

SOCIAL TENDENCIES.

“THE DIVINE END IN SOCIETY IS HUMANE PERFECTION.”

How strange a sound is this heard along the shore! Unlike either the last splashes of a recent storm, or the swell of a coming gale, its indications cannot be read by experience. In irregular intervals, the new waves curl, crisp and yeasty, over the shell-strewn beach, with an unusual surge, although no fresh breeze is sensible above the surface of the waters. The oldest, time-worn caves, echo the unfamiliar sound, and even their inmost recesses seem sensible of the forthcoming of some event, which may destroy their venerable forms forever, and crumble them to common earth. It is as the apprehension of an earthquake, against which no contrivance can prevail, and which no skill can avert. The ancient fishermen, they who seem to be as imperishable as the waters, stand mute. Their boats and nets are drifted to and fro by the influence of the unseen power which they have not the courage to resist, or deem it as impossible to oppose as the south-western gale in its highest fury. Yet the elemental world above is serene; no portents cloud the sky; and the perpetual sun shines on in steady splendor. In a murmuring prophet-note this new impulse is principally indicated.

May we worthily speculate on the origin, operation, and probable futurity of this new movement in the human ocean. Peradventure we may divine the interpretation of the omen.

Certain it is, that the political chiefs of the earth no longer execute that initiative function for which their office was created. The monarch and his prime minister are now but the chairman and his deputy, at a convention where the government really rests in the hands of the majority. The governor has ceased to rule; he is there only to hear resolutions propounded and to count the votes. The old ditty begins to be realized, and each one now is substantially “king in his turn.” Happy fact, that humanity is so much nearer mankind, and is escaping from the leading-strings self-imposed in the nursery.

The depths from which the surface-movements spring, are as various as their outward appearances; and their origins are as separate and distinct as the strange and broken wavelets which indicate them.

Some minds, moved as by personal irritation at a particular vice in existing institutions, will be invited to apply every energy to its reformation or annihilation. Unquiet souls, under the most favorable circumstances, have some complaints to utter. By no means are the objects generally aimed at by the great mass of men to be deemed worthy of real human effort. Yet there is a number, almost deserving the appellation, "a multitude," who, being moved from a greater depth than ordinary, manifest a purpose which may, with less liability to the charge of ostentation, be designated *human*. Whosoever shall go about seeking these, may, without much difficulty, discover them, though they are hidden from the external observer's eye. Heretofore mingled in the stream of professed reformers, until they found such a course could not lead to their satisfaction, they stand aloof from troubled waters, they now declare they are impelled by an inspiration to build up a new social existence, such as history records not, such as experience does not manifest.

These consist not of malcontent or rebellious souls, who, from a pugnacious nature, attack whatever in existence may stand in their way; nor of such as, from an avaricious appetite, hunger for new food; nor of disappointed or disgusted self-indulgents, whose elasticity has been worn away by excess in low delights; but they appear to consist of the loving, the peaceful, the calm, the considerate, the youthful, seeking an external state conformable to the spirit within. They propose not a monastery for soured sinners; nor incarceration of moral debtors, to add, by refined idleness, to a debt already too large; nor a pest-house to accommodate disease; nor an almshouse to create poverty.

There seems now born into the world a newer, fresher spirit; an infant race craving nourishment of a higher kind than was heretofore asked for. Unto us children are given who cannot imbibe the old world's draff, nor be clothed in the old world's abraded garments.

Here and there, in places distant and obscure, but becoming less distant and better known, are heard the cries

of this infant voice. Feeble it has yet been, and deemed mostly foreign; but there is not wanting a maternal ear, which, being open to the slightest sound from real humanity, recognizes these juvenile faint utterances. This maternity, though itself unable to enjoy the new conditions and the new food, may provide them for the young and new-born, who may thenceforward unite in sufficient numbers for the perfect accomplishment of the new life.

Such are some of the characteristics of the latest-born idea of human progress. Between it, and the reforming mind, whose notions of improvement are satisfied by a repair of the guide-post, stand almost all the human family. The thought, the wish, the hope for something better, is all but universal. The question rather is, which is the good, than whether there is a good yet to be attained. It is the intuitive certainty of a better morrow, which makes to-day's ills tolerable.

Assuredly, the world abounds sufficiently in evil to arouse in the dullest an ardent desire to secure some amendment. Not a few are still so obtuse in opposition to progress, that their entire existence is a hinderance. They stretch far beyond all rational conservatism, and must rather be called *Hinderers* than *Conservatives*; hindering no less their own individual weal, than the common good in all. Save these, all are banded in one common sentiment, the improvement of man and his conditions.

The *Conservative* is now a reformer, both intellectually and practically, however strongly in feeling he may be disinclined to changes. The notion, that no melioration is possible, either in mode or principle, is confined to the *Hinderers*, who are glad to hide their morbid peculiarity in the bosom of conservatism, which thus generously succors a pest it should reject. *Hinderance* is the zero in the moral thermometer, of which conservatism makes the freezing grade, radicalism fluctuating in the intermediate degrees, and destructiveness is denoted by the boiling point. Only the cold and hot extremes are obnoxious. The genial temperature lies between the two points of radicalism and conservation, and this is where a benign providence disposes the moral atmosphere.

Conservatism perceives the propriety of amendment in the administration of the established institutions. A reform

in small matters is suited to its taste. There are certain popular principles, or rather a few vague sayings, which conservatives have for a long series of years repeated, involving them to some extent in the class of reformers. Thus, "retrenchment and economy" are familiar terms, even in royal speeches; and although they are employed to cover actual "waste and extravagance," the admission, verbally, that honesty and truth should govern mankind, is a point gained. This slow and unspontaneous acknowledgment, that something must be conceded to the youthful spirit, that "the boys must have it," is cheering, when we know how tardily the better is allowed a place.

Were mankind to be polled, it is pretty certain that a very large majority would be found in advance of this position, notwithstanding it is so long kept in it. Of this we have the strongest assurance in the fact, that the hinderers are violently opposed to a counting of votes in that manner. Did they feel assured that the majority is with them, they would instantly appeal to man. But the mode of reckoning is cunningly fastened upon another principle. Instead of estimating man by virtue, or talent, or skill, he is valued according to certain results, which may sometimes grow out of these antecedents, but which, in fact, may, and more frequently do grow out of vice, or rapacity, or fraud. Man is weighed by property. The State-doctors, like those who study medicine, judge of humanity by its excrements, or wait until itself is excrement. They are only clear after a *post mortem* examination. When the man bodily is destroyed by a surfeit of food, and the man moral by a superabundance of wealth, the doctors can admit him to their conservatory museums, and give a good account of him. But the age demands a consideration of healthful, living men; and daily the living are growing more and more uneasy under the old dead weights.

Urged by no better principle than the pressure from without, the holders of political power slowly and reluctantly concede some of the ground which *might*, in bygone times, wrested from the domains of *love*, but no new principle is recognised. A few more voters are admitted into the circle; but there is not sufficient courage to act universally, and cast aside all the barriers. Conservatism is still ruler by virtue of barricades. Election laws are modi-

fied. Sanguinary codes are meliorated. Poor laws are reconsidered. Black slavery is softened down to apprenticeship. White slavery is refined by a poetic periodical, or rendered more tolerable by music. This mending and patching, or cutting into pattern to suit the demands of the market, promises ages of employment for moderate reformers. It is not probable, scarcely possible, that if the progress of social man is thus capriciously dependent, much good will be attained during the next five or ten centuries.

Perceiving which fact, some men are desirous to move on a little faster, and more steadily, than the ever-varying winds will carry the State vessel, to the desired haven. They are disposed to render all new discoveries available for universal ends, as well as for particular advantage, and hence propose to lay on a degree of steam power to carry us over the ocean. These call for organic changes, and invite new experiments. They are deemed, by the old captains, the most dangerous part of the crew, though acknowledged to be amongst the most useful working sailors.

Hence, in Old and New England, Chartism has birth. This is essentially a new form, including some new materials; not a reform in that definite sense which signifies a going back to ancient forms of ancient materials. Orthodox reform means simply a restoration to the primitive outward condition, in which institutions originally stood. But this is an idea as clearly impossible of actualization, as to restore to animal life the men who, some centuries back, established such institutions. Heterodox reform, therefore, is necessarily proposed; because men see plainly that it is not any outward state of things, beautifully adapted, perhaps, to some remote period, that can be found suitable for them at this day. Organic changes, then, are needed, as well as purity in administration and melioration in practice. And from what point shall these changes date? According to what standard shall they be set up? The principles for the construction of such new institutions are not to be sought in any hitherto known mode, for they are new, they profess to be new. The standard, then, is that which is the antecedent to new measures, to all new measures, for all have the same antecedent, that is to say, the spirit of truth in the human soul. Men may differ respecting the interpretation of this spirit, but they will differ kindly and

graciously. When they disagree, it happens because one party at least is not, perhaps both parties are not really appealing to this standard. The universal spirit has many modes, but they all harmonize. The selfish spirit takes a multitude of jarring forms.

The contest grows hot, when the organic reformer, bold in the rectitude of his purpose, and justified by pure, interior convictions, stands forth beyond the limits which frigid conservatism deigns to permit. Such an action is like the soul attempting to attain to ends beyond the body's capacity. The body, the corporate existence, doggedly withstands any attempts to proceed faster, or farther than its accustomed pace and destination; and binds down the swifter-moving mind, as much as it can, to its own limits. This action is doubtless in conformity to a law established for the good of both. So with the ponderous drawback, which progress encounters from the unwilling and unyielding nature embodied in the corporate interests of the unreforming world.

Chartism is the lowest phase of reform, which has any claims to an affirmative position. Though not without a large deference to established modes and existing current thought, Chartism yet has some positive and primitive assertions to make. Its best principles are drawn from the same fountain whence all principles flow. The chartist has traced backwards and inwards to the origin of the institutions, which the conservative will spill his last drop of blood to defend, and discovers the same reality which underlies both. The maintenance of "the throne and the altar," in England, in the year 1796, is synonymous with "law and order," in Rhode Island, in 1843; for each, being interpreted to its clearest meaning, signifies, "protect my wealth and ease." The same reality thus is ever varying its sign; and half a century may probably suffice to convert "liberty and equality" to the same end. Traced still deeper, the investigation lands us at a point even more comprehensive of parties; and Chartist, as well as Hinderer, design nothing more than the largest possible income from the outlay of their capital, skill, and labor. In relation to selfishness, it is merely as a domestic strife. Both parties equally desire the greatest good of the greatest number, or the happiness of the whole; the said whole being neither more nor less than each man's self.

A better aim for each man, in his earthly career, could not be devised. As happiness is attainable by goodness alone, goodness in each man being secured, the goodness and happiness of all are secured. Men differ only about the mode of it. Through all time, and in all places, this has been the debate. From pot-house gossip to legislative dispute, this is the burden of the song. Doubts, waverings, changes, each man and each sect undergoes; for they firmly believe the truth lies somewhere about, though they have it not. The thought rarely occurs, that the truth is not thus amongst them; and he would be universally voted a pestilent fellow, who should venture to hint as much.

Ever since the invention of civilized society, the result has been found so unhappy, and so inadequate to the outlay, that there has been a constant aim to amend it. Even now, after so much labor, we seem as distant as ever from the desirable condition. In a state of barbarism, the individual man gives up but a very small portion of himself; he looks little to others for support; he is self-reliant. He runs not to the baker for bread, to the butcher for flesh, to the teacher for grammar; but hunts, and cooks, and speaks for himself. It is true he develops some of the misfortunes of civilization, and occasionally, in his weakness, carries fees to the doctor and priest. But the essential quality in barbarism is that integrity of development, which keeps man away from a dependence on other individuals; and while it circumscribes his supplies, also limits his cravings to a more natural and rational amount. On the other hand, the very pith and heart of civilization is mutual dependence, which, in action, comes out in the representative form. Everything, every person is vicarious. No one lives out his own life, but lives for all. This is the great merit and boast of civilization: this, too, is its misfortune and its loss. By its advocates, this short coming in happiness is attributed, not to the inherent nature of civilization, but to its imperfect working out; upon which the recommendation is to expend more and more anxiety upon the attempt; which anxiety having to be reimbursed before society is as much in happiness as previous to this additional outlay, the moral estate of the people becomes as hopeless as their pecuniary estate, where national debts are multiplied in the attempt to obtain relief from the present difficulties.

Ramifications of this idea are found in every department of civilized life. The farmer applies fresh quantities of foul animal manure to force heavier crops from his exhausted fields; which, when consumed, generate a host of diseases as foul as the manures to which they are responsible. The consumer, attracted by cheapness, pays dearly in his doctor's bills, but in ignorance of nature's laws, which he has so entirely abandoned, he fails to connect cause and effect, and repeats his error to repeat his pain. Faith in man would, indeed, appear to be no scarce commodity on earth. Every one looks abroad to every other one; no one looks within to himself;—a universal representative life, in which the legislator represents the conscience, the judge the gravity, the priest the piety, the doctor the learning, the mechanic the skill of the community; and no one person needs be conscientious, grave, pious, learned, and skilful. Out of this grow those monstrous and dreadful conditions which large cities, the very acme of civilized life, without exception, exhibit. Exalted intellect, on the part of a few, which at the expense, frequently, of moral and physical life, elevates national renown, with extreme ignorance of all that really concerns them, on the part of the masses. A few intense spots of wealth, learning, or heroism, amongst an endless range of poverty, ignorance, and degradation, accumulated, apparently, for no higher end than the meretricious employment of the three opposite qualities.

This faith begins, in some quiet and serene corners, to abate, and it will soon be exhausted, when eyes are opened to perceive that the imagined perfection of the scheme of civilization does, in fact, not belong to it. Politically, the idea of representation could not be more fully and purely carried out, than it is in North America. In some of the States, if not in all, the majority is correctly and entirely represented. The majority rules in a direct manner; and although, on minor points, parties are more nicely balanced, yet, in the wider range of every-day life, this majority is a very large portion. Yet, to say that the people are happy; that they are a well developed race; that they manifest an existence as near the perfect as their representative system approaches the perfect, would be a series of libels, which their complaints, their habits, their very countenances loudly gainsay.

In the perfection of the representative system, in the very ripeness of civilization, is its downfall accomplished. Like other fruits, those of this tree will be timely shed by the spirit in beneficent nature, fresh leaves shall germinate, and new blossoms be put forth for the healing of the nations.

How small does this parade of legislation, and this march of science, and this increase of wealth, appear by the comparison with the unsophisticated intuition of man's purpose and destiny! Not more ridiculous would be ancient armor in a modern battle field, or royal robes and ermine in republican assemblies, than these same speech-making, newspaper-reported, republican assemblies are in the presence of real humanity. Court intrigues, the personal disposal of kingdoms, the regulation of whole nations according to individual caprice, are chances for humanity scarcely, if at all, more strange and alien to the true end, than its delusive amusement by statistical renown, antagonistic union, or dissocial society. The regalia of the throne in Europe, the judge's powdered wig, the door-keeper's gold-laced hat, with all antique regards and time-honored observances, are as comforting to the heart, and perhaps not more outrageous to man's real needs, than the fancied security of legislative perfection, and representative self-government. We see the folly in the old, but are not quick-witted enough to perceive it in the new. Because the music, and the incense, and the wax candles are no longer used, men deem they have escaped all papal errors. But the triumph of intellectuality is not always the victory of reason. The misfortunes of a church can fall upon a people assembled in the plainest hall, where music, or sweet odors, or lights by day never appear.

We need not marvel, therefore, at the dissatisfaction which not only rings throughout Europe, but is heard even here in the sylvan expanse of North America; the free, the youthful, the hopeful nation of the world. The Americans are like a troop of truant boys escaped from school, to the woods, for a day or two; who only remember the ways and modes of the old pedagogue, and have not yet had time to develop an original course of action for themselves. But it will come out of them, and the old pedagogue shall be ashamed that he kept the boys so long in

fear and thralldom; and he will conform to an amicable truce with the more demure and broken-spirited boys who still submit to the old school discipline at home. Self-interested love of ease shall, at least, secure some amelioration.

In the mean time, through the great instrument of teaching, pungent experience, we ascertain the true value of these pursuits and objects, for the free attainment of which we ventured our all to escape from the tyrannical old disciplinarian. Mankind may undoubtedly be much slower and more inapt to learn than to enjoy; but duller than Lethe's stream should we have been in failing to discover the rocky spots and barren wastes in the new land. The game of government, for which the boys eloped to the woods, is found a profitless affair, by the best of men. They who have really ripened into manhood in the newly acquired freedom, are desirous of keeping out of this amusement as a sport for children only. This is a grand secret, a sacred revelation for both those who have gone ahead, and those who stay behind.

No man who is qualified to be a political leader, and by democratic vicissitudes, some day finds himself placed in that position, but is anxious to declare how hollow and corrupt is that fruit, which, to the exoteric eye, appears so plump and ruddy. The ease with which mankind are governed, or, as he would say, gulled, is a soul-sickening contemplation to such a person. On initiation into the facts, he instantly becomes satiated of his false ambition, and intuitively perceives the real pettiness of political greatness. These things are sources of vanity and of vexed spirit now as they ever were. Heroism exhibited in this manner becomes renowned, more by the degradation of the mass, than by any extraordinary elevation of the individual. If there were no masses of crime, the jurist would excite little attention to his codes. If there were no distressful pecuniary exigency, the treasury-secretary would only be an accountant. Many are the men daily called upon for more ability, in private life, than we demand of public men. The teacher of a large school, or a busy shop-keeper, must honor larger drafts for patience and prompt calculation, than the functionaries of government, who are withdrawn from their own pertinent duties

by the attractions of popular gossip, and ephemeral importance of office.

During the latter days of ancient Rome, the imperial dignity was purchasable by the highest bidder, to whom the mercenary prætorian bands passed it in quick succession. But ruling minds were never among the purchasers. So is it in our time. The temporary and apparent dominion of men is attainable at a market price, but no virtuously conscientious mind can consent to pay it. For it is as certain now as of old, that the mercenary bands will slay every soul which is not sufficiently compliant to their purposes, as of old they slew the body. Office can be gained in gyves only. "Bound hand and foot" is the common expression of the victims themselves, who, with a zeal worthy a nobler cause, suffer their better nature to be sacrificed on the vain cross of public political life.

A state of things, thus subversive of all true greatness, is necessarily equivalent to an impassable barrier against real manhood. The dove finds little that is congenial to its nature in that muck heap which ushers the viper into day. The best men are thus the first to be convinced, that the present order of existence is not so much to be designated erroneous, as that it is essentially an error; a magnificent error possibly, but no less an error; a mistake which no perfecting of the system can rectify, but rather must render its inherent crookedness more obvious. Attempted perfection thus becomes a beneficence; for men, who have resolved upon any course as true, are not wont to be convinced of its delusion, until they have run to the end of it. While, therefore, the progressive man cheers onward every projected reform, he is not to be assailed as faithless, because he has no hope in reformed old institutions as the ultimate in human earthly existence. The parent, who is quite conscious that youth leads to manhood, may, nevertheless, supply his boy with the toys he asks for. And the world, still in its youth, is merely crying for toy after toy, in succession, according to its age; and the more freely and quickly the world is indulged, the more fully and speedily will it be convinced of their worthlessness. There seems to be no other mode of progress for a race generated so deeply in ill as the present stock of humanity. If our being dated from wisdom and love, so much effort to bring us back again to those qualities would not be required.

For fifteen hundred years, Western civilization, with the lustre of Christianity superadded, has been struggling to perfection, an ideal perfection of its own; and at the close of that period, the acknowledgement is more complete, that we have approximated little towards the true end, beyond men of pagan civilization, or barbaric sylvanism.

An enthusiastic ardor, a pressure upward to a higher and purer life, is an indestructible instinct in the human soul. Hope is the truly youthful spirit, the characteristic nature, which distinguishes the brightest specimens amongst the duller human mass. It is the sacred fire, which, on the altar of human clay, perpetuates the remembrance and the connexion of heaven. Caught by the first luminous sparks which appear in the social temple, such purer beings attach themselves, in entire simplicity, to the shining lights of the age, with little inquiry, and little power to discriminate to what end they will lead. Sad experience proves that they lead nowhere. Deceived, but not depressed, the youthful spirit still relies. Its faith again deceived is again and again renewed, until reliance on men or measures becomes itself a breach of faith. In disappointment and disgust of reform and reformers, how many noble souls are now wandering objectless, almost hopeless, in tartarean fields.

Diffidence, humble self-estimation, is ever a quality in the true soul. Hence the most sincere are seldom found in the front rank in political reform. They defer to leaders, who with some partial dazzling talent, but no determined intention of carrying principle into action, talk loudly in echo of what they suppose to be the general sentiment. Year after year witnesses the rise of these wavelets on the political ocean, which as soon are succeeded and suppressed by the offspring of a fresh wind. Of late these bubbles have arisen and passed away, with such rapidity, that reliance on them is almost worn out. Their mere frequency exposes their instability. In the days of slow travelling, the mercantile community still entertained hope that rapid communication would aid their prosperity; but now that steam packets and rail ways almost bring the ends of the earth together, the delusion has vanished, and the merchant no longer thinks he should be relieved, if communication were electrically instant. His hopes no longer are based on mechanical contrivances. Thus is it, also, in the moral-

political sphere. The noisy, heartless, external reformers, have risen and sunk with such rapidity, that experience of their futility is revealed to every one. A life, short as it is, is no more required to develop to the simplest observer the hollowness of political reforms and reformers. But it requires some faculties to become a simple observer; which the misled multitude yet possess not. So that there is still an occupation left for a few small actors on this stage.

Comparatively great efforts are, however, now needed to maintain politics on anything like a respectable footing. So that to predict their speedy downfall is not a very hazardous prophecy. To think by deputy is found to be as unhappy for the mind, as to cast our fair share of physical labor upon others is fraudulent to the body. Drudge politicians are no less degraded than drudge laborers. It is now grown so evident that the pure mind cannot have its garment's hem touched by the hand of public life, without feeling that the virtue has gone out of it, that the superior minds in all countries are working in other directions.

For these other directions, the great mass, also, are evidently preparing. So frequently have the people been told that some great event was on the eve of development, that now is the appointed time, that they cease to have faith in such calculators. One crotchet after another, which it cost not a little to attain, has been accomplished, and happiness seems distant as ever. Magna Charta, Bill of Rights, Trial by Jury, Purity of Parliament, Diminished Taxation, Democracy, Separation of Church and State, Universal Suffrage, Pure Republicanism, Universal Education, Physical Abundance,—all these have been gained; and, although not in vain, yet it is uncertain whether they are really worth the powder, shot, and mental anxiety which they cost. Monarchy, hierarchy, despotism, monopoly, exclusion, and every other outward political form of selfishness men may, one after another, set aside; but as fast as destructive reform proceeds in one section, hindering corruption is growing in another; and so long as men remain unreformed within, there always will be a crop ripe for the reformer's sickle. Now this fact is rising into consciousness in so many bosoms, that there is almost a general readiness to follow those superior minds, which, recoiling from the

uncomeliness in all state affairs, are each, in their several directions, essaying their best for humanity.

The Literary Class, by nature, by genius, the friend of virtue, of liberty, of man, ever ready to announce and to explain new truths,—what do its best members at such a crisis? Sad to say, but the fact must out, that the divine gift of literary or poetic utterance is not always allied to taintless integrity. “We must live,” say the writers. “Bread must be had. We have as much right to the market value of our mental organization, as the holder of physical strength has to the results of his energies.” Thus a large number at once justify the extremest hiring which a commercial press can offer. The trading spirit buys the productions; a trader is the factor between the author and the reader. How then can the writer escape the general pollution? A few, more nice in mental sensibility, must have readers in some degree conformed to their own intuitions, and sell themselves to a select circle only. But few are there who either now are, or seek to become acquainted with the dignity of poverty, if complete fidelity to their mission should involve such a consequence. Nay when, at distant intervals, an unsold, uncompromising pen appears, the hireling recreants are ever ready to assail the disloyal rebel whose example might leave them breadless.

Pitiable, indeed, is this bankruptcy of soul. For these are the appointed means, in their degree, for man’s mental redemption. They are the morning watchmen sleeping on the walls. Their dormancy is fatal to the whole city. Nay, worse is their treason, for they are bought by the arch-enemy of the good citizens. And he who, though denouncing them not, is faithful to his trust, they fail not to slander as the recreant.

The degeneracy of literature taints the age. Instead of reclaiming men to uprightness; instead of stirring them once more to their feet; it accepts the wretched price of bread to confirm them in ignoble indolence of heart, and an activity of head still more ignoble. It receives its dun color from an ill-tintured source, and returns one of a still darker shade. Time was when the author and the prophet were one. Then the oracle and the oracular were not separated, and there was no weighing and adjusting in the scales of popular approbation, before the voice spake what the

heart felt. Misgivings of the people are deplorable; defalcations of statesmen are sad; but when the purest of popular instruments thus fail, when the very ladder, by which we are to ascend from words to being, is constructed of rotten wood, what hope can remain for the nations?

Literature, then, is a false dependence. Since its divorce from real being, it is unavoidably barren. It is divorced whenever for a price it concedes favor. Of it nothing is to be expected. At the best, it presents to the people pretty pictures, which there is no intention whatever to realize. Of these paintings the world possesses a large stock, and it seems still increasing, every addition to which constitutes a fresh obstacle to human progress. The masonry, designed by the architect for a road to facilitate, is built into a wall to obstruct, and each added slab serves only to augment the hindrances. When men escaped from the confined air of the cloistered church, they imagined not they should fall into the meshes of a new priestcraft. When men are liberated from the hireling priest, they are little aware how they are caught by the hireling press. It is as fatal to thought, to purity, to integrity, to religion, for a nation to be press-ridden, as it is to be priest-ridden.

Of mere literature, therefore, there is no hope. Logical acumen, argumentative force, fluent expression, prompt wit, do not ensure moral rectitude, although originally they must have been allied to it. But integrity does not seem so marketable as its faculties. *That* can neither be bought nor sold;—*these* are ever purchaseable, and have, of late, found so ready a market, that the expectation is of the next change being an increased supply, and a superabundant stock. When intellectuality is so plentiful as to be worth little in the market, the home demand may possibly be served. Since men have concluded that knowledge is power, and that ignorance is the source of all our woes, they have indefatigably pursued the accumulation not of fact-knowledge, but of the records of fact-knowledge and of fact-speculation, until the sun of truth is almost hidden from their eyes. Literature is indeed a telescope which takes the whole firmament within its visual field; but, unfortunately, its lenses are constructed of paper instead of glass; a semitransparent shade, reflecting its own imprinted errors; not a lucid medium transmitting pure light. Lite-

ature cannot purify and elevate man, since itself needs so much to be purified and elevated.

Words are, however, such sacred types of the divine oracle, so near akin to that word which in the ever beginning is, that as being the mode in which the loftiest and purest must utter themselves to the common understanding, even our current literature is dashed occasionally by a purer rill than the body of the broad stream. In the warm season, sundry little freshets come down from the mountains, sparkling in the sun, bathing and quenching the thirst of the arid soul. But this literature, by reason of its very originality, is so quaint and strange that the great Mississippi flood is not at one with it until it becomes saturated with its unsubiding silt; and the condition of its acceptance is to adopt the old prevailing muddiness. Thus virtue's self grows powerless; and, to maintain existence, life is destroyed.

From this account of the general bearing of literature, we exempt all those efforts of the moralist, who only employs the pen or the press, or the tongue, as means, and neither of them the best, by which the moral purpose is to be declared. Of these efforts something must be said hereafter.

Science is a prop on which men have of late almost universally leaned; but, with what impropriety, is daily growing more and more apparent. Ungracious in the extreme is it to say aught against science, against knowledge, against intellectual culture. These, in their order, and as opposed to their negations, are so beautiful, that the tongue recoils from the smallest whisper in their dispraise. Yet the declaration must go forth, that science is not moral virtue; and that, being an accommodation road with two branches, it is as frequently the avenue to degradation as to elevation. Scarcely a projector, or inventor, or intense student, has broached the object of his absorbing pursuit, without affirming also that it was the means for human regeneration. The profits on gas light were to pay off national debts and set the bankrupt world upright to start afresh. Spinning-jennies, steam-engines, power-looms, canals, rail-roads, have each in turn been made to promise pecuniary and moral redemption to the insolvent and hardened human race. But this species of redemptory designs is nearly worn

threadbare. The hope in science is as attenuated as the hope in politics. They are, in fact, branches of the same stock. Expansions from the great stock of selfishness, they bear the same kind of fruit.

Little novelty as there is in the announcement, that knowledge is subordinate to goodness, and difficult as it is to avoid cant in the annunciation, it must yet again be said,—Knowledge, pursued as an accumulation of useful store; science, studied with the omission of the master science—con-science—is, at best, like an examination of the nutshell without a penetration of the kernel. Science has in vain ventured into every possible department of human life on our behoof; and vain must ever be such enterprise. A stone is but a stone, polish it as smoothly as we may; and it can never be chipped into a corn stalk. The grass, too, living as it is, must be taken in and digested, its refuse passed away, before its elements can be assimilated to animal being. So too of science. It may be the air which the moral nature breathes in, and thus it may be used by its superior, but never can it generate, or be the parent of, moral life.

Science has gathered our cottage spinners and spinsters and knitters from their separated firesides to the magnificent and heated cotton mills; it transforms sailors and stage drivers into brakemen and stokers; it penetrates mountains; it quickly crosses oceans. Like the elephant's trunk, nothing is too large for its strength, nothing too minute for its sensibility. It permeates everything and everywhere. Cotton, woollen, needles, buttons, ships, books, society, and theology; all are brought to the bar of science. The analytic, the doctrinal, the skilful, prevail over the synthetic, the loveful, the unitive. Whatever can be proved by logic, or made to appear rational by argument, is accepted; while that which is deeper than all proof, and is the basis of all rationality, is to go for nought.

With a perpetual deferring of hope, which, by perverting the heart's eye from the true and stable centre upon the turbulent and dazzling circumference, makes the soul forever sad and sick, science still attracts as the magnet of human resuscitation. Man appears to have engaged science as a special pleader in the court of conscience, to avert the consequences of his culprit conduct. Hired extenua-

tion is deemed cheaper than self-repentance. To know every wise saw and moral sentiment that ever were uttered, is not nearer to a realization of them in the man who remembers them, than in the paper on which they are written. All this fact knowledge, or report of fact knowledge, of which the world is so full, seems barren of the desired consequences. We know how many millions of miles lie between Saturn and the Sun, and how many thousand seconds light is travelling from the fixed stars to our little planet, but are wandering much as ever from the road to happiness, and are as unready as the ignorant to enter thereon by its only wicket gate.

“Science may be applied to inadequate objects.” True. We may exaggerate or ridicule when we say the optician will never spy out bliss for us through his lenses, nor the cotton-mill spin happiness with its million yards of unmingled yarn. So analysis and rationality step forward into a new sphere, and venture to elaborate a Science of Society. Amongst the recent offspring of the scientific nature, are political economy and human association. The right divine of kings has, through the right divine of landlords, descended to the crowned heads of factory owners, and the orthodox doctrine is now the right divine of cotton lords. Hereditary monarchy, subdued by blood aristocracy, to be in its turn levelled by opulent democracy. In all of which the *res publica* are equally neglected; the common wealth is swallowed up by individual miserliness and individual misery.

Magnificence of idea and of execution have not, however, been wanting in the recent modes any more than in the ancient. The argosies of merchant princes are eclipsed by townships of busy industry, and the feudal cavalcade is surpassed by the fairy-like gliding of the mail train, which only needs the dimness of remote time and the glance of genius, to render as poetic as its predecessors. These extensive schemes for the increase of wealth, these unprecedented combinations for the augmentation of individual happiness, could not long exist without suggesting to the benevolent mind ideas of the like nature for the common good. Thus the science of society, no longer left as of old, to individual private enterprise, has been projected into the grand, the public, the combinative. Of

these several plans have been some time before the world, and, for one or two, there are now practical operations commenced. Various doctrines of human nature are mixed up with these practical schemes; and pleasant withal it is to the moral metaphysician to be confirmed in his *a priori* intuitions of considering first the man, and secondarily the plans, to see that all parties are necessarily brought back again who venture to reverse this mode.

Amongst the many schemes for aggrandisement by means of joint-stock companies, it has been submitted to capitalists that greater security and a larger return await their outlay in schemes for the bettering of human beings, than they can obtain in any other kind of risk. Capital is, however, slow in adventuring; and, as yet, only a few small associations have been formed with this object, in addition to the efforts of one or two persons who have boldly ventured to embark individually. At Citeaux, in the south of France, Mr. Arthur Young, formerly an Amsterdam merchant, has laid out 1,450,000 francs for an estate of thirteen hundred acres, and 154,000 francs more for stock in hand, on which a Phalanstery is formed. The chateau is represented as very magnificent; and the whole buildings and court yards cover thirteen acres. Mr. Young transfers shares on equitable conditions to purchasers either resident or not. The basis of recompense is threefold; having relation to investments of capital, skill, and labor, the latter enjoying the larger return, the first receiving the smallest percentage. It need hardly be observed that Arthur Young is a faithful disciple of Charles Fourier. It does not appear that any other such plan of association is in operation, or even projected in the continental countries of Europe. The various old religious foundations may probably supply some of the conditions provided in such institutions.

In England, however, where the almshouse or the union-workhouse is the highest refuge which society offers to unemployed labor or virtuous skill, in age or youth, the subject of social science has been regarded with the deepest attention. A nation almost ceaselessly engaged in combatting with poverty, and having strong desires for ease, unavoidably catches at whatever may present the smallest hope for respite from ill-requited toil. No wonder, there-

fore, that the British Isles have heard a loud response in favor of thoughts so comprehensive, as to promise relief from every clerical, legal, governmental, doctrinal, and practical evil. In the multitude of inventions which ground the people down, one was descried which proposed to exempt them from the galling mill-stone. However noble may have been the contemplated design, it was accepted as means of increasing the supply of bread, and of averting the consciousness of blame. Hope and consolation for body and mind, therefore, met a reception in idea much greater than in practice. And as the poverty to be meliorated was too excessive to help itself, nothing has been done of a permanent character until very recently.

At Tytherly, in Hampshire, estates amounting to about one thousand acres, held principally on long leases, have been appropriated by some wealthy individuals, in conjunction with a widely spread list of smaller subscribers, to the carrying out of the idea which has adopted especially the term "social." The principles are mainly, in morals, that "the character of man is made not by him, but for him;" and, in economy, that of a community of goods. In what way, or to what extent, these principles will work out with human materials generated and educated, as all have more or less been, on the opposite doctrines and practice, future reports must show. Time has not yet permitted the requisite experience. The buildings erected are furnished on the most commodious, and even luxurious scale, for the reception of about two hundred persons, but at an expenditure which threatens the profitable action of the industrial materials. An investment of about £30,000 comprises the pecuniary capital of this adventure.

Upon this attempt innumerable eyes are fixed, as upon the day-star of hope. Should it rise, countless hearts will be gladdened, which, in the dim uncertain twilight, durst not so much as venture to announce their sympathy. Some, also, contemplate its possible success with terror, as the uprooting of all that is sacred and comfortable. Not alone, however, the toil-worn, ill-requited artisan, is an anxious spectator of this scene, but even the successful trader, disgusted with the processes to wealth, as well as dissatisfied in its possession, hopes to liberate his offspring from such soul-staining courses.

Although from the unavoidable defects of inexperienced leaders, wayward followers, and uncontrollable circumstances, many excuses may be afforded to these two distinct establishments; yet they must develop, in their respective careers, some of the effects of acting upon the two principles of community of property, and of individuality of recompense. It is quite possible that the two vessels thus started at the same time may, ultimately, land their passengers in the same country; but to know the difference in the navigation will repay the cost of the charts. They will, at least, illustrate the laws of human organization, if they do not determine the law of human nature.

The moral principles of the French and the English experiments are, however, more importantly asunder than their economies. The English has entirely a material basis; and, though sympathetic and religious sentiments are superadded, they are only introduced as tasteful ornaments to please the eye, and are not mingled with the bread as component parts of healthful diet. The French combines the material and the spiritual; and enters, from the first, into all questions touching the feelings, sympathies, and views of individuals. One sets out with the idea that, although human beings are now endlessly varied, they may all be made of uniformly good character, by favorable circumstances, with such slight differences in organization as shall not impugn the general truth. The other proposes no uniformity of character as essential to success, but seeks to provide attractive occupation for all dispositions and tastes, and rather bases its hopes upon variety, than upon sameness. The Phalanstery, therefore, seems to be a more comprehensive view of humanity than the Community. Both are, perhaps, equally wanting in respect to the inmost life-germ, for the development of which the human egg is laid; but, mentally considered, only, that is, without relation to practical operations, one appears to be the shell alone, and the other the yolk and shell.

The poetry in life, the soul of things, the spirit in the soul, the warmth in the light, — in what human association shall we find this the primal element? In the religious associations of the old world, or the new; in the convent, the monastery; the Shakers, the New England fraternities, the joint-stock industrials?

Man cannot have a heart or not, at the good will and pleasure of philosophers, how benevolent soever they may be. Nor can he set it aside at his own convenience. He has it always. And it is something more than a mere hydraulic machine. It is even more than a possession. It is himself. Man, as a heart, as a nature more occult than an intelligence, is a riddle yet unsolved by intellectual philosophers. These profess to discourse of the understanding, while they deny that any reality whatever, stands under the intellectual or analytical powers. Fortunately, however, there is also a synthetic nature, which must know and feel all things as whole, as one, and provision for this nature must be part of the common stock, but as far as we can judge by an inspection of the inventories, there is rarely any store laid in.

With the sincerest wishes for the success of any programme having for aim the bettering of man, or his conditions, we still can entertain but faint hopes where we perceive the scheme rather than man is placed first in importance. That there is to be a gradual outworking of society, a vast progress for mankind, cannot be doubtful to the steady observer. A sufficient arc is known to prove the fact of a concentric orbit. But that orbicular track cannot be calculated by the moral astronomers, who are not centralized beings. It is a calculation, too, which cannot be put beforehand into books, and systems, but must be realized, day by day, from the centre itself, as are the planetary motions. Skeptics and scoffers of social melioration have yet some misgiving of their wit, and their objections, but they are rather confirmed than converted by preorganizations never realized, and which, at the same time, serve rather to disappoint than to encourage the faithful.

Various smaller associations in England and America might be spoken of as either in existence or proposed. But for all those which are not bound down by theological tests, it may be remarked, that they are yet in so incipient a state that their immediate observers, or even the members themselves, can scarcely pronounce decisively on the elucidation of any one principle. For material results, the period is too short; for mental order, the elements too chaotic; for spiritual growth, the subject too little heeded.

(To be continued.)

C. L.