first after the loss of innocency, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread;"—so a dispensation from such law, given by Him, who best knows what is good for man, in whatever state, is not worthy to stand high among life's blessings.

More particularly we are taught in the same school, that the good thus contemplated must cost something at least on the score of that best of physical enjoyments—health. If it were duly appreciated, how high this stands among life's goods, and how much its perfection depends on freedom to the mind from the anxieties of hazardous speculation, and a goodly amount of manly labor, of which the varied occupations of agriculture are the most favorable of all; this consideration would check the prevalent ambition to make the contrivance of the brain supply the place of the labor of the hands.

Health is commended to us, not only as among the first of present goods, but as one, the security of which is placed very much in our own power; if we will but study and practise the means. It is remarkable, that, while the healing art is proverbial for its sects and uncertainties—amid the disputes of homoeopaths and allopaths, mineralists and herbalists, stimulators and depletors—there is a pretty general agreement of parties on the laws of hygiene, or the art of preserving health. We might find here a law, taught by the constitution of nature, that its Author never intended healing to hold an important place in the cause of human welfare. He meant it should be well nigh dispensed with, by the obedience men should pay to laws, which they may understand.

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The full appreciation of these considerations would tend greatly to establish friendly relations in society; because, first, the good contemplated is such, that the success of one in seeking, facilitates the success of all. Secondly, it would abate the strife for luxuries,—amassing without producing, and cultivating artificial wants,—most fertile sources of discord. And, thirdly, it would establish between physicians and their employers, relations the most agreeable.

Another most unmanageable misconception of life's good, makes one of its choicest items to be, the possession of power and superiority. To what depths of degradation will man depress his fellows, just to contemplate the distance between his might and their weakness! If this ambition seems less general than the desire of accumulating, or of substituting contrivance for productiveness, it may be, because the necessity of the case more limits the number who can bear rule; otherwise, the passion for power might find as ready an entrance to as many hearts as are taken by the love of gain, or the dislike to labor. We may find in this thought a partial explanation of the fact, that the thrift of the non-slaveholding States contrasted with the stagnation at the South, is so powerless an argument addressed to the slaveholders there; for you have not only to satisfy avarice of the superior profitableness of free labor; you have still to contend with the lust of dominion—the passion for power and superiority. To manage this passion is the heaviest charge of policy—to provide that the offices which must be intrusted to human hands, be filled peaceably and worthily.

Philosophy explodes this notion of good (as claiming to be eminently such), in that it cannot stand the general test: It is a good, which a few must share by detracting so much from the happiness of others.

And further, to the love of power is submitted the consideration, that knowledge is power. It may be feared, this maxim oft suggests scarce other sense, that that deeper insight into the tricks of trade or politics enables the possessor to outwit competitors for riches or honors in the game. It is still a low understanding, that knowledge of nature's laws multiplies the means of physical enjoyment. Knowledge is power in a higher sense, in that it empowers the possessor to call forth stores of enjoyment form objects, which seem to vulgar apprehension most barren of utility. But knowledge—taken for the round of mental cultivation—is power, in that it is competent to yield to all more than the delightful sense of conscious superiority, which vulgar ambition may afford to a few of its successful votaries; a store, from which each in taking does but multiply the remainder.

But to find it so one must look well, that he apprehend knowledge to be a good of itself, independently of the distinction it confers. For a vain ambition often takes this direction; and then it matters little to one whether himself advance, or others be kept back—since, in either case, the difference between him and them, the distinction chiefly enjoyed, is the same.

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Now, the love of knowledge is prior in time to the love of distinction; it should seem then, that, with proper care, it might maintain the mastery over its rival. The child is delighted with the acquisition of new ideas, before it thinks of turning them to a vain-glorious account. It deserves to be considered, whether our modes of education, offering prizes and honors of scholarship, do not train into the ascendancy that love of distinction, which education ought and might keep subordinate; which in fact is one of the greatest hinderances to progress;—for when one's immediate aim is not truth itself, but the glory which attends the acquisition, he meets a thousand sidelong impulses from the straightforward search.

That knowledge is a good which grows by being shared, is a truth more fully apprehended, as the idea of knowledge is enlarged. It is measurably so, while taken for eminence in common studies and the received sciences. One's advance is facilitated by the advance of others.

Much more does this hold, when the distinction between intellectual culture and intellectual life is made, and the preference due to the latter apprehended.

When the missionary enterprize was a new thing, in favor of the missionary's being a married man was argued the advantage of having children trained up in a Christian way before the eyes of the heathen. But so completely has that expectation been disappointed, that now the missionaries send home their children to be educated; alleging the danger, lest their children become stumbling blocks, through the apparent little difference between them and the heathen children. And the difficulty is not, that they cannot there, as well as here, be taught Latin, Greek, Mathematics—all the received sciences-the branches of what is nominally education. It is not so much, that they cannot there be shielded from evil influences abroad; as that their children there want, what our children enjoy—the sight of magnificent enterprises; a spirit of inquiry and freedom breathing all around them; and the healthful contact and stimulus of multitudes of young minds, in the like process of intellectual and moral training. It is such nameless imperceptible influences, that awaken intellectual life, from the mind, and determine the future man more than the teaching, which is nominally education. Why else does the acknowledged excellence of the teaching in the Prussian schools do so little to quicken intellectual life—to form men of progressive thoughts?

We should be repaid the whole cost of the missionary enterprize, were it only in the clearness and importance of the lesson thus taught us, as otherwise we should hardly have suspected—the doctrine of our mutual dependencies and tendencies to a common average—how our intellectual life is subject to the law, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."

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We may hence take instruction, first, in the matter of educating our children. We have but half done our duty as parents, when we have joined with such of our neighbors as better appreciate, or readier furnish the means, of good instruction, to unite our children in a select school, furnished with competent masters and ample apparatus. The children of one neighborhood educate one another mainly. They receive from one another more of those impressions which form the mind and fix the after character, than all they get from their masters. The carefully trained will receive a deleterious impression from the neglected portion, despite of care to ward off evil influences. Or, however successfully care may be applied, that is but negative success. Our children still want the kindly stimulus to mental growth, to be realized in a whole community of young minds, all sharing the like wise training.

We may hence take occasion, secondly, to mark (what is not so obvious), that through life the same law binds us: the law, that our intellectual life depends more on the state of society in which we exist, than on our direct efforts at self-culture. Individual effort may give one great preeminence before his associates in any of the acknowledged sciences, though even in such their success facilitates his; and if he prizes the knowledge—the truth—for itself, rather than for the attending glory, he will find in another's success, that, "whether one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." But distinctively is it so, in regard to the general progress of universal mind in justness of thought and sentiment—those new developed master ideas which mark the place of each successive age in the line of progression; and in regard to which, the masters in the received sciences are quite as often found lagging behind, as going before.

In regard to this, we are all of us individually very like the several drops which compose the mighty current of the Mississippi, moving with resistless force to its destination. A few may outstrip by a little the general progress of thought, and but a little; just as one drop in the current may receive an impulse, carrying it a little in advance; or, if we might suppose the drops gifted with intelligence, some by self-directed effort and seizing opportunities, might speed themselves a little. So study and determination will enable one to anticipate by a little the birth of ideas.

And, on the other hand, the current of thought none can resist. Sometimes a man resolves to be so conservative, as to stick fast by the old moorings—*he* is not going to yield to popular impulses. But it fares with him very much as it would with the single drop in the Mississippi, which should resolve to stop in its place, and so reluct against impulses and take advantage of all impediments. The result from day to day would be, not that it had stopped in its place, or any thing like it; but that its daily approach to the ocean was a little less than that of its fellows.

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Thus we are brought round to the same position—that the attempt to monopolize Heaven's best gifts to man, must be a very small affair— that the individual best consults his own attainments in knowledge, after the sublimest sense of the term, by consulting the progress of his neighbors and the race; just as the single drop in the Mississippi sees its best hope of speedily reaching the ocean, in whatever gives onward impulse to the whole current.

The thought receives force from the consideration, that here emphatically is that knowledge, which he who increaseth beyond the average increase, increaseth sorrow. A saying of so much currency must have some foundation in reality. And yet is not knowledge commended to us as one of the richest sources of enjoyment?

"Happy the mortal, who has traced effects
To their first cause."

Where is the reconciling link between these seeming contradictions?

Now eminence in any of the received sciences, or branches of literature, has rich capabilities of affording happiness. To penetrate the depths of mathematics, chemistry, or astronomy—to revel in the stores of ancient lore;—all such pursuits generally become more delightfully attractive, the further one advances; or, after the ancient indefinite use of terms, *knowledge* might be taken for the just proportionate training of all the faculties, in distinction from the teaching, which impresses so many items of truth. And such education preeminently fits one to pass time happily.

The maxim in question then applies emphatically to the forethought, which anticipates the dawn of ideas.* [Or, more generally, we might define, an accurate perception of the difference between *what is* and *what ought to be*—between reality and ideal perfection. Perhaps we might say, *insight into logical futurity*.] And although, as above said, none do greatly anticipate beyond the general sense of the age, yet some may too much for their own comfort.

This thought Schiller finely sets forth in his Cassandra. At the hour of her sister's nuptials, while the rest give loose to merriment at the festival, the prophetess wanders forth alone, complaining, that her insight into futurity debars her from participation in the common joy.

"To all its arms doth mirth unfold,
And every heart foregoes its cares,
And hope is busy in the old;
The bridal robe my sister wears,
And I alone, alone am weeping;
The sweet delusion mocks not me;

Around these walls destruction sweeping,
    More near and near I see.

A torch before my vision glows,
    But not in Hymen’s hand it shines;
A flame that to the welkin goes,
    But not from holy offering shrines:
Glad hands the banquet are preparing,
    And near and near the halls of state,
I hear the god that comes unsparing,
    I hear the steps of fate.

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And men my prophet wail deride!
    The solemn sorrow dies in scorn;
And lonely in the waste I hide
    The tortured heart that would forewarn.
And the happy, unregarded,
    Mocked by their fearful joy, I trod:
Oh! dark to me the lot awarded,
    Thou evil Pythian god!

Thine oracle in vain to be,
    Oh! wherefore am I thus consigned,
With eyes that every truth must see,
    Lone in the city of the blind?
Cursed with the anguish of a power
    To view the fates I may not thrall;
The hovering tempest still must lower,
    The horror must befall.

Boots it, the veil to lift, and give
    To sight the frowning fates beneath?
For error is the life we live,
    And, oh, our knowledge is but death!
Take back the clear and awful mirror,
    Shut from mine eyes the blood-red glare;
Thy truth is but a gift of terror,
    When mortal lips declare.

My blindness give to me once more,
The gay, dim senses that rejoice;
The past's delighted songs are o'er
For lips that speak a prophet's voice.

To me *the future* thou has granted;
I miss the moment from the chain—
The happy present hour enchanted!
Take back thy gift again!"* [Bulwer's translation.]

These lines express more than the trite observation, that a knowledge of futurity would prove a torment to the possessor. Beneath that obvious is couched the deeper moral, which expresses the sufferings of the philosophic prophet—of the man who, too much for his own quiet, anticipates reasonings, conclusions, sentiments, forms of social life yet to prevail—the man to whom not coming events, but coming ideas, cast their shadows before. If we could suppose one at the time of the crusades, educated to associate and sympathize with the choice spirits of the age, yet anticipating the sense of

their age, in making the comparative estimate of chivalrous adventure, and successful cultivation of the arts of peace and industry; he must have felt somewhat like Cassandra among the less gifted. If we could look on life, as our successors will two hundred years hence, we too might complain of being “lone in the city of the blind;” unless large Hope and Benevolence enabled us to live on the future. Thus we find additional motive to desiring a united and absolute, rather than an individual and relative progress, in the consideration that knowledge most worthily so called—whoso increaseth greatly beyond the average attainment, doth so to his own sorrow.

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To complete the list of false estimates of good, refuted by one test, we should allude to the frivolities of gentility and fashion-the passion for wearing badges of distinction, however impotent or unmeaning such may be. This is the very poorest form of finding delight, in what from the nature of the case can be shared by few. For its incommunicableness is its only recommendation. It is an icy repellant, freezing up the kindly flow of sympathy with universal humanity; and uncompensated loss of that best ingredient of earthly felicity—the interchange of friendly feelings and offices; that store of wealth, from which the more that take, and the fuller their share, the more they leave to be taken by others.

The foregoing may be treated as a fine and just speculation, but as what ever must remain a barren speculation; as if it were after the example of all ages, that men should mistake the material of happiness for happiness itself. So it always has been, so it always will be, that false notions of good usurp the place of the true, despite the demonstrations of moralists and divines to the contrary.

Mind, however, has not stood still in this matter. It has moved, and that in the right direction. We may note a progress from age to age, in coming to a just estimate of life. Start not at the use of terms, rendered suspicious by the extravagancies of which they have been made the vehicle. But we must not reject ideas great, just, or new, because of the distortions and caricatures of little minds. If one idea occupies the mind all them more for being great and just, it will be likely to overmaster that mind, so as not to be produced in its fair proportions, or rightly applied. So fare they, with whom the one idea is, the progress of society—the growth of thought. The Mississippi in its progress throws froth and scum on its surface, more conspicuous than the under-running current. So radical folly and transcendental nonsense is obtruded on the sight, from the sympathy of little minds with the deeper current of thought. To gauge the progress of mind from those who are most noisy on the matter, would be, like taking the direction and rapidity of the Mississippi, from the froth, which the wind blows hither and thither over its surface.

“Let us go on to perfection”—“Forgetting the things behind, and pressing onward to the things before.” Such language describes distinctively the American character, and the spirit of Christianity. Only, where is perfection? What are the things before? If, as a people, we do fully take these expressions in their author’s sense, we may hope there is one element of agreement, betokening good for the future.

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It is encouraging, that the two rival systems, most boldly promising to lead to perfection, both had their birth under political and mental bondage. So evidently with Romanism, whether under its proper form and name, or refined and disguised after the modern fashion. And the same is true of the baptized infidelity imported from Germany. The German mind is cramped and diseased by the bands which confine it. It is not allowed to speculate freely on politics, and the many questions most nearly touching present interests. Therefore, on the records and on the doctrines which pertain to eternal interests, it falls with an insane avidity for innovation, and runs into licentiousness a liberty no where else enjoyed. Hence the levity, in dealing with things sacred, in Germany often found in minds of the first and second orders, here is taken up by those to the third and fourth—the copyists and imitators; nay, by the buffoons who figure at the farces of mock philanthropy. Now, though every folly must find minds whose caliber it fits, we may hope the genuine American mind will not be extensively beguiled by either of the misbegotten offspring of Europe's mental servitude.

But, to the point—progress made in estimating life. A few centuries ago, a torrent of enthusiasm set in the direction of bearing the cross into Asia, to fight for glory, and the propagation of Christianity, on the fields of Palestine. Already the old Roman military character was greatly improved on. Virtue, (*manliness*, a` vir-*man*) was no longer supposed to fulfil its highest office in

> Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

A delicate sense of honor, of the courtesy due to a foe and the gallantry to the other sex, betoken a type of humanity in advance of the brute ferocity of the best days of Rome.

But, notwithstanding Mr. Burke's eloquence, and the opinion sometimes expressed, that the courtly knight of the middle age, realized the perfection of humanity; we have no reason to regret that the age of chivalry is gone by, and that the age of speculation, and money-making, and industrial enterprize has succeeded. The materialism of this age, with all its faults, is better than the chivalry of an age gone by. It tends to keep the world at peace; *that* tended to perpetual turmoil. The supposition *all rich*, according to modern ideas, is not so flat a contradiction as the supposition *all glorious*, in military heroism. As the past age estimated life's supreme good, the enjoyment of a few *required* the exclusion of the many from its benefits: as this age estimates the enjoyment of some, *admits* the exclusion of others. Whether the mercantile spirit thoroughly entered into makes a better man than did the spirit of chivalry, may be doubted; not so, which best comports with the welfare of society.

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Now if one, at the time of the crusades, had so anticipated the spirit of the age, as to picture to himself modern Europe and America, manufacturing, trading, flocking to California, as if there a holy sepulcher was to be rescued from hands profane, glorying chiefly in mechanical development and mercantile enterprize; and had ventured to suggest, that instead of trooping to Asia to fight for glory, and the fancy of promoting religion by arguments of steel, it would be worthier of the choice spirits of the age to stay at home, and by industry and enterprize aim at multiplying the means of content to quiet life: he might have found a harder task than now devolves on him, who urges, that the materialism of this age must pass away, as has passed the chivalry of the crusades; both for the same reason; the progress of thought must outgrow the one, as it has outgrown the other.

A new age with another spirit will be ushered in. What is to be the spirit of that age? Are we to find the forebodings in the dreamy sentimentalism, which boasts so much its flights beyond common material ideas? I trow rather, we may trace the character of the coming age in an increasing estimation of health, knowledge, mental cultivation, intellectual life, and the flow of the social affections, as the prime of earthly felicities—in an approximation towards rationally estimating money (with the ability to command it) as the means of meeting one's capacities of enjoyment—to be no longer worshipped as itself the idol or the end.

When a pestilential disease breaks out in the city, the plainness and urgency of the case compel all to see in the sickness of one the danger of all. Wants and discomforts, which charity had been too cold to attend to, now considered as sources of contagion, are administered to with a ready alacrity. The law is recognized, according to which, "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." And this law will be more fully recognized, as self-love is educated—as men better understand their own welfare, and choose with reference to the whole of their nature, and the duration of their existence.

Self-love is a motive of the indifferent kind—not of itself essentially good or bad. This appears from its being an essential part of our nature. Indeed, we can hardly conceive it as within the province of Omnipotence, to create a rational sentient being, who should be indifferent to his own happiness.

The advantages accruing from an educated self-love are:

First, additional security, that the good work of charity be done; and to all but the individual doer, it may matter little what be the prompting motives.

Secondly, the expansion of yet nobler principles. Each act favors the growth of the sentiments, of which it is the expression. So he who does as benevolence bids, though from a motive secondary on the score of purity, will be likely again to do the same from yet purer motives. So at least if the essential principle be there, though appearing no more vividly than as a cold sense of duty.

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But, thirdly, self-love is made the rule and standard of charity: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” One must then first love himself, in order to loving his neighbor. Keeping this rule, there is no danger of loving thyself too well; rather, the more truly thou lovest thyself, the more truly thou lovest thy neighbor.

Suppose one to cherish the vulgar notion of life—that it consists in the abundance of the things which one possesses, in the ability to live without exertion, amid plenty of good cheer. Suppose him to love his neighbor as himself. His charity must partake of the contraction and grossness of his self-love. Suppose another to prize duly intellectual riches. To him the discovery of a new principle in the physical, intellectual, or moral world, brings a joy unsurpassed by the merchant’s, on the return of his heavily laden ship from a successful voyage. As the best legacy to his children, he would leave them a good education; and, knowing the natural influences and dependencies existing between young minds, he aims to have all the children in the neighborhood well educated, as the best security against failure in the attempt to educate his own. If all is but a refined calculation, how best to benefit himself and household; it is far more estimable and amiable than the gross selfishness which grovels after vulgar goods, and in the success of a brother sees an obstacle to its own success. But if he too loves his neighbor as himself, why how far his self-love is educated to find its satisfaction in nobler ends, by so much his charity is better than the other’s.

There is hope for the future in the consideration, that self-interest, the first, as well as love of approbation, the second, of the great powers which move the world, indeed all the indifferent motives, are getting still more into coincidence of action with justice and benevolence.

When Jesus enforced a duty by the consideration, “Then shalt thou have worship [respect, approval,] in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee,” he implied two things; first, that regard to the world’s respectful esteem is not a censurable motive; and, secondly, that the same operates to good, rather than to evil. So it must have been even in that corrupt generation, so disposed to call evil good and good evil. It must be much more so now, when public sentiment has so much improved. Notwithstanding the danger of loving the praise of man more than the praise of God, and the mischiefs resulting from such preference, we should lose, on the whole, by eradicating the love of human praise. Witness the accounts of the atrocious outbreaks of depravity at the gold diggings, while society was yet unformed. Witness, wherever cease the common restraints of civilization.

Thus agents—so often the authors of discord and confusion, so often the fire-brands to set the world in fumes—philanthropy is more and more firing as her sure allies.

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“Even so, the torch of hellish flames
Becomes a leading light to heaven:
And so corruption’s self becomes
To bread of life the living leaven.”

All analogies point to a still increasing vigor in the growth of the kingdom of heaven. If the mustard tree is never seen growing, but only to have grown; yet the greater the tree, the greater its power of daily making large growth, without its growing being perceived.

All considerations indicate the power of each to do something to forward the consummation. No member of society is so insignificant, that his spiritual life does not affect the health of the whole. The obscurest, who cherishes a preference of ideal wealth over material riches and sensual delights, does something towards forming a sane public sentiment, just as surely as the tenant of the humblest city dwelling, who keeps clean his own premises, does something towards promoting the general health.

It is well to review the progress made in estimating life—to impress our minds with its existence as a reality; because mind and enterprize just now tend so strongly to the material and mechanical, that we might be tempted to doubt, whether any other improvement were to be thought of. If so, we might well enough stop where we are. But we shall contemplate with most satisfaction our multiplied facilities for manufacturing, transportation, fertilizing the earth, and conveying intelligence, if we see in the whole a store, from which we may draw with good effect for promoting general welfare, whenever the true end of these means shall be earnestly studied. Otherwise the discovery, how to make two kernels of corn grow where one grew before, would all redound to the tyranny of fashion, and only foreshadow an increase of artificial wants, quite up to the increased supply; so that want would still be as close treading on our heels as ever.

But if we yet scarce attain to longer life, better health, or more content, than fell to the lot of our fathers, with their simpler arts and manner, because we are forgetting to discriminate between true and false wants—between real and imaginary happiness: the true voice of history still is, not that the material means must always thus fall short of their legitimate end; but that, though the material and the mechanical travel first and fastest, the moral and the spiritual are following after. These in due time will reveal the meaning and the value of our stored acquisitions.

Dr. Franklin calculated, that the labor of all for three or four hours a day, would furnish all the necessaries and all the conveniences of life; supposing men freed from the exactions of an arbitrary fashion. If he was near correctness, his time must be abundant in our day, when the productiveness of machinery, and skill in the arts, are so much improved. Then it is within existing possibilities, that every mind be thoroughly cultivated; and every body taxed

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for labor, only to the extent required by the conditions of its own best vigor and that of the inhabiting mind. So far afield from truth is the common supposition, that the many can receive but the elements of learning; while the few must sacrifice bodily vigor to excessive intellectual cultivation. Connect with this thought that before advanced of the irresistible tendencies of our intellectual life to one average; and what a boundless vista, in the direction of human progress, opens before us.

As citizens of the republic, we have comparatively little cause to exult in the conceit of being freer or happier than other communities; much more in the chance, having broken the fetters of superstition and tyranny, next to rend those of false habit and fashion—to enthrone reason over the authority of one another's eyes and prejudices: to say in truth,—

"Here the free spirit of mankind at length
Throws its last fetters off; and who shall place
A limit to the giant's untamed strength,
Or curb his swiftness in the forward race?
Far, like the comet's way through infinite space,
Stretches the long untravelled path of light
Into the depth of ages; we may trace,
Distant the brightening glory of his flight,
Till the receding beams are lost to human sight."

Bryant.

Part IV.

Welfare as Dependent on Religion.

But in all our attempts to educate self-love into harmony with Universal benevolence, we contend with the enemy, somewhat as Hercules wrestled with Antaeus:—

Und erstickst du ihn nicht in den Luften frei, Stets wachst ihm die Kraft anf der Erde neu.* [If thou strangle him not high lifted in air, Fresh strength from the earth he continues to share.]

Thus we come to speak of present welfare, as dependent on the cultivation of the whole man—on a recognition of his immortality, his allegiance to his Maker, and his capacity for more disinterested sentiments, than self-love, however modified.

The influences thus accruing are a confirmation, from higher authority, of the conclusions approved by philosophy, ethics, the prudence which calculates how man

should live with man, considered as but creatures of earth—a *re-binding*—a *re-ligation* to what was *obligation* before; and such precisely is the proper sense of the word *religion*.

That the promise of the life that now is attaches to godliness-the vivid recognition of a Father in heaven, with the union of reverence and love cherished by a dutiful child—and that naught else secures the possession, might be argued,—

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1. First, as anticipated from the nature of the case. If man is formed to own allegiance to his Maker, and to spend this life as preparatory and introductory to a coming existence, then, till these conditions are fulfilled, he must be expected, not to fill worthily his place, as possessor of the present life; but must, in important points, compare disadvantageously with the beasts that perish. If, like the inferior races, ours attained to a life which should be the full flourish of its demonstrable capacities, while immortality entered not into account, then would fail one argument to prove us destined to an hereafter. If the philosopher, from the examination of the chick eaglet in the shell, knowing naught else of the animal, could make out for it, within its narrow walls, a life answering to the indications of its organization; he might fitly question, whether it were destined to burst its prison, and soar aloft. And such embryo eaglet is man, considered only as to what this life realizes.

2. Historically, we are in little danger of being confounded on this argument. The evidence from fact is very plain and positive, that men have never become wise for the life that now is, but as they have first become wise for the life that is to come; that self-love never becomes a just prudence, till informed by the faith, hope, and charity of Jesus; in a word, that in Him is life, and only through the light derived from him is life realized to men.

Seeking the lowest form of worldly wisdom—political science applied as the agent for promoting general welfare—we may look in vain for a beginning thus to apply such science, in any nation unblest by revelation.

They on whom the light has shone, have generally so imperfectly comprehended it, that they have only attained to that vulgar love of liberty, which Guizot defines to be removed but a step from the love of power. Rather, we might say, that step is not—the two are but the same thing. Viewed on one side, it is the hatred of being domineered over; on the other, it is the love of domineering.

Only where the Christian account of human character has been taken for a sober reality, has been taken for a sober reality, has been practically understood the rule of dividing power equally, because so universal is the tendency to grasp it inordinately. Only (we may add) where, better still, some good deference has been paid to the charge, “Call no man master on earth, for one is your Master in heaven.” If this is the instruction, after which one becomes a republican, and shapes his love liberty; the conclusion is equally obvious and inevitable-call no man slave or vassal on earth, for One in heaven is the common Master of all.

Mistaking here, France has gone through a series of signal failures. Her Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, still prove empty names; while want and oppression stare millions in the face, despite the promises of more than half a century’s experimenting with revolutions. A vision of political blessedness mocks her sight, which, like fabled enchanted island, ever and anon seeming just within the grasp, still escapes, and flies

the faster, the faster it is pursued. O my country! mercy spare thee from thus mistaking Heaven's high decree!

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But if we should allow to some of the more enlightened Gentiles of antiquity, some degree of political wisdom; we might still look in vain for their progress in that estimation of temporal wealth, which reveals our community of interests, thus divesting self-love of its hatefulness, by training it to its best satisfaction. Historically, we every where find self-love too blind, freakish, springing upon immediate results, too envenomed with maliciousness to calculate prudently.

3. Religion affords altogether the readiest, shortest, directest way to the conclusion, that interest and duty most coincide. It brings the man of humblest intellectual attainments at once to the conclusion, which the prudent calculator may reach, after long research and extensive induction of particulars; namely, that he cannot add ultimately to his own stock of enjoyment, by detracting from another's share. What might seem prudence at the expense of justice and benevolence, may assume a contrary aspect, at the first flush of conviction, that another life shall rectify the inequalities of this.

Philosophy, having done its best at showing the interest of each in the welfare of all, and how much would redound to the happiness of all if all heartily concurred in thus regarding life, still labors at the question, as the world goes, how the individual will fare, who takes a course so different from the general current, as to devote his best zeal to bettering the condition of that world, which will be likely so little to appreciate his devotion. So that, as matter of fact, one is little likely to see first (in earnestness) the reign of righteousness, as the best security for the necessaries and conveniences of life, unless in the faith which apprehends, that "all these things shall be added" to those thus devoted to promoting the holy cause of humanity.

4. Again; to the great majority of mankind, religion is the best spur to the understanding, towards the conclusions of a just prudence. "The entrance of the word giveth understanding to the simple," says the Psalmist. How often have we found its so! How often the first impulse to intellectual activity is given by the man's religious interest! How often they, in whom a taste for reading could never be formed otherwise, begin to read for satisfying their spiritual wants, and so develop mental powers which else had ever lain dormant.

If we mark those extremes of social humanity, the masses of Hindostan and the people of New England—the monotonous stagnation there, and the progressive enterprize here—we see a difference mainly attributable to a religion whose very spirit is, forgetting the things behind, and pressing onward to the things before. And, though this spirit may not always go forth in accordance with the teaching of that religion, it is none the less true, that such was its source; mind being awake, enterprising, on the track of improvement, only where a lively faith in Christianity has kindled the flame. Every where else, policy at best presses so hard on the subject individuals, as tolerably to restrain the passions from breaking out of one against another. Only "where the spirit of

the Lord is," ventured the experiment, of making the pressure on each so light, as to become the best security for his keeping in place.

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5. Philosophy fails (once more), because it has no adequate malady for the moral malady under which our race labors. When we speak of men weighing fairly the present and the future, comparing impartially the substantial with the showy, the gross with the refined, and choosing after the decision of a fully informed prudence, we suppose what does not exist; “The good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do.”

> “The better seeing and approving,
> Towards the worse I still am moving:”

Such is the united testimony of Christian and heathen to that “law of sin and death,” through whose tyranny the united decisions of reason, prudence and conscience are powerless, till what the law could not do, “in that it was weak through the flesh,” the grace of the Gospel accomplishes; restoring reason and conscience to the throne, giving effect to the conviction, how fully coincident are interest and duty— “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled by us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”

Paul’s account of this matter may have accommodated to it, what John says of the command to mutual Christian love; that it is an old history, and yet not an old but a new one. *Old*, in the sense, that, from what time by one man sin came into the world and death by sin, every one in earnest to fulfil the true end of his being, has found the dame impotence attached to good resolves; the same supremacy gained by the baser impulses, in the hour of trial; the same temptation to find an excuse in what seems so like a law unavoidable, as if it were no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me, as if it were not the responsible *I* that did wrong: this *I* being controlled by sin, which is fancied as a foreign agent taking up a residence within, and controlling the man in spite of him. And, escaped from this and the like deceits, all have been brought to the stand, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!”—that species of self-despair, finishing the preparation for that renewing influence, which “is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” Thus the enemy is raised *in die Luften frei*, no more to receive fresh strength from mother Earth, to renew the contest successfully.

But this account, so old in one sense, is not so in another—in the sense of being obsolete, or out of date. It still retains the freshness of novelty, to answer to the last example of a man’s ordering life, as, he knows, meets the approval of his Judge, and his own truest welfare.

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6. But “the end of the commandment,” or the result of the process by which the soul is put into condition to contend successfully with the powers of evil, “is charity.” So religion preeminently rebinds men to the rule of not seeking their own advantage at the cost of others; because it implants a principle, which might dispense with the certainty of always calculating prudently in doing right. Charity seeketh not her own—not one’s own welfare calculated on the largest scale, exclusively, or at the cost of the greatest good of the whole. Thus it is essentially distinct from a prudence, however refined, and calculating its ends through eternity. It is called “the bond of perfectness,” or a most perfect bond; because, if men were all devoted thus disinterestedly, each to the good of the whole, society would be perfectly held together, without other bond. All forms of civil compact and voluntary association might be dispensed with. Even prudence might fail to calculate, how the present sacrifice to general good is to be compensated; and charity would rebind the man to love his neighbor as himself, and do as he would receive again.

It is further called “the perfect law of liberty;” as by a simple rule it perfectly secures to individuals those immunities, which constitutional provisions at best secure but imperfectly by complicated apparatus, and where philosophy halts at the perversities of human selfishness.

7. Faith alone is the sure foundation, whereto to add virtue [courage], and that for the further addition of knowledge. This courage is *du Coeur*—of the heart, and alone gives that simple love of truth, which, for *its* sake, dares equally to be new and singular, or to be vulgar and common-place. Without that foundation, assuming to be courageous enough to leave the beaten track, and reject received opinions, one does but attain to the bravery, which, in its efforts to dare danger or opposition, is sure to overact its part. Who holds an even balance in weighing evidence, equally guarded against rejecting the old, because it is old, or the new, because it is new? I know not, unless such as have apprehended the *urwahr*—the essential truth, which throws all temporal considerations into the shade.

There are two difficulties in the way of attempting changes in the existing state of things, with good prospect of improvement. The first arises from the force of habit, and a reluctance to try a new, it may be, hazardous course. The other form the little discrimination exercised, when men set about in earnest exchanging the old for the new—discrimination to avoid treating the old as necessarily antiquated, and the presumption of “laying again the foundation” of all things. And these difficulties will hardly be met successfully, except by men, in whom the fear of God has cast out other fear.

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The intelligent part of the people of southern Europe have been, for many years, more thoroughly divested of reverence for the papacy, than was Luther in the days of his greatest vehemence. But they have quietly taken things as they are. They have wanted Luther's substitute for superstition—a fervently religious spirit. They have had only worldly and political motives, for wishing to see the old imposition done away; and these have been powerless against natural apathy, and the fixedness of old establishment. Infidelity and indifferentism prove poor antagonists to superstition.

But when this apathy is one overcome, then the difficulty is, to temper with discretion the zeal for innovation. Throughout, such only as heartily prize the true, because it is true, will be likely to shun alike, rejecting the old for its antiquity, and the new for its novelty.

The first lesson is, to learn how much of human wisdom is but folly: the second, that it is not yet all folly, but a good deal of it genuine wisdom. And he will be most likely to unite these in the habit of thinking soberly, who first moderates his estimate of human power and wisdom, by marking how far their utmost flights had failed to anticipate, what has proved the power of God and the wisdom of God to the world's renovation. Such is the best preparation for still learning, how much that wears the appearance of wisdom and science unsubstantial. This best teaches so to reason soberly and conscientiously, as not to run into licentiousness the liberty of thinking. Religious zeal indeed has hitherto been little enough tempered with discretion; but no other zeal has glowed so intensely, without still more disastrous consequences, in setting the world on fire.

It is yet a consideration in point, that, as in all undertakings hope of success best stimulates and sustains exertion; so the hope, that the world's disorders will yet be cured, is best furnished by the faith, which recognizes a Sovereign ordering and disposing all, bringing light out of darkness; making the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder thereof pledged to restrain. Judging from history and appearances, the philanthropist may often doubt, whether the race be not destined still to go a ceaseless round; ever exchanging one delusion for another, but no real progress.

As it was in character for the prophetess of Apollo, it complain:

"My youth was by my tears corroded,
My sole familiar was my pain;
Each coming ill my heart foreboded,
And felt at first—in vain."

So the philosophic prophet may lament, that he anticipates so much more clearly, what *ought* to be, than what *will* be; that he finds the increase of knowledge, beyond the general sense of the age, to be but the increase of sorrow. But the religious insight into futurity saves from such anguish, by the hope which gilds and realizes the future: hope for the race, armed with a higher assurance than philosophy can work out, that and right and peace shall reign triumphant; and personal

hope, inasmuch as, however dark the prospect for earth's races may be, the individual has a future, whose joy is his strength.

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9. And this habitual reference of the government of earth to its Supreme Ruler, is not more necessary to the hope, that sustains endurance, than to the patience which bides the time, in opposition to the indecent, passionate haste, which defeats its own end. “He that believeth shall not make haste.” There is much fruitless haste to bring the world to rights, for want of a lively belief in a sovereign controlling Power; whose wisdom, whose goodness, whose resources, whose interest, to bring the world to order and happiness, infinitely transcend ours. Thus is missed the conclusion, if He can endure to see the stream of evil flow on age after age; then discretion would set some bounds to our zeal, to see all evil rectified. And the clearer this conclusion is the result of faith, the surer the bounds will be just such, as to save from losing all by a headlong precipitancy.

In short, that habit of mind equally ready to accept the right and the true, whether it come with a suspicious air of novelty and singularity, or whether as old and vulgar it be scouted for being behind the age— that habit which neither yields to discouragements, nor favors the fool-hardy haste, which calculates neither time nor its own strength; which discriminates, when to “contend earnestly,” and when to “let them alone,” the dogged adherents to falsehood and wrong, to the teachings of time and circumstances, their conscience and their God, till every plant which he hath not planted be rooted up by these mightier energies—the habit, realizing all the good of the radical, in proving all things, and all the glory of the conservative, in holding fast what is good;—this habit, so favorable to human progress, but involving so rare a combination of seemingly opposite qualities, as scarcely to be accounted for on all apparent influences, has been well described, as a “life hid with Christ in God.” And truly has it been remarked, in view of the general result of ordinary tendencies and influences in forming one-sided characters, that *becoming as a little child*, expresses no less fittingly the conditions of entering the kingdom of nature, and thinking with the wise, than of entering the kingdom of heaven, and worshipping with the holy.

Of the spiritual more grievously than of the intellectual life is it true, that, “whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.” Here emphatically does the individual labor hardly, to digest into his life the conclusions of reason and conscience, in advance of the average understanding of the age. Professor Lyell, speaking of the Millerite phrenzy, and how some men of pretty sound mind were carried away with it, remarks to this effect: “Religious delusion is like a famine fever, which attacks first the hungry and emaciated, but in its progress cuts down many of the well-fed and robust.”

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So it is. So strong are our tendencies to one tone, that the Christian, in setting to his worldly desires the bounds which his religion exacts, feels to be exercising a self-denial —yielding the temporal to the eternal. He scarce seems to himself to be acting the part of true worldly wisdom. In reading the life of Dr. Payson, it is obviously manifest, that his deeply spiritual views were not inwrought harmoniously into his life's web, as would have been, if he had carried along with him a whole community.

The materialism of this age must pass away, as has passed the quixotism of the crusades. Each has but expressed a stage in the progress of thought; and neither measures the mature life of the soul. It is not so certain to sight, what will be next grasped by this reaching onward to the things before; whether a better reconcilement of the life that now is with that which is to come, or whether a vaporing, misty sentimentalism is to be the spirit of the next age. There are not wanting indications, that the materialism of this age is to be followed by a dreamy spiritualism, raising men above the observance of vulgar duties, but not above the practice of the grossest vices. It is not uncharitable to mark such tendencies, where we see canonized Rousseau, the very embodiment of sensuality, egotism, and misanthropy; and progress *so* taught to be the law of *individual* man, that, whether going to commit his crimes at the brothel, or to expiate them on the gallows, his tendencies are still and forever upward.

We need better evidence than sight can afford, to say,—

"O no! a thousand cheerful omens give
Hope of yet happier days, whose dawn is nigh:
He who has tamed the elements, shall not live
The slave of his own passions; he whose eye
Unwinds the eternal dances of the sky,
And in the abyss of brightness dares to span
The sun's broad circle, rising yet more high,
In God's magnificent works his will shall scan;
And love and peace shall make their paradise with man."

Bryant

Conclusion.

The matter of the preceding thoughts may be thus summed up.

A progressive movement has been going on towards the rule, that, self-love directed towards the material, the sensible, the showy, the distinguishing, is so the ruling motive of human conduct, as to constitute it the first requisite in adjusting the social relations, that private interests, and class interests may not flourish best, short of the best attainable flourish of the whole. When this point shall be so thoroughly understood, that

it shall be taken for no reproach of any class of men to regard them practically as subject to the common influences which control human conduct; we may expect an effective move, for giving to the lawyer and to the physician a relation to society, analogous to that sustained by the pastor among Protestants; instead of leaving their professions to find their best flourish, at about the vigor of intellectual and moral life, which just now we live.

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But this idea loses its importance as another comes into appreciation, —namely, that the conflicts of self-love with self-love, suppose mistaken estimates of happiness to be uppermost; and, just in proportion as men rightly estimate life, and truly love themselves, they appreciate those strong, numberless, delicate, indissoluble ties, which bind the members of the social body to suffer, or to rejoice together.

And this idea again lessens in importance, as yet a third gains the ascendancy—the living conviction, that time is but the portal to eternity; the soul meanwhile tasting “the powers of the world to come;” and knowing the persuasiveness of that strongest call to mutual endearment, “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

And now the consideration of these three points is commended especially to the attention of those, who, in the execution of their office and ministry, have weekly access to the mind of the people. We mourn the waning influence of the American pulpit. Where the power thence emanating in the stirring days of trial to men’s souls,—when its ministers stood on that commanding point, where they caught the first beams of rising day, and reflected the light in the face of the people? At our Revolutionary period, ministers, in their earnestness to preach to the times, might have come short in preaching eternity. So far there was a mistake to be rectified; but they did well to preach to the times. It is among the reasons, why religious so tempered political zeal; and, accordingly, why, as our Revolution *was* without a model, so it *remains* without a rival. It is well that the struggle came, before the toad-eaters to capital’s feed agents in legislative halls occupied the high seats of moral influence.

The true successors to the fathers are not the preachers of party politics, but they who aim to supply the lack of all parties, in that they fail to make liberty a means, valuable only as affording facilities to improvement.

We are exceedingly contracted in our notions of the Christian preacher’s just province. If we confine it to administering directly to the soul’s spiritual wants and everlasting interests, we stray wide from the example, which God himself sets, when he writes a revelation for man. The Bible is full of histories, maxims, laws, just as might be expected in a book, which ignored any other life, than that which now is. One half of it (within bounds) might remain as it is, on the supposition, that men have neither hopes nor duties, but such as pertain to them as joint tenants of this earthly life.

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If we would keep people superior to the impulses of appetite, and the solicitations of sensual pleasure, we must attempt *servitute corporis uti* by *imperio animi** [In Sallust's well known sentence *servitute* may be the object of *utimur*, *imperio* the ablative of the means; or, reversing the construction, the sense may be, by keeping the body in subjection, we better maintain the mind's supremacy. Neither, I believe, is the common understanding of the passage.]—by training the mind to know its capacities and powers. If this be neglected, purely spiritual influences, supposing them forthcoming, will hardly save the body from unduly controlling the man. Vulgar ambition is to be forestalled in the same way. *Imperium populi* may be expected to be attractive, in proportion as *imperium animi* is unstudied, unknown; and of course the full sense missed, in which knowledge is power. He who knows the greatness of the world within, hears nothing strange in the declaration-that "greater is he who ruleth his own spirit, than he who taketh a city." That the recipients of a (so called) liberal education so often become the votaries of vulgar ambition, and vulgar pleasure too, is to be accounted for on the three-fold consideration: first, that what passes for a liberal education is often a very illiberal thing, doing very little to unfold the spirit to itself, and so impress the greatness of mastering its capabilities; secondly, that merely intellectual without moral influences, do not suffice; and thirdly, the law is supreme, which binds all to suffer, in their intellectual and spiritual life, from the mental and moral degradation of a part.

Jesus thought it not beneath the dignity of his office, nor the sacredness of the Sabbath, nor the proprieties of the synagogue, to discourse to people on politeness and good breeding; nor to enforce attention to decorum, by the comparatively low consideration, "Then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee." Unworthy alike, both the lesson and the motive, would cry a false spirituality, if the example of such preaching were set by any lower authority. A false spirituality it is, for it originates in missing the close connection between the temporal and the spiritual, the outward and the inward, the life that now is, and that which is to come.

In faithfully delivering the whole counsel of God, we may encounter something like the wrath of the ruler of the synagogue, whose spirituality was offended at the restoration of a withered hand on the Sabbath. We may find, that we have cast pearls before swine. We may be referred to Paul's determination to know nothing among the Corinthians, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And, if we minister to a people who, like the Corinthians, need to be fed with milk and not meat; like them carnal, factious, party-spirited, and if we would delicately hint to them their character—let us do it indirectly,

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following Paul's example, when he put restraint on the fullness of matter within, and discoursed only on the elements of Christian doctrine. But shall the strong man be confined to a milk diet, because the careful nurse ventures to supply nothing else to the tender infant? If when for the time our people ought to be teachers, they need to be taught again the first principles of the oracle of God, we may reserve pearls for a worthier reception. But, if they are well-grounded in the elements, let us lead them on to perfection.

> Society's pillars, the temple's three P.s,
> Philosophy, Policy, Piety—these
> I commend to your notice. My labor is done:
> May we meet in that city where temple is none,
> Nor sun supervenes on the shadows of night;
> Jehovah—the Lamb—are its temple and light.