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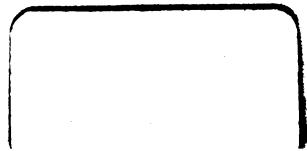
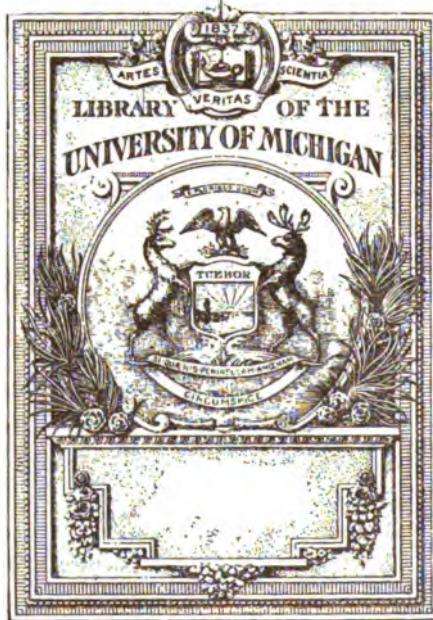
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# EARLY ESSAYS AND LECTURES



BY

CANON SHEEHAN, D.D.  
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## P R E F A C E

I HAVE disinterred these short essays and lectures from several magazines, some of ancient, some of more modern date, at the solicitation of a few well-wishers in Ireland and America, who have expressed a desire to possess them in a combined and permanent form. And for this reason, and also because I have marked them as "early essays," I present them just as they were originally written and published, without addition or modification, believing that those who have expressed a wish to possess them would prefer to have them in the shape in which they originally appeared. Hence, perhaps, some of these papers will appear out of date just now, when we have forged so far ahead of the time when such subjects were deeply interesting. But I hope the greater number will be considered of more permanent and vital interest, as they embrace questions that are not of to-day, nor yesterday, but of lasting

human importance. It is quite possible that if I were to write on these subjects now, I would treat them in a different manner, and perhaps in a modified style. But they are at least a record of certain phases of thought on problems of great moment during a literary novitiate, extending over many years.

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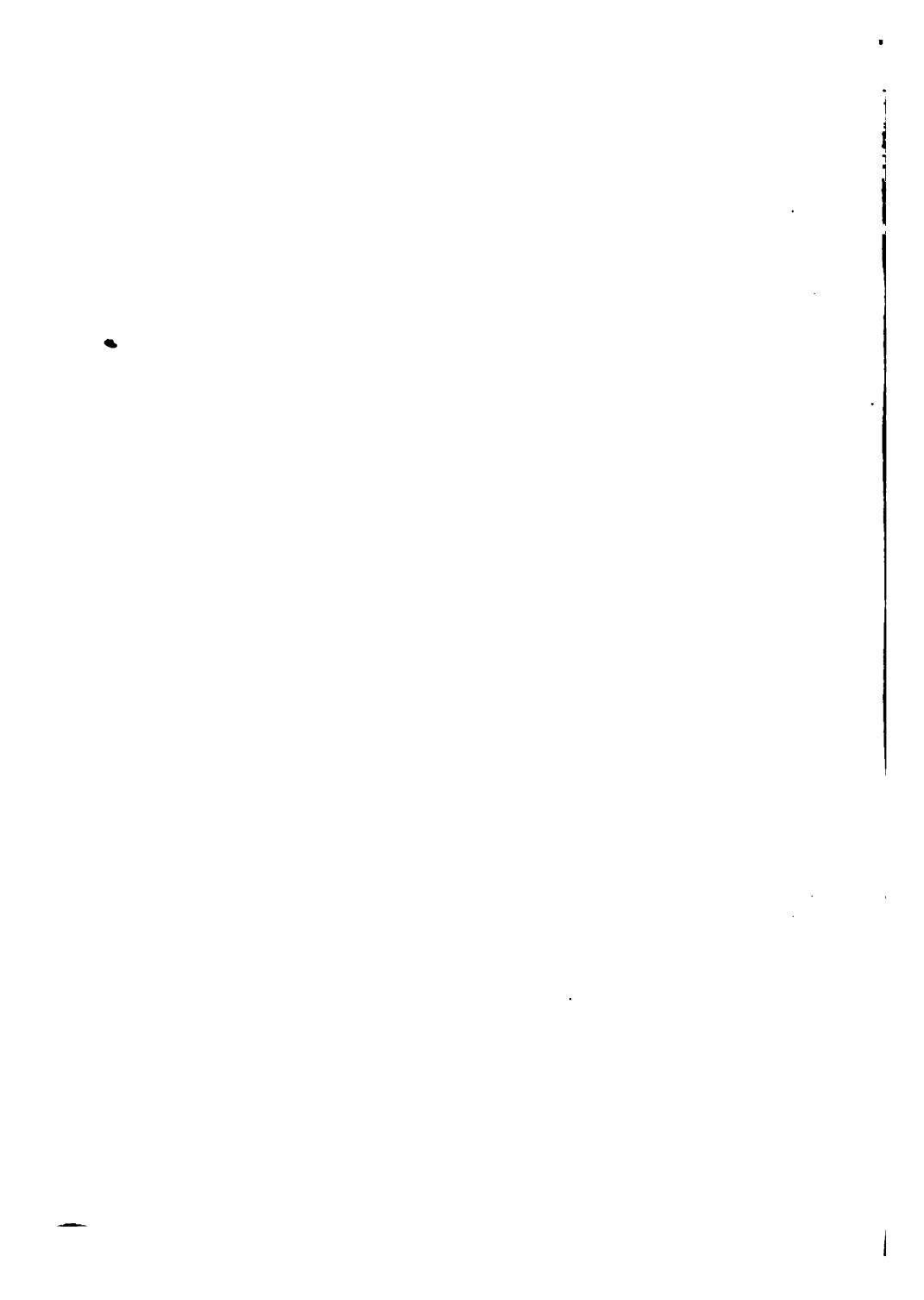
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## ESSAYS



## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN INTER- MEDIATE SCHOOLS.<sup>1</sup>

EVERY decade of years in our century brings a fresh revolution in thought, and every revolution means an advance, and every advance, if not properly directed, is a positive retrogression. I am writing from a Catholic standpoint, from which it is abundantly clear that the activity of individual thought and the interchange of ideas amongst men, if not restrained or controlled by the Gospel teaching, must lead inevitably to that refined atheism with which we are not altogether unacquainted, and which to thoughtful minds is more repulsive than even squalid barbarism. This reflection is of the utmost importance at the present time when the national passion for knowledge has been stimulated by competition for rewards, and artfully directed into those grooves which modern thought has worked out for itself. The Intermediate Education Act was hailed as a measure of infinite good to the youth of Ireland; its Board was constituted without an objection; its programmes have been issued and accepted almost without demur; and its adjudications received as impartial judgments made by enlightened and liberal minds. On all hands it has been pronounced a success; and if in these pages I point out a few dangerous tendencies, I desire to guard myself against the suspicion that I am contravening public opinion. I merely wish to point out the dangers that would arise if the framers of that Act could follow out their own designs; and if ample precautions be not

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, September, 1881.

taken to supply palpable defects, and neutralise in the working of the Act whatever is positively hurtful.

Although this paper is a consideration of the ethical rather than the educational aspects of the system, limited to secular studies and secular advantages, I cannot refrain from quoting an extract from Sir Charles Dilke's work, *Greater Britain*, to show the tendency of modern American thought on the subject of competitive and elective systems of education. These conclusions have been accepted by the Michigan and Cambridge Universities after experiments which, if not prolonged, were certainly exhaustive:—

“ The system of elective studies pursued at Michigan is one to which we are year by year tending in the English Universities. The Michigan professors say, and Dr. Hedges bears them out, that a far higher average of real knowledge is obtained under this system of independent work than is dreamt of in colleges where competition rules. They acknowledge frankly that there is here and there a student to be found to whom competition would do good. As a rule they tell us this is not the case. Unlimited battle between man and man for place is sufficiently the bane of the world not to be made the curse of schools. Competition breeds every evil which it is the aim of education, the duty of a university, to suppress—pale faces, caused by excessive toil, feverish excitement that prevents true work, a hatred of the subject on which the toil is spent, jealousy of best friends, systematic depreciation of men's talents, rejection of all reading that will not pay, extreme and unhealthy cultivation of the memory, general degradation of labour—all these evils and many more are charged upon the system.”

Such are the doctrines evolved from the free, unfettered experience of Young America. They are worthy of consideration in this land of ancient ideas.

One of those rare minds that can at a glance foresee consequences said to the present writer immediately after the passing of the Act of 1878: “ The Tories have out-

witted the Irish priesthood at last. They have introduced into the primary and secondary schools, and they will introduce into the university scheme, the system of payment by results ; and the consequences will be that in a short time your whole educational system, from the lowest bench in the country school to the *aula maxima* of the university, will be thoroughly secularised." That there is some foundation for these forebodings is a fact beyond dispute. The dangerous tendencies of the system in elementary education have been already explained in two thoughtful articles that have appeared in the *Record* ; but, practically, they can be minimised by the careful supervision of the managers, by periodical examinations in religious knowledge, by episcopal visitations ; and they would be entirely removed if the system of diocesan inspection, recommended by the Synod of Maynooth, were introduced into Ireland. The extraordinary advantages of this system are well known to those who have visited England, and who must have been struck by the zeal of the teachers and the proficiency of the children, not only in Christian doctrine, but in Scripture and ecclesiastical history, and the devotional practices and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. To obviate therefore the dangers in the primary system, nothing more is required than a patient and precise use of the remedies at our disposal.

The case is quite different in Intermediate schools. For here we are dealing with men, not with children ; with ready and eager intellects, not with infantine, undeveloped minds ; not with youths, impatient of study and confinement, but with those who are filled with a passion for knowledge and the ambition of excelling ; and here there is an evident and powerful temptation to neglect religious knowledge, which apparently can be of no practical utility in the race of life, in favour of the technical and secular learning that is rewarded not by exhibitions alone, but by the larger prizes which years will bring. We live in a utilitarian age. Everything must subsidise secular advancement. Spiritual

and intangible things must subordinate themselves to visible advantages of wealth and position. This is the teaching of the age. This is the cardinal heresy of our century. And this *cui bono* doctrine has penetrated our colleges and schools, and masters and scholars alike are subject to its influence. The former consult for the interests of the college; and for the twelve months prior to the examinations dream of nothing but the place the college will take in the columns of the *Freeman's Journal* in September. The latter strain every faculty that they may win honours and gladden their parents' hearts by carrying off exhibitions and prizes. Perhaps there is anger and mortification from failures during former years, perhaps a very exalted position that must be maintained. But there is certainly every incentive to work for money and honours, and every temptation to neglect and set aside altogether the religious knowledge, on which neither teachers, nor commissioners, nor the world will set a premium.

The consequences of such neglect to the individual and to society cannot well be exaggerated. For let us remember again that the question now is, not of children in whose minds the absence of positive knowledge will leave blank ignorance and nothing more, but of matured intellects, restless, active, and inquiring, and far more receptive and retentive of the knowledge that is unto death than of the wisdom that giveth life. In such minds we can never find the vacuity of sheer ignorance. The want of a thorough, detailed, and comprehensive knowledge of Catholic theology, will eventuate in the adoption of those attractive philosophic conjectures, that constitute the literature and almost the religion of the day, and which are so vaporous and unsound, yet, withal, so grandly spiritual, that they have been well called "the dreams of fallen angels".

Even on a lower level there are dangers not the less perilous because more prosaic. History forms a department in these examinations; and to reach the required standard, history must be read as a philosophical system,

and not merely as a narrative of facts and events. That system of mnemonics with which we are familiar—the laborious compilation of dates and names in the mind—is altogether superseded. The senior grade student is now educated to approach his Lingard or Smith with something of the critical tastes and comprehensive views which he has been taught to admire in Hume or Schlegel. He must collate facts, question authorities, make allowances for religious prejudices, and in a short time he will be disposed to take a broad liberal view of things, which to his inexperienced mind will mean the rejection of everything he has learned by sound tradition, and the acceptance of new theories founded very often on the grossest distortion of facts. He will read profane history without the sidelights of ecclesiastical history. He will forget or disbelieve the patent truth that history can be made to prove anything; and he will think himself advancing to the light when he has been deceived by the dexterity of the playwright. And the supervision of a Catholic tutor will be of little use. The student has formed his opinion on the subject, and he will look on his preceptor as a judge regards the special pleader who is feed to prove, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, that right is wrong, that black is white. Botany and zoology must be studied. What better manual on the subject than the text-book of the College of Science, *Darwin on Species*? Natural philosophy must be read. There are Tyndall's admirable treatises on Light and Heat. Pure mathematics are bracketed with 2,000 marks. No ancient or modern writer excels in this logical and deductive science the young atheist, Clifford, who a few months ago, in Madeira, breathed his last, and "vanished," as he believed, "into the infinite azure of the past". These are the first writers that have clothed the dry skeletons of facts and figures with rhythmic nervous rhetoric, and struck musical poems out of the dumb cold statue of science. Our young enthusiast cannot help admiring their transcendent talents. The admiration develops

into hero-worship. If he have a real love for his work, they become his saints as surely as Savonarola becomes the idol of the ecclesiastical zealot. And in the cycle of time and thought the suspicion darkens his mind for the first time—perhaps, after all, these men are not deceived in their higher speculations. Can it be that the traditions of my youth are but nursery tales? If Rome is in antagonism with reason, where is truth? In the new revival this temptation is inevitable. It will arise from scientific or literary research as surely as miasma arises from the prairie mould that is turned for the first time. It is only indifference to the students' highest interests that can believe these dangers problematical. And what provision have we made? Where is the prop for staggered faith? Where the light for darkened minds? Is it not a fact that the catechism of the hedge-schools of fifty years ago is the religious class-book of the senior grade student of to-day? And surely no one can suppose that the categorical question and answer on the rudiments of religion is sufficient to meet systematised infidelity, supported by logic that is incisive enough even to well-trained minds, and presented in the finest sentences into which the English language can be moulded.

There is no taste or passion, for it might well be called a passion, so powerful as the taste for literature. It is so exalted, so refining, so free from objections, that it may be indulged at will; and it has pleasures and fascinations that are second only to those that are enjoyed by students of the fine arts. The music of poetry, the subtle analyses of human character that are constantly found in novels, the glowing and luscious descriptions of scenery, and, above all, the high philosophy that deifies man's intellect and humanity—all these must have an inexpressible charm for a young and enthusiastic mind eager to measure itself with the boundless infinity of knowledge. It takes many years and much experience to humble the human mind, and force man to confess that after all he is but

An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.

The eager schoolboy does not admit it. He must have knowledge even though it be forbidden. And what that forbidden knowledge is, let those tell who have tasted the fruit and known the sickness of shattered faiths and dreary doubtings, and that terrible darkness that supervenes on partial or total unbelief. And they can tell, too, how a sentence or a phrase will often raise doubts and questionings that derive substance and authority from the ability of the writer. And I appeal to universal experience to testify, that all the literature of the day, home and foreign, poetic or philosophic, didactic or narrative, in books, magazines and newspapers, is filled not only with phrases and sentences, but with powerfully developed arguments and elaborated sarcasms against the Church and Revelation and God. And it is only a healthy, well-strung, and thoughtfully pious mind that can withstand their influence.

I can, however, imagine the reader saying: "What does a boy who is puzzled over the particles of the *Anabasis*, or an irregular verb in *Athalie*, know of Comte, or Frederic Harrison, or Swedenborg, or Mill? And is there not an impassable gulf between the mind of the young girl who is spelling out the chromatic scale, and the mighty darkened intellect of George Eliot? Are they not infinitely more interested about their marks at the examinations than about man's future, or the sacerdotal system, or the perfectibility of human nature?" They who say so know but little of the popular culture or the ambitious tastes of the day, and make little account of signs and proofs that daily pass before their eyes. There is no country in the world in which this passion for literature has taken such firm hold of the professional and mercantile classes as in Ireland; and I venture to say that in Cork, Limerick, or Dublin there will be found a larger average of young men acquainted with current literature than in Manchester itself, the

centre of English thought and progress. Celtic talent is very versatile, but it is fond of running in literary lines. More than half the editors of American newspapers have been born and educated in Ireland ; and every department of literature in England is illustrated by the subtle genius of our race.

Last winter I travelled a short distance by rail with a young commercial, who could not have been more than twenty years of age. When he had pulled the collar of his greatcoat around his ears, donned his travelling cap, and carefully wrapped his rug around his feet, he took from his valise, to my utter astonishment, the *Latter-day Pamphlets* of Carlyle, and laid on the cushion as a reserve the last number of a periodical published in London and Dublin, which has for contributors some of the most notorious atheists in England, and which admits every shade of opinion, no matter how advanced, provided it be representative of modern ideas. And who does not know that if educated women still take the *Young Ladies' Journal* for dress patterns and fashions, they seek sentiment in *The Sorrows of Werther* and piquant philosophy in *Faust*? A little brochure, lately published in Dublin, shows what I mean. It is called *A Son of Man*, and is a faithful illustration of the "calm despair and wild unrest" that must inevitably follow from advanced secular education, without a religious training, simultaneous and commensurate. And I might take as a text one of the sayings of the victim of the story, who, writing from the university, declares that "when one commences to study botany and physiology, he must soon forget Revelation and all supernatural religion". From the tone of the work it is evident that the writer has seen all the evils to which I am adverting ; but the exalted tastes and comprehensive readings of the day could not be better exemplified than by the author, for that tale could not have been written without an intimate knowledge of German habits, the German language and literature, which years ago attracted the fancies and tastes of advanced thinkers like Shelley

and Coleridge and Carlyle, but are now familiar in all educated circles, and to students even of incipient literary tastes. And if our typical boy is now busy with dialects and accents, he will soon pass from this chrysalis state with tastes formed, and developing with riper knowledge. We, too, remember painfully guessing with lexicon and grammar the Sphinx riddle of the *Edipus*. We read it now, not as a task, but as a splendid tragedy. And he will revert to his studies<sup>1</sup> to discover in them not difficulties but beauties; and the transition is easy from ancient to modern tragedy, from Æschylus to Swinburne, and easier still from Racine to Voltaire, from the essays of Bacon and Macaulay to those of Carlyle and Arnold, from the ballad poetry of Scott to the mystic, involved, and refined metaphysics of Emerson, who classifies the Divine author of Christianity with Shakspeare and Plato:—

One in a Judgean manger,  
One by the Avon's stream,  
One over against the mouth of Nile,  
And one at the Academe.

And if habits of restraint and self-respect be not engrailed in him by the discipline of his college career, he may also become liberal in his ethics, and easy in his morals, and may learn in time, with the exponent of our latest school of poetry, to despise

The languor and lilies of virtue  
For the raptures and roses of vice.

The consequences, therefore, of this revival of thought, if not wisely restrained or directed, must be mournful in the extreme. Admiration is soon succeeded by imitation. It is hard to admire the style without adopting the sentiment; and it must be admitted that in our day English writers have brought style to a perfection that

<sup>1</sup> “The love of study is in us almost the only eternal passion. All the others quit us in proportion as this miserable machine which holds them approaches its ruin.”—Montesquieu.

was undreamt of in the days of Johnson and even of Macaulay. And the more daring the impiety of the idea, the more resonant and thrilling is the language that articulates it. It is a strange and significant fact that Catholic writers cannot catch the fire and the glow that illuminate every page of profane literature. Since the Oxford revival, England has been crying for its Catholic poet, who is to eclipse the great pagan poets of the day, and awaken by his music the faith that is fondly believed to be dormant, but not dead, in the hearts of the English people. He is not forthcoming; and meanwhile human love has its lyrists, and philosophy its doctors, and even vice has its hierophants, and the priests of Baal are silver-tongued, and they ring out their new teachings with an audacity that must carry conviction to weak minds. And if the ears of our youth be enchanted, who is to defend their reason, or take the poison from the food that is honey in their mouths? Will they believe that the wisdom of the world is folly before God, or appreciate the sublime humility of the apostle who, from his reverence for truth, would not descend to use "the persuasive words of human eloquence"? How will the intellects, trained to believe in the majesty and grandeur of the human mind, suffer to have their belief shaped for them by the Divine dogmatism of the Church? How will they bend before the village curate, whose knowledge, however great, is mediæval, and whose ideas are so reactionary, to acknowledge their weaknesses, and beg pardon for their transgressions? How can they, whose ears are filled with the pet phrases of some German transcendentalist, listen to the Sunday homily according to the *Petite Methode* of St. Alphonsus, the gravity and monotony of which are unrelieved by one racy expression or one bold idea? Of course the semblance of religion will still be maintained. They know that "free-thinker" is a word that means unutterable things to the minds of our faithful people, and the priest is still a power in the land, and there is the dispensary

to be competed for, and the suffrages of clients for the Petty Sessions Court to be obtained. But religion is not the active principle of their lives; and take away the restraints imposed by the character of our people, put our young and clever professionals in the mess-room of an English barrack, or on the deck of a British troop-ship, throw them amongst literary men in London, or into the fierce battle of life that is fought out in America, and very soon they will lay aside the mask, talk of religion and country with the easy levity of a Frenchman, and supply the lost objects of early faith with ambitious dreams, or limit their belief, like Mill, to the caprices of a woman.

How is all this to be prevented? The Intermediate Education Act is practically irrevocable. It has passed from its tentative state, and stands endorsed with the nation's approval. And its principles have been taken up, and are about to be developed and applied to a broad liberal measure of university education. And we, who are particularly interested in this vital subject, have seen with pleasure the nation's pulses quicken under the new-born ambition of proving itself again a nation of scholars. We have witnessed with pleasure the excitement that has thrilled the entire country, when the hope was given to it of realising and exhibiting all the grand things that its orators and poets have said and sung. We see the universal interest excited when the results are given to the country, and it is a novel and pleasant experience to behold the farmer or labourer, whose son is in the favoured class in the national school, quite as hopeful and as eager to see the list of prizes, as the city merchant or professional man whose child is in the first bench at Blackrock or St. Colman's. But the system is not complete. It does not form a perfect man. As a means to a projected end, it is very nearly successful. But the end and object of the Act are not quite in unison with the views of the Church on education. The Christian ideal does not enter into the calculations of premiers. The *Vivian Grey* of Beaconsfield

is not quite a model for Irish youth. We have higher aspirations. Our ambition does not expend itself in sending year after year into public life, the clever, flippan, and sensuous youth, that graduate in English public schools or in Parisian lycées. But if these secularists do their part, why should not we do ours, and establish in all our intermediate schools a system of religious instruction adequate to the wants of the age, correlative with the secular system, and made obligatory either by episcopal supervision or by public criticism, that can be directed on religious as well as intellectual advancement? This has not yet been done. There is no such thing as a system of religious instruction in our schools. There are, perhaps, the Catechism lessons and the weekly lecture; but who will say that these are commensurate with the rapid development of thought and taste that are generated by superior systems of education?

It is not the object of this paper to formulate such a system or enter into its details. I merely paraphrase the many words of wisdom that have been spoken on this subject by the leaders of thought among ourselves. And perhaps this application of great principles to present necessities will not be unacceptable to that great brotherhood, the Irish priesthood, into whose hands the gift of Irish faith is committed.

From every side we receive warnings of the inception of a great apostasy amongst the nations of the earth. They come to us in grave and earnest admonitions from the princes and pastors of the Church, and in the loud and defiant vauntings of the prophets of agnosticism in England and America. Ten years ago the great prelate who rules the Catholic Church in England said: "There is a period setting in—not for the whole world, not for the Church of God, but for individuals, races and nations—of a departure from faith, in which the human reason will have to wander once more alone without guide or certainty; not, indeed, as it did before, but in a worse state, in a state which is, in truth, a dwarfing and a degradation of the human intelligence". And again:

"I am old enough to know that, forty years ago, men believed more than they believe now, that doctrines were then held as indisputable which are now openly disputed". And again: "I will try to bring before you the signs or marks of this rising or revolt of the intellect of men that were once Christians, and to show that the intelligence of Christian nations has, in these last ages, begun to manifest the phenomena and signs of a departure from faith, which shows that there is a current carrying the minds of men away from faith in Christ and in God unto the darkness of unbelief".<sup>1</sup> And the following contains the pith and marrow of the philosophy of morality advocated by one of the boldest of modern scientists:—

"Sin is a word that has helped to retard moral and social progress more than anything. Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so; and the superstitious and morbid way in which a number of entirely innocent things have been banned as sin, has caused more than half the tragedies of the world. Science will establish an entirely new basis of morality; and the sunlight of rational approbation will shine on many a thing hitherto overshadowed by the curse of a hypothetical God."<sup>2</sup>

To prevent the adoption of these pernicious doctrines by our Irish youth must be the proximate and pressing duty of those to whom the faith and morals of the rising generation are largely entrusted. There is sound material for a new knighthood of chivalrous faith and virtue, if all the generous impulses and ideas of virgin minds and hearts be swayed by the convictions that have hitherto governed our people. The possibilities that the future has in store for Ireland are unlimited. Everything depends on our foresight and activity. If religious instruction be practically eliminated from our public schools, by not being raised to a level of importance with secular learning, we shall not remain a high-

<sup>1</sup> Manning, *The Four Great Evils of the Day*.

<sup>2</sup> Mallock, *The New Republic*.

principled race nor become a cultured one. For, as Emerson says, "The foundation of culture, as of character, is at last the moral sentiment". But if, to use the well-known figure, human knowledge be made to take its place side by side with its elder sister, the wisdom that is from above,—we may hope to see in our own time our Irish youth abreast of the youth of other nations in the rush of progression, with large comprehensive knowledge, ready wit and facile eloquence, and with all their generous impulses and enthusiasm swayed and directed by loyalty to Mother Church and Mother Ireland.

## IN A DUBLIN ART GALLERY.<sup>1</sup>

“FOR the artists of our age are steadily turning their eyes from the saints, and madonnas, and martyrs of the past, and finding in Nature alone the fittest subjects for their pencils,” etc. This statement, taken almost literally from the speech of the late Lord Beaconsfield at the Academy banquet, 1879, and expressive of the speaker’s desires as well as of his opinions, irresistibly came to mind as we gazed on its most emphatic contradiction in one of the noblest works of modern art, the famous picture by Sir Nöel Paton, “Satan Watching the Sleep of Christ”. It was exhibited in one of the art galleries of Dublin last year; and hundreds, attracted by the quaint title, as well as by the laudatory notices of the picture that had appeared in the press, visited the gallery, and found, if we may judge by their expressions and visible emotions, that they were standing in the presence of a great work, touching and sublime in conception, and, so far as amateurs could judge, faultless in the many details that are necessary to interpret to the public the artist’s mind.

The subject of the picture has not been taken from Scripture narrative. The artist has followed either some pious tradition, or a fancy suggested by his own poetic instincts, or one of those terrible Dantesque conceptions, so vivid and painful, that rise before the mind “when the soul follows a dream in the house of sleep”. Darkness still hangs in the sky, except where behind rocks and boulders, and far away and far down across the valley, the blue-grey dawn is showing against a

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, December, 1881.

jagged cloud. The morning star is shining, liquid and lustrous, in the sky; and dark and brown against the dawn, the form of Satan looms up in the centre of the picture. The tempter, naked but for a loose strip about the loins, is seated on a rock, one hand convulsively grasps his knees, on the other he is resting his head. The spear leans against his shoulders; a strange bluish light quivers from his hair, and his wings are half closed. So far, in colour and form, the Satan of the picture is only partly original. But when we look on the face we see at once the power of the artist. For into those features he has knit all those passions of fear and anger and hate, which Satan's defeat on the previous night, by one whom he considers a mere man, must have created. He is looking on the face of the sleeping Christ. The Saviour is stretched on the rocks at his feet. His hands are clasped on His breast, and His face is partly in the light which the dawn is shedding on the desert. And what a face! Traditional? So it is. The features with which pious pictures have made every Catholic familiar are there, but the long and weary vigil of forty days has wasted them, the temples are sunken, the cheeks hollow and tinged with a pale hectic flush, and the terrible struggle with the tempter, through which He has passed, or perhaps the proximity of Satan at the moment, has left a shadowy expression of pain on the brow and closed eyes, which is inexplicably touching. It is a great work—so great that the artist is forgotten completely. These two figures—the fallen archangel, still great in his strength but baffled, glaring on the Man-God unconscious and the conqueror, but yet troubled—are so terribly realistic and representative, they must remain a memory for ever. Looking on the face of the arch-fiend, we could not help conjecturing the thoughts that were passing through his mind. He had remained on that rock through the night, and as passion after passion rolled in storms over his soul, one cry echoed ever, ever answered, but never hushed, "Who is He?" There is a far-off look

in the fierce, questioning eyes, as if he had seen that face before, and a patient and hateful expression, as if he waited only the opening of the Saviour's eyes, to challenge Him again to conflict. And turning from that fierce, dark countenance to the worn and gentle features of Christ, "the eternal strength made perfect in His weakness," we asked ourselves the tempter's question: "Who is He?" and that glorious outburst of eloquence, with which Lacordaire made the hardened infidels of Paris grow pale, and breathe hard with emotion, came to the mind: "There is a man, whose tomb is guarded by love. There is a man, whose sepulchre is not only glorious, as the prophet declared, but whose sepulchre is loved. There is a man, whose ashes after eighteen centuries have not grown cold, who daily lives again in the thoughts of an innumerable multitude of men, who is visited in His cradle by shepherds and kings, who vie with each other in bringing to Him gold and frankincense and myrrh. There is a man, whose steps are unweariedly trodden by a large portion of mankind, who, although no longer present, is followed by that throng in the scenes of His bygone pilgrimage, upon the knees of His mother, by the borders of the lakes, to the tops of the mountains, in the byways of the valleys, under the shade of the olive-trees, in the still solitudes of the deserts. There is a man, who was scourged, killed, crucified, whom an ineffable passion raises from death and infamy, and exalts to the glory of love unfailing, which find in Him peace, joy, honour, and even ecstasy." And when we looked around, and saw the representatives of the intellect and wealth of the metropolis gathered together in this quiet gallery, and studying silently and reverently the great work and the great lesson before them, and when we saw the wonder excited by the bold figure and terrible face of Satan, give way to looks of reverential pity and awe, as the hard, worldly, deep-lined faces were bent on the figure of Christ, we thought that, after all that has been doubted and denied, the preacher is right, religion is

still the absorbing subject for human thought, and great artists, like Sir Nöel Paton, consult wisely for the interests of art and their own fame, when they refuse to submit themselves to the deteriorating influences of their age, and rise above the world of Nature to steal the fires of artistic inspiration from that world over which God more immediately presides.

We use the word Nature here of course in a restricted and limited sense, and as it is used in the remark that opens this paper. Lord Beaconsfield speaks of Nature as the negation of everything supernatural, everything that does not come under the domain of intellect and sense. And he hopes and believes that the artists of our age are emancipating themselves from beliefs that have hitherto been held sacred, and traditions that have been proudly cherished, from the magic of names that have been household words in art circles and schools, and from the inspirations that have been shed on past generations from the deathless works of the dead, from the stone that sprang into life, and the canvas that breathed immortality, at the touch of vanished hands. And he thinks that art will have reached its highest level, when its disciples, freed from the deadlights of superstition, paint Nature as she shows herself to them, and the humanities of life as they can interpret them ; and, adapting their taste to the materialistic tendencies of the age, exclude everything that will not bear analysis from the scientist, or attract the sympathy of men, whose taste may be refined, but whose ideas on Religion and Nature are very superficial.

It is not much to be wondered at that the ruling passion of our age—this passion of *Æstheticism*, the worship of sensuous beauty, the careful elimination from all art and science of everything moral, didactic, or spiritualising—should have found its way into that art, which more than any other appeals to the senses. The hard, cold materialism of our day, which treats as shadowy and unreal whatever does not submit itself to the arbitrary tests of science and sense, is not con-

fined to the study of the natural philosopher, or the laboratory of the chemist. It has filtered down from these high places into all the strata of society, has created in poetry what is called by the ill-sounding name of the "fleshly school," and in the sister-art of painting has tried to establish the principle that Nature alone must be studied and reproduced. If fancy must have its flights, let them be limited to the absurdities of pagan mythology; if models or types are needed, let them be the few relics that Grecian art has left us.

The Victorian age has set itself to rival the ages of Pericles in Athens, and the Medici in Florence. These were the two great epochs in human history, when art is supposed to have been most carefully cultivated, and to have been brought to its highest perfection. That such is not the opinion of the first art critics of our age we shall immediately show. But such is the tendency of present ambition. It aims at excelling or equalling the best works of these periods, whilst adhering so closely to their traditions and principles, that it does not even affect invention or originality. It has taken for its idol the *τὸ καλόν*, careless whether that beauty be wedded with baseness, or be the reflex of that inner sacredness and spiritual beauty, that lies deep in the heart of all things. The Athenians had their gods and goddesses, their fauns and satyrs, and nymphs and dryads, tales of fleshly love and records of shameless intrigues, histories of triumphs of brute force and of daring deeds, heroic only in their defiance of all natural and moral law. From these their poets had to weave tragedies, and their painters and sculptors had to design groups; and, as we may well imagine, in this poetry and its kindred arts there is much beauty, perfect and exquisite in every detail, but wanting in that majesty and sublimity that must be suggested by a higher faculty than fancy, and that can be thrown into form only by those who have recognised and cultivated in themselves what we may call the higher supernatural sense. It wanted more. It lacked the suggestiveness

that can be produced only by high moral and intellectual perceptions, and by the conviction that art has far-reaching, immortal aims, and that a work of art is even of less value than a fashion in dress, if it merely pleases the eye or the fancy for a moment. Nature to them was dead and uninformed, and as such they interpreted it. The great Being, whose existence they knew to be necessary, was "unknown". They substituted for Him such weak representations as poetic fancy could suggest. They knew nothing of the economy of creation. The world was

An altar-step without a priest,  
A throne whereon there sate no king ;

and as they could not grasp the mighty mystery, the interpretation of what they did see was necessarily weak and defective. "For we do, indeed, see constantly," says Ruskin, "that men having naturally acute perceptions of the beautiful, yet not receiving it with a pure heart, nor into their hearts at all, never comprehend it, nor receive good from it, but make it a mere minister to their desires, an accompaniment and seasoning of lower sensual pleasures. And this which in Christian times is the abuse and corruption of the sense of beauty, was, in that Pagan life of which St. Paul speaks, little less than the essence of it, and the best they had. I do not know that of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found in heathen writers, there are any of which the leading thought leans not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned; her teachings through both they understood never." Yet their representations of the objective realities of life, though piecemeal, were perfect. What they wanted was inspiration. But what shall we say of their modern admirers, who confess their despair of approaching the perfection of Grecian workmanship, whilst they reject the Christian ideals and Christian inspirations that would enable modern artists to rival and even surpass the ancients?

This vast distinction between the Pagan and Christian conceptions of art, and their relative influences on artists themselves, on contemporary students and admirers, and on posterity that has inherited the accumulated treasures of the ages, was most distinctly shown about that period, when the Medici had made Florence a modern Athens, and Greece was robbed of its priceless wealth of statuary and paintings to please the over-refined tastes of the aesthetic city. The two great schools of art, of which all the succeeding classic schools were merely subdivisions, were then brought face to face, their principles were tested by the works of their pupils, they were supported by the dominant influences of the age, they contested the supremacy with all the calm, earnest, unimpassioned vigour on the one hand, and all the fierce, intemperate zeal on the other, that have characterised the eternal war between the Church and the world. It was another and not very dissimilar phase of that uprising against faith and morality of which we are witnesses, the only difference being, that the struggle which is now waged by the pen and the press was then carried on by brush and pencil in the studios and art galleries of the Italian cities. It was the Renaissance of Pagan ideas, Pagan worship, Pagan theories of art, Pagan habits of life, of which, after all, art and literature are but faithful reflections. On the side of this new Paganism were arrayed artists and men of letters—the restless, unquiet, but gifted spirits that haunt a city of revolutions like Florence ; wealthy and powerful merchants, like the Medici themselves, proud and retiring aristocrats, like the blind father of Romola. On the other side, which clung with the tenacity of love and principle to Christian tradition, was the Church, then as now combining a magnificent contempt for the transitory passions of the age with maternal anxiety for truths that might be neglected, and souls that might be imperilled ; and, under the shadow of the Church, protected, encouraged, and inspired, were her faithful servants, working out on canvas or on the

bare wall the thoughts that were ennobling their minds, and the feelings that were sanctifying their souls. The Renaissance ushered in the Reformation. It was the preliminary and partial revolt that preceded the great rebellion against the majestic dogmas, and the stern discipline of Christianity. The world was growing tired of the supernatural, and was yearning after the humanities of ancient times, and the soft heathen freedom and voluptuousness to which Rousseau says mankind is perpetually tending. And the first symptoms were exhibited in the new departure in art from all that twelve centuries of Christian civilisation had prized, and the new passion for reproducing and embellishing that ancient civilisation, which had been branded as "anathema" by the prophets and priests of the Catholic Church. It is true that, before that time, there had been a few attempts to break away from Christian traditions, and establish new schools that might emancipate themselves from the prevailing ideas, and fly to the buried past for inspiration. But the faith of the ages would not brook this disinterring of Paganism, nor tolerate representations of the "grand old gods of Greece and Rome," when the pure and sublime art of the catacombs was still modern, and painting was yet what St. Basil called it, and the Council of Arras defined it in 1205, "The book of the ignorant who do not know how to read any other".

And when the primitive art school of Florence was established, of which Giotto was the founder, it seemed as if Christian art was so thoroughly regenerated, that no succeeding attempts could revolutionise it, nor introduce again a passion for Pagan or Byzantine types. Work after work came from the pencils of holy men who were inspired, not by anticipation of public applause in national galleries, nor by the hope of amassing money by painting to please the passions of an hour, but by a pious desire of lending their talents to God's service, and raising men's minds far above mundane things to the celestial heights where themselves in spirit were

dwelling. And, therefore, the Christian Gospels, and not Pagan mythology, were the sources whence they drew subjects for portraits and for larger works. It is marvellous to see how faithful they were to these lofty ideas. Still more marvellous that, though circumscribed within comparatively narrow limits, they were able to infuse variety into their works, and stamp on every product of their pencils the individuality of their own minds. There is scarcely a name, for example, worthy of respect in the Catholic schools of Italy, that cannot be found subscribed to some painting of our Blessed Lady. In the Sienese school, there are Madonnas by Guido, Lorenzetti, Bartoli, Matteo da Siena, Pacchiarotto, Beccafumi, Razzi. In the Florentine school, we have Madonnas from Giotto, Buffalmaco, the Gaddi, Giottino, Orgagna, Fra Angelico, Gözzoli, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Lorenzo di Credi, Lippi, Fra Bartolommeo, Albertinelli. In the Umbrian school, by Perugino, Pinturicchio, Rafaello. In the Bolognese school, by Dalmasio, Francia, who seemed to be able to paint nothing else, for every city in Italy has a Madonna from his pencil ; in the museum at Berlin there are several from his hands, and at Munich and at Vienna. In the schools at Ferrara, the same subject is treated by Panetti, Costa, Grandi, Mazzolino, Garofalo. In the Venetian school, by the Vivarini, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, Carpaccio, Vecelli. And so strongly were these artists imbued with Christian feeling, that a sodality was established, the members of which bound themselves to paint no other subjects but holy men and women on the walls and altars of churches, that by this means the world, in spite of the demons, might be attracted towards virtue and piety. This is the first academy of painting of which history makes mention : the Confraternity of St. Luke, founded in 1350. A century later, so rapid are the revolutions for good or evil, the Medici had perverted public taste, and mythological subjects came into request. Little by little, painting became the servant of vanity and vice, the pedantry that pervaded the

schools invaded the studios, and art had fallen very low, when the portraits of patrons were no longer seen at the foot of the pious picture in an attitude of humble supplication, but introduced into the picture itself, and attached with unblushing effrontery to the most holy and sacred personages. In former days, the faces of art patrons were seen amongst humble shepherds or enthusiastic disciples ; now they were to be seen amongst angelic choirs, or representing the holiest that ever trod the earth, and then alternating as an Olympian god or hero. Ancient sources of inspiration were abandoned. The histories of Greece and Rome superseded sacred history. "Pagan inspirations," says M. Rio, "were received at the time from two sources—the majestic ruins of ancient Rome, and the court of the Medici. The Paganism of the Medici sprang from the corruption of morals, as well as from the progress of learning. What did Lorenzo de Medici demand from the artists of Florence, when he wished to exercise towards them that distinguished patronage of which we hear so much in history ? From Pollajuolo he demanded the Twelve Labours of Hercules ; from Ghirlandajo the edifying story of Vulcan's misfortunes ; from Luca Signorelli nude gods and goddesses ; and, as atonement, a chaste Minerva from Botticelli, who, despite the natural purity of his imagination, was also obliged to paint a Venus for Cosmo de Medici, and to repeat the same subject several times with all the changes suggested by his learned protector." This materialism, thus introduced under powerful patronage, and adopted by men of light and leading, has to this day dominated the art of painting. It would reach its final stage of development if the hopes of Lord Beaconsfield could be realised. But as Christian art not only survived Medicean influence, but reached its perfection stimulated by the hostility raised against it, so we may hope that, in our own age, the intelligent and natural sympathy of artists for purity and sublimity will keep them faithful to the highest traditions of their art, and help them to sustain Christian

ideas, and follow Christian types, undeterred by false criticism or vitiated public taste.

Driven by princes and presidents from museums, academies and private collections, mysticism in art found an asylum in convents and monasteries, where the art of painting in miniature was brought to perfection. The Dominicans and Camaldulenses cultivated the art with the greatest success. The magnificent productions of these monks, and the solitaries of Monte Cassino, can still be seen at Sienna, Ferrara, and the Vatican. They were the immediate precursors of that great saint and painter, still known in Florence as *Il Beato*, the Blessed John of Fiesole, better recognised by the title *Fra Angelico*. It was he who never took pencil in hand without previous prayer; it was he who never painted a Crucifixion without shedding bitter tears at the memory of his Saviour's sufferings. A bare catalogue of his principal works will show the source of all his inspirations. In Paris, at the Louvre, the Life of St. Dominic. In Orvieto, at the Cathedral, Our Lord at the Last Judgment, and the Choir of Prophets. In Rome, at the Vatican, in the Chapel of Nicholas V., The History of SS. Stephen and Lawrence; in the Corsini Gallery, The Ascension and The Descent of the Holy Ghost; in the Fesch Gallery, The Last Judgment. At Fiesole, in the Church of St. Dominic, a Madonna with several saints; at the Church of St. Jerome, a Madonna between St. Jerome and St. Stephen. At Cortona, in the Gesu, the Annunciation, the life of Our Blessed Lady, the life of St. Dominic. At Florence, in the cloister of St. Mark, a Crucifixion with St. Dominic; in the Chapter Hall, a Crucifixion with many saints, and a genealogical tree of the Dominicans; in each cell, a fresco of the Crucifixion; in the Uffizi Gallery, St. Peter, St. Mark, a Madonna with many saints, the Martyrdom of St. Peter, the Nativity of St. John, the Preaching of St. Peter, the Espousals, the Adoration of the Magi, the Death of the Blessed Virgin, the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin in the midst of

celestial choirs ; at the Academy of the Fine Arts, the Descent from the Cross, St. Thomas and Albertus, the Life of Our Lord in thirty tableaux, the Last Judgment, the *chef d'œuvre* of Christian art. In Berlin, at the Royal Museum, St. Francis and St. Dominic embracing. Yet such is the degeneracy of modern art, that Fra Angelico is numbered by modern connoisseurs amongst the painters of what they are pleased to call *i tempi bassi*. And yet we are told by the best critics of our time, that "modern Italians have degenerated into sign-board painters," that now "they can only reproduce," that as "originators they are beneath contempt". Fra Angelico was immediately succeeded by Perugino, Pinturicchio and Rafaello, "a glorious trinity of artists," says Montalembert, "that never has been, and never shall be, surpassed". They belonged to the Umbrian school, which shares, with the Siennese school and the mystic school of Florence, the glory of having been entirely Catholic and Christian, as regards the choice of subjects and the mode of treatment. "Perhaps," says M. Rio, "the Umbrian school was not so rich in its variety of subjects as contemporary schools ; it did not follow profane mythology, or the study of ancient bas-reliefs, or even the grand historic scenes of sacred history ; it limited itself to the development and perfection of certain types, very restricted in number, but which reunited all that faith could inspire of poetry and exaltation. The glory of the Umbrian school is to have followed without ceasing the transcendental aims of Christian art, without suffering itself to be seduced by example or distracted by clamours. It would seem that a special benediction attached to these places particularly sanctified by St. Francis Assisi, and that the perfumes of his sanctity preserved the Fine Arts from corruption in the vicinity of the mountains, where so many pious painters had contributed one after the other to decorate his tomb. This happy influence exercised on painting became part of a mission of purification, and we see that Perugino, who

was the great light of the Umbrian school, extended this influence from one end of Italy to the other.”<sup>1</sup>

Just at the same time, a mighty and temporarily successful struggle was made against the invasion of Paganism into Art and Society. It was the crusade preached by the great friar of St. Marco, in Florence, against the Renaissance. Its history has been lately made so familiar to the world, that it is needless to enter into it here. It is enough to say that, as at the passing of Paul and Timothy of old, the idols crumbled into dust, so at the voice of the Christian preacher the relics, collected at such mighty cost, of the “grandeur that was Greece and the glory that was Rome” were huddled together in the square of the city of Florence, and the craze of the moment vanished from the minds of men, as the smoke of the holocaust of heathen vanities thinned and whitened into fleecy vapour in the blue Italian sky. Despite the all-powerful influence which Savonarola exercised on the savants, the artists, and the warriors of his age, Pico de la Mirandola, Salviati, Valori, Lorenzo di Credi, Fra Bartolommeo, Luca della Robbia, Cronaca, etc., the mighty apostle perished. But ten years after his death justice was done him by the Roman court, for Raphael represented him amongst the Doctors of the Church in the fresco of the Blessed Sacrament, and with the authority of Julius II., the immediate successor of the Alexander VI. who had condemned him.

From that time naturalism became the fashion in art. We read of Signorelli, who pushed his love of anatomy so far, that he studied the dead body of his own son, anticipating the scientists of whom Wordsworth says, “they would peep and botanise on their mothers’ graves”; of Mariotto, who died of a debauch in the flower of his age; of Andrea del Sarto, who for money

<sup>1</sup> For the quotations from M. Rio’s standard work, the lists of paintings, etc., I am indebted to Montalembert’s essay, “De la peinture chrétienne en Italie”.—P. A. S.

painted the obese wife of Francis I. as a Madonna ; of Piero di Cosimo, whose special horror was the sound of church bells, and the chanting of monks. Even such original and mighty geniuses as Raphael and Michael Angelo became subject to the passion of the age. Though essentially Catholic, and deriving all their transcendent glory from the works which they executed under inspirations from faith, they, too, temporarily forgot their allegiance to the highest teachings of their art, and sacrificed the majesty and beauty of spiritualism in a passion for perfect anatomy or skilful colouring. The perfection of tinting and shading, the scientific and symmetrical reproduction of muscles in action or repose, became of far greater importance than the lofty philosophy of Christianity, and its power over humanity, flashed forth upon learned and unlearned, from the faces of "sweet Mother Mary" or a Magdalen, or that warrior-saint, Sebastian, or the midnight horrors of a Crucifixion, or the terrors and splendours of a Last Judgment. And they suffered in consequence. Their right hands lost their cunning, because their minds had forsaken their inspirations. It is well known that Raphael, for the last ten years of his life, was not equal to the Raphael who emulated Perugino in his love of Christian art. It is said that monsters issued from the marriage of the sons of God with the daughters of men ; and such must ever be Christian ideas, wrought out in obedience to Pagan theories.

However sad this defection might be, and it is saddest in the case of Michael Angelo, who was essentially a poet-painter, and a poet before he became a painter, and was therefore more independent of fashions than any of his contemporaries, these artists are still claimed as masters of Catholic schools, and their fame rests on the sacred pictures they executed, rather than upon their imitations of Grecian art. Now all these painters and all these schools are still regarded with as much reverence by art students, as the Fathers or Scholastics by theological students, or as German philosophers by the lovers of

the mystic and the undefined. No art education is considered complete, that has not been finished under the shadows of the Old Masters. And though a hope is now entertained of transferring the sanctuary from the Tiber to the Thames, Italy must remain for ever the home of painting. Who could study, for example, the *nuances* of colour under the *aer bruno* of the murky metropolis of England? No! modern eclecticism, fickle and erratic, will soon wear itself out. Students of far future generations will sit in the dim twilight of cathedrals, and lay the foundations of their fame, in the lessons that are inculcated by the silent and eloquent teachers, that tell the glories of an age, the like of which we shall not soon see. And then, as now, it is Madonnas and pale saints, and stately prophets and grave doctors, "with a far-off look in their eternal eyes," that will rain down inspiration into these students' souls, and with such dreams will these latter be afterwards haunted, when they touch, with brush or pencil, the canvas that is to speak back to them the cherished fancy, or realise the long-worshipped ideal.

If, therefore, Religion from the beginning had been rejected as an element in Art, Art would have had no history, no "names that will hang on the stretched forefinger of all time". Religion supplied the loftiest inspirations; Religion elevated and exalted the tastes and ambition of artists; Religion repelled whatever was base and sensual; and Religious Art, therefore, is immortal.

So far then for History, the testimony of the ages. Now, on purely abstract grounds, let us consider the motives which Religion supplies, and the subjects it presents to the artist's mind, and we shall see that, apart from the influence of traditions, Religion must always remain the most potent factor in Art. There was a time when men regarded labour as prayer: with them Art was worship. The present is a time when Art has become a trade, and labour means coining mind-thoughts and the heart's blood for gold. Worship nineteenth-

century progress as we may, can it be doubted for a moment that the inspirations of faith are higher than the promptings of avarice ? That the men who stood day by day face to face with eternity, who dealt familiarly, but not without awe, with great solemn mysteries that were terrible realities to them, have not higher ideas and inspirations than Medicean or Victorian artists, whose fancies are busy with cheque-books and art criticisms, while their hands are mixing the colours or laying them ? What a comment on our age is the simple and touching inscription under a beautiful Madonna, in the Hospice della Scala at Sienna : “ *Opus Laurentii Petri pictoris : fecit ob suam devotionem* ” ; or the painting of the “ Procession of the True Cross ” in the Place St. Mark, signed by the artist, “ *Gentilis Bellinus amore incensus crucis, 1496* ”. Where shall we find a parallel in our age to Vitalis, who could never paint a Crucifixion, saying it was too sorrowful a task for him ; or Jacopo Avanzi, who for years was prevented by the same scruple ; or Lippo Dalmasio, who cared only to paint images of the Blessed Virgin ; and in whose eyes this work was so great, that he never undertook it without preparing himself by a fast on the vigil of his work, and receiving Holy Communion on the day on which he commenced his sacred labours ? “ Dreadfully superstitious ! ” no doubt our modern artist will exclaim ; yet Guido in the fuller light of the seventeenth century stood for hours, ravished with delight, before one of this painter’s Madonnas. Mr. Ruskin, whom all agree in considering the first art critic of his age, has a remarkable passage on the subject :—

“ And, in the last place, it will be found that so surely as a painter is irreligious, thoughtless, or obscene in disposition, so surely is his colouring cold, gloomy and valueless. The opposite poles of art in this respect are *Fra Angelico* and *Salvator Rosa*, of whom one was a man who smiled seldom, wept often, prayed constantly, and never harboured an impure thought. His pictures are simply so many pieces of jewellery, the colours of

the draperies being perfectly pure, as various as those of a painted window, chastened only by paleness, and relieved upon a gold ground. Salvator was a dissipated jester and satirist, a man who spent his life in masquing and revelry. But his pictures are full of horror, and their colour is for the most part gloomy grey. Truly it would seem as if art had so much of eternity in it that it must take its dye from the close rather than the course of life. 'In such laughter the heart of man is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.' These are no singular instances. I know no law more severely without exception than this of the connection of pure colour with profound and noble thought. The Bellinis, Francias, Peruginos painted in crimson and blue and gold. The Caraccis, Guidos, and Rembrandts in brown and grey. The builders of our great cathedrals veiled their casements, and wrapped their pillars with one robe of purple splendour. The builders of the luxurious Renaissance left their palaces filled only with cold white light, and in the paleness of their native tone."

Lastly, it were easy to show that even for technical reasons Religion is not only a legitimate subject of Art, but the worthiest and most fertile subject, inasmuch as it is Catholic in its sympathies, reaches from the footstool of God on earth to the throne of God in heaven, enters deeply into all human concerns, and presents a hundred conceptions that must be of lasting interest to men's minds. Such is the opinion of all those who have given serious and earnest attention to this engrossing subject. Let us hear the voices of two who may be considered the leading experts on Art and Psychology:—

"Painting," says Mr. Ruskin, "or Art generally as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and peculiar ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but of itself nothing. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective

greatness of the painter or writer is to be finally determined.”<sup>1</sup>

Now by this rule let us try to understand the words of Victor Cousin :—

“ Art is the reproduction of the beautiful, and not of natural beauty, but of ideal beauty such as the human imagination conceives it by the help of the data which Nature furnishes. The ideal beautiful envelops the infinite. The object of art, therefore, is to produce works which, like those of Nature, but in a still higher degree, have the charm of the infinite. But how and by what conjuring to draw the infinite from the finite? Here lies the difficulty of art; but it is also its glory. What carries us up towards the infinite in natural beauty? The ideal side of that beauty. The ideal is the mysterious ladder by which the soul ascends from the finite to the infinite.”

Now, in another part of the same lecture, he says in language that were worthy of St. Augustine :—

“ The ideal resides neither in the individual, nor in a collection of individuals. Nature or experience furnishes us the occasion of conceiving it, but it is essentially distinct from it. For him who has once conceived it, all natural figures, however beautiful they may be, are but shadowy images of a beauty they do not realise. The

<sup>1</sup> In the *Magazine of Art* for December, 1880, the sarcastic remark of Lord Beaconsfield is indignantly criticised in the following passage: “When at the Academy banquet of 1879 Lord Beaconsfield half slightly referred to pictures of ‘saints and Madonnas and martyrs,’ there was a sympathetic laugh. Who laughed? Some of the ‘distinguished strangers,’ let us hope, and not any of the brotherhood who own a kindred art with M. Angelo, Raphael, Titian and Murillo, and least of all, we may be certain, he who was exhibiting there at the very time not a ‘saint or a Madonna or a martyr,’ but personages who may be supposed to be equally comic—an angel and a prophet! The public will rather agree with another speaker at another Academy banquet—the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1880—who said: ‘The noblest pictures are, as a rule, the embodiment of the highest and noblest ideas, and I hold that saints and angels are nobler subjects than Bacchus with the satyrs and fauns.’”

ideal retreats perpetually in proportion as we approach it more nearly.

"Its last term is in the infinite, that is, in God ; or, to speak better, the true and absolute ideal is nothing but God Himself."

And after a series of passages rising one above the other in beauty of thought and diction, he concludes by saying : "Thus God is the principle of the three orders of beauty we have distinguished, physical beauty, intellectual beauty, and moral beauty".

Now, if art be but the expression of thought, if thought must be exercised about what is beautiful, so that art may reproduce only what is beautiful, if that beauty be not natural beauty alone, but ideal beauty, and if the term and source of all beauty is God Himself, who can eliminate as objects of art that world over which God more immediately presides, of which He is the centre and the life, the world of religion and mysticism ?

Would we then exclude Nature in its lower forms from the domain of art, paint only purely religious subjects, be blind to the beautiful world that lies around us, with its rich landscapes and seascapes, the soft tender dawns, the transparent light of noon, the purple twilights, the blush of a rose petal, the pure whiteness of a lily, the clustering vegetation of forests, the still and solitary grandeur of mountains ? Still more, shall we exclude humanity, with its passionate tenderness and sublime dissatisfaction, its yearnings after the infinite, the pulsations of human activity, the flutterings of the human heart ? So thought Goethe, the Archpriest of humanity in our age, the leader and interpreter of our modern classical contempt for Christianity. Speaking of the subjects treated by the Old Masters, he says : "They are either miscreants or ecstasies, criminals or fools. There is not a *human* idea throughout the whole." Not the human ideas, certainly, of suicidal Werthers, or a Faust driven by passion into fearful excesses, or a sad Gretchen, dying a lunatic in a prison. But divinely human ideas of saints who have stilled the wild yearn-

ings of their hearts by penance and prayer, and learned doctors who have bound themselves with cinctures of chastity, and Magdalens who have found peace after sin in repentance. Christian art is not above humanity. It stoops to it, raises it, ennobles it, consecrates it. Christian art is not above Nature. But it sees in Nature the hand of the Divine Artist, whose works speak His praises so eloquently.

It sees the smile of God in the sunshine, the anger of God in the storm, the tenderness of God in the flower and the child, the love of God in the stricken soul, the peace of God on the faces of the dead. It will not rest content with mere material beauty. Everything in its eyes has a subjective beauty. Substances that impress the senses are nothing compared to the Divine thought that flashes for ever athwart them, glorifying and transfiguring them. "It is the realisation of this subjective beauty," says a late writer in the *Magazine of Art*, "that has made great landscapists. See how Turner and Cox invariably sacrificed the lesser to the greater. The work of one was a mighty protest against the materialism of topographical draughtsmanship—it was not Ehrenbreitstein he saw, but the flash of sunlight that fell upon it fresh from the hand of God. The work of the other was a mighty protest against the traditional notion that fine scenery makes fine pictures. Lancaster sands were good enough for him if God passed over them in a storm." This is the subjective beauty which the saints have always seen in Nature; it was this which was present to the mind of St. Bernard when he declared—"I meditated upon the Word of God; the fields and the forests taught me its sacred meaning; the oaks and the beeches were my masters". And to St. Augustine when he declared that "all beauties which pass from the soul to the skilful hands of artists are derived from that beauty which is above the soul, after which my soul sighs day and night". But the artists and admirers of these exterior beauties, while they take from that first beauty the rule of approving them, do not take from thence the rule

of using them. It is in its lowest form the vision of the singer who beholds—

A light that never was on sea or flood :  
The consecration, and the poet's dream.

And in its highest form it is represented by the beauty of "Sovran Blanc," the "thunderous avalanche," the "motionless torrents," the "silent cataracts," the "living flowers that skirt the eternal frost," when Coleridge looked upon them, and heard syllabled in every tone that Nature could assume, the name of God.

With such thoughts in our minds, looking again on the picture before us, do we not discern a relative beauty in all the accidents of Nature? Is not the glimmering dawn more tender because it floats its veil of light over the sleeping Saviour? Is there not a soul, an intelligence, in the lone star, that seems to be resigning into the hands of coming day the watch it has kept over its Master? The rugged boulders even seem to have feeling in them, as they support the head of the sleeping Christ. All things are transmuted by the subtle spirit which the artist has thrown from his soul into his work. We, too, are no longer spectators, but worshippers; the usual interjections of wonder and criticism are silenced; we hear only the soft sounds of pencils that are stealing ideas from the masterpiece, and the soft breathing of reverential men and women who seem never tired of looking and admiring. The gallery, for the moment, is changed into a sanctuary, and the picture has become a shrine.

I cannot forbear closing this paper with a few lines taken from *Scribner's Magazine*. They express in the narrow space of six stanzas all that we have been labouring to say:—

#### TRANSFIGURED.

By S. M. B. PLATT.

Almost afraid they led her in  
(A dwarf more piteous none could find);  
Withered as some weird leaf, and thin,  
The woman was—and old and blind.

Into his mirror with a smile—  
Not vain to be so fair, but glad—  
The South-born painter looked the while,  
With eyes than Christ's alone less sad.

“Mother of God,” in pale surprise  
He whispered, “what am I to paint?”  
A voice that sounded from the skies  
Said to him: “Raphael, a saint”.

She sat before him in the sun;  
He scarce could look at her, and she  
Was still and silent. “It is done,”  
He said. “Oh, call the world to see!”

Ah, that was she in veriest truth—  
Transcendent face and haloed hair;  
The beauty of divinest youth,  
Divinely beautiful, was there.

Herself into her picture passed,  
Herself and not her poor disguise,  
Made up of time and dust. At last  
One saw her with the Master's eyes.

## EMERSON: FREE-THOUGHT IN AMERICA.<sup>1</sup>

AMERICA has become, during the last quarter of a century, the object on which the eyes of the intellectual world have been fixed, with all the interest that attaches to a novel and critical experiment. Up to that period she had virtually taken not only her religious systems, but all her ideas on philosophical science, from the Old World. She had mutely acknowledged her indebtedness to the great intellects whom the combined thought of Europe had canonised as men of "light and leading," in their respective departments. Her universities were fashioned after Oxford and Göttingen, and their students sat at the feet of Old World professors, and accepted their teachings with the deference that is due to learning and the sanctities of tradition. Meanwhile, in the mechanical arts, America had asserted her independence. She took the moulds of European inventions, improved upon them, broke them, and cast them aside as worthless and antiquated. And whilst her schools and colleges were accepting European ideas and traditions, there was scarcely a mill in America that had not reached a full half-century of progress beyond the best-appointed and best-conducted factory in Leeds or Sheffield.

Such a state of things could not last. A nation of fifty million inhabitants, with infinite possibilities before it, and with all its intelligence quickened into activity by the interfusion of races, with their specific principles and traditions, could not remain in leading strings to any other people, nor maintain a rigid and senseless

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, October, 1884.

conservatism in those very things in which the human mind demands absolute and unconditional freedom. Hence, during these latter years, the mind of America has ascended from mechanical to philosophical experiment, and, with the facility begotten of wealth and independence, has explored every system of thought, and revelled in the creation of new and fanciful theories in the world of mysticism.

What then is to be the leading system of thought in the great Western Republic? How will its progressive ideas develop themselves? It starts on its career free and untrammelled by prejudice or superstitions. It enjoys the most perfect freedom, not only in its political life, but even in that social life which amongst ourselves has laws more despotic, and decisions more magisterial, than state constitutions. Nature has thrown open her treasury, and already dowered its children with super-abundant wealth and promises of inexhaustible supplies. America inherits free all the blessings of the civilisation which nineteen centuries with an infinite expenditure of thought and labour have accumulated; and she commences her career without a single care for all those sad and terrible possibilities which hamper progress in the Old World. What is to be the issue of the new civilisation? Will it become licentious in its freedom, and reap in the near future the sad consequences of the violation of that political and intellectual discipline which, like the laws of Nature, avenges itself upon its transgressors? Will it run riot in speculation and conjecture about the mighty mysteries of mortality, and end, like the Old World, in dreary scepticism? Or will it accept theology as an exact science, with its truths revealed and absolute, and preserved inviolate in its temple, the living Church? Will its strong democratic spirit eventuate in that freedom which "slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent," or will it issue in a revolution which will dwarf the revolutions of the Old World by its colossal wickedness? Will its aristocracy of wealth and intellect draw away more and more from

the masses, and ignoring all Christian obligations seek to establish feudalism and an oligarchy, until the inevitable disruption that will fling them and the people in common ruin ? Or will they admit a common brotherhood, and coming down to the level of poverty and ignorance, throw the glamour of intellect and wealth over the forced asceticism of the people ? To reduce the question to its broadest terms, will the future religion of America be the cultus of "sense and science," the Neo-Paganism, in which the God of Sinai, with His commandments, "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not," and the meek Saviour, with His beatitudes, shall find no place ? or will the pure Christianity of Catholicism, the conserving element in European society, be the active and vigorous agent of the new civilisation of America ? The question is interesting, doubly interesting to us, for assuredly the most powerful auxiliaries on the side of Christianity in the New World are the exiled children of our race.

There are two things indicative of the mental and moral genius of a people: its habits of thought and its habits of life. These two agents act and react on each other; licentiousness of thought producing laxity in moral principles, and easy virtue begetting the utmost liberality in matters of belief. We will glance at both, and see if, to borrow an expression from Matthew Arnold, "the stream of tendencies" in modern America makes for righteousness or not. We shall put aside for a moment the Catholic Church in America, and consider the systems of religious thought that lie outside it.

The whole history, then, of Protestantism in the States at the present time, may be described as the history of a desperate and critical struggle with that Agnosticism which has followed, not very logically indeed, from the theories of the evolutionists. Owing to the absence of copyright, and the consequent enterprise of publishers, all the Agnostic literature of the Old World has become the property not only of the thinking, but even of the reading, public of America. When we are told that the

poetry of Matthew Arnold adorns the tea-papers of the New World, that the publishers have issued a popular edition of his works, that the treatises of the International Science Series have been cheapened and simplified, that sociology and kindred subjects are matter for study and debate in the homeliest literary societies, and that a vulgar lecturer, like Ingersoll, can always command an audience of three or four thousand persons in every city of the States, we must be prepared to admit that materialism is a growing creed in America, and that it will need the strongest efforts of Christian faith and Christian scholarship to resist it. The causes that have led up to such a disposition in the public mind are manifold. In tracing and classifying them we shall best understand how deeply laid are anti-Christian ideas, upon what forms of investigation or imagination they are founded, what influence external causes have exercised upon them. From the depth and strength of the foundations alone can we conjecture to what stature the temple of Unbelief and Unreason shall rise. The future shall be measured by the present and the past.

The sources then of Free-thought in America may be stated thus.

They are historical changes, speculations in philosophy, the absence of definite dogmas in all the Protestant communions, wealth boundless and luxury unrestricted, weakness from within, and aggression from without. We will limit this paper to a consideration of the first two of these causes which are also the most important.

The dark, intolerant spirit brought over by the Puritans in the *Mayflower*, and which is best known to us through the sombre pages of Hawthorne, might be said to have been broken by the great War of Independence. The principles involved in the famous Declaration, and which were simply the expression of the collective feelings of the people, were found to be inimical not only to foreign domination, but also to the class and creed ascendancy which had hitherto obtained in the New England States. The right of every man to worship his

Creator as he willed was made the cardinal doctrine of the New Republic, and it broke for ever the power of the fierce bigots who rigidly upheld their ancestral beliefs against Catholic and Quaker by appeals to the branding iron and the pillory. A reaction was inevitable. Intoxicated with freedom, the people rushed from the gloomy doctrines and unbending discipline of Puritanism into extreme licence of thought, as the Jews of old, freed from the terrors of invasion and death, revelled in sensuality and idolatry. And events on the European Continent were giving to the mind of America a bias in the same direction. The American Revolution was immediately succeeded by that in France. An invisible bond of sympathy existed between them ; and although in their motives, their objects, and especially in their results, they were essentially different, they agreed at least in their hatred of tyranny, their demand for freedom, their insistence on social equality, their impatience of any thing or person who would attempt to limit human freedom, or coerce human thought. And the ideas that led up to the French Revolution, the Deism of Voltaire and the Encyclopædistes, were wafted to the New World, and became the foundation of that Unitarianism, which for so many years was the prevalent belief in America, which counted amongst its professors the most eminent men in science, art and literature, which founded one of the great American universities, and which prepared the American mind to receive with facility all those conjectural theories of existence on which the modern philosophies are founded. For Deism marks the extreme limit of religious belief. It has its place in the outer spaces of the realms of faith. It stands on the horizon-line of the creeds. Beyond it are the regions of speculation and conjecture. It needs but a single step to fall from it into the abysses of unbelief. And one did fall ; fell too like an archangel, drawing hosts of gifted minds with him. The history of his intellectual life will contain a summary of the second cause of the growth of unbelief which we have cited under the name of philosophical speculations.

Beyond comparison the first name in the annals of Unitarianism, as well as the first in American literature, is that of Ralph Waldo Emerson; and we introduce his name here, for we believe that his life of lofty spiritual, if not Christian thought, and his character of quaint and earnest simplicity, have had a charm for the young intellects of America, the potency of which can only be measured when its effects are clearly understood. He might have removed for ever his own strong indictment against his nation that it had no distinct national literature, had he not selected as the basis of his philosophy that German idealism which originated with Kant, was developed by Hegel, and still holds pre-eminence amongst all other systems in the German schools. His tour in Europe in 1833, and his visit to Carlyle at Ecclefechan, became turning-points in his professional and literary career. He was seized with the ambition of effecting for America what Carlyle had effected for England—to create in all minds the belief that what the world was seeking for centuries was to be found in Germany—a perfect system of philosophy which would satisfy every demand of the human intellect, and every craving of the human heart. He became the interpreter of German transcendentalism to the mind of America. And no professor by the Elbe or Rhine ever disclosed to receptive minds the mysteries of the new philosophy with such passionate earnestness, or preached the naturalism that underlies it, with such faultless eloquence. Rhetoric, in fact, is not only the handmaiden, but the mistress of this vague philosophy. To hide an obscure thought in a cloud of words, or to present a familiar idea in strange and beautiful language—this appears to be the main end of German philosophy. "Know you not," says St. Paul, "that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" "You touch heaven," says Novalis, "when you lay your hands on a human body." Here is the same truth arrived at by different ways and clothed in different language. And scattered here and there through the writings of idealists we find some such

precious thought in the very richest of caskets ; yet we may pass over whole pages of heavy reading without finding a single idea worth preserving, or a single principle that could sustain human hope, or brighten the sombre mystery of life. It is a philosophy of phrases : and we know how in our hurried lives men sometimes found their religion on an epigram. It is said that the first requisite for a successful politician is to be able to invent nicknames for an adversary ; and before now a neatly turned expression has overthrown Governments in France. Epeolatry is the fashion of the day. The wisdom of the world is apparently exhausted ; and all that can be done with its worn-out material is to break it up, and remould it in new casts of thought.

Yet the play of splendid intellects around mighty problems of nature and mind has in it something highly fascinating to the young and the undisciplined. To leave behind, for a moment, the solid ground of Christian philosophy, founded on Divine revelation, and to ascend into cloudland with the gods ; to see mighty mysteries of life and death, time and space, God and the universe, duty and immortality, treated as freely as the astronomer swings his globe, or the navigator his sextant : all this is very daring and attractive to the young. And when the brilliant speculations of these leaders are floated through the world, and through the ears of men, in liquid poetry, and prose that is as firm and measured as the tramp of a conquering army, it is not easy to resist the temptation of worshipping their brilliant but erratic intellects. We know how Carlyle was sage and prophet to half the young intellects of England in his time ; how he drew all London to his lectures on "Heroes," and how silently and respectfully they listened to this uncouth Scotchman telling them, in his broadest Doric, that there was only one thing worth worship in the universe, that is, strength and success ; how he held spellbound the students of Edinburgh University in his famous address as rector ; and how a single phrase of that address was made the text of a

hundred sermons. Yet the influence of Carlyle in England was not equal to the influence of Emerson in America. Nor will it be half as abiding. A far more subtle intellect had the latter, and a far firmer grasp of the principles on which all philosophers are united, and the principles on which they specifically differ. And strange to say, he never acquired that obscure and Germanised style for which Carlyle will be for ever remarkable. Not quite so pure, his style has all the clearness and precision of Lord Bacon's. His sentences are generally short, crisp, and full of meaning. It is only when he speaks of the majesty and beauty of Nature that he broadens out into stately and harmonious lines, that remind one irresistibly of the prose-poems of Ruskin. And his essays and addresses are absolutely bristling with sharp, pungent epigrams, each with its grain of wisdom put as neatly as our cumbrous language will allow. The author of the *Novum Organum* would not have been ashamed of such sayings as these: "Nature stretcheth out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness". "Nothing divine dies." "All good is eternally reproductive." "Words are signs of natural facts." "Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they continually convert into verbs, and apply to analogous mental acts," etc., etc., etc. And Ruskin, in his most inspired moments, might have written of Nature thus:—

"But, in other hours, Nature satisfies the soul purely by its loveliness, and without any mixture of corporal benefit. I have seen the spectacle of morning from the hill-top over against my house, from daybreak to sunrise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformation; the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does Nature deify us with a few and cheap elements? Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of

emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams. Not less excellent, except for our less susceptibility in the afternoon, was the charm last evening of a January sunset. The western clouds divided and subdivided themselves into pink flakes modulated with tints of unspeakable softness; and the air had so much life and sweetness, that it was a pain to come within doors. What was it that Nature would say? Was there no meaning in the live repose of the valley behind the mill, and which Homer or Shakespeare could not reform for me in words? The leafless trees become spires of flame in the sunset, with the blue east for their background, and the stars of the dead calices of flowers, and every withered stem and stubble rimed with frost, contribute something to the mute music."

But it is with his thoughts we have principally to deal, and they are manifold and brilliant. Wisdom flashes everywhere through his writings—wise thoughts that have never touched us before, and thoughts as familiar to us as our daily prayers. It is a feature of genius that it can present to us our own ideas, yet so changed and coloured that we can scarcely recognise them. The thought that we see from only one direction presents itself to the mind of a great thinker under every aspect. And under every aspect it is shown us, until we declare it unfamiliar and original. Like the story of Faust, which is totally different as it comes from the hands of Marlowe, and Goethe, and Bailey, or the sweet legend of "the Falcon," which is one thing in Coventry Patmore's verses, quite another in Tennyson's drama, all our wise fancies come back to us in the pages of Emerson, but so glorified and etherealised that we cannot recognise them. The commonplace in his hands becomes brilliantly original. Every page of his writings sparkles with the wisest thoughts and the wittiest con-

ceits; and conjectures as lofty as ever disturbed the mind of Plato are compressed with Scriptural conciseness into a single line. Hence, a generation of American scholars has sat at his feet, and accepted his teachings as the sum and essence of all that is worth knowing in ancient and modern philosophy. And hence, too, to him more than to any other teacher of his time is to be ascribed the fact that the best intellects of America have been swept clear of every vestige of revealed religion, and left blank to receive the new impressions that have been made by the theories that of latter years have been pushed to the front in the name of science.

For Emerson, let it be said, was not a philosopher in the same sense as Plato or Bacon. He is an eclectic; but by far the most brilliant of eclectics. He did not create so much as collect. His warmest admirers cannot discover a trace of system in his writings. The sincerest critic amongst his friends, Matthew Arnold, has declared that he can never be considered a great philosophical writer on account of his method, or rather want of method, in writing. And yet it was apparently his ambition to construct such a system. He commenced by removing all traces of the Divine Revelation of Christianity. Speaking of Carlyle he says, evidently in sympathy with him, "that all his qualities had a certain virulence coupled in his case with the utmost impatience of Christendom and Jewdom, and all existing presentations of the 'good old story';" and in the introduction to his *Essays* he says: "The foregoing generations beheld God and Nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in Nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply to action proportioned to Nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of

the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works, and laws, and worship." But although he succeeded so far as to remove Christianity from the minds of many, the religion which he was to found, the worship he was to originate, the world has not as yet seen. His religion or philosophical system was essentially negative. Whenever he attempts to construct, he drifts of necessity into pantheism as absolute as that of Spinoza. His lofty idealism leads inevitably to this. He cites approvingly the words of Turgot: "He that has never doubted the existence of matter may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries". It is the common opinion of all metaphysicians that, as Sir W. Hamilton says, "The study of mind is necessary to counterbalance and correct the study of matter". But Emerson declares that never yet has there been made a single step in intellectual science that did not begin in idealism. It is a necessity. The moment the mind turns inward upon itself, and stands face to face awe-stricken with its own creations, it begins to regard all external things as dreams and shadows. It is with us as with the monk in the Spanish convent—the men and things that pass before our eyes, appearing and disappearing, are but pictures and shades; the paintings on the walls, that is, our own ideas that are ever present, are the only realities. Hence he holds that there is a necessary affinity between idealism and religion. Both, he thinks, put the affront upon Nature. "The things that are seen are temporal," says St. Paul, "the unseen things are eternal." The uniform language of the churches is: "Condemn the vain unsubstantial things of this world; they are fleeting and shadowy. Seek the realities of religion." Plotinus, he says, was ashamed of his body. Michael Angelo declared that external beauty is but the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul, which He has called into

time. Like his German friends, Emerson has struck upon a truth, but from what a different standpoint from St. Paul's, and with what different conclusions! He will not rise, like the latter, to the "house of many mansions," nor will he accept the doctrine, that what is "sown in corruption will be reaped in incorruption". He flouts Nature, because he has not read its meaning, nor will he believe the interpretations which Faith puts upon it. But has he not gone too far? He who has written so beautifully of Nature, has he come to despise her? No. He sees he is drifting too far in the dangerous current. And although he avows himself an idealist, and holds that all culture tends to idealism, he shrinks from the consequences. "I have no hostility to Nature," he says, "but a child's love to it. Let us speak her fair. I do not wish to fling stones at my beautiful mother, nor soil my gentle nest." What then? Nature must be underrated and despised in the religion of idealism. No, he says, but Nature itself must be idealised. But how? Mark the consequences. "The mind," he says, "is a part of the nature of things, the world is a Divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day. There is a universal soul in all things. It is within and behind man's individual life. Intellectually considered we call it reason. Considered in relation to Nature, it is Spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man, in all ages and countries, embodies it in his language as the Father. That Spirit creates. That Spirit is one and not compound. That Spirit does not act upon us from without, that is, in Space and Time, but spiritually through ourselves. Man has access to the entire mind of the Creator—is himself the Creator and the Finite. I am part or particle of God." This, of course, is the purest pantheism, and thus what is called Natural Religion in its worst and lowest sense was put before the thinking mind of America in its most subtle and attractive form. The consequences are apparent. All Revelation is rejected, save such as comes intuitively from

man's own consciousness, or is produced from the contemplation of external nature. The Sacred Scriptures, like the Koran or the Veda, are simply the histories and legends of a fairly cultured race. The Hebrew prophets are ranked with the priests of Vishnu and Buddha. Christianity is only another form of the universal religion of mankind, and its Divine Author is classed with Confucius and Plato. All divinely revealed doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation are allegories and myths, and God Himself has no distinct personality, but is the soul which pervades all things, and is incarnated in Nature. Thus the young intellect of America has been taught, and taught by a master whose personal character added weight to every word which he spoke. Unlike Carlyle, his idol, Emerson was essentially an optimist. In the very attitude of modern society towards all great spiritual questions, and in which the English philosopher could only discern traces of inevitable spiritual dissolution, the American recognised elements of hope for the future. Probably because he himself was so very sanguine, and knew so little of men, he brought himself to believe that his countrymen would be weaned more and more from the pursuit of wealth and position, and come to live more and more the true life of the Spirit, in which he believed all real happiness to be found. In this he was egregiously mistaken. Once in a century, perhaps, some great hopeful mind like his may be able to wrap itself up in its own ideas, and live a calm life full of all serenity and dignity. But the world at large demands something more positive and real than this. Theories, however splendid, will not satisfy the eternal cravings of the human mind for the knowledge that is not born of itself; and the grandest pantheistic conceptions may flatter the vanity, but will never meet the wants, of men. Yet a character like Emerson's, so delicate and so elevated, had a lesson of its own for the refined and impressive minds that gathered round him, and took from him the ideas that were to serve for dogma, and the discipline that took the place of virtue. But of

them, and in consequence of his influence over them, we may ask in his own words, "Where dwells their religion?" And answer again in his own words, "Tell me where dwells electricity, or motion, or thought, or gesture? They do not dwell or stay at all." And the Divine secret is reduced to the common platitude that religion is the doing of all good, and for its sake the suffering of all evil, *souffrir de tout le monde, et ne faire souffrir personne.*

## FREE-THOUGHT IN AMERICA—THE SECTS— THE CHURCH.<sup>1</sup>

IN our last paper we tried to explain the nature of the changes that took place with the growth of time and thought in the mind of the first of American philosophers, and the consequent disturbance of fixed beliefs amongst that large and important section of the American people who accepted his teaching without question.

This strong bias towards scepticism was very much increased by the close intercommunication that then was established between the Old and the New Worlds. It is very probable that the growing intellects of America, with that natural elasticity by which the human mind reverts to primal principles and truths, when uninfluenced by external disturbing causes, would have sooner or later recovered from unhealthy doubts and questionings to strong and firm faith, were it not for the constant stream of educated but prospectless men that poured into the American Continent from Europe, and who brought with them no capital, but free and vigorous intellects; no religion, but the most liberal notions of all moral and dogmatic truth. Introduced as the *alumni* of the great university centres of free thought in Europe, they created the idea, which still prevails, that a finished professional education, much less a perfect philosophical education, was not to be had at home—was not to be had anywhere, in fact, except in the cherished sanctuaries of unbelief. Hence, during these last decades, a returning stream

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, November, 1884.

has passed from the States to Europe, dividing itself at Paris. The æsthetic or pleasure-loving American passes into the cities of Northern Italy, and whiles away the summer in the galleries of Florence, or in the shades of Umbria. But the patrons of advanced thought plunge at once into the German universities, study philosophy under Virchow, and anatomy under Haeckel, and, refined by a short residence in a London club, they return, and from newspaper and tribune, in the daily fly-sheets, and in the pages of the Popular Science Monthly, they put forth their ideas boldly and ably, and scatter broadcast through America the principles they gathered in Europe, and developed at leisure at home.

All these causes were remote and preparatory; but there is not a doubt but that they had undermined the faith of thousands in systems of religious thought which were supposed to be unassailable, and opened the way for the last concentrated and sweeping attack that has been made on Christianity. It commenced in the great controversy that agitated the world thirty years ago, and which originated in the assumption that the discoveries of geologists were contradicting the testimony of the Word of God. The controversy raged fiercely at the time; and nowhere were there more violent assertions made that every stratum of rock discovered disproved the teachings of Holy Writ; and nowhere, too, were more brilliant and learned defences made for the integrity of Scriptural inspiration than in America. The brilliant and successful labours of Hugh Miller in England were rivalled in the States by Professors Dana and Hitchcock, and the great naturalist, Agassiz. Then came a lull. The cause of Geology *versus* Revelation was withdrawn, but scientific speculation had been awakened. The study of the rocks was set aside; but in the laboratories of England and Germany, under the clear light of the microscope, Nature was revealing new wonders in plant and animal, and men's minds under fierce excitement were arranging analogy after analogy, and flashing back through countless centuries to the

nebulae of worlds, and the germs of all existing life. Biology *versus* Creation now became the burning question. Is man the product of mechanical forces, working up and out through the strata of matter, or is he indeed the son of God, created to the image and likeness of the Deity? The doctors of the new science were Haeckel of Germany, and Darwin of England. The apostles were Tyndall in these islands, and Huxley of New York. We remember what a thrill of horror penetrated the world when, in 1874, Tyndall defiantly formulated and unfolded at Belfast the full plan of the naked materialism that was to supplant the sacred traditions of humanity. Huxley, still more boldly, fled to America a few years before, and in a series of lectures in New York not only explained the new theories, but deduced from them a series of conclusions as wanton and unconnected as ever agonised the intellect of a logician. The mind of America was agitated. The transcendentalism and ill-concealed pantheism of Emerson were forgotten. Speculation gave place to examination. The scientific journals teemed with praises of the industry and enterprise of the evolutionists, and the world of science waited on the tiptoe of expectation for the discovery which was confidently promised—the link that was to connect the organic with the inorganic world. It was not forthcoming. But scientific speculation was accepted for certain revelation, and men of science boldly launched themselves against revealed religion under every form. All the caution that was so carefully observed by rationalists of former years was cast aside; the fear of wounding susceptibilities, or of darkening the light of faith in minds, where the torch of science could provide no adequate substitute, was stated to be pusillanimous and childish. Scepticism became dogmatic; and by every class of literary men, historians, metaphysicians and philosophers, all faith in the supernatural was ridiculed as a remnant of the weak and puerile superstitions of the world in its infancy. Arrogant infidelity became supreme in America. The absolute freedom of the press enabled

the active propagandists of this new religion of science to scatter their pernicious doctrines broadcast through the land. Scientific journals of immense weight and authority were assisted by the lighter magazines, and these in turn by the daily papers, in making the theories and deductions of evolutionists familiar to the masses of the people. Light scientific lectures, ably illustrated, opened up to wondering minds the spectacle of the world, with all its vast complexities of animals, vegetables and minerals, unfolding itself from the first atom, and growing under the hands of some unseen power, with mechanical precision, into a universe of surpassing loveliness. And if these, in their exclusive devotion to science, spared the susceptibilities of their audiences, there were not wanting in the American cities street preachers, and day lecturers, and pamphleteers, who repeated in coarse and indecent jests the unqualified contempt of their superiors for everything savouring of religion. All our fundamental ideas of God and Revelation, the soul and its everlasting destiny, the higher moral sense, the spiritual desires and aspirations of men, everything in fact that could be a motive of virtuous actions, and a mainspring of noble deeds and ambitions, was stigmatised as the fancy of superstition, or the dream of enthusiasts, kept alive by an elaborate system of priesthood throughout the world. The fact that nearly every preacher of the new creed had been obliged to retract his assertions under the pressure of science itself; that Tyndall in all his later lectures withdrew from the advanced position which he had taken at Belfast; that Huxley, in his article "Biology," in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, absolutely contradicted his own favourite theories; and that Haeckel himself in his addresses before the French Association, and in his *Natural History of Creation*, was driven to admit the necessity of an absolute beginning, was most carefully kept in the background. In Germany and England the ancient conservatism of the races, and their stern and pitiless examination of these subversive doctrines,

compelled the materialists to limit their dogmatism. America and France, let it be said, have stood forth in ugly pre-eminence as the countries where infidelity has taken its firmest foothold. In these lands it is no longer disreputable. It is no disgrace to be known as an atheist. That terrible name, which Voltaire in his worst moments would have repudiated, that term of shame which, even to depraved minds, carries with it some nameless idea of turpitude, has been freely accepted, and even boasted of, under the euphemised form of Agnostic and Materialist. And all sacred things of religion, names that were spoken with bared heads and bended knees, sacred stories that had so often brought comfort to the sorrowful, and sacred hopes that had so long had their consecrated shrines in the human heart, are made subject to derision. The scoff of the unbeliever has degraded in the eyes of thousands the purest and holiest revelations of heaven.

Our examination into the growth of free-thought in America would hardly be complete, did we not advert for a moment to the luxury and voluptuousness of social life, and to the corruption and venality that exist in all the State departments. So far as the mere material growth and progress of the States is concerned, these things, which in an older and more thickly populated country would be the prelude to extinction, will scarcely have a perceptible effect. So long as the population is not wedged together within limits that are impassable, so long as there is free power of expansion, and unused land with its teeming wealth lies open to the people, there never can be those awful collisions between wealth and poverty, the governing classes and the governed, that are such perilous possibilities in older states. But that excessive luxury, the facility of making and squandering fortunes, and the competition for wealth, which is so keen, that dishonesty is reputed a virtue—that these things are inimical to religious feeling, and direct incentives to infidelity, is beyond all dispute. The history of the world testifies it. Athens, in the very climax of

freedom and prosperity, forgot its ancient deities, and built statues to the Great Unknown. Rome, under the emperors, lost faith in the gods, under whose tutelage it was supposed to have waxed so strong. Florence, under the Medici, became classic and pagan. Paris, under Louis XIV., became the cradle and school of all modern infidelity. England, under Victoria, is drifting every day into the abysses. And America, whose ambition it is to rival and surpass these states and empires, may succeed too in securing the doubtful honour of towering above all in colossal iniquity. Certainly, if there be any connection between free-living and free-thinking, and some one has said, "Les passions sont athées," it would not be rash to predict a supremacy in evil for America. We will not go into details, but mention that, as far back as the Civil War, and even amidst its horrors, an outcry was raised against the extravagance and voluptuousness of the cities of the Union. Descriptions of revellings and riotous living are quoted largely by Dr. Brownson in his Review,<sup>1</sup> and they read like a page from the *Arabian Nights*, or from a history of Rome under Caligula. Now, if these things were done twenty years ago, what shall be said of America at present? The answer, in all its painful and vivid truth, may be read in Mr. Henry George's latest work, called *Social Problems*.

We now come to the question, what defence has been made by the Christian communions of America against the terrific assaults of infidelity? We put aside for a moment the Catholic Church, and we candidly admit that all that could be done by human zeal, intensified by the deadliness of the struggle, and fortified by learning as wide and deep as that of the adversary, was done by the Evangelical churches of America. That their pastors were at an early period quite alive to the dangers which were pressing on their traditional creeds, from

<sup>1</sup> *Review*, January, 1864; Art. "Popular Corruption and Venality".

within and without, was apparent from the efforts that were made to secure for their theological students a most accurate knowledge of those sciences which were assumed to be in direct hostility to revealed religion. Hence, divinity students from America crowded the universities of Germany for the last fifteen years, and returned to their missions fully equipped with every fact and argument that could tell against the advancing lines of infidelity. And if we except the standard works, written by German divines, we hardly exaggerate when we say, that by far the fullest and ablest defences of Christianity have been made by the elders and professors among the Non-Catholic creeds of America. A mere catalogue of the works issued by the religious press of America during the last fifteen years would fill a volume. To each succeeding phase of unbelief—Rationalistic, Materialistic, and Positive—they opposed scholarship that was very profound, and a tenacity for their faith that was heroic. They established in their professional schools, notably at Princeton and Andover, lectureships on the relation between religion and the sciences. And, not being impeded by strict theological courses, they had leisure to devote themselves to the philosophical studies which have become of such supreme importance in our days. It ought, therefore, to be a matter of regret that they were unable to counteract the influences of free-thought. In their defeat there is the pathos that always hangs around the brave defenders of a hopeless cause. They went down like the Israelites before the Philistines, because they had not the Ark of God in their midst. Stubbornly they contested every issue, and gradually they had to abandon point after point of cherished beliefs, which were doubly hallowed by the worship of their ancestors and the robust traditions of their race. But no purely human institutions could stand the merciless criticism that rained from press and platform on doctrines that had no better support than the frail logic of the class-room, set in stereotyped forms, and supported by ancient texts, which had lost all their inspired vigour,

because they had been irreverently handled by every individual who claimed the right of private judgment. The Nemesis of the Reformation has assuredly come. Its own children have risen against it. They have pushed its lessons to their logical conclusions. With audacity unheard of before our century, they have assailed every doctrine, not only of Christian, but even of Theistic belief, and the churches have gone down before their assaults like cities built upon the sand. Every familiar doctrine must be modified to meet the requirements of science; the integrity of Scriptural inspiration must be abandoned; the deeply cherished doctrines that the Puritans brought over in the *Mayflower*, and which were reverenced as the Israelites revered the Ark and its Tables—the dogmatic articles which lit the faggot and heated the brand in the New England cities—have been swept away ruthlessly by the broader views of that liberalism which environs all thought in our time. The texts and tenets which went to build up the edifice of Calvinistic theology, and which generations of elders regarded as irrefragable, have been torn in pieces and flung to the winds by the contemptuous logic of latter-day infidels; and even that sacred belief, in which were centred all hopes of comfort here and happiness hereafter—the belief in the Word of God, the “sword of the spirit”—has become as vague a source of religious thought as the intuitions of the philosopher, or the reason and spirit of Emerson. “Faith in spiritual and divine realities,” says an American divine, “may, in some of its older forms, be passing into Herbert Spencer’s ‘family of extinct beliefs’;” and his only hope is, that he may be allowed to help in the general movement towards a faith at once “more simple, more rational and more assured”. It is the same writer,<sup>1</sup> whose works have become very popular in England, who declares, “that the system of philosophy in the Westminster confession we are not bound to accept”; “that we are anxious to do

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Newman Smith.

the real work of revision, to adjust our own faiths happily to modern conditions of thought, and to learn to preach them in new tongues of knowledge".<sup>1</sup> And he says that he would be far more reticent of his views in addressing a lay than a clerical assembly; "for if I had been called upon to address, upon the same topic, an ecclesiastical assembly, my growing conviction of the need of a revised theology, suited to our scientific environment, and fitted to survive our modern thought, would have led me to lay the stress of my argument even more strongly upon the desirability of a restatement of the standards, particularly of my own, the Presbyterian Church".<sup>2</sup> And he quotes with approval the Cambridge platform of the Congregational churches, in which it was expressly written that in the examination of candidates for admission to the Church, a "rational charity" should be exercised, and the "weakest measure of faith" should be accepted. A creed which thus can be recast and fitted in every new setting of science has neither elements of cohesion and unity in itself, nor powers of resistance sufficient to maintain a distinct and specific existence as a religion. We can hardly be surprised to hear then, that, in New York, the churches are comparatively deserted, nor to read the following verdict on Protestantism by one of its own professors: "The great bulk of the Protestant Church is identified with the world. It has a name to live, while it is dead. It has turned its doctrines into nationalism, or rationalism, and its life into selfishness. The old landmarks are gone. Family prayer is given up. Prayer meetings are ignored, worldly partnerships are formed, social sins are connived at, and even excused, the pulpit is made a stage on which to strut and pose before a gaping world, and religion is made one of the instruments of fashion."<sup>3</sup>

We turn at last from the weakness and defeat of the sects to contemplate the attitude of the Church towards

<sup>1</sup> *Orthodox Theology of To-day.*

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.* See Preface. <sup>3</sup> Dr. Crosby, New York.

free-thought. And at first sight there seems to be such absolute indifference in the Church to the dangers that paralysed the sects, that we are inclined to set it down to a want of forethought and prudence that seems inexplicable. We recognise none of that anxiety, and even panic, that drove hundreds of Episcopalian and Presbyterians to the Divinity schools of Germany, we see no chairs of biological, or other sciences, established in Catholic schools, we notice the total absence of any desire to adapt the teachings of the Church to the dictates of the sciences, or the wants of the age. But the closer the subject is studied, the more majestic appears the attitude of perfect security with which the American Church regards the last and worst of the heresies. In this she presents in miniature the history and character of the Church from the beginning. Far removed from the tumult and warring of sects and creeds, the Church looks imperturbably on the ever-shifting phases of spiritual thought in which heresy and infidelity present themselves; but is calm about her own future, for her lease of existence and of triumph reaches unto the years of eternity. This attitude of security the Church in America has assumed. She, too, inherits the eternal promises, for she is linked in visible bonds of unity with the Catholic Church. And with singular facility she has adapted herself to the free institutions of America, as easily as if she were not born under an Empire. Democratic ideas fit in with her dogma and discipline, as easily as those of monarchies. Here is her strength—that whilst she allows her children the fullest liberty in political and social life, she maintains her authority in doctrine and discipline as firmly as in the lands where saints were born and the blood of martyrs was shed. Inflexibility in her teaching, universality in her sympathies, and constancy in active well-doing—here are her credentials to the American nation, here are her answers to the controversies which agitate the world around her. Whilst patronising the sciences, and adapting to her own wants every element of human progress,

she continues to preach and demand submission to doctrines that were weighty with age in the remote periods when the prototypes of our modern agnostics assailed them. To all objections against the truth of her teaching she has but one answer—the steady unvarying assertion of her exclusive right to teach the world. This Divine despotism, even in the land of freedom, is her buckler and defence. And hence is she free to exercise her undoubted strength to bind closer and closer in compact organisation the territories and races that acknowledge her supremacy. With a hierarchy chosen, not so much on account of the great oratorical abilities, or liberal scholarship of its individual members, as for their splendid administrative talents; with a priesthood which combines in a singular manner the freest republican habits and sympathies with the steadiest adhesion to ecclesiastical principles; with a press second to none in the world, in ability and enterprise, and characterised by special zeal for the sacred cause it espouses; and with an aggregate of races, differing in customs and even in language, but united in the bonds of religion; the Church in America appears to be not so much a human association as a vast mechanism, which is for ever giving and receiving, expanding and developing, with a silent power that seems irresistible. It has all the advantages of action over speculation, for it has all the advantages of firm faith over wavering unbelief. Carlyle somewhere quotes Goethe as saying that "belief and unbelief are two opposite principles in human nature. The theme of all human history, so far as we are able to perceive it, is the contest between these two principles. All periods in which belief predominates, in which it is the main element, the inspiring principle of action, are distinguished by great, soul-stirring, fertile events, and worthy of perpetual remembrance; and on the other hand, when unbelief comes to the surface, that age is unfertile, unproductive and intrinsically mean. There is no pabulum in it for the spirit of man." The Church in America is proof of this. It anticipates all the am-

bitions of the philosopher. It foreshadows all the benevolent ideas of the best among the unbelievers. Its charity is wider than the world's philanthropy. Its devotion to the arts, which consecrate civilisation, is for ever showing itself far in advance of the barren sympathies of the educated and irreligious. Shall we then complain of the inaction of the Church in America? Or wonder that it has not come down to the arena of controversy with the unbeliever? Well, controversy was never yet the vehicle of Divine Faith. But Faith itself, manifested in works which touch the sympathies of all, may generate Faith in the infidel. "Show us your works," was the cry of the Parisian students which inspired Frederic Ozanam to found his great society. And it is not to great scholars like the Abbé Moigno, but to the Sisters of Charity and the priests, who hovered round the beds of the cholera patients, that we are to attribute that relenting towards the Church which we witness in contemporary France. The world, we are told, now demands what is real and positive in preference to what is imaginary and conjectural. Well, here is the Divine Positivism of the Church, its active benevolence, its never-failing charity, its patronage of the arts and sciences, its persistent devotion to the cause of education. And after all, is not the attitude of the Church completely justified by the fact that the strongest assertions of the infidels have been withdrawn? We have already quoted some retractions. But it may be safely said that the history of heresies affords no parallel to the dogmatism and assertiveness of the materialists, or the abject manner in which they have withdrawn, in the face of the world, their boldest and most impious declarations. We must not, however, be supposed to hold either that a liberal scholarship is not necessary for the priesthood of America, or that the American seminaries do not afford it to ecclesiastical students. The Church must always be in advance of the world. The priest must lead the flock. And his spiritual instructions will carry all the more weight when

it is understood that the pastor is a man of culture and refinement, and that his condemnation of new and fanciful theories comes from his belief, founded on fair and exhaustive reading, that they are utterly untenable. A Secchi in his lone observatory may be doing the work of an apostle. Men will reverence knowledge wherever found, and the natural abilities of the scholar may lead many souls to acknowledge the supernatural mission of the priest. Hence it has delighted all lovers of the American Church to hear that of late years the students in theological seminaries have been able to read a complete course of divinity and philosophy, and that missionary requirements will not for the future necessitate a curtailed and unsatisfactory preparation for the greatest of missions. We may mention, too, that the exhibitions of the Brothers of the Christian schools in London lately have shown that in Manhattan College the professors are quite alive to the necessity of taking their places in the foremost lines of scientific thought; and we might fairly judge by analogy, if we did not already know it as a fact, that a similar spirit prevails in every Catholic seminary in the States.

There are just two difficulties that bar the progress of the Church in America. Both will engage the earnest attention of the prelates who, on the 9th of this month, will meet in solemn council at Baltimore. The first and greatest is the question of State schools. That these schools do not subserve the interests of religion or morality is already proved by the fact that the bishops have found it necessary, at enormous sacrifices, to establish Catholic schools in their cities. These schools are supported by the different churches; and we can understand what a hardship this is, when we are told that many churches in the city of New York are obliged to spend 12,000 dollars, or £2,500 a year, in maintaining these schools in such a state of efficiency that they can compete successfully with the public schools. There appears to be no great probability that the State will change this secular system of education, and thus relieve

Catholics from the burden of double taxation. Neither is there any likelihood that these public schools will improve their teachings. And, of course, following the tendencies of our age, many Catholic parents will send their children to the Government schools, reckless of their faith, if their temporal welfare be secured.

The second great difficulty for the Church is to reclaim the thousands who, with singular perversity, have chosen for their homes the tenements of New York in preference to the freedom and health of the broad prairies towards the West. That these dark places of the great city are nurseries of vice, that the children born in them are reared in spiritual blindness, and that myriads of them drift away towards heresy and infidelity, are things which no one desires to conceal, but for which no remedy has yet been found. But all future emigrants will be protected and warned against the most unhappy social tendency of our age—the concentration of vast masses of people in districts where the laws of God and the laws of health are alike disregarded.

If the evils of public schools and the evils of the cities be once removed, the Church in America has a future before it which the imagination itself fails to reach. We expect to see in the States a religious revolution such as we behold at present in Europe. We think that with the advance of education, most of the Protestant sects will disappear, or, merging with each other, descend to the dead level of Unitarianism. We do not believe that Atheism, pure and simple, can ever become the creed of vast masses of the population in America or elsewhere. But the Deism of Emerson and the philosophers will probably draw to itself all other creeds, except in some remote districts where, in a rustic Sion or Bethel, the local deacon will still read the Bible and preach some surviving doctrines of the ancestral faiths. The Church will then be confronted with the rational and consistent beliefs of the followers of natural religion. And then, too, even as now, will it show that

it is the custodian of all Divine Revelation, the living interpreter of the mind of God towards men, that it knows no change or shadow of change, but is perfect in its light as at the beginning. And the Universal Church will recognise it as a fair compensation for all the losses she has sustained in her combats with heresy and infidelity in these evil days—as the fairest province in

The fair Kingdom wide as earth,  
Citied on all the mountains of the world,  
The image, glory-touched, of that great city  
Which waits us in the heavens.

## THE GERMAN UNIVERSITIES.—I.<sup>1</sup>

THE question of higher or University Education, which is generally regarded as one of vital issue from its bearings upon the moral and intellectual life of a nation, is in the near future to be submitted to us again. And this fact alone, apart from the transcendent importance of the subject, is the only apology we offer for presenting this paper to the readers of the *Record*.

University Education in this modern world is supposed to have reached its most perfect form in Germany; and to Germany we must go to understand fully what appears to be the highest conception of University life, its spheres of thought limited only by the boundary lines of human knowledge, and its work, free and flexible, within rigid principles of religion on the one hand, and patriotism on the other. As a guide we shall take one of the most interesting books produced in our generation, written, strangely enough, by a French priest, Père Didon, who made the largest sacrifice a Frenchman can make, that of national vanity, for the purpose of teaching a wholesome lesson to his nation. The book appears to have been wrung from him by a kind of torture, to which, indeed, he voluntarily subjected himself; and his broad philosophical habit of generalisation is very often broken abruptly by an exclamation of pain, when he sees some striking instance of German superiority, or some special manifestations of the patriotic instinct, which is so universal in its extent, and so well directed in its energies. From the day when,

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, June, 1886.

midst a crowd of students, German and foreign, he signed his name, *Gulielmus Didon*, in the album of the University of Berlin, and touched the rector's hand as a kind of honourable oath to be true to the traditions of the place, down to the time when his book came forth from the press, and was received with a scream of agony from his vain countrymen, Père Didon went through purgatorial pains, with one sentence of solace in his heart: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". The two best books on Germany have been written by French *littérateurs*. Madame de Staël was the first in Europe to understand and manifest the riches and power of German literature. Père Didon, nearly half a century later, has written the latest and best book on the springs and sources of the political and literary pre-eminence of the same nation. But De Staël at least commenced to write in a tone of superiority as one who, brought up in more than Attic or Augustan refinement, had suddenly discovered pearls amongst barbarians. Père Didon wrote in a more humble, and perhaps truthful, spirit, when German power and intellect were acknowledged through the world, and his own country was writhing in the shame of a defeat, which resulted from forces generated in the German Universities, and directed through the channels of military organisation. To trace to its springs the power that had proved so disastrous to his own country—the power that came down like the rock cut from the mountain, which shivered the statue of brass with the feet of clay; to study the secrets of the energies which transformed a race barbarous up to yesterday into kings of intellect to-day, clothing themselves with the richest spoils of Greek and Oriental culture, and evolving and creating with superabundant plenteousness ideas and institutions that will minister to the intellectual wants of generations yet unborn—this was a task of observation and analysis, repulsive and uncongenial enough, yet all the more fruitful, let us hope, for his own country and for the world.

There are twenty-two Universities in Germany,<sup>1</sup> as uniform in teaching, and as easy in discipline, as the most rigid dogmatist on the one hand, or the broadest Epicurean on the other, could desire. They are scattered through the empire and its provinces as if by accident, sometimes buried in mighty cities, like Berlin, sometimes, like Göttingen, creating quiet towns by sleepy rivers. In the more modern Universities like Munich and Berlin, the patrons of science amongst the regal and ducal families have built palaces as the homes of the learned. In the more ancient, the University building is an old convent, as at Leipsic; or a dismantled fortress, forming the centre of a splendid architectural pile, as at Tübingen. The teaching of the smallest, as well as of the largest University, embraces the four great faculties of Theology, Jurisprudence, Medicine and Philosophy. The Theological faculty is sometimes exclusively Protestant, as at Berlin, Göttingen and Halle, at which latter place one of the strongest assaults ever made on Christianity was led by the rationalist, Wolf; sometimes Catholic exclusively, as at Breslau, Münster and Würzburg; sometimes Catholic and Protestant, each, of course, with its own professors, as at Tübingen, where there are 374 Protestant and 179 Catholic students of Theology. And a student is at perfect liberty to pass from University to University, from one famous professor to another, according to the bent of his own inclinations, and the attractions of the great intellects, which direct thought in these schools of the highest science. There with the humming of the busy world around him, if his University happens to be located in a city; or if in a country town, in a

<sup>1</sup>That is in the Empire, *viz.*, thirteen in Prussia, the duchies and the annexed provinces—Berlin, Bonn, Braunsberg, Breslau, Friburg, Grieswald, Halle, Heidelberg, Kiel, Königsberg, Marburg, Münster and Rostock; one in Saxony—Leipzig; one in the duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha—Jena; one in the grand duchy of Hesse—Gieessen; three in Bavaria—Munich, Würzburg, Erlangen; one in Württemburg—Tübingen; one in Hanover—Göttingen; one in Alsace—Strasburg.

silence and calm as deep as that which falls upon Chartreuse, when the evening antiphon has been sung, and the echoes of the last footsteps have died along the twilight corridors, the student, with his mind already stored with the facts of science and history, and the principles of art, is enabled to collate, combine, and generalise in that high faculty of Philosophy, which is the term of all education. And how easy and elastic is the discipline of those German Universities, and how charmingly Bohemian is the life the students lead! A slice of ham and a glass of beer for breakfast—an adjournment to the hall where the students leap over desks and benches to their places with the inevitable note-book in their hands, the solitary black-board and piece of chalk for the professor, who enters with the students, places his cap with theirs, and commences his hour's lecture without comment or preface, and without the slightest attempt at style, telling the hardest facts, and explaining the highest problems in the plainest manner that the German tongue will allow; then an adjournment to the restaurant, where professor and students sit around the same table, and the thread of the lecture is taken up, and in a perfectly informal manner the difficulties of Arabic, or cuneiform inscriptions, or absolute idealism are explained; or a quiet stroll by the banks of the river, and confidential revelations of the arcana of Science and Philosophy, when the professor has gathered around him some of his favourite pupils, who may yet perhaps, he thinks, stand on the high table-lands of science with the masters at whose feet he himself sate and studied!

I suppose no two races were ever more dissimilar in habits, tastes, and temperament, than the ancient Greeks and the modern Germans. The capricious, artistic, wayward sons of Athens were the exact antitheses of the dreamy, yet plodding and practical Germans. Yet the genius of both lands has struck out a University system, which in its scope and object, and even in the details of working, are very much alike. The Athenian

*ephebi* were the prototypes of the modern German students. Living either in private residences, or together in colleges, they attended at will the lectures of the philosophers, who attracted admiring crowds at the Lyceum, or in the Academy, or in the Porch ; and these halls of learning, as well as the hospitality of Athens, were thrown open not only to the children of the city, but to dusky strangers from Egypt, the cradle of all philosophy ; to students from the distant shores of the *Ægean*, and, above all, to those of the great Semitic race, which even then, with its Sacred Books, held a foremost place in the world of culture, for its professors were inspired and its Philosophy divine.<sup>1</sup> And in Athens, as in the Germany of to-day, the professorial system obtained. Zeno in his porch, Plato in his little garden near the sacred Eleusinian way, Aristotle in the Lyceum, or in his residence by the banks of Ilyssus, seem to us the far-off images of Kant and Hegel and Fichte, or the more modern professors, as they move freely amongst the students, who look to them for guidance, and teach the highest synthesis of all Science by the banks of rivers as famed as Ilyssus, or under the shadows of mountains, peopled with the phantoms of poetic dreamers, and as sacred to German genius as Olympus or Parnassus to the Greeks. It is to men and not to books that these two great nations, separated by fifteen centuries of time, commit the intellectual training of their youth. Schools are founded bearing the names of great professors or the philosophical systems they established, and each student attaches himself at will to that school or that professor to whom he feels himself particularly attracted. The professor dictates, the students listen and write, for the note-book is the armoury of the modern German student, as it was of the Athenian, who, however, more aristocratic and luxurious in disposition, took his slave to the lecture as

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Card. Newman's *Idea of a University*. Discourse, "Christianity and Letters," p. 264.

amanuensis. No pedagogic system of question and answer! Athirst for knowledge, the student hangs on the lips of his professor, and it is only after the lecture is finished that he can approach his master, and lay his difficulties before him. Hence, too, there is no programme in our sense of the word. Twice a year the Senate of the University appoints the subjects to be treated, and the hours for lecture. In the Maxima Aula, or corridor of the University, the professors put up their notices, written and signed by themselves. The students must select the lectures they wish to attend. They give their names to the quæstor, and pay the master's fees. They call on him once more to get their books signed, and are then free to be studious or idle, careless or assiduous, as they please. The University course terminates with the examination for a Doctor's degree. The title is indispensable for those who are about to practise medicine, or who aspire to a professorship. Otherwise it is purely a title of honour; but such honour as to make men, during the eight half-years of the University course, study and toil in a manner which makes the students of other countries the merest amateurs by comparison. He who possesses that title in Germany stands enrolled in the only aristocracy which that democratic nation acknowledges—the aristocracy of talent. Learned men form an estate by themselves. They represent the intelligence of the Empire, and as such are returned to Parliament. There are no less than eighty Doctors in the German Reichstag.

So far we have followed Père Didon. But here we must notice some points on which he differs from perhaps the two greatest specialists, if we may use the word, in this matter of University Education—Cardinal Newman and Dr. Pusey. He differs from the former in his idea of the scope or object of University Education; he differs from the latter in his idea of the system of education that ought to be pursued. The difference with the former, however, is infinitesimal; with the latter, in his statement of principles and results, the

difference is wide and deep. In the meaning of the word University, as a term embracing all science, human and divine, in the absolute logical necessity of including theology amongst the sciences, and the grave detriment to society and religion which is done by excluding it from University teaching, and confining it to a special faculty in a high school, the French Dominican and the great Oratorian are one. The ideas of Cardinal Newman on this subject are so well known, through his admirable lectures delivered before the students of the Catholic University, Dublin, that we forbear quoting them here. But as Père Didon's book is not quite so well known, we would ask our readers to look up Discourses I., II., III., IV., in Newman's *Idea of a University*, and compare them with the following extracts which are rather long, but which perhaps will be read with interest.

#### I.—THE SCOPE OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

“ Nothing shows better the progress of the culture of the mind than a simple comparative glance at higher education amongst ancient and modern nations. They both consider it as universal; but what a difference in the universality of each! With the ancients, education may be likened to a lake, the banks of which being limited are easily explored; with us it is like a shoreless ocean—the farther you explore it, the vaster it appears. Genius is no longer a beacon on the shore; it is a star, shining above the reefs, in the immensity of the skies; it no longer shows the port—the port no longer exists. It only shows the way through the rolling and stormy waves. Knowledge is infinite; man, who pursues it, dies in the midst of the immensity. What he explored is nothing, being easily measured. What remains to be discovered is unlimited; in fathoming it, imagination and reason draw back confounded. Nevertheless, mankind goes on without rest. Some irresistible attraction carries it towards truth. It lives only in order to learn, and learns only to rule over this world, the prey given

by God to its devouring and sublime curiosity. There are now among enlightened nations two kinds of public institutions for the diffusion, the culture, and the progress of higher Education—the High Schools and the Universities. High Schools present everywhere a double character—they are special, that is, exclusively limited to certain branches of general knowledge; utilitarian, that is, having in view some more or less immediate practical object. Their tendency is to obtain increasing influence in modern civilisation. From year to year their number increases as the province of knowledge extends its limits, as men become more energetically intent upon learning, as the utility of science becomes more obvious through the increase of wealth, security and comfort. Special schools are everywhere founded for training men capable of directing and managing the forces at work in the field open to their activity. Universities differ from High Schools precisely in these two respects—instead of one branch of knowledge only, their aim is to reach all its branches, to constitute a synthesis thereof; instead of giving to studies a professional direction, they aspire to pure science, and in cultivating the latter in view of some practical application, they cultivate it for itself. Knowledge and ability: these two words explain the aim of human life. The one might be engraved on the frontispiece of the *Alma Mater*, the other be written over the doors of all High Schools. *In Universities are trained great speculative minds; in High Schools great workers. In the former discoveries are made; in the latter they are usefully applied. The first is the realm of enlightenment; the second that of activity.*"

## II.—THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY.

"If Germany was wrong in not completing the old University organisation,<sup>1</sup> other modern nations committed a much more serious fault—they reduced it.

<sup>1</sup> By neglecting Leibnitz's last wish—the institution of a new faculty, called *economic* (*faculté économique*).

"In Russia, as in America; in France, as in Italy; almost everywhere the faculties of Theology have been eliminated from the encyclopædic organisation of knowledge. I am wrong; Theology has not been suppressed; it has been made, like the military art, a professional faculty; it has not been destroyed; it has been shut up and isolated in schools—closed to the life of the general public. Wherever the *régime* of the union of both powers exists—wherever the Church and the State, as subject or as mistress, remain united, in Austria, in Germany, in England—religious science continues to be an integral part of higher knowledge, and Theology occupies the first place in universal organisation. With nations, where the struggle has been more hardly fought, it tends to disappear. In Italy, Theology has been excluded from the twenty-one new Universities of the young kingdom, and has been obliged to seek refuge in large seminaries or in half-ruined cloisters. In France, official and public opinion has but little regard for supernatural science, but men of talent there often reawaken the honour of faith by their eloquence and their culture. We still possess five faculties of Theology; but these faculties, frequented only by amateurs, have no influence on the training of the Clergy; they are but the ghost of a great name, the last threatened *débris* of an old *régime* that is fast falling to pieces. In Germany, however, the State does not pretend to teach its own theology, its own philosophy, its own science, its own politics. It authorises the teachings required by public opinion or by the wants of the population, with the welfare of which it is entrusted. Are the Catholics in a majority? they possess, as at Breslau, their own faculty of Theology. Are the Protestants in a majority? they, in turn, have their Protestant faculty. Are the numbers equal? then, as at Tübingen, Protestants and Catholics alike have their own faculty. As regards scientific and philosophical liberty, it is seen at work in the faculty of Philosophy. All practical interests are thus taken into

account. Doctrines may, at will, battle against one another. Are we to deplore this? By no means, if men respect themselves. The discussion of philosophical or religious truths has become, with us, a necessity; and 'Universities are the fit arenas for such debates. The best, the sure means, to withdraw religion and religious questions from the discussion of the streets, is to give them the shelter of Universities. Must we therefore do away with seminaries in our own country? I do not think so; but, no doubt, valuable advantages would accrue from their being completed by regular faculties of Theology, wherein the future priests, sent there by their bishops, would come to study. Divine Science would once more find itself in vivifying contact with all human science. Like them, it must live; and to do this it must commingle with the progressive life of human things. Isolated, it remains unmoved in its rigid formulæ—it crystallises; cast into the ground, the formula becomes a living germ; it shoots, grows, transforms itself, assimilates. In passing through the ideas of Greek Philosophy, what did not these simple words, "Son of God," theologically commented upon, produce; and what wealth did not Christian Philosophy heap up, solely by the contact with Oriental Metaphysics, and by the sole development of a cultivated reason, which knew how to draw logical conclusions from revealed principles? This necessity the Germans have duly recognised. In it is to be seen one of the most active causes of the superiority with respect to erudition and science of the German clergy over the clergy of other nations!"

From the comparison thus instituted it will easily be seen how these two distinguished minds agree. The one point on which they differ is, that Père Didon insists that in Universities science must be studied for itself, and its professional application left to the High Schools; that therefore its province is to train *great speculative minds*, and to give the largest field and the best possible appliances for the experiments and research which are usefully applied in the Higher Schools; that therefore Universities

are places where knowledge must be pursued for its own sake, and the pursuit of it be disinterested, whereas in the High Schools the pursuit of knowledge is decidedly utilitarian. Now, whilst agreeing with most of these principles, Cardinal Newman, in his preface to the work already alluded to, is of opinion that philosophical inquiries belong rather to Academies, which sometimes are connected with Universities, sometimes subordinate to their rules, sometimes quite independent of them, such as the Royal Society which originated in Oxford—the Ashmolean and Architectural Societies—the British Association—the Antiquarian Society—the Royal Academy, etc.; and his Eminence quotes Cardinal Gerdil: "Ce n'est pas qu'il y ait aucune véritable opposition entre l'esprit des Académies et celui des Universités; ce sont seulement des vues différentes. Les Universités sont établies pour *enseigner*<sup>1</sup> les sciences aux élèves qui veulent s'y former; les Académies se proposent de *nouvelles recherches* à faire dans la carrière des Sciences. Les Universités d'Italie ont fourni des sujets qui ont fait honneur aux Académies; et celles-ci ont donné aux Universités des Professeurs,

<sup>1</sup>This point appears to have attracted a good deal of attention. In a lengthy article in the *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1852, on the Oxford University Commission Report, the writer says: "By the decay of the Professoriate, one of the two primary functions of a University, the cultivation of profound learning, has been almost entirely abandoned. Study, and self-improvement, and original investigation, are sacrificed to the educational office. The University, accordingly, is stripped of literary greatness; and, abandoned to hard-working schoolmasters or indolent dignitaries, is compelled to borrow its literature, its text-books, its authoritative commentaries on the philosophy, history, poetry, and divinity which it studies, the fundamental principles of its criticism and of its intellectual life from without, from foreigners or non-residents; whilst the nation loses that learning, so more than ever important in these days of commercial growth and material prosperity, which the University was specially designed to encourage and perpetuate." Almost precisely the same ideas are to be found in a treatise written by Mr. Mark Pattison, B.D., Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, and entitled "Suggestions on Academical Organisation, with special reference to Oxford". Edinburgh, 1868.

qui ont rempli les chaires avec la plus grande distinction." And the greatest thinkers of the world, his Eminence says, have shunned the lecture-room and the professor's chair; and in silence and retirement originated the ideas which have shaped the courses of men's thoughts. As a proof, the names of Pythagoras, Thales, Plato, Aristotle, Friar Bacon and Newton are quoted; and Socrates and Lord Bacon admitted as exceptions.

There cannot be a doubt that the marvellous progress which science has made since these lectures were delivered (1852), more than justify Dr. Newman's conclusions. During these thirty years the men of "light and leading," almost in every department of human science, have been specialists, who having once taken their degrees, and sometimes without having passed through an academical course, devoted themselves, without being hampered by professional duties, to the development of that particular art or science to which a special attraction was felt. We need only mention Edison in Mechanical Science; Tyndall and Huxley in Natural Philosophy and Biology; Ruskin and Carlyle in Literature; Pasteur and Koch in Anatomy and Physiology; Secchi in Astronomy. We must also admit that the Germans have not had much success in scientific generalisations; and have mastered and improved upon the theories and discoveries of other nations rather than originated any bold conception themselves. They cannot show scientists who for success in original research can be compared to Linnaeus, Lyell, Darwin, Lavoisier, Lamark and Carnot. But for earnest unflagging energy in pursuing studies, such as Philology, where a talent for discovery rather than for speculation is required, for the indefatigable industry with which the physical sciences are pursued, in the multitude of students and professors who in every department of human and divine knowledge are working with passionate earnestness, in the interminable series of excellent books which are produced on every possible subject, and, above all, in the pursuit of

Philosophy—the correlation of all arts and sciences towards each other, the Germans have no equals. Darwin, in his English laboratory, puts forth timidly an idea. It is taken up in Germany, developed, and made a prolific science, before he has assured himself even of its probability. Pasteur or Dumas gives to the world the latest secret Nature has told him. Whilst he is yet wondering at the revelation, scientific treatises on that discovery, with all its bearings on human knowledge or happiness, are in the hands of his pupils. Every day translations of German scientific works are issued in France. The inspiration of science falls in England or France, but the germs are borne to their Teutonic neighbours, and there they fructify. But there are two departments—and these the highest—where the observations of Cardinals Newman and Gerdil will hardly apply; and to these particularly Père Didon refers. The great masters in Theology were its professors; and the same is true of its kindred science—Metaphysics. And we speak with all possible hesitation and reserve, when we say that we always thought that the master-minds of antiquity, particularly Plato and Aristotle, whose influence on human thought is, and must be, permanent, expounded to admiring pupils the systems of Philosophy which they had elaborated with slow, and perhaps painful, effort, in the silence of their chambers. That Socrates, the founder of all Greek Philosophy, spent very little time in retirement and solitude, and the larger portion of his waking hours in the portico, in the gymnasium, conversing with artists, men of science, rhetoricians, and practising what he called mental obstetrics, is an historical fact. But was not Aristotle a pupil of Plato's; and in turn did he not instruct pupils at the Lyceum, and form the mind of Alexander? Speaking of the four great Athenian schools, Professor Capes, of Oxford, says: "One of the first needs in each case was a sort of authorised version of their philosophic creed; but the written word was not enough; the writings of their founder, canonical as they might be, could not content

them ; they must have a living voice to expand and illustrate the truth, to stimulate by the contagious influence of strong conviction, and meet objections from all quarters ".<sup>1</sup> And although Epicurus was the least popular teacher in Athens, so much so that he was completely ignored by the heads of the Colleges when they recommended their pupils to attend the lectures of the other professors indiscriminately, yet that he taught a considerable number is evidenced by his will, in which he says : " I beg all who take their principles from me to do their best as a solemn trust to help Amynomachus and Timocrates (his executors) to maintain the school buildings in my garden, and their heirs after them, as also those who may be appointed to replace my own successors ".

And perhaps it bears out the analogy which we instituted between Greece and Germany, when we find that the founders of the great German systems—the masters of thought, whose principles succeeding generations have been solely occupied in developing, spent half their lives in thinking, and the other half in communicating their thoughts to their pupils and to each other. But there is another and very important reason why the German Universities might usurp the functions of Academies and Universities in other lands. It is that secondary education in Germany appears to be totally different from what we call Intermediate Education in these countries—and still more different from the corresponding grade of education in France. There are two kinds of High Schools in Germany—the *practical schools* (*Realschulen*) and the *gymnasia* (*gymnasien*) ; and the curriculum in these embraces professional and scientific studies and literature to an extent that is unheard of in these countries, except in Universities. For though there appears to be a distinction between *practical schools* and *gymnasia* in Germany to this extent, that in the

<sup>1</sup> *University Life in Ancient Athens*, by W. W. Capes, Chapter II.

former, scientific pursuits are more encouraged, and in the latter, literary, it is a distinction that gradually shades off, until the only remaining difference is, that the pupils of the *gymnasia*, after completing their course, generally move on to the University, and the pupils of the *practical schools* enter on that career in life for which they find themselves best adapted. But under the head of literary and scientific studies what usually is the extent of the knowledge that may be acquired? The ancient languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The study of the two latter is compulsory; the study of Hebrew is optional; but lectures are given in that language, and every student intending to embrace Holy Orders makes it his special study. The leading modern languages are taught—French, English, Italian, Spanish, French being compulsory. Equally liberal is the course of studies in the exact sciences; yet it is understood and impressed upon the pupils that, no matter how high their proficiency may be in the dead or living languages, or what mastery they may have obtained over the sciences, their intermediate course of studies is merely preparatory—to what? To the University course, which is a severe training in abstract reasoning, in the critical analysis of the studies through which they have already passed, and lastly in that synthesis of all the sciences which is called their philosophy. It is only, therefore, when the German student enters his University that he is free to criticise, analyse, compare the facts or principles he has already learned! Up to that time he has been acquiring in a submissive manner, whilst his mind is broadening and deepening, a knowledge of the languages, beneath whose intricacies are enclosed all the treasures left to the world of the ancient civilisations which grew and thrrove amongst the Semitic race, and by the *Ægean* Sea, and on the banks of Tiber; a knowledge of the sciences, which reveal the harmony under which all creation is moving in obedience to laws that are inexorable, and Titanic energies, which never break their bounds; but by attraction and repul-

sion, and sometimes with the swiftness of lightning, and sometimes with the slowness of centuries maintain that balance of power which is the beauty and order of the universe ; a knowledge of the arts which contribute to man's comfort and enlightenment, and which minister to his innate sense of the Beautiful, which is but a reflex of his faith in the Divine. At last he is allowed to use his knowledge. The studious or acquisitive powers are set aside, and the creative or rather formative powers of the intellect are thrown forward. Henceforth, no fact in Science or History, no principle in Metaphysics or Theology, stands alone. The affinity of languages which, however changed by time, can be traced to a common stock ; the correlation of the sciences, by which it is seen that the highest laws of celestial mechanics in that noblest of all the sciences, Astronomy, are the same as those which rule the angles and lines of the black-board in the primary school ; the still more close and intimate union of the arts, which have all but one great principle underlying them ; still more, the links by which languages, arts and sciences are bound together, and form, as it were, the highly ornate vestibules, through which the mind of man, hushed and reverent, enters the vast temple where in silence the Godhead is enshrined—here is the grand object of study and veneration that lies before the German student, as with distinctive cap and scarf, and with his *absolutorium* from the *Realschule*, he signs his name, and selects his studies and professor. Assuredly with such a course before him, there is ample room for investigation, the only limit being the examination which comes at its end. And still more for the professors of whom especially the cardinals speak. For their work is no longer the dreary drudgery of teaching the meaning of accents and particles, and abstract signs, or mnemonic formulas, and even the more complex mechanism of enthymemes and sorites—but the more congenial and less laborious task of initiating vigorous and thirsty minds into the high philosophies of history and of art,

and the close affinities of the sciences. Now, either the professor in the first year of his academical duties writes out his lectures for his class, and delivers those identical lectures, year after year, to the different bodies of pupils who pass beneath him, or, what is far more likely, he strives, year by year, to keep up with the progress of science, to master every new principle which has been established, every new fact which has been ascertained, and to develop, as far as his own abilities and opportunities will allow, that science and art, in which he is interested, by personal conjectures, speculations or experiments. In the former case there is plenty of leisure, if the will is there, for those studies, which are supposed to belong to Academies in these countries. In the latter he is stimulated to original research by the rivalry which exists between Universities and professors in Germany; for assuming, as we may, that all have reached the high levels of knowledge, and have been initiated into the sacred schools of philosophy, he alone will stand above his fellows who wrests some secret from Nature, or throws fresh light on her mysterious work, or discovers some new connection between man's mind, and the marvels it is ever in pain to interpret, or finally makes the unerring revelations of the Creator less enigmatical to reverent minds, by proving that the handwriting in the Sacred Books is the same as that which is abroad on the face of Nature, and that the spirit is brooding over the waters, where we behold as yet but darkness and chaos.

## THE GERMAN UNIVERSITIES.—II.<sup>1</sup>

IN the last number of the *Record* we pointed out, in examination of Père Didon's work, the one solitary instance in which his opinions on University training differ from those of Cardinal Newman and the majority of English educational experts. In this paper it is our purpose to show some broader lines of divergence between our author and Cardinal Newman's contemporary—the well-known Professor of Hebrew in Oxford University. We single out his evidence from a pile of literature on this important subject, because he appears to be by far the ablest exponent of popular and generally received ideas about the condition of German religious thought; and, singularly enough, the Anglican professor writes of it in tones of despair, and the French Dominican sees in it nothing alarming or disquieting, but everything yielding bright hopes and promises for the future of religion in that country.

Within thirty years two distinct Commissions for the Universities both of England and Scotland have been held; and according to the Reports submitted by these Commissions to Parliament, enactments have been made for the better ordering and governing of these State institutions. The first of these Commissions for England was held about the year 1852; and a vast mass of evidence was accumulated from various and important sources. A Report was duly drawn up and presented to Government, containing a great deal of thought, and an immense variety of suggestions from

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, July, 1886.

those whom public and University opinion marked as leading men in their own departments, and best qualified by experience and intelligence to notice defects in University organisation, and suggest the remedies to be applied.

Amongst these experts Dr. Pusey was probably the one to whose opinions most deference was paid, partly owing to his personal eminence, but principally from his wide acquaintance with the history of Universities, both in his own country and on the Continent of Europe. His evidence, however, brought him into a sharp controversy with Professor Vaughan, the main issue being —the advisability of substituting, as far as possible, tutorial or catechetical teaching for the professorial, which partly obtained at Oxford, and was almost universal in Scotland and Germany. By the professorial system Dr. Pusey meant, “that in which the professor is himself in fact the living book, and imparts knowledge, original and instructive, but still wholly from without, to the mind of his pupil”. By the tutorial system is meant, “that by which the mind of the young man is brought into direct contact with the mind of his instructor, intellectually by the catechetical form of imparting knowledge, wherein the mind of the young man, having been previously employed upon some solid textbook, has its thoughts corrected, expanded, developed, enlarged by one of maturer mind and thought, who also brings to bear on the subject knowledge and reflection which the pupil cannot be supposed to have”. In other words, the professorial is the system of lectures orally delivered, whilst the students take notes, and the tutorial is the system of question and answer. The whole thesis of Dr. Pusey, as formulated by Professor Vaughan, and admitted with some very important modifications by his opponent, is summed up in five propositions, as follows:—

1st—Professorial lectures do not communicate knowledge well.

2nd—Professorial lectures do not give a discipline to the faculties.

3rd—Professors do not aid the advancement of truth.

4th—Theological professors are the causes of heresy and scepticism.

5th—Professors are the causes of immorality in the Universities to which they are attached.<sup>1</sup>

With one of these only have we to deal, because, in the attempt to maintain it, Dr. Pusey largely relies on his knowledge and experience of the German Universities, and his evidence is almost in direct opposition to that of Père Didon. It is the fourth proposition, that "Theological professors are the causes of heresy and scepticism". In support of this, Dr. Pusey offers many examples to show that in Germany the Professors of Divinity have taught and produced Rationalistic theology. There cannot be a doubt that Dr. Pusey was very well qualified to write upon such a subject. He had given to the study of it a great part of the best years of his life. In 1827, nearly half a century before the Commission was held which elicited the evidence to which we have referred, he had published a work entitled, *An Enquiry into the Causes of German Rationalism*, a fair liberal inquisition into the state of religion in Germany, made by a pious and patient mind, which went beneath the surface into the depths of those mystic philosophies from which he thought Rationalism had taken its rise, and which was able to distinguish what was good and hopeful from what was evil and pernicious in those transcendental theories which had taken such hold of the German mind. And whatever other value attaches to his evidence, it has at least the merit of consistency. His ideas in 1827 do not materially differ from those of 1853, and they are the ideas that have gone abroad and filled the public mind for half a century, until religiously-minded people, when speaking of Germany, are always

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pusey's statement is very different from this. He says, "Negatively, the professorial system is wholly destitute of any moral training".

tempted to apply the Scriptural question: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?"

Dr. Pusey takes it as proved, then, that Rationalism has taken a firm hold of the mind of Germany; and although in 1827 he concluded his inquiry with a hope that the nation would return to a belief in Revelation, and its central doctrine of the Incarnation, he is forced to admit in 1854 that his hopes have not been realised. "It is true," he says, "that I have been disappointed. I watched with many a heart-ache over the struggles of the faith in Germany, and came to see how hard a thing it is for the intellectual mind of a country, which has once broken away from the faith, to be again won to it in its integrity." But if his hopes are disappointed, his opinions are unchanged as to the causes which have led up to such a sad condition of things. They are three: The traditional orthodoxy (1) which, transferred as to its objects from the ancient Church to the doctrines of Luther, maintained a rigid conservatism, without history, philology, or Biblical criticism to sustain it. This gradually led to a system of Pietism (2), which furnished a "well-prepared soil for the seeds of unbelief, under whatever immediate circumstances it might be planted". The sowers came, not, let it be remembered, from Germany, but from England. Rationalism was not the product of German soil. Nay, at the very time that the German Universities were seats of orthodoxy, so far as the great mysteries of the Christian faith were concerned, and the German households were pietistic and puritanical to a degree never reached in England, this latter country was the home of a school of Deistic philosophers (3), whose influence on the cultured minds of Germany was pernicious in the extreme. It was an age of metaphysical theories. From the highest summits of Catholic thought down to the dismal abysses of materialism, every shade of religious or psychological thought was represented. But by far the most potent, dissolving factor was that English Deism, of which Blount, Chubb, Collins, Lord Herbert of Cherbury,

Hobbes, Morgan, Tindal, Toland, were, if not the originators,<sup>1</sup> at least the abettors; which was afterwards so successfully developed by the Encyclopædistes of France; and cloaked in light sarcasm, or panoplied in weighty argument, was introduced into the Universities of Germany, and fostered there into that natural religion which ushered in the bald atheism of our century. Yet Deism, though it took its rise in England, never got a firm foothold there. Why? Nowhere was scepticism so audacious. Compared with the timidity of the Scottish and German schools, the English was as positive and aggressive as the French. The disciples of Locke, who, like those of Descartes, pushed his theories to extremes from which he would have shrunk, either flatly denied that anything was immortal or immaterial, thus shadowing forth the ideas with which we are now so familiar, or preached a false spiritualism, which, directed in safer and narrower channels, became the basis of the moral theories of the Scottish school. But Deism never took root in England, Dr. Pusey says, because of the independence of the English intellect, particularly in the Universities, where schools of philosophy formed on the teachings of individuals never existed. He might, perhaps, have added, that there never has been much taste for such subjects in England—that the practical English mind is absolutely opposed to metaphysical speculations of any kind—that not only has there never been a school of philosophy in England, but even very few thinkers who could be ranked as great philosophers; and with regard to the Universities, their faith, such as it is, has been preserved not by its absolute firmness, established by deep, protracted and enlightened study, but by the very indifference to metaphysical speculations, which, if sometimes sublime in reach, and sweep, and magnitude, are not always safe in their subtleties. Deism, then, took no root in England, because the vast masses of the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Kahn's History of German Protestantism*, p. 32.

population neither knew nor cared for such things ; and the lordlings of the two Universities thought more of the conflicts between town and gown, than of the disputes between the Nominalists and the Realists. And if Deism, taking its rise in England, had its reign in Germany, we must not forget that religious and metaphysical ideas were always subjects of supreme interest for the German people ; and that there were twenty Universities in Germany, thronged with students, poor, like those of Scotland, and cultivating science *tenui avend*, but restless, speculative, inquiring, piling Pelion upon Ossa to enter the homes of the immortals. But we are anticipating. Deism, sprung from Orthodoxy and Pietism, and introduced from England, had its reign in Germany, because of the professorial system in the Universities.

“ Now, long before the times of Rationalism, the professorial system in Germany had exercised a power, enslaving the intellect. We are accustomed to think of the Germans as powerful, original thinkers. I myself respect and love the Germans. Yet intellectual writers of their own, Lessing and Herder, upbraided them with their imitativeness. It often showed itself in a strange submission to lawlessness of mind. We are of the same stock. Yet the English mind has been independent ; the German has been imitative. We have had no schools ; among the Germans from the Reformation downwards, there have been successive schools. These schools existed in Philosophy, as well as Theology. Englishmen have been proud of Locke, but Locke left no school. Wolf, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, exercised by turns an almost undisputed sway. Everything for a time became Wolfian, Kantian, Hegelian. Theology, as well as Philosophy, became Wolfian. Sermons or catechisms bore the stamp of Wolfian Philosophy. I spoke, not of the value of that Philosophy, but of its transient autocracy. Why had it so extensive and absolute a sway, when yet, after a while, it was to resign its sceptre to another monarch over the

German intellect, as absolute and as transient? Systems of philosophy were like fashions of dress; first absolute, then obsolete. Like Jonah's gourd, 'the son of a night, perished in a night'.

Is it not the irony of history, after all we have been listening to during all these years about Papal autocracy centring in itself not only supreme authority that must be obeyed, but supreme intelligence, which demands the fullest submission of the intellect, that an English Protestant should be found to complain that in Germany, the home of Protestantism, there has been such slavish subjection to individuals—such indiscriminate adhesion to fashions of thought that existed, but to pass away? But if these bold Scriptural criticisms and consequent weakening of faith belonged only to the Universities, and never spread amongst the people, whose pastors clung tenaciously to ancient orthodoxies, it cannot be true that Rationalism obtained a firm foothold in Germany. And if it be true that the Universities showed such slavish submission to the professors whose theories were dominant in the schools, a simple remedy might have been found,—the appointment of orthodox professors, whose righteous interpretations of Scripture, and such dogmas as Protestantism maintains, would be as blindly followed as the teachings of those who tried bolder flights in those speculations of which the Protestant faith does not wholly disapprove. In truth, Protestantism was put upon its trial in Germany and found wanting; and the professors were not entirely to blame. The substitution of Luther for the Vicar of Christ, of the Bible for a living authority, of successive philosophers and their tenets for those who went before them, reduced Christian dogma to such a minimum in Germany, that the educated classes were forced to be sceptical; and it is to the honour of that country that it has not completely drifted away from supernatural faith of every kind, when we consider how relentlessly the German mind pursues a course of reasoning, and does not shrink from its conclusions, at least specula-

tively, when it finds them. Rigid Lutheran orthodoxy, which commenced with the subversion of the cardinal principles of Christianity, was itself put on trial; and the Scriptures, to which the Protestant mind has always attached a kind of talismanic effect upon the soul, were brought under the severe tests of Science, without an external authority to safeguard them by wholesome interpretations of their meanings and mysteries. What can be thought of a religion that, as Dr. Pusey says, fell to pieces before criticism? Wolf made certain speculations about Homer. "This introduced two wrong principles—the disregard of traditional evidence, and the theory that a minute verbal criticism could suffice to dissect works, which had descended to us as wholes, into various compound parts." The criticism on Homer introduced criticism on the Old Testament, and Protestantism collapsed.

Whilst, however, strongly maintaining the position he had assumed, Dr. Pusey makes a singular admission, which reflects a kind of qualified praise on the professors and philosophers of Germany, and at least attributes to them the singular merit of having preserved to their country some broad beliefs and general reverence for religion, at a time when the other countries of Europe were rapidly passing from timid scepticism into aggressive infidelity. "Professor Vaughan says of my former work: 'The transcendental professors, by demolishing the low popular philosophy to which England had given birth in earnest error, and which France soon cultivated in a spirit of satire and corrupt mockery, were then thought to have at least shown, on its promulgation, the necessity of faith, and to have assisted directly to restore the sway of those fundamental truths of conscience, which the mere understanding could never demonstrate'. I think the same now. Of Kant's philosophy I have lately said, 'it was on its positive side a gain, in that it awoke the conscience, and exposed the shallowness of a system more hopelessly irreligious and self-satisfied. But, on its negative side,

it strengthened Rationalism, and gave it its definite form.' 'The Kantian *avrovoula* of reason,' says Twisten, 'left room for the Deity, but not for a Revelation, in the sense of the Christian believer.'"<sup>1</sup>

Looking back now, through the perspective of history, at these systems of philosophical thought which, considering their ephemeral effect on contemporary religious beliefs, and the rapid pace at which modern ideas are travelling, seem to belong to a far remote period, we think there are very few leaders of Christian thought, in our own age, who will not acquit Germany of the sad reproach of having been mother and mistress of all modern infidelity. We have Dr. Pusey's admission that that country was saved from blank atheism by the action of its philosophers. We admit that it lapsed into temporary Rationalism through the action of its Scriptural professors. There has been a singular confusion of thought about the teachings and doctrinal consequences of the Transcendental philosophers on the one hand, and the Biblical expositors on the other, in Germany. It has been generally supposed that their teachings about Christianity were identical, or that their systems so dovetailed into each other, that the rejection of Revelation, which was openly professed by Biblical scholars, was the inevitable outcome of the metaphysical theories of the Transcendentalists. But their systems of thought, the objects they proposed to themselves, and

<sup>1</sup> Compare with this the following paragraph which appears in an article on "George Eliot," written by Lord Acton in the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 1885. "For some years her mind travelled in search of rest, and like most students of German thought before the middle of the century she paid a passing tribute to Pantheism. But from Jonathan Edwards to Spinoza she went over at one step. The abrupt transition may be accounted for by the probable action of Kant, who had not then become a *butress of Christianity*. Out of ten Englishmen, if there were ten, who read him in 1841, nine got no farther than the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and knew him as the dreaded assailant of popular evidences. When George Eliot stood before his statue at Berlin, she was seized with a burst of gratitude, but she hardly became familiar with his latest works."

the deductions at which they arrived, are as distinct as the philosophical teachings of Mill or Hamilton, and the Scriptural exegesis that is taught in a Protestant seminary. The work of the former was positive; of the latter, consciously or unconsciously, negative, and, if you will, destructive. The philosophers aimed at constructing a philosophy of Christianity. Utterly dissatisfied with Christian doctrine, as it was taught in their churches, and unwilling to believe that the crude and uncouth form, in which its sublimest doctrines were submitted to their congregations by the pastors and theologians of the Lutheran Church, was the only presentation that could be made of a religion which, in the sublimity of its origin, and the perfect adaptation of its moral code to the wants of men, was manifestly Divine; and not being able to realise the idea of a living Church, with a voice that interpreted unerringly the Revelation of God to the world, they attempted to create a system of philosophy, founded on pure reason, which eventually would embrace the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. A similar attempt was made by Coleridge in England. In a work, on which he intended his fame should rest, but which he did not live to perfect, he tried to prove that Christianity was not only not opposed to reason, but was its highest embodiment from a doctrinal and ethical point of view. His work, like that of the German philosophers, has come to naught—has failed as utterly as that of the Gnostics in the early days of Christianity. One after another, the greatest German thinkers developed their ideas as to the meaning of the universe and the destiny of the human soul, only to find that they were moving in a circle in the end. But let it be said that each commenced with a perfect faith in the existence of God and of the soul, and the absolute necessity of religion. And if, by the exercise of pure reason, they did not reach these high truths which Eternal Wisdom alone could reveal, at least it must be said that the spirit in which they approached the consideration of such sacred prob-

lems was in no wise a spirit of hostility to Christianity, and that the conclusions at which they arrived may have fallen far short of our perfect Revelation, but did not absolutely reject or deny it. We might safely put into their mouths the plaints of the ancient philosophers in the first circle of the *Inferno* :—

Per tai difetti, non per altro rio,  
Semo perduti, e sol di tanto offesi  
Che senza speme vivemo in disio.

Nor would it be altogether unworthy of a Christian to feel as the great poet felt :—

Gran duol mi prese al cuor, quando lo'ntesi:  
Perocchè gente di molto valore  
Conobbi, che'n quel Limbo eran sospesi.

The commentators, on the other hand, whilst coqueting with philosophy, and professing themselves disciples of one or other master or system, directed all their attention to the critical examination of the Sacred Books. Philology was the science they brought to the study of Revelation, and, finally, into conflict with it, just as geology, in later times, and later still, biology, have been considered its antagonists. Nothing narrows the human mind so much as exclusive devotion to one science. Germany became hypercritical; and, as usual, German *savants*, compressing their ideas within the limits of one faculty, grew cramped and illiberal in the pursuit of knowledge. "That sublime and devouring curiosity," man's first passion—the weakness on which the fatal temptation fell—even still leads men beyond their depth. And so, by the morbid development of the critical faculty, the Germans fell into this fatal, but, we are sure, transient error. "They somehow lost faith in the Bible as a supernatural product; and it had become to them more a great and transcendent classic, than a living Revelation." And there is one fact of pregnant meaning which Dr. Pusey has not noticed, and which has had a most important bearing on the attitude of reverence which Germany has

always held towards religion. In Biblical criticisms, in controversies on religious dogmas, in all the heat and passion of polemical strife, there has ever been, with a few latter-day notorious exceptions, a total absence of that contempt and savage satire which the French and English philosophers and scientists have levelled against religion. Of the exalted tone which the German philosophers assumed, in dealing with religious mysteries, we have already spoken. It must be also admitted that the German expositors set about the work of studying and interpreting the Sacred Books, not with an *a priori* belief in their inherent inconsistencies, but with a fully formed and acknowledged faith that their critical and conscientious searchings into the meaning of Holy Writ would result in decided advantages to the cause of religion and truth. It was not with them, as with the French and English sceptics—a crusade against religion and against God. That contemptuous tone, with which modern materialists put completely out of the domain of logic and common sense metaphysical questions of any kind, as only fit for fetish worshippers, is conspicuously absent in philosophical or exegetical works produced by Germans. These works were, for the most part, written as a kind of unconscious protest against the Protestant doctrine that the Bible was the sole rule of faith; and the analyses of texts and their meanings are what logicians would expect from too acute and too learned reasoning, unassisted by authoritative interpretation, and losing the spirit of the Divine Word in too critical an examination of the letter. But the handling of the Inspired Text was never irreverent. When Lessing published the famous *Wolfenbüttel Fragments*, which had passed into his hands from the daughter of Reimarus, their author, a storm of indignation against him arose throughout Germany. He explained:—

“What has the Christian to do with the hypotheses, explanations and evidences of the theologian? To him the Christianity he feels to be so true, and wherein he

feels himself so happy, is there once for all. If the palsied individual experiences the beneficent shock of the electric spark, what matters to him whether Nollet or Franklin, or neither, be right? In short, the letter is not the spirit, and the Bible is not religion. Consequently, charges against the letter and the Bible do not also imply charges against the spirit and religion."

A very inconsequential conclusion, and, from a Catholic standpoint, a heretical and condemnable opinion, inasmuch as it altogether denies the dogmatic factor in religion; but who shall say it is a breach of Protestant orthodoxy? Such opinions are held to-day, without ban of Church or clamour of clergy, amongst the most highly favoured Protestant divines, who do not always express their opinions with the reverence of Lessing. And Bahrdt, one of the first of the representatives of Popular Rationalism in Germany, whilst unhappily rejecting the whole doctrine of man's redemption, can yet write of our Divine Saviour:—

"O, Thou great Godlike Soul! no mortal can name Thy name without bending the knee; and in reverence and admiration, feeling Thy unapproachable greatness! Where is the people amongst whom a man of this stamp has ever been born? How I envy you, ye descendants of Israel! Alas! that you do not feel the pride which we who call ourselves Christians, feel, on account of One so incomparable being sprung from your race! That soul is most depraved that knows Jesus and does not love Him!"<sup>1</sup>

And what a contrast between that "progenies viperarum," the French Encyclopædist, and the German Transcendental philosophers! Voltaire's sneering admission, "Si Dieu n'existe pas, il faudrait l'inventer," and the more savage candour of "Ecrasez l'infame"; Rousseau, advocating a return to primitive barbarism; Diderot's profane apologue to the Deity, "Of Thee, Supreme Being, I demand nothing"; the sensual

<sup>1</sup> Bahrdt, *Moralische Religion*, vol. i., p. 71.

D'Alembert, excusing the ambiguity of the *Encyclopédie*, "Time will make people distinguish what we have in our minds from what we have said"; and, on the other hand, Leibnitz, straining his mighty knowledge of mathematics, and declaring that, behind the rules of geometry and physics, he discerned the very nature and attributes of God, and that the source of all philosophy lay for him, not in his knowledge of things, but in the Divine attributes; Hegel, developing his mysterious philosophy of the spirit, until he finds that the apogee of all moral sentiment is Christianity or absolute religion; Kant, called by his admirers "the Christian philosopher of his century," drawing a most reverent picture of our Blessed Saviour, and declaring, even in his earliest works, that the Bible is, in a certain and very high sense, a Revelation; Richter, in his Divine fancies, as of the soul that went wandering through the spheres, and that terrible "Dream," which, it is said, did more to preserve men's faith in God in Germany than the arguments of its countless theologians—all these Transcendentalists have been, in the end, decided, if unconscious, allies of Christian faith in Germany, whose example and influence were all the more powerful, because they had lost themselves in the mazes of free-thought, and reached such light and truth as were vouchsafed them, not by the quick flight of faith, but by the laborious and circuitous route of patient investigation, and the steady advance from principle to principle, guided by the slender thread of inductive reasoning, and buoyed by the consciousness that, somehow or other, the God of Truth would not fail them in the end. They set out on their toilsome journey, declining the guidance of religion, only to find her majestic figure before them at the end. We might reverse the saying of Cicero about the Roman augurs, and say of them: "Verbis (inscii) tollunt, re ponunt Deos".

On what other theory can we explain the fact that to-day Positivist and Materialistic opinions have no followers in Germany? That, although philosophy holds

as high a place in public esteem, and is considered quite as essential a branch of education as it was in the days of Kant or Hegel, infidelity is making no headway amongst any class in Germany? That reverence for the illustrious dead, and even philosophic faith in the stupendous systems that were founded by them, are not considered at all incompatible with the fullest adhesion to what Protestants call the fundamental truths of Christianity? That, with the exception of four or five,<sup>1</sup> not a single German professor has signed the broad schedules of scientific unbelief? And that the most trusted leaders of German scientific thought have neither abandoned metaphysical and religious science for the more concrete studies of the museum and laboratory, nor believed that the mighty questions of the soul and its destinies can be resolved into problems which the chemist can solve, nor even sought to reconcile the established teachings of religion with the conjectural hypotheses of physical science; but, with decided predilections for the former, have steadily aimed to keep the latter in its place as "the younger child"—babbling, hesitating, wilful, dreamy, and erratic, if not controlled by the calm wisdom, and discipline, and experience of her sister, who, with the halo of sixty centuries around her, has yet the freshness of youth, because of her promise of immortality? And if for a time Rationalism did take a hold of the German mind, its reign was transient and temporary. The very school which originated it, that of Tübingen, was the very first to destroy it.

But all this time we are forgetting Père Didon, whose testimony, on these very disputed questions, is eminently interesting.

He first, then, declares that although the professorial system still obtains in Germany its influence in determining religious opinion by creating schools of thought has passed away.

"The era of masters is over. None can now be said

<sup>1</sup> Büchner, Vogt, Moleschott, Fischer, Haeckel.



to have opened a new school; none, as in the days of Kant, of Wolf, of Hegel, of Fichte, or of Schelling, exercise sway over a whole generation."

The professorial system, therefore, for full fifty years (Schelling died in 1854) has not had that dominant and pernicious influence which has been ascribed to it.

But is there still philosophical thought in Germany?  
Yes:—

"And it is still dominated, and its bearings directed by three great geniuses—Spinoza, Leibnitz and Kant. Pantheistic tendencies which seek results at all costs, and delight in erecting a system, belong to Spinoza. The prevalence of vast erudition and a conciliating eclecticism are inspired by Leibnitz. As for psychological and critical problems, they originated with Kant, whose mighty works ponderously weigh upon the intellects which they divide into two contrary schools—the idealists, who, scorning experience, consider, like Hegel, their superb theories the absolute measure of things—the realists, who, subordinating the subjective to the objective, borrow from reality the rule of their speculations. I fancy that to-day the University youth, which to-morrow will form the ruling opinion of this country, inclines to realism, to a certain unconscious pantheism, from which German minds scarcely ever liberate themselves; and above all to a certain eclecticism, based upon serious erudition."

One unacquainted with the strange paradoxes which are to be met at every step in the history of this powerful nation would now rush confidently to the conclusion that with such determined proclivities to realism, the whole bent of modern German thought would be directed in our age to the positivism of Comte, or the blank materialism of Büchner and Haeckel. Not at all.

"These misguided intellects (Büchner, Vogt, Mole-schott, Fischer) have succeeded less in leading German youth than in providing learned French materialists<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example, Ernest Renan, who was fond of tracing that *esprit critique* which led him into infidelity to the writings of Ewald and

with weapons at a time when it was fashionable with us to believe in the infallibility of German science. In high University chairs materialist or positive doctrines are left unrepresented. The rash speculations of thought are not nowadays viewed with high favour: philosophical tradition is, however, faithfully preserved."

But at least this philosophical tradition must be unfavourable to religious science? No.

"Religious science holds a distinguished place in most Universities, not only because it occupies the leading place in programmes, *but also, and above all, because under the influence of esteemed and often famous teachers, it rallies a youth numerous and ardent.* There are 4,000 theological students in Germany, scattered among the twenty-two Universities of the Empire, who in the mass of students form the most serious and diligent group."

This statement, thus made by the most recent authority on the subject, is the direct negative, both as to causes and effects, of the ideas generally entertained on this subject.

Gesenius, although his contemporary at St. Sulpice is of opinion that he was a free-thinker long before he had acquired a knowledge of German or Hebrew. "Or, à cette époque (en recevant la tonsure) il ne savait ni l'hébreu, ni l'allemand; il n'avait traversé ni Gesenius, ni Ewald, ni l'exégèse allemande; sa critique historique était à naître."—*M. Renan, hier et aujourd'hui*, par M. L'Abbé Cognat.

## THE GERMAN UNIVERSITIES.—III.<sup>1</sup>

WE closed the last paper on this subject in the *Record*<sup>2</sup> by the statement, that the German people had maintained the main principles of Christian tradition and belief against all adverse influences. It must have occurred to any one, particularly to a French priest, who had seen very serious and terrible consequences in his own land arising from much simpler and less potent causes, that there must be something in the genius of this nation that thus preserved faith and a passion for theological science amongst them. Our author, from a careful study of the German people, soon discovered a curious trait in their character, which we have not seen attributed to any other race. He considers the Germans to be what he calls a *bicephalic* nation—thinking, dreaming, speculating with one mind, but always acting with another. It is the combination of pure reason and practical reason on which Kant built up his mighty philosophy; and the principles which he applied to religion, as deduced from the operations of pure reason on the one hand, and practical reason on the other, are the same principles with which educated German thinkers theorise and speculate, and then abandon in real life those creations of fancy for the more positive wisdom of practical good sense. For just as Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* taught nothing of absolute reality, but a purely ideal speculative world, and in his later treatises laid down laws subordinating man's mind and conscience to God, and the Divine and natural laws, so the ordinary

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, August, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, July, 1886, p. 631.

German loves to wander in the broad fields of metaphysical thought, creating, conjecturing and poetising ; but in everyday life he is as shrewd and practical a thinker as the ancient Greek or the modern American. This dualism of the mind enters into every department of thought and life. It is the prevailing national idiosyncrasy in education, religion and political science ; and the contrast between ancient and well-preserved tradition, and the fullest acknowledgment and acceptance of new and everchanging ideas and systems is very striking. Up here in the cloudland is some mediæval city, grey and battlemented, the ivy wreathed around its fortifications long since disused, and stretching its tendrils across the mouths of cannon long since antiquated and useless ; and strolling through its streets in undress cap and jacket are dreamy, metaphysical Teutons, pondering weighty mysteries of time and space, and, in the contemplation of the infinitude around and above them, seemingly oblivious of the petty concerns that agitate the multitude beneath them in the white villages and towns that dot the landscape from the Weser to the Rhine. Below in the valley is a row of buildings, granite-hewn, square-cut, uniform and stern, and the quadrangles are bristling with black guns, the latest invention of German military science ; and through the barrack squares march grim bands of warriors, as grey and stiff as the granite of the walls, and many of them a few months ago were, and many a few months hence will be, gay, rollicking students, talking high science over pipe and glass away up in the cloudland. It is a type of the education—military and academical—through which the Fatherland insists that all its children shall pass, and of the liberty and discipline which prevail side by side in all State institutions. Absolute freedom in speculation—obedience as absolute as that of a Carthusian in practical life ; toleration of the wildest vagaries in academical halls—unceasing vigilance over act or word that might be inimical to the Fatherland ; freedom as glorious as that of Rousseau's barbarian in the University, discipline as unbending as

that of Sparta's soldiers in the barrack—such is life in Germany to the young. Hence there is no restriction on books, or programmes, or studies. Every field of thought is opened up to the student, and he is encouraged to explore it. Every invention of modern science is put before him to stimulate his ambition to improve it, and—make it obsolete. Whatever the genius of other lands has effected he is at perfect liberty to study and turn to practical uses. But never is his cold sluggish blood stirred into enthusiasm by victories of science achieved by other nations; nor will his home and college prejudices yield for a moment to admiration of talents which, with sublime pride and exclusiveness, he believes to have been specially created for the benefit of his race. If French scientific class-books are carefully noted and studied in Germany no one is very much the wiser. The French, with the interest and curiosity peculiar to their race, study the habits of the English and Germans, and candidly acknowledge their virtues and excellences whilst politely laughing at their eccentricities. But no German is ever troubled about his neighbours, except to draw maps of their fortresses and sketches of their ironclads. No De Staël or Didon will ever come from the German land. Wrapt in sublime security, which in any other nation would be sublime conceit, they believe that the world was made for the Fatherland. Never a whisper of admiration passes German lips for Milton, or Dante, or Racine—for Locke, or Descartes, or Mill. Goethe and Schiller are the greatest poets that have yet appeared on this planet; and Kant and Spinoza are the intellectual giants of the modern world, as Plato and Aristotle were in times of old. The same national peculiarity is observable in the religious beliefs of the people. "Protesting strongly and repeatedly against authoritative teaching, they are the slaves of synods and consistories." In theory, the free-thinkers of the world, they are really as dogmatic and exclusive as Puritans. For ever soaring in the high empyrean of abstract thought, they never lose touch of

the solid earth. And, on the other hand, however logical in thought and accurate in scholarship they may be, they cannot descend into the abysses of that realism where less dreamy and imaginative races fall and abide. The strong tendency to idealism, which is such a peculiar characteristic of the people, saves them from lapsing into abject error. It was a noticeable feature in their philosophers; and even the masses of the people are so imbued with it, that it seems a kind of impossibility that they should ever adopt that crude, hard materialism which comes so easy to the genius of other nations. The Frenchman concentrates all thought and feeling within one faculty—the reason, and the senses as its ministers; and whatever refuses to come within its domain is instantly rejected. Strangely enthusiastic and impulsive, he has not a particle of imagination. His poetry is little more than rhymed prose—his fiction is never successful until it becomes realistic and morbid. Two and two make four; therefore, he argues, there is no God. Here is the surgeon's scalpel—find the soul if it exists. But the faculties of the German mind are so well balanced that there is a perpetual protest between the two extremes of thought—excessive fancy and excessive logic—idealism and materialism, and the mind is kept in that happy mean where each faculty has its full sweep of exercise without the peril of losing itself in the abysses above, or the darker abysses of vulgar materialism beneath. Hence, the free-thought of Germany is ridiculed by the more robust atheism of other countries as yielding and puerile. "Quand un Allemand," says Renan, "se vante d'être impie, il ne faut jamais le croire sur parole. L'Allemand n'est pas capable d'être irréligieux. La religion, c'est à dire, l'aspiration du monde idéal, est le fond même de sa nature. Quand il veut être athée, il l'est dévotement, et avec une sorte d'onction."<sup>1</sup>

This taste for metaphysical studies is the safety valve

<sup>1</sup> *Etudes d'histoire religieuse*, p. 417.

of free-thought in Germany. No nation can long remain either rationalistic or infidel so long as this fancy for abstract thought is a national characteristic. And whatever value may be set by this too prosaic age on the works of positivists, the lasting verdict of the world will be given in favour of the authors to whom great ideas were more important than the greatest facts or deeds accomplished in the history of our little race. Nay, even those who spurned metaphysics as a delusion have been forced either by the want of material machinery, or by the free working of the intellect, into realms of thought, to which they wished to remain for ever strangers. Goethe, a sensualist and realist in a moral and literary sense, could say of Jacobi, that "God afflicted him with metaphysics as with a thorn in the flesh". Yet, what is the second part of "Faust," and the greater portion of the first part, but an admission that without supernatural elements even that strange jumble of thought could not, with all the efforts of his own unquestionable genius, cohere in legitimate dramatic unity? Whatever philosophic system, therefore, prevails in the halls of German Universities, the religious creed of the students is as definite and dogmatic as Protestantism can permit. It could not be otherwise if we consider the programmes that are issued by the Minister of Public Instruction in Germany, and which are obligatory on teachers and pupils alike. Here is the programme for High Schools, issued 17th March, 1882:—

"Religious instruction shall comprise—1st, The History of the Bible, but chiefly of the New Testament. 2nd, The Catechism, with the Scriptural passages and traditions which explain it. 3rd, The Ecclesiastical Year-Book, and complete knowledge of the principal hymns. 4th, Knowledge of the main facts contained in the Scriptures, chiefly in the New Testament (reading of various passages selected from the *original text*). 5th, Fundamental points of dogma and morality. 6th, Knowledge of the most important dates of the history

of the Church, of eminent personages, and of the lives of the principal saints."

And in the diploma which each student in the Gymnasia receives, when he has passed his final examination, are found the words:—

"We hereby testify that the pupil of the Catholic—or Evangelic faith—is efficient in religious knowledge".

But it is in the Universities that chief prominence is given to religious science, and that it occupies the foremost place in the activity of trained and matured intellects.

"The activity of theological science cannot be denied. Every professor treats at least two different subjects. And as the smallest faculty of theology does not possess fewer than six professors, there are thus at least twelve lectures. At Leipzig, where the faculty of theology numbered fourteen professors, twenty-five subjects were being treated in the same half-year. These are the titles of the various subjects studied during the summer vacation of 1882:—

History of the Church.	The Prophet Isaiah.
Epistle to the Hebrews.	The idea of the Covenant in the New Testament.
Moral Theology.	The minor prophets before the exile.
Epistle of St. James.	Hebrew Poetry.
Compared Symbolics.	History of worship among the Hebrews, and its bearings upon the criticism of the Pentateuch.
The Psalms.	History of Christian architecture compared with the requirements of the present time.
The Messianic Prophecies.	Gospel of St. John.
Epistle to the Romans.	
Life and doctrine of Schleir-macher.	
Introduction to the Old Testa- ment.	
System of Practical Theology.	
Biblical Theology of the New Testament.	
Messianic prophecies of the Old, and their fulfilment in the New Testament.	

"Add to this the practical labours accomplished in the various associations of theological students, and

some idea may be formed of the prodigious intellectual movement of which in Germany every faculty of theology is a centre. The encyclopædia of religious science is thus approached from all sides; and the students who are excited by an ardent wish for study, live under the cross fire of the thousand rays of the same science."

Lastly, in political science in Germany similar effect of the dualism of the national character are observable. The most strenuous liberal and democrat in France or America, whose life is one passionate dream of a universal brotherhood of nations, "in the parliament of man—the federation of the world," is not so enthusiastic as the German student, who is prepared to clasp hands in cosmopolitan friendship with every other nationality. So say their poets—their philosophers. Yet we know that they love their mountains and rivers and forests with a partiality that seems narrow and illiberal, that the glory of the Fatherland is the ever-present dream of every German, no matter what his religion may be, and that Germany is a huge barrack where every adult must pass through the ordeal of a severe and rigid discipline to form part eventually of a colossal and irresistible force that may crush the French on the one hand, and the Slav on the other. This is all the more wonderful, because there is no nation in the world composed of such heterogeneous elements in origin, race, and religion.

Though for the most part descended from the Gothic tribes that swept Europe at the dismemberment of the Roman Empire, the Germans occupy such a central position that a large Latin element from the South has entered into the composition of their nationhood, and the Slavs from the East and the Tartars from the North have added their distinctive characteristics to the race. It is cut up also into principalities and kingdoms as different in size and configuration as if the poles were between them. And though the Catholic and Lutheran religions predominate, there is a large variety of small

sects differing from one another on some point of religion which is only made important by controversy. Yet, notwithstanding these elements of disruption, the fact remains that the German Empire is to-day consolidated into a whole more concrete and unified than empires whose people kneel at the same altar, and whose flag floats over one race claiming the same origin and birthright. Still more strange is it that politics, in the sense of differences of opinion in reference to the common welfare, is an unknown science in Germany. The great central idea of German unity pervades all classes; and to that idea everything must be sacrificed. And the German Universities are undoubtedly the places where that dominant idea is engendered and developed. "In closely studying German youth I soon came to the conclusion that the love of the mother country, the consciousness of its doctrines, and the ambition of its future glories have been chiefly developed in its Universities." This national feeling is promoted by the patriotic clubs of the Universities, and, let us add, by the spirit of the professors themselves. "This lecture," said Fichte during the Napoleonic invasion, "will be deferred until the issue of the campaign. We shall resume it when our country has recovered its liberty or—we shall have fallen dead for the defence of her freedom."

So far, then, as we can see, in two great departments of human thought, academical education and political science, the German Universities exercise the most wholesome influences; and even in religious science the spirit of these valuable institutions is a main support of Christianity. What conclusions, therefore, shall we draw, or how shall we apply the practical lessons of this book of Père Didon's to our own country? We may, perhaps, state that the peculiarities of the Teutonic and Celtic races are so utterly dissimilar that it would be impossible to create or maintain a University system in Ireland after the model which we have studied. We have neither the traditions that consecrate to the minds

of German youth the ancient seats of learning in their land, nor great names to whose memory is attached that national reverence which is so freely given to those who have marked some intellectual epoch in the history of their country, nor governmental patronage such as that bestowed on Berlin, nor even the universal homage to learning, which is the sweetest guerdon of the protracted vigil, and the laborious task of unearthing dead centuries for their treasures. Neither have we as yet that peculiar virtue of pursuing knowledge for its own sake, which is the soul and inspiration of a University. It is in this matter that the book we have studied is specially valuable. With a firm hand our Dominican draws a decidedly unfavourable contrast between his own country and Germany, points out distinctly the faults of the French educational system, and suggests a total reconstruction of that system on German principles, adapted, of course, to French ideas and temperament. And there is such an affinity between the French and Irish nations that we may safely apply all his strictures and suggestions to ourselves. To understand them, we must take his standpoint, for it is not too much to say that his own nation and Germany are half a century ahead of us in this matter of education; and with them the whole system is not feebly tentative as with us, but has been tried by the fullest tests of time and experience.

The great central idea of the book is that Universities are the brains of a nation, that whatever excellence has to be obtained must be obtained through them, and that any kind of prosperity, intellectual or other, that does not proceed from them, is hollow and unstable, and must eventually collapse. A favourite idea in the Church is, that men of prayer are more powerful agents for good than men of action; that the cowled Carthusian whose earthly vision is bounded by the white wall of his cell on the one hand, and the white wall of his garden on the other, has more influence on the Church's destinies than the girded apostle who goes forth *in fines*

*orbis terræ.* Now, it is the creed of our author that it is by great ideas a nation is created and strengthened, and that Universities are the homes of such ideas. He thinks, therefore, the increase in the number and efficiency of Universities a healthy proof of the vitality and energy of a people; the decline of Universities and the increase of High Schools for special subjects, a certain sign of a nation's degeneracy. Yet, he says, this is the universal tendency of the world at the present time: "The fashion to-day is professional and High Schools. All nations, Germany excepted, seem to obey that fashion. Everywhere in England, in America, in Italy, in France, in Russia, High Schools are founded and multiplied." What is the result? "If we observe this intellectual impulse of contemporary society, we shall soon come to the conclusion that it will eventually and fatally result in the breaking up of the vast unity of general knowledge; and that in fostering too energetically the practical application of science, it will gradually dry up the inspiration of genius, to which theoretical science alone can give wings and flight." What he condemns, therefore, is the undue and forced exaltation of High Schools at the expense of Universities. In Germany the former are never suffered to lose their preparatory character; in France they are permitted to encroach too much on the domain of Universities, with the result that University teaching in France is only the shadow of a great name, and the High Schools are "hotbeds of irreligion, positivism and eighteen-year-old philosophers". These latter are formed by the undue development of the critical faculty. The natural powers of the mind require the following sequence in the course of education: gradual strengthening of the memory by filling but not overburthening it with facts or principles—gradual development of the intellect by the collation of such facts and the application of such principles, as we see in the study of mathematics—finally, the training in just criticism, when the judgment is matured, and the memory and intellect combine to help it in forming

correct ideas and practical principles of action. Now, in France, this last branch of education is usurped by the Lycées or public schools, where the young pedant is instructed to sit in judgment on the universe, like Browning's diner-out:—

Who wants a doctrine for a chopping-block  
To try the edge of his faculty upon,  
Prove how much commonsense he'll hack and hew,  
In the critical minute 'twixt the soup and fish.

With that prematurely developed critical faculty he roams through the realms of thought, and nothing is too high or sacred to escape him. Setting aside reverence of every kind as a kind of exploded superstition, he flings the full searching light of this wonderful faculty into every corner and cranny of the universe of science, flashing it from the inaccessible heights of heaven to the lowest depths of animal or vegetable physiology. Whatever escapes this white light, or is unrevealed to it, is to him non-existent; and the budding philosopher through the medium of his language, which, if useless as a vehicle of high thought or poetry, is splendidly adapted for the more servile purposes of satire, annihilates to his own fancy creeds as old as the world, and hopes that are stronger than death. So it was with ancient Greece. The philosophers were followed by rhetoricians and sophists, who inducted the youth committed to their charge into all the secrets of science, yet made eloquence of language and rhetorical display their highest ambition in the end. But their appearance marked the decline of Grecian learning. From that time we date the transference to the Latin races of the wand of intellectual superiority. And it is not altogether beyond our own experience to find youth of our own age who can sing the litany of the kings and queens of England, and mark the dates of battles with the mechanical uniformity of a chronometer, deeming themselves qualified to sit in high places, and stare and wonder at teachings which are too simple or too sublime for forced and weakened intellects.

For the same reason, our second conclusion shall be, that the crown of all teaching in a Catholic University should be the perfect grounding of the students in a system of mental philosophy, strictly in accordance with the teachings of the Church, but neither too restricted in its scope nor too illiberal in its applications. Theology is justly the queen of sciences to the inmates of a Catholic Ecclesiastical College. Its place in a University would be justly filled by Philosophy. The whole course of modern literature, varied and complex as it is, is for ever touching the fringe of this latter science. The finest poem of modern times, the "In Memoriam" of Tennyson, is purely philosophical from beginning to end; and if the perfect hope of the Christian's belief is clearly professed in its splendid prologue, the doubts and difficulties that beset it are indicated in minor keys throughout the poem, and are silenced, but do not entirely vanish, in the "Higher Pantheism". And through the brilliant warp and woof of George Eliot's works, is there not discernible the dark thread of her negative and melancholy philosophy? So with science. Whether looking for a universe of worlds through the telescope, or through a microscope for a universe of atoms, the mind of man is for ever tormented by metaphysical questionings. There is no use in trying to silence them. Positivism may lay down peremptorily its dogmas, and warn its disciples to waste no more time in futile searches after that which can never be known. But the ceaseless curiosity of the mind cannot be stilled till the stars are quenched, and the mechanism of the universe loses its obedience to the Divine Mind that controls it. To bring vigorous and active intellects under a mental discipline so perfect, that the chafing and irritation of such doubts and questionings are soothed by a science to which the highest intellects have been consecrated, and which is as perfect and flawless in its workings as the most scrupulous mechanic could desire—this ought to be the ultimate aim of a University. And for the same reason, the study of

philosophy ought to be deferred to the end of the University course, when the mind is trained to understand its intricacies, and pass freely from problem to problem, which would appear to it in a less matured condition barren and empty formulæ. "Eighteen-year-old" classical scholars are intelligible; "eighteen-year-old" mathematicians are not forced and unnatural creations; but "eighteen-year-old" philosophers imply a deordination in the process of education which is irrational and absurd. We hasten from this point to say that it is evident that in a University this science should be taught in the vernacular, and that its history, as well as its doctrines, should be made familiar.<sup>1</sup> For, after all, it is the history of human thought. Physical science was practically unknown up to our own time. What occupied the minds of men for twenty centuries? The mighty issues of the human soul, its capabilities, its destiny. In porches and gardens under Grecian skies, in halls of rhetoric in the days of Ambrose and Augustine, in academies and Universities in mediæval times, and in our own days in that great arena of modern thought—the press—the same vital questions are discussed. The advocates of free-thought in every shape and in every age sit under the bust of Plato; and the statue of Aristotle is enshrined in Christian schools near that of the great apostle of intellect, Aquinas. Yet we do not speak of the former with horror, nay, many of our best Christian scholars have thought it in no wise heterodox to quote him. And surely Kantism does not mean unutterable things: nor is Spinoza quite a synonym for Satan.

Thirdly, the professorial system should be maintained in the most conservative manner in an Irish University, partly, because no other provision can be made by us for great specialists; principally, because, under any

<sup>1</sup> Not to burthen our pages with quotations, we refer the reader to Père Didon's work, page 174, for the programme in the faculty of philosophy for 1882.

other system, learning shall never become honourable amongst us. However efficient a tutorial system may be in preparing youth for professional examinations, it can never be successful in the higher object of making them thoroughly educated men. The instrument may answer its purpose well, but it never becomes more than an instrument, to be cast aside when used. It is clear that reverence for knowledge in the persons of its possessors can never have for its cause or object those who use it as a means to an end less noble than itself. These only command respect for learning who are consecrated to its service, and who win worship for their goddess by their exclusive devotion to her service.

Finally, with all our indebtedness to Père Didon, we borrow from him one last idea: "No national life is possible for a people, if, at the same time, it be not taken up with the pursuit of some grand ideal". What ideal should be put before a University of Irish students who hold their country's destinies in their hands? We pass by political aphorisms too menacing, too flattering, or too enthusiastic, and say that the only true ideal for Ireland is to be once more, what it was of old, a nation of saintly scholars. "To the English," it was said, "was given the empire of the sea; to the French, the empire of the land; to the Germans, the empire of the air." What a sublime destiny it would be, if, with these latter, we could share the dominion over human thought; if, utilising to the utmost the varied and inexhaustible treasures of talent that lie hidden around us, we could explore unknown fields of science, and garner intellectual wealth till the nations of the world cried out with envy; if we could open up our sanctuaries of learning to strangers, and send apostles of intellect, as we send to-day apostles of faith, to nations that hail the rising, or sadden under the setting sun! And all this intellectual glory should be ours, whilst the deposit of faith remains intact, the past and eternal glory of Ireland's fidelity to religion undimmed; whilst her science is not the litter of dead philosophies dug from the past like the members of

a mutilated statue, but the perfection of the fair and living figure that woke to music and immortality when the sunlight of faith had dawned upon it. Let us hope that this is not the dream of a sleeper before the dawn, but a fair forecast of what may and shall be.

## THE GERMAN AND GALLIC MUSES.<sup>1</sup>

A FEW months ago we had to listen with all patience and seeming unconcern to the apotheosis from press and platform of one who had passed more than the years usually allotted to the span of human life; and who, after various vicissitudes of pain and strife, terror and triumph, had come to be regarded as the great national poet of France, and the prophet of that recent development of man's eccentricity—the religion of humanity. Poet and essayist, novelist and historian, he left no department of letters untried; and the praises of him were so persistent, and his personality of such influence in these latter days, that even those who were not of his household or country came to join in the universal chorus of unstinted worship and unconditional admiration. "Foremost man of this our century," "Apostle of Freedom and Humanity," the "latest seer vouchsafed to us;" and in lower tones, "the greatest lyric poet of France and the world," "the best dramatic novelist of our century"—this is the chime that has been swinging its adulations in our ears, and whose music is rather marred by its monotony.

But even when the glory of the man had reached its height, when his mortal elements were carried in funeral procession, and the steps of the sacred temple which was to be his mausoleum were piled with floral tributes from France and the world, a question would force itself upon us. Outside the ranks of newspaper critics, a few dreamy enthusiasts in his own country, and an exceedingly limited number of poetasters and *littérateurs* in

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, January, 1887.

these islands, how many are there who have read Victor Hugo's poems? to how many are his verses familiar? who can quote one single line from them? who can even tell the titles of his works? In the whole wide realm of English literature, he appears to have had but one admirer and advocate, an eccentric but strong genius whose rapturous enthusiasm, however, would scarcely have compensated the vain dead poet for the studied indifference of the English literary world. Master of the English language as he undoubtedly is, Swinburne can scarcely find words to express his admiration of Victor Hugo. He calls him—

The mightiest soul  
That came forth singing ever in men's ears,  
Of all souls with us, and thro' all these years,  
Rings yet the lordliest, waxen yet more strong.

And again,

That one, whose name gives glory,  
One man, whose life makes light.

Our lord, our light, our master,  
Whose word sums up all song.

And so on through the whole litany of adulation. But what do the masses of the people think? Is Hugo even in his own France as familiar to educated people, as Tennyson is in these islands? Will literary men in his own country form learned societies to explain and apply the meaning of his verses, like the Shaksperean societies that are numberless amongst ourselves? Will there be a club in Paris, half a century after his death, to meet every year in worship of him, as the admirers of Words-worth do in London? Will his sentences be quoted in books and speeches, to strengthen them by apposite illustration, or adorn them, so that they shall not easily slip from the memories of men?

But the question takes a wider range. It must have occurred to many readers that French poetry is absolutely unknown beyond the geographical boundaries of

the Republic. Since the time of Frederick the Great who patronised Voltaire, and made French literature, manners, language, fashionable amongst the Teutons, there has been a steady decline in the popularity of French poetry amongst educated foreigners; and on the other hand, there has been a steady increase of admiration for that wonderful galaxy of thinkers and singers which the Fatherland, to make up for past apathy, has produced. In England every educated person has acquired, or thinks it necessary to affect, a taste for foreign literature. The wild poet, who saw the fiery snow fall upon the backs of the tormented, who felt the breath of the hurricane that swept round in fierce gusts the sad souls of Paolo and Francesca, who lingered amongst the sealed tombs that held lost souls, and tore bleeding limbs when he touched the branches of the gloomy trees, must be as familiar as Shakspeare or Byron to the cultured English intellect. Calderon, too, and Lope de Vega must be recognised; and even the far-off poets of the East, with their strange mythical philosophies, have found honourable places in our magazines, and more than one learned commentator; and above all, German philosophy, German romance, and German poetry must be known, if one desires not to be classed amongst those who sit in exterior darkness, and have no place in the circles, where familiarity with the works of genius is the only passport of admission. But it is no literary crime to be quite ignorant of French poetry. You may know that Racine and Molière existed, and wrote certain tragedies and comedies, but no one is expected to spend much time on these poets of the past, or to waste midnight oil in seeking to discover or remember their beauties. And so, for one who has heard the names of Alain Chartier or Villon, a hundred have by heart the songs of Schiller and Bürger; for one who cares about the Napoleonic songs of Béranger, a hundred admire the glaive-song of Körner.

The study of the causes which have made French

poetry a drug in the market, whilst French literature in every other department holds a foremost place amongst its contemporaries in every country in Europe, is a very curious, and, perhaps, instructive one. It has been said that the French language is not well adapted to the higher forms of poetry. With its fondness for light dental syllables,<sup>1</sup> the almost total absence of strong guttural sounds, and its numberless particles, whose tenuity is not relieved, as in Greek and German, with deep sonorous syllables, it remains for ever the language of the drawing-room or cabinet, of pastoral loves and sweet simplicities, but can never be made the vehicle of the stormy outpourings of love or terror, of the stern passion and solemn feeling which the tragic muse demands; nor in lyric poetry can it ever convey the pathos and the tenderness and the sublimity, that belong to the subjects, which in our times poetic geniuses have almost universally adopted. French writers admit this inferiority of their language to those of the ancient classics, and seek every pretext for maintaining that, notwithstanding this weakness, French dramatic poetry deserves to take a place on the high level of the immortal works which Greek genius has left to humanity. They hold that the rhythm of their language can never be understood by foreigners; and that, owing to the peculiar possession by French artists of an organic power over the sounds and syllables in poetry, which they call the tonic accent, the full meaning of their great dramatists can be interpreted to an audience in strong, but harmonious rhetoric—melodious, yet as passionate and striking as the harshest threnodies of Æschylus; and that the weakness of the perpetual rhyming, which is so painful to readers of French tragedy, is altogether removed, when by attention to

<sup>1</sup> "With what delight did I hear the woman who conducted us to see the triumphal arch of Augustus at Susa speak the clear and complete language of Italy, though half unintelligible to me, after that nasal and abbreviated cacophony of the French."—*Shelley's Letters from Italy*.

meaning and by gesture, every passionate speech is uttered, accentuated by oratorical inflexion. This, they say, was the secret of the power of Talma, the greatest of French tragedians.

However correct this strong defence may be, the fact remains that for the majority of readers, who are entertained by their poets, not in the auditorium of a theatre, but in the silence of their studies, the French language is absolutely effeminate—we might almost say exasperating—in its inadequacy to express what are often great and splendid ideas. And, unfortunately, the three great tragic poets of France, Corneille, Voltaire and Racine, have challenged comparison with the masterpieces of antiquity by selecting for treatment, characters, scenes, and episodes that belong to the mythology of Greece and Rome. To any one familiar with Greek tragedy, whose ears have been accustomed to the long rich roll of the Epic hexameter, to the iambics of the Attic stage, and to the high heroic style of the chief actors in the immortal dramas of Greece, nothing can appear more paltry and weak than the mock heroics of their modern French imitators. Here, for example, is a part of a dialogue between Agamemnon and Achilles, on an occasion of unusual solemnity, when the former had determined to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, and Achilles, her betrothed, has just heard the terrible report.

#### ACHILLE.

Un bruit assez étrange est venu jusqu'à moi  
Seigneur ; je l'ai jugé trop peu digne de foi.

On dit, et sans horreur, je ne puis le redire,  
Qu'aujourd'hui, par votre ordre Iphigénie expire.

#### AGAMEMNON.

Seigneur, je ne rends point compte de mes desseins,  
Ma fille ignore encore mes ordres souverains,  
Et, quand il sera temps quelle en soit informée,  
Vous apprendrez son sort, j'en instruirai l'armée.

## ACHILLE.

Ah ! je sais trop le sort, que vous lui réservez.

## AGAMEMNON.

Pourquoi le demander, puisque vous le savez.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of an excited prologue to a tragedy, this reads like a cautious and diplomatic exchange of question and retort between the clever plenipotentiaries of two rival States. But turn to the *Iphigenias* of Euripides, or the *Iphigenia in Tauris* of Goethe, and the vast inferiority of the Gallic to the Greek and German dialects will be apparent. Or take any part of the *Iliad*, or a single page of *Paradise Lost*, and then hear Voltaire in the only epic poem which France has produced—the *Henriade*. Here is the opening description of the massacre of St. Bartholomew :—

Cependant tout s'apprête, et l'heure est arrivée  
 Qu'au fatal dénoûment la reine a réservée.  
 Le signal est donné sans tumulte et sans bruit ;  
 C'était à la faveur des ombres de la nuit.  
 De ce mois malheureux l'inégale courrière  
 Semblait cacher d'effroi sa tremblante lumière.  
 Coligny languissait dans les bras du repos,  
 Et le sommeil trompeur lui versait ses pavots.  
 Soudain de mille cris le bruit épouvantable  
 Vient arracher ses sens à ce calme agréable.

It is as “ moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine ”. But the German language, so broad, and deep, and resonant, lends itself easily to metrical romance, historical epic, or the stately drama. Very strong, rough elements went to compose it—the dialects of the East Goths who occupied the low alluvial lands of the Danube and the Elbe ; and whilst still crude and unformed, Ovid, the earliest poet who wrote in German, discovered its adaptability to Greek and Roman rhythm, and invented the German hexameter, the same metre in which Wieland and Klopstock wrote their immortal epics. And there cannot be a doubt but that this lan-

<sup>1</sup> Racine, *Iphigénie*.

guage is peculiarly fitted for heroic and dramatic poetry. The long compound words, each of which is a metaphor, like the compound Greek adjectives; the preponderance of consonants, sometimes linked and riveted together as if to reduplicate their strength; and the distinct pronunciation of every letter, give a tone of masculine vigour to the language, which makes it peculiarly the language of the tragedian. But even in softer lyric verses the words fit in, when used with skill, as easily as the liquid Italian. We quote two stanzas from Uhland's *Das Schloss am Meere* :—

Sahest du oben gehen  
 Den König und sein Gemahl ?  
 Der rothen Mäntel Wehen ?  
 Der goldenen Kronen Strahl ?

Führten sie nicht mit Wonne  
 Eine schöne Jungfrau dar,  
 Herrlich wie eine Sonne,  
 Strahlend in goldnen Haar ?

and these few lines of Mignon's song, which are familiar :—

Kennst du das Land ? wo die Citronen blühn,  
 Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn,  
 Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,  
 Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht ;  
 Kennst du es wohl ?  
 Dahn ! dahin !  
 Möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn.

But the distinct inferiority of French to German poetry is rather to be sought in two yet more powerful causes—the configuration of the countries, and their histories, legendary or otherwise. It may seem a bold assertion that the poetry of a country takes its tone from its scenery, and that the divine dreams of bards and singers are coloured by associations of mountains and rivers, the level beauties or rich undulations of a landscape, or the many wonders of the sea. Yet, if a poet is above all things a child of Nature—if she is his

mother, his mistress, his teacher, who keeps her secrets for him alone, and shows him pictures to which other men are blind, and whispers music which the unfavoured shall not hear—assuredly his writings must bear some strong impress of his fancies, and, according to Nature's teachings, be rich or poor, tame or spirited, the rapt utterance of an oracle that is inspired, or the stammering of a voice which has never been lifted above the low levels of human knowledge and utterance. Hence, Mount Parnassus was the home of the Muses in the Greek mythology, and from the mystic fountain their clients drew their inspiration; and every poet that has sung since these distant times has walked with Nature first, and then with man, to learn the myriad moods in which she strives to captivate and educate her wayward child. True to her teachings was the Irish bard, who returned from the ends of the earth to see once more the "purple mountains of Innisfail;" and if there be any special charm in the works of an artist who is always delightful, it is the sombre tone in which he envelops the mournful chant of *In Memoriam*, or the twilight atmosphere in which he exhibits the spectral forms of Arthur and his knights.

Now, Nature has been particularly unkind to France. She has given her splendid facilities for commerce and agriculture; but her dowry of broad, tame, fertile plains, unbroken by the barrenness of shaggy mountains, and unrelieved by the desolation of moorland or mere, has never qualified her to be "meet nurse for a poetic child". Smooth, bare levels, dotted with poplars, arranged with the mathematical precision which Nature detests, and shallow rivers flowing by dull towns, yield not a spot which Melpomene could haunt, and lift the soul of native child or gifted stranger to that mood of inspiration when the spirit of man breaks forth in song. But in Germany everything favours the poetic and philosophic spirit. Its broad majestic rivers, castle-crowned and jewelled with green islets; its giant forests, dark and gloomy, as if still haunted by the spirit of

Druidical worship ; its mountains, with their Brocken-spectres and witches ; its historic cities, that were swept by the storms of political strife, and rent with the rage of battles ; all combine to give a tinge of the weird and supernatural to German poetry, and to eliminate whatever is merely formal, prosaic, or utilitarian. Every mountain has its legend, every forest its grim history, every river its associations ; and brooding over all, and colouring legend, history and association, is the dark spirit of Scandinavian mythology. Across the dawn of French poetry, we see a gay procession of jongleurs and troubadours daintily dressed, swinging their guitars, and singing of love and flowers and perfumes, " Vous estes belle en bonne foye," and " Si jamais fust un Paradis en terre ". Across the dawn of German poetry are the dark figures of the scalds, who sang of Thor and Odin, and the mad Beresarks, and the Valkyres, who, forgetting their sex, went out on the battlefield by night, and slew the wounded. The former sang in quaint old Breton, or the half-Spanish French of the South ; and the eternal subject in lay, virelay and rondelay, is the silly nonsense that for ever attaches to purely erotic poetry. The latter sang in rough gutturals<sup>1</sup> of war, and the gods, and the fountains of being, and the origin of men, and the three sisters Urda, Verandi and Skulda, of the twilight, and the windswells, and the old man of the mountain and the old man of the sea. The earliest monuments of Gothic intellect are these rough old rhymes on subjects which, though clothed in uncouth language and darkened in the twilight of mythology, must still be considered the beginnings of those modern schools of poetry which have produced masterpieces which will bear to be read or represented by the side of

<sup>1</sup> " Sunt illis hæc quoque carmina, quorum relatu, quem Barditum vocant, accendunt animos, futuræque pugnæ fortunam ipso cantu augurantur : terrent enim trepidantve prout sonuit acies. Nec tam voces illæ quam virtutis concentus videntur : affectatur præcipue asperitus soni, et fractum murmur, objectis ad os scutis quo plenior ac gravior vox repercessu intumescat." — Tacitus.

the masterpieces which Greece produced in the zenith of its intellectual power. But the love songs of the trouvères and troubadours are the beginnings of an effeminate school which never in its earlier days thought of the philosophy of Nature as a subject for poetry, and never in its later days touched that great subject without reducing it to ridicule. And so even to this day we have rondeaux, triolets and huitains with "les parfums," "les fleurs," "les oiseaux" and "le printemps" well sprinkled through them; but not a word that is worth remembering of a past that may be lingered over with regret, of a present rich in fruitful philosophy, or a future that is fraught with buoyant hopes and cheerful presages for humanity.

But did not the Germans actually adopt not only the versification, but even the subjects of French poetry? True; after the conquests of Charlemagne a strong imitative spirit grew up in Germany for everything French; and the romances of chivalry which took their rise in Brittany, which celebrated the glories of the Round Table, and the bravery of Charlemagne, and the exploits of Amadis of Gaul, became the ruling subjects of literature not only in Germany, but all over Europe. The Italians had no vernacular poetry prior to the fourteenth century. The earliest of their poems which have come down to us are simply imitations, both in dialect and subject, of the ancient Provencal poets. The Spaniards invited their singers from beyond the Pyrenees. All the early English romances are avowedly taken from Norman sources, and the German romances are simply translations of the fame of Sir Percivale, or the loves of Lancelot of the Lake, or the fate of Sir Tristram. But we cannot say that any works of native Germans, written in this humble, imitative style, deserve to be remembered now. Just as the Italian copyists have passed away, and are forgotten, whilst the figure of Dante, huge, colossal, original, stands enshrined in the Temple of Immortality; and as the Spanish copyists have passed away, and leave Calderon and Lope de Vega, the sole re-

presentatives of Spanish and Portuguese art; so the servile imitators of Breton or Provençal romance in Germany have barely recorded of them in musty indices of the Vatican or elsewhere that they wrote such and such a work in "merrie rime," but that is all the hold they have on the attention of our age to be rescued from absolute oblivion. Even during this dull period, the only works of any importance that have challenged the notice of posterity are the original metrical romances, that have for subject some national or mythological legend derived from purely Gothic sources—such as the expedition of the Ecken, or the Lay of the Nibelungs. In truth, Frankish influence appears to have paralysed every effort of native Germans to establish and consecrate to national purposes a truly original school of poetry. The traditional ballads of the trouvères had a host of servile imitators, who, when tired of extravaganzas in amatory verse, introduced the same silly sentimentality, the same profane and far-fetched imagery, the same indelicacy and coarseness into the miracle plays, which, during this period, were tolerated over the whole continent of Europe. In fact, Germany had ceased to be a nation, and had become merely a collection of principalities, and German poetry had come to be represented by a few ballad writers, who were welcome in the halls of the feudal barons, but who neither caught inspiration from the people, their history and their traditions, nor, in turn, communicated those passionate feelings to the masses, which in later times stirred them to the deepest depths of their being, and created the high ambition which has placed Germany foremost amongst the nations in all kinds of intellectual culture. In fact, in Germany, as in all other nations, nationality and literature acted and reacted on each other. So long as Germany remained under Frankish influence, political or literary, so long it remained in a condition of intellectual debility. When emancipated from foreign influence, it at once produced masters in every branch of intellectual enterprise. When again it passed under

the dominance of Frankish customs, it relapsed into sluggish barrenness. It has been said that it was the Reformation which quickened the intellectual pulse of Germany, and by introducing freedom of opinion, philanthropic liberality, etc., stimulated the minds of men to those contests on religion, science and the humanities, by which the intellect is always invigorated, and the imagination has scope for broad and liberal speculations in every department of human knowledge. But that this is not so is evidenced by the facts that for 150 years after the Reformation, the countries of Europe, which embraced Protestantism, sank back into a condition of almost primitive barbarism; and that long before the Reformation, and in the very centre of Catholicism, a revival of taste for all the arts that can elevate and refine humanity, for the sciences which contribute to man's comfort, and for the literature which broadens and beautifies his mind, had already taken place. "If the 300 years," says an English writer,<sup>1</sup> "which elapsed between 1500 and 1800, be divided into equal parts, the spirit of the Reformation will be allowed to have been most operative during the first 150 years. But the diffusion of general welfare and illumination will be found most conspicuous during the last 150 years. This progress, both of populousness and refinement, resulted chiefly from the increase of wealth; and the increase of wealth resulted chiefly from the extension of commerce, which grew out of the conquest of Hindostan and the colonisation of America—events independent of the Reformation. If the European territories shaken by this revolution be distinguished into Protestant and Catholic countries, and the respective masses be compared with each other, the Protestant will uniformly be found the more barbarous during the three first half centuries of the Reformation; as if the victory of the new opinions had occasioned a retrogression of civility. The Catholic

<sup>1</sup> W. Taylor, *Survey of German Poetry*.

provinces seem barely to have retained their anterior refinement; but the Protestant provinces to have receded towards rudeness; and these only began to recover their natural rank, in the competition of national culture, when the religious zeal of their ruling classes began to abate. Valuing thus in gross the effects of the Reformation, it is surely not easy to perceive its merits." We quote another sentence from the same Protestant author, just to show that the opinion of Carlyle and others, that modern civilisation is directly traceable to the Reformation, is not shared by all thinkers. "When it is considered that, of the evil, which for 150 years accompanied the Reformation along its progress, much inheres in the very nature and essence of the change; that, of the good, which for 150 years has been enjoyed in the seats of the Reformation, much might equally have been expected without any alteration at all; and that a purer reformation from the bosom of Italy itself, was probably intercepted by the premature violence of Luther and his followers—surely they may not hastily, or decidedly, be classed among the benefactors of the human race. The Northern Reformers made tempests and bloody showers; and now that the sunshine is restored to their fields, they boast of the storm as the cause of the fertility."

We see therefore that the change in the religious opinions of Germany was not the prelude to the golden epoch of its poetry and literature. That the spirit of independence of foreign influences, and the popularisation of German manners, language, etc., had an immediate and vivifying effect on German genius is evidenced by the fact that it was in the year 1748 the first German grammar was published by Gottsched,<sup>1</sup> and writing in German became popular; and from that year, for a long century, Germany developed, with a rapidity which astonished herself and the world, a galaxy of poetic and other geniuses, more numerous, and of

<sup>1</sup> Up to that date the learned wrote in Latin.

more transcendent ability than all the modern nations of Europe have together produced. We do not say that she therefore bears the palm of intellectual superiority, or that she is the cradle of the world's greatest men. We do not say that Goethe is a greater poet than Shakespeare or Dante, or that Klopstock is equal to Milton. But we do say that in the short space of a single century, and that century bounding the only national life which Germany has enjoyed, it has given to the world a school of poets and philosophers of more unique, original and varied talent, of higher and more transcendent aims and ideas, and of greater perfection of artistic workmanship, than can be found on the rolls of honour of any other nation. Here are names, every one of which is mentioned with enthusiasm, not only at home, but in every academy and university in Europe,—Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Werner, Heine, Novalis, Bürger, Freiligrath, Klopstock, Körner, Lessing, Tieck, Uhland, Wieland, Hoffmann, etc., of whom Carlyle says: "We have no hesitation in stating that we see in certain of the best German poets, and those, too, of our own time, something which associates them, remotely or nearly we say not, but which does associate them with the Masters of Art, the Saints of Poetry, long since departed, and as we thought, without successors, from the earth, but canonised in the hearts of all generations, and yet living to all by the memory of what they did and were. Glances we do seem to find of that ethereal glory which looks upon us in its full brightness from the Transfiguration of Raffaelle, from the *Tempest* of Shakespeare; and in broken, but still purest and heart-piercing beams, struggling through the gloom of long ages, from the tragedies of Sophocles, and the weather-worn sculpture of the Parthenon. This is that heavenly spirit which, best seen in the aerial embodiment of poetry, but spreading likewise over all the thoughts and actions of an age, has given us Surreys, Sidneys, Raleghs in court and camp, Cecils in policy, Hookers in divinity, Bacons in philosophy, and Shakespeares and Spensers in song.

In affirming that any vestige, however feeble, of this Divine spirit is discernible in German poetry, we are aware that we place it above the existing poetry of any other nation."

We might say in conclusion, that the whole spirit of Germany is in alliance with the lofty ideas and emotions which find their embodiment in poetry; the whole spirit of France is in direct opposition and antipathy. There are two very exquisite passages from two of our most eminent English poets, which clearly exemplify this statement. Robert Browning, speaking of subjective poets, and taking Shelley as a type, says: "Not what man sees, but what God sees—the *ideas* of Plato—seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand—it is towards these that he struggles. Not with the combination of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity he has to do; and he digs where he stands—preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intentions of which he desires to perceive and speak." To the spiritual, introspective character of German genius, these remarks would admirably apply, and although there appears to have been no correspondence either of imitation or praise between Shelley and his German contemporaries, he derived his undoubted inspirations from sources to which they had access and recourse, and his poetry, which has long since passed into the region of the deathless classics, has an indisputable affinity with the legendary and lyrical poetry of the Fatherland. For if the German poets were metaphysicians before they broke through forms and sang in clear resonant rhythm emotions and ideas that were unintelligible in mere prose, Shelley, too, had his mind formed on the teachings of Plato,<sup>1</sup> and his immortal verse is but the disburthening of a great philosophical mind, which laboured under the doubts and difficulties of existence to the end. And his vain ineffectual strain-

<sup>1</sup> Introductory note to *Essays and Letters* by Ernest Rhys.

ing after an excellence and beauty, which he ended by declaring it to be visionary and ideal, what is it but that perpetual balancing of reason and fancy, which is so remarkable amongst the German poets, and which is unknown to French versifiers? For these latter, unable to maintain an equipoise between the two great powers of the intellect, decided to dethrone imagination, and deify reason. Whence it is easy to understand that saying of Shelley's: "Rousseau was essentially a poet—the others (meaning Voltaire and his school of sceptics) were mere reasoners".

The other sentence we take from Shelley himself: "Poetry is indeed something Divine, it is at once the centre and circumference of all knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption." It is the brilliant surface then of men and things, and not the hidden mechanism of nature, that comes under the domain of poetry; or if the Divine art will penetrate beneath the surface and seek to understand secret operations that issue in such splendours of form and colour, it is with a view to understand their mystery and meaning, and not to reduce them to the commonplaces of science. Here the analyst and theorist have no place. The subtle essence of poetic thought can no more be sifted and solved than the scent of a rose in summer, or the odours that are wafted from the sea. Its secret charm, which appeals to our highest senses, and gives us some idea of pre-existence as it certainly gives a hope of immortality, is undefinable; and human speech, that is wrought into such mysterious and beautiful texture under its influence, has no power to declare the nature of the spell that enfolds it. And as in the sister art of music, the ethereal harmonies which sway human emotions are

altogether beyond the grasp of the geometer, who can tell the exact value of notes and intervals, or of the surgeon who knows exactly the physiology of the vocal chords; so poetry in its highest forms is far beyond the reach of critical or analytical intellects, who understand the science of the skeleton, but are blind to the beauty and perfection of the living form. Yet France has always had a dread of the ideal; and her painters and novelists, her sculptors and poets, have driven realism to extremes. Battle-scenes and historical episodes cover their canvases; the *Morgue* and the *Salpêtrière* furnish the heroes and heroines of romance, and their poets have either taken the classic legends, and deprived them of the life and charm they possessed for the ancients, or affected those historical subjects, which even in the hands of Shakspeare are only redeemed from dulness by the highest efforts of genius and art. The result is this. The spirit of our age is totally opposed to dry verse, which the soul of poetry never animated. A solitary poet, like Austin Dobson, may try to revive in our magazines some taste for French forms of versification, with comparatively little success, but the unerring instincts of great geniuses like Coleridge and Carlyle force them to direct the full searching light of intellect and taste on German poems and German mysticism, with the result that a radiance is reflected upon themselves which will keep bright their names and memories so long as the world retains its appreciation for thoughts that are imperishable and art that is immortal.

## RECENT AUGUSTINIAN LITERATURE.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite taken for granted by the unbelievers of the day that the world has so completely rejected the great doctrines of Christianity, that controversies on religious, or, as they would call them, sectarian topics, are utterly unknown; for that nowadays no one is in the least degree interested in the subtleties of theological discussions, which at one time set empire against empire, and engaged the best faculties of the ablest thinkers throughout Europe. The contempt so freely lavished on the metaphysical discussions that were held throughout the universities of Europe in the Middle Ages has broadened into a disdain for the supporters of doctrines, which to mediæval theologians, and, indeed, to all Christian believers, were absolutely incontrovertible; and it is supposed that outside the walls of Catholic colleges, which with rigid conservatism still cling to scholastic forms, no one feels the least interest in the ghosts of past and buried controversies. Thus in the September number of the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Justice Stephen says:—

“The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, has ceased to interest the great mass of mankind, and it is difficult to imagine in these days a controversy about original sin or the sacraments attracting much attention”.

In flat contradiction to this theory comes the fact, that within the last year no less than seven publications have issued from the British and American press, dealing with the life and doctrines of St. Augustine; and following this series comes review after review,

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, December, 1887.

treating exhaustively of these publications and the many most interesting questions they deal with and suggest. Nor are these questions altogether of that purely metaphysical nature that would be tolerated, and even welcomed by the free-thinking spirit of the age. For it admits there is one subject it has not yet quite tired of, that is, the existence of a Supreme Being, and the abstruse questions that cluster around the great central mystery of the universe. These it is always prepared to discuss, especially as they lead out from the company of musty Christians, and into the society of glorious Greek heathens, and the mystics of the majestic East. But the main subjects discussed in recent Augustinian literature are such antiquated and commonplace controversies as those which agitated the world in St. Augustine's time—controversies with Manicheans and Pelagians about Divine predestination and human freewill, between necessarians and supporters of liberty; and, alas! there is not a word about the dialogues of the divine Plato, but a great deal about the *Institutes* of half-forgotten Calvin. Still more singular is it that three of these publications have come to us from America, and that, as a writer in the *Church Quarterly Review* for July tells us, "while the price to which the Parker Society's series has sunk appears to prove that the Reformers are but a drug in the market, and the library of Anglo-Catholic Theology stands, we fear, at a figure not much higher, the Fathers afford material for repeated publishing speculations". It is quite clear the world is not so enlightened after all. The scorn of Pascal,<sup>1</sup> and the sarcasm of Renan<sup>2</sup> have not been quite so deadly as was supposed. Or, perhaps there is something in these old Fathers and their despised controversies not quite so obsolete and worthless as the wits of France and the pamphleteers of England would have us suppose.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres Provinciales*, II.

<sup>2</sup> *New Studies of Religious History*. Art., "The Congregations de Auxiliis".

The most ambitious of these works on St. Augustine are the Hulsean Lectures for 1885, embodied by the writer, W. Cunningham, B.D., Trinity College, Cambridge, in a work which bears the title, *St. Austin, and His Place in the History of Religious Thought*. The most useful and interesting to us is the *Historical Study of St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor*, written by a Vincentian Father, and already favourably noticed in the *Record*. The former has been subjected to a good deal of unflattering criticism. The latter has passed through the Reviews, not only unscathed, but frequently and warmly recommended, and, we hope, will soon be issued in a second edition. Perhaps the learned author will pardon us if we call his attention to a remarkable exemplification of the truths conveyed in that chapter of his book in which he lays down certain rules which must be observed by professional or other readers of the works of St. Augustine.

It has passed into the ordinary canons of criticism that the works of any great author, ancient or modern, must be studied in their entirety, with such light as contemporary publications throw upon them, and with a fair amount of deference for the opinions of those commentators who, from one motive or another, have made these works the study of their lives. The violation of any of these canons is apt to lead to singular mistakes; and it will be found that nearly half the books of the world are written to support arguments in favour of certain views which are supposed to be contained in the great works of the world's literature. The subjectivity, to use a hackneyed word, of our minds is so strong, that we are continually projecting our own ideas on the page we are supposed to be studying with illumination independent of that which is cast by other minds; and language is so very flexible, particularly when it embraces abstract and indefinite ideas, that we can derive from almost any author texts to support doctrines which we know very well would be most repugnant to that author's mind. We know that Bacon in

the English school, Reid in the Scottish school, and Descartes in the French school of philosophy, have been the originators of ideas which have been pushed to conclusions which they would have decidedly condemned ; and to ascend higher, it is well known that St. Paul has been cited in support of most contradictory doctrines—to-day he is a Calvinist, to-morrow an idealist, and the climax has been reached by proving him a pantheist from the words, *in ipso enim vivimus, movemur et sumus*. Now there never was an author that required to be studied with keener discrimination than St. Augustine. His mind was so subtle, and he analysed ideas in such a manner that none but the strongest and best trained intellects can follow him ; and then he was essentially a dialectician, and possessed such a phenomenal power over the Latin tongue that he uses phrases and expressions that actually bewilder in their apparent contradictions. Even that little work, his *Confessions*, which apparently was thrown off without premeditation, and, therefore, should be marked by all the directness and simplicity of a plain categorical statement, is in reality a philosophical treatise containing the pith and marrow of all he had thought and read, and full of those transcendental ideas which have been the despair of those who have attempted to analyse and explain them. The neglect of these primary rules, and, let us add, the absence of real theological training, which is common to all Protestants, have led the Hulsean lecturer into many serious errors. Some of these have already been noticed in the *Tablet* for February, 1887, particularly the assertion, which probably will astonish some readers, that the Church of England fully represents, and has always represented, St. Augustine's teaching. But any one who has had the least acquaintance with contemporary history in England will know that one of the most exasperating features of Ritualism in England is, that in the face of history, in defiance of contemporary declarations on the part of the Anglican bishops, and contemporary decisions of the Ecclesiastical

Law Courts, it proclaims the identity of the English Church of to-day with the Apostolic Church and the pre-Reformation Church in England, and maintains doctrines which are reprobated by the bishops and three-fourths of the Anglican Communion, and uses ceremonies which are condemned by its formularies, and prayers which are declared blasphemous, and rites which are declared idolatrous. But long before the English Church had advanced so far in apostasy from itself, and irreconcilability with Rome (for the nearer it approaches us in externals, the farther is it removed in spirit), the appeal to the Fathers was a favourite one. It was made by all the great High Churchmen of the past, it was made by the Oxford men in the time of the great revival, with the result that they passed directly into union with the Catholic Church. But until some one can define what the English Church is, and declare authoritatively its teaching, the assumption of its identity with any other community can neither be contradicted nor refuted. It is not a concrete body about which anything can be affirmed or denied. One section of its members proclaims its dogmatic adhesion to every doctrine and ceremony of the Catholic Church, if we except that of Papal Supremacy. Another, representing a good deal of the best thought and feeling of the communion, is quite content to exercise a civilising influence on the masses by the example of irreproachable lives, and the preaching of a secular ethical system, without committing itself to any dogma whatsoever, leaving even the personality of God open to the choice of its followers. "If some very distinguished members of the Church of England," says Mr. Justice Stephen, quoted above, "living or lately dead, could be, or could have been, put into a witness box, and closely cross-examined as to their real deliberate opinions, it would be probably found that they not only acknowledged the truth of principles advocated by Mr. Mivart, which, indeed, most of them notoriously and even ostentatiously did and do, but were well aware that they in-

volved all the practical consequences which are pointed out above ; yet some of them held, and others still hold, an honoured place in the Church of England, and, without giving any particular scandal, discharge in it duties of the highest importance, and give advice, and make exhortations which are highly appreciated by a large number of important persons." To say, therefore, that the English Church represents the teaching of St. Augustine is to make the latter responsible for "wide divergencies" of belief, a devout Catholic to-day, tomorrow a Socinian or Agnostic. But when the lecturer takes the other side, and, instead of telling us what the Church of England teaches, declares the actual opinions which he supposes St. Augustine held ; declares, for example, that St. Augustine considered unity no essential mark of the Church, and knew absolutely nothing of the Sacrifice of the Mass, he comes boldly out into the open, and it must be admitted that he is very brave. And when he says that the *libertas indifferentia* is a Pelagian doctrine, and that man has no such liberty, and that this is the teaching of St. Augustine, we can bring him down, even in this abstruse and most difficult matter, to the words of the great Doctor himself, and to the exposition of these words which was made by his followers and commentators. To select a few sentences out of thousands, in his dialogue with Evodius about free-will, he uses the following words : " Si natura vel necessitate iste motus existit, culpabilis esse nullo pacto potest " (Lib. iii., cap. 1) ; and in the following chapter, comparing the motion of the will to that of a stone which is cast, he says :—

" Verumtamen in eo dissimilis est, quod in potestate non habet lapis cohibere motum, quo fertur inferius ; animus vero, dum non vult non ita movetur, ut superioribus desertis, inferiora diligat : et ideo lapidi naturalis est ille motus, animo vero iste voluntarius ".

And again :—

" Audi ergo primo ipsum Dominum ubi duas arbores commemorat, quarum mentionem ipse fecisti ; audi di-

centem, aut facite arborem bonam, et fructum ejus bonum, aut facite arborem malam, et fructum ejus malum. Cum ergo dicit, aut hoc facite, aut illud facite, potestatem indicat, non naturam. Nemo enim nisi Deus facere arborem potest; sed habet unusquisque in voluntate aut eligere quæ bona sunt, et esse arbor bona; aut eligere quæ mala sunt, et esse arbor mala. Hoc ergo Dominus dicens, aut facite illud, aut facite illud, ostendit esse in potestate quid facerent."—*In Actis cum Felice, Manichæo*, Lib. ii., cap. 4.<sup>1</sup>

We pass here from the lecturer to the *Church Quarterly* reviewer, who is inclined to differ from Mr. Cunningham in his opinion of St. Augustine's Rule of Faith, for he states that the latter took the Sacred Scriptures for the recorded and established representatives of Divine Truth on earth, adding that, "although Church authority is to him the immediate practical medium by which he obtains access to Scripture, and is led to believe it, yet every element and constituent of Church authority, whether the individual teaching of Fathers, or the united voice of Councils, is to him capable of mistake. It is Scripture alone in which he has decided to find no error." This is rather a strange assertion about the saint, who declared that he accepted the Scriptures only from the hands of the Church; and it is more strangely supported by the quotation given in the note from the saint's letters to St. Jerome. This note is simply a distinction which St. Augustine draws between the Canonical books of Scripture and those which were considered doubtful or apocryphal, or were the works of individual writers—"Fateor charitati tue solis eis Scripturarum libris qui jam *Canonici* appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre, ut nullum eorum auctorem scribendo aliiquid errasse firmissime credam. Et si aliiquid in eis offendero literis quod videatur contrarium veritati, nihil aliud quam vel men-

<sup>1</sup> St. Hilary (in Psalm ii.), St Optatus (Lib. adv. Parmen. vii.), St. Bernard (*de Gratia et lib. arb.*) agree with St. Augustine.

dosum esse codicem, vel interpretem non assecutum esse quod dictum est, vel me minime intellexisse, non ambigam. *Alios autem ita lego ut quantalibet sanctitate doctrinaque præpolleant, non ideo verum puto quia ipsi ita senserunt; sed quia mihi vel per illos auctores Canonicos, vel probabili ratione, quod a vero non abhorreant persuadere potuerunt.*"<sup>1</sup>

It is quite clear that here there is no distinction made between Scripture and Church authority, but between the Canonical books and the works, however learned, of individuals; and it would rather appear that St. Augustine favoured the absolute authority of the Church in these matters when he acknowledges two classes of books, those called Canonical, which are presented to the faithful with the supreme *imprimatur* of the Church, and in which the saint says "firmissime credam"; and those whose contents can only be accepted when there is proof of their consonance with the teaching of the Canonical books, "quia mihi vel per illos auctores Canonicos, vel probabili ratione, quod a vero non abhorreant persuadere potuerunt". But let us hear St. Augustine himself in that very book which the reviewer has cited, but not quoted (*Lib. contra Faustum*, xi.): "Si non de aliqua particula, sed de toto audies contradicentem et clamantem, falsus est; quid ages? quo te convertes? quam libri a te prolati originem, quam vetustatem, quam seriem successionis testem citabis? Nam si hoc facere conaberis, et nihil valebis; et vides in hac re quid Ecclesiæ Catholiceæ valeat auctoritas, quæ ab ipsis

<sup>1</sup> The quotation, as given by the *Church Quarterly* reviewer, and quoted accurately in the text, is, however, truncated. For St. Augustine adds: "Nec te, mi frater, sentire aliud existimo; prorsus, inquam, non te arbitror sic legi tuos libros velle, tanquam Prophetarum vel Apostolorum," which bears out still more fully our contention, that no contrast was intended between Scriptural and Church teachings, between which no discrepancy can exist, but between the writings of individuals, even those to whose learning and sanctity St. Augustine bears such warm testimony, as in his *Opus Imperfectum*, iv., 112, and the inspired teachings of Scripture and the teachings of the infallible Church.

fundatissimis sedibus Apostolorum usque ad hodiernam diem succedentium sibimet Episcoporum serie et tot populorum consensione firmatur." And again, "Quis quis falli metuit obscuritate questionis, *Ecclesiam de illo consulat*, quam sine ulla ambiguitate Sacra Scriptura demonstrat" (Lib. i., *contra Cresconium*, cap. 33); and that well-known expression, "Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Ecclesiae Catholicæ commoveret auctoritas" (cap. 8, *contra Epistolam Fundamenti*). We shall not dwell on the statement that St. Augustine's belief in the Sacred Scriptures arose from his determination to recognise some authority, and in the "circumstances of inability to criticise which existed for him in the ignorance of the original languages, and the possibility of error in the particular MSS. to which he had access". But it is in just these particular cases that St. Augustine recognises the necessity of a living and infallible authority, and, therefore, reposes his final faith in the *magisterium* of the Church. And as to the superior advantages we possess in the facilities for studying Scripture critically by aid of philological and exegetical research, they have resulted in an issue which was very far from the lofty faith and sublime hope of St. Augustine—the rationalism of modern Europe.

In the same way the reviewer, whilst doubting about Mr. Cunningham's success in proving logically that the Calvinistic doctrines are quite different from the Augustinian, lapses into some mistakes. He cannot understand, for example, in what the Augustinian doctrine of man's inability to work out his own salvation differs from the Calvinistic doctrine of man's total depravity, forgetting that inability to perform supernatural acts without the efficacious help of the Most High is very different from the incapacity to receive such help owing to the total depravity of nature. He ignores the distinction made by Catholic theologians between positive and negative reprobation—the former abstracting altogether from the malice of the sinner, and insisting that the reprobate were created with a view to eternal punish-

ment; the latter, meaning the prescience of God foreseeing the commission of sin, and the necessary subsequent punishment. "Providentia summi Dei, non fortuita temeritate, regitur mundus," says St. Augustine, "et ideo nunquam esset istorum aeterna miseria, nisi esset magna malitia;" and again in another place, "omnis poena, si justa est, peccati poena est, et supplicium nominatur" (*Lib. iii., de lib. arb.*, cap. 18). As to the case of Pharaoh, and the words of St. Augustine, of which the Calvinists have made so much, "Operari Deum in cordibus hominum ad inclinandas eorum voluntates, quocunque voluerit, sive ad bona pro sua misericordia, sive ad mala pro meritis eorum," a sufficient explanation is found in the words of St. Thomas, when speaking of this passage he says: "Nam ad bonum inclinat hominum voluntates directe et per se, tanquam auctor bonorum; ad malum autem dicitur inclinare, vel suscitare homines occasionaliter; in quantum scilicet Deus homini proponit vel interius, vel exterius, quod quantum est ex se, est inductivum ad bonum; sed homo propter suam malitiam perverse utitur ad malum" (*Epist. ad Rom.*, c. ix., 17). And again, "Deus instigat hominem ad bonum, puta regem ad defendendum jura regni sui, vel ad puniendum rebelles; sed hoc instinctu bono malus homo abutitur secundum malitiam cordis sui. Et hoc modo circa Pharaonem accidit; qui cum a Deo excitaretur ad regni sui tutelam, abusus est hac excitatione ad crudelitatem."

With the conclusions, however, of the reviewer, we can almost entirely agree. The principal conviction which the study of Augustinian doctrines has brought home to him is, that where the doctrine of predestination is too exclusively regarded, without any application of external sacramental aids, it can only result in a morbid Pharisaism, which placidly condemns the larger portion of mankind to eternal punishment, or a still more morbid despair, which ends in a total disregard of duties which even the natural law imposes. For it is clear that the recourse to the Sacraments ought to

imply a belief that there is a necessity for spiritual assistance derivable from external sources, and a corresponding belief that such sources can adequately supply what is wanting to the weakness of Nature. And though prayer must always have a very large place in any scheme of spiritual economy, as being one of the easiest and readiest means of approaching our Maker, still we require some facilities of access to channels of Divine Mercy, whence grace will infallibly flow to us, if no obstacle is raised by the perversity of Nature. We will not stop here to ask the reviewer what spiritual assistance a merely commemorative ceremony such as the "Lord's Supper" can impart; and what other Sacrament is provided for adults in ordinary Protestantism? But when he traces the infidelity which unhappily does exist in Catholic countries to a multiplicity of sacramental forms, that is, to too many visible means of approaching the Unseen, we cannot quite follow him. The same odd fancy has struck the mind of another writer, whose latest work, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, has attracted considerable attention in this country and in America. In two chapters of this work entitled "Semi-parasitism" and "Parasitism," Professor Drummond traces the apostasy of Catholics to the fact that "the Catholic Church ministers falsely to the deepest needs of man, reduces the end of religion to selfishness, and offers safety without spirituality. . . . No one who has studied the religion of the continent upon the spot has failed to be impressed with the appalling spectacle of tens of thousands of unregenerate men sheltering themselves, as they conceive it, for eternity, behind the Sacraments of Rome."<sup>1</sup> The professor draws a parallel from Nature, in which he compares ordinary Catholics to those parasitical animals which, deriving strength and safety from superior organisms, rarely develop into healthy conditions of life, and

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 329. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

never put forth those organs which belong to their nature, and which are provided by necessary laws as a means of sustenance or defence. And although he is careful to state that the teachings of the Catholic Church do not promise safety or moral perfection except to those who correspond with the graces of which she is the depositary, yet he breaks out constantly into angry invective against the system, and places in the same category of contempt the Evangelical, who believes in his unconditional salvation through the merits of the atonement, and the Catholic who trusts for his salvation to the efficacy of prayer and the Sacraments. But a more acute thinker would perceive that there is this wide distinction, that the Evangelicals trust implicitly in the merits of redemption to the positive exclusion of all merit and of all effort on our part, these latter being to them but "filthy rags," whereas the Church most positively insists that in most of the Sacraments the grace received is proportioned to the state of the soul which receives it. It is the obvious distinction of grace received *ex opere operantis* and *ex opere operato* which is so familiar to Catholic students, but quite unknown to the Protestant professor. But the parallel between organic and spiritual life is in these chapters carried a little too far. For either the professor admits the supernatural, and then he must of necessity admit the operation of grace either in the Catholic or Evangelical sense, and thus he admits external assistance apart from internal effort and uncontrolled by it; or, what is more likely, he denies the supernatural element altogether in the spiritual life, and speaks of ordinary natural laws in the development of moral and mental energies. In this latter case, the analogy between the lower organisms and the human mind does not hold, because the contention is that organs and powers are developed by a principle of natural law which adapts organisms to their necessities. This supposes a struggle for existence, and a contest of the weaker with the stronger powers of Nature. But abstracting from the

supernatural, what contest goes on in man that can develop and strengthen his *moral* powers? No doubt his *mental* energies are developed in his struggle against Nature, and he puts forth strength that will save him against the uncontrolled forces which seek his destruction. Thus he ascends from the flint fire and the friction fire of the forest to the patent stove and electric lamp of civilisation, and from the coracle or canoe to the steamboat. But morally speaking, there being no danger, there is neither struggle nor contest, therefore no development, and therefore he must remain the primitive barbarian, rather enervated, but not at all exalted, by his sense of safety in civilisation. The application of natural law to the spiritual world is here, therefore, entirely at fault, and, indeed, we might say that the whole work is fanciful rather than logical. But writers of this kind must always break a lance with the Catholic Church; it adds to their honour to be defeated.

Apart, therefore, from the perversities of individuals for which no system can be held responsible, it would be difficult to conceive a more perfect supernatural system, and one better accommodated to spiritual necessities and spiritual growth than that which is presented by the Church. It holds the golden mean between the extremes of Evangelicalism and Rationalism. It neither promises salvation without effort, nor salvation without assistance. It neither preaches vicarious sanctification nor human perfectibility. But after declaring the high moral precepts that are contained in the absolute commandments of the Most High, and the counsels of perfection in the Gospels, it leads its members by individual effort on their part, and by the strength supplied by the Sacraments, to such possibilities of perfection as are compatible with the limits of a fallen nature. It allows grace and free-will to work harmoniously. They are the centripetal and centrifugal forces that keep the soul in its perfect orbit round the central sun of its existence. It does not encourage pride or overweening consciousness in our own powers; neither

does it paralyse effort by promising absolute security through the merits of the Redemption. To say, therefore, that "Roman Catholicism opens to the masses a molluscan shell. They have simply to shelter themselves within its pale, and they are safe," is palpably absurd. And so is the typical case which the professor gives of the Catholic convert who said: "I used to be concerned about religion, but religion is a great subject. I was very busy. A Protestant, my attention was called to the Roman Catholic religion. It suited my case. And instead of dabbling in religion for myself, I put myself into its hands. Once a year I go to Mass." This is not serious reasoning at all. It is *bouffonerie*. To whatever causes, therefore, the infidelity of Catholic countries is attributable, it certainly cannot be traced to the sacramental system in the Church. A system that has been adopted by such minds as St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and which has produced those marvels of sanctity, who have been raised by the veneration of the people or by the voice of the Church in thousands upon her altars, cannot be so enervating as our Protestant friends would have us suppose. It is the only system which is in strict accord with the words of Holy Scripture—the only one that can adapt itself with ease to those difficult passages that seem to be irreconcilable in Holy Writ, the only system that meets the wants of men when pride is weakened—

And the helpless feet stretch out  
To find in the depths of the darkness  
No footing more solid than doubt.

And there are only two classes that can possibly reject it. The religious fanatic who believes he has got "religion," and attributes a play of emotions to the breathing of the Spirit of God; and the Rationalist who rejects all supernatural agencies, and thinks that man can raise himself by unaided effort to the full stature of moral perfection. The emotional and exciting religion of the former, however repulsive to refined minds, will

always find adherents amongst the classes, who prefer a play of feelings to that elevation of mind and heart towards God which is taught by the Catholic Church; the latter will command the assent of that large and evergrowing class, which with intolerant pride strives to match its puny strength against "principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places".

We have been tempted into this rather discursive paper by the pleasing fact that Augustinian doctrines are to-day commanding the attention and reverence of so many thoughtful men throughout the world. And it is a satisfaction to know that the *Church Quarterly* reviewer adds an unbiased testimony to the excellence of the Catholic work (*A Historical Study*), and its superiority in all biographical respects to the other publications we have mentioned. This book, therefore, must become the standard work on St. Augustine, and we have thrown out the above hints in the hope that they may catch the eye of the learned author, and perhaps elicit from him an explanatory chapter in the shape of an "Appendix". Nor should we be surprised to find that in time a good deal of Augustinian literature will cluster around this work which has come to us so modestly, and has been received in so welcome a manner. For the subject is practically inexhaustible. The writings of St. Augustine touch on all those problems that will ever have a lasting influence on the human mind. Mr. Cunningham skinned in one sentence a subject that could be easily built into a treatise, when he said: "Just as it is true that he may well be compared to Descartes in regard to the problems of the certainty of knowledge, so it is true that he seems to have anticipated Kant in proclaiming the true freedom of the will"; and a whole library might be constructed out of his suggestions, just as devastating heresies arose from the misinterpretation of his words. If it were true that he anticipated Descartes and Kant, the philosophy of the present would possess very little

that would be original, and the philosophy of the future would have but a limited field for research. This is but saying that the best intellects of the world have been employed, consciously or otherwise, in seeking to make clear those mysteries that would never have dawned on the human mind but through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

## THE POETRY OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.<sup>1</sup>

IT has been remarked by a very profound critic that England owes her supremacy in literature almost entirely to her poets. It is needless to repeat here the parallels he has drawn between her literary celebrities in other departments, and those of foreign countries, past and present. It is quietly acknowledged that in all sciences requiring depth and profundity of thought, combined with the cognate talent for dogged and persistent labour, England will not bear a moment's comparison with Germany; and that in the lighter and more graceful arts, such as essays and critiques, she has never had a Montaigne or Sainte-Beuve. But in the divinest art of all—that of wedding the loftiest thoughts to the sweetest language—she stands pre-eminent, without rival, without equal, at least since the time that Apollo honoured Pindar with half the fruit-offerings of his altars, and the face of Sappho was engraved on the current coinage of Mitylene. It is, therefore, no measured praise to say, as most of our critics have said of Matthew Arnold, that in a country, rendered illustrious by its poets, and in an age, which boasts of its distinction in their number and uniform excellence, a great *littérateur* claims the chief notice of the present, and the more matured admiration of future generations, solely because of his supreme endowments as a singer.

Yet it must be said, that if the recognition of Arnold's gifts as a poet is neither very qualified nor un-

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, June, 1888.

certain, it was made tardily, and with some apparent reluctance. The fame of Tennyson has so completely overshadowed that of all his contemporaries, that it was difficult to wake the public ear to melodies almost as sweet as those of its favourite. And even yet we are told that Arnold's poetry is a sealed book to the multitude, for the reason that it is so excessively polished and refined, that the practical genius of the English people, which detests the semblance of affectation, will not brook its Attic perfection; and that for the same reason, the verdict of posterity is rather doubtful, unless, indeed, it grows cultured beyond present possibilities of belief.

The truth appears to be that if Arnold does not rank with the highest divinities, he may well take a place among the demigods of his art; and that, if he can never become popular in the sense that he will be read in every household, and his poems used as a minor gospel of life, at least he will always have a place on the shelves of those who possess or affect the taste for appreciating noble thinking, and language that is polished and artistic.

Matthew Arnold's poetic genius is imitative rather than creative. No distinctive character, thought, or teaching can be attributed to him; and, with the exception of one or two remarkable poems, he exhibits no originality of style. His longer and more ambitious efforts, such as *Tristram and Iseult*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, are quite unique in design, worked out with infinite care, exceedingly tender and pathetic, yet lacking that freshness which would make them unfamiliar, and entitle them to be called the peculiar creations of their author. Amongst his shorter productions, a *Memory-Picture* might have been written by one of the early lyrists who immediately preceded Shakspeare and Ben Jonson; *Stagirius* might fit in admirably with *The Dream of Gerontius*; and we can characterise only one as absolutely original in thought, metre and rhythm, that is, *The Forsaken Merman*, redolent in every line of the sea,

the peculiar object of Arnold's nature-worship. But two influences can be distinctly, almost too easily, traced in these poems—that of the ancient dramatists of Greece, and that of him who appears to have moulded and modelled all modern poetic thought—William Wordsworth. The influence of the former is detected in the structure, that of the latter in the spirit, of his poems. Arnold has had the courage of framing one or two of his longer poems on the models of the Hellenic masterpieces; and they were welcomed by the public, not so much, we venture to say, for their intrinsic merit, as because they were accepted as a seasonable protest against the tradition that poetry was to be locked up, line after line, in the trammels of rhyme. Yet it has long since been laid down as an absolute impossibility—this attempt to construct a modern drama, or dramatic poem, that would exhibit the passion and pathos that filled the easy, natural lives of the ancients, and this, too, with the short rapid action of the Greek dramas. Mr. Swinburne has attempted it in *Phaedra* and *Atalanta in Calydon*; but although he possesses an extraordinary power over the language, and the latter tragedy is unique for its beauty and originality, it is not Greek in any sense. Neither can the *Strayed Reveller* of Matthew Arnold be called "the subtly interwoven harmony of a poem," as some have designated it; for though the author evidently desired to keep it strictly within the lines of Greek models, and writes of thyrsi and "fawnskins wet with dew," as if he had seen the raging Bacchanals of Euripides, it is ancient poetry without the light and perfume of Greece, and modern poetry without its music. But where Arnold has achieved his most conspicuous success is in his creation of a metrical rhythm adapted from the ancient choruses, and consisting of irregular, but well-accented lines unrhymed, and devoted principally to elegiacs; and hence, if for no other reason, it is most probable that of all his poems *Rugby Chapel* and *Heine's Grave* will be those for which he will be best re-

membered, and which will be regarded as his characteristic creations.

Although in general the structure of his lines is very perfect, it cannot be said that it ever attains to the marvellous music of Tennyson, with whom alone he can be compared. His verses are more transparent, but less melodious; and it is rather difficult to understand how the charge of super-refinement or affectation could be brought against him. In truth, here and there, in lyrics and sonnets, which demand perfect smoothness, his lines are neither soft nor regular; and he slips into solecisms, such as Tennyson would have lost his right hand rather than write. That unpleasant Americanism "say" recurs more than once; and the expression "let be" in the sense of not troubling nor molesting, is used at least in two lyrics—that called *Requiescat*—

Her heart was tired, tired,  
And now they let her be;

and in *Meeting*—

Ah! warn some more ambitious heart,  
And let the peaceful be!

On the other hand, we catch glimpses of expressions, such as "some wet bird-haunted English lawn," and "the soft, ash-coloured hair," which claim for Matthew Arnold one of Tennyson's chiefest charms—his power of noting and using dexterously the most commonplace accidents or appearances of Nature.

It is, however, in his cast of thought that the influence of Wordsworth is so distinctly observable. We have here the same passionate love of Nature that characterises the latter, the same interpretation of its thousand moods, the same coercing of sounds and sights into the service of human joy or sorrow, and invariably the same distinct moral at the end, occurring as regularly as the *envoi* of a French *ballade*. But we miss the serenity that lifted Wordsworth's poetry high above

ordinary levels, and makes it rank as a kind of philosophical system, with definite credences and promises, and glorifying the meanest things by the perception that they serve some wise and fruitful end in the great economy of Creation. And we miss the high tone of faith that lends to such poetry its calm cheerfulness ; and find another dreary example of how impotent art is to preserve the strains of the loftiest verse from sinking into a low, weary monody of despair and gloom. It is this defect which makes Arnold's poetry so unlike his master's. He has apparently imitated him so far as to select the very subjects that Wordsworth treated. We have in his two sonnets to "A Republican Friend," a repetition of the enthusiasm of the latter for freedom, and his subsequent change of opinion owing to the excesses of the French Revolution ; and there is a startling similarity of tone and thought between the lines :—

The hush among the shining stars,  
The calm upon the moonlit sea,  
(*Switzerland, 3. A Farewell.*)

and the well-known lines :—

The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

Yet no one rises from a study of Wordsworth without a feeling of hopeful calm and a renewed vigour in doing what is right ; and few will close Arnold's poems without a dreary sensation that somehow everything is wrong—that there is some initial mistake that vitiates the beauty and utility of Creation, and the sooner this universe of ours comes to an end the better. He has a morbid idea of the restlessness and pain of humanity. In the picture-gallery of Nature he sees everywhere but Dantean circles of irredeemable and hopeless misery, nor will he hear any music other than that of the eternal sobbing of humanity, chorused by the infinite sea :—

For most men in a brazen prison live,  
Where, in the sun's hot eye,

With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly  
 Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,  
 Dreaming of nought beyond their prison wall.  
 And as, year after year,  
 Fresh products of their *barren* labour fall  
 From their tired hands, and rest  
 Never yet comes more near,  
 Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.  
 And while they try to stem  
 The waves of mournful thought by which they are preet,  
 Death in their prison reaches them  
 Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And if one escape, perchance, it is to meet a more  
 dreadful fate from

The freshening wind and blackening sea.  
 And then the tempest strikes him ; and between  
 The lightning bursts is seen  
 Only a driving wreck,  
 And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck  
 With anguished face and flying hair  
 Grasping the rudder hard,  
 Still bent to make some port, he knows not where,  
 Still standing for some false, impossible shore.  
 And sterner comes the roar  
 Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom  
 Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,  
 And he too disappears, and comes no more.  
 Is there no life, but these alone ?  
 Madman or slave, must man be one ?

Yet his remedy for this weariness of life is that of  
 Wordsworth. Lay thine ear close to the heart of  
 Mother Nature, and try to hear her teachings and  
 apply her lessons ! In the "untroubled and unpas-  
 sionate heavens" observe

A world above man's head to let him see  
 How boundless might his soul's horizons be,  
 How vast, yet of what clear transparency !  
 (*A Summer Night.*)

The sea, "bringing its eternal note of sadness in," re-  
 minds him, as it did Sophocles of old, of

The turbid ebb and flow  
 Of human misery ;

but here he falters, for the abandonment of beliefs that could strengthen and solace has taken from the world the hope of a final solution of the mystery of pain—

The sea of faith,  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Yet once again does he lean on the teachings of natural religion, and from the mechanical, unconscious workings of stars and seas derive the lesson—

Resolve to be thyself ; and know that he  
Who finds himself loses his misery !

(*Self-dependence.*)

There are none of these alternations of faith and unfaith, hope and despair, in Wordsworth. Passionately fond of Nature, to the extent that he has been accused of Pantheistic teachings, he never obtrudes revealed hopes and consolations on his readers. For the most part he is content to seek some exposition of the riddle of the world in the workings and revealings of Nature ; yet the very fact that we know he was a believer in all those sublime dogmas that alone make the sunshine of the earth, colours and brightens all his poetry, and raises a purely natural religion into something holier and more determinate, and gives its lessons a meaning and a force they would not otherwise possess. Unfortunately for themselves his two most distinguished followers have forgotten the keynote of faith ; and if Mr. Tennyson's blunt paradox—

There lives more faith in honest doubt  
Believe me than in half the creeds,

destroys the sublimity of the prologue to *In Memoriam*, so does Mr. Arnold's agnosticism lessen the force and beauty of teachings that practically have no meaning without religion.

And this naturally brings about the question, how far Mr. Arnold can be regarded as a teacher of his generation, for it is now generally accepted that all poets are teachers, and no longer write to please but to instruct. We are far, indeed, from thinking that this is primarily the object of the poets themselves, who probably write because they must, or throw their poetical goods into the literary market to be appraised at their real value. Yet it is not difficult to understand how a writer, conscious of possessing the great gift of harmony, might desire to pour into the hearts of men through the music of language, those summaries of human life and passion which it is so easy to make and formulate. And this age has become so morbidly introspective, that we are assured that every great work of every great author is simply a manifestation of his own feelings and experiences, sometimes put as broadly as by Rousseau and Goethe, sometimes to be read only by those who understand how far the symbolism of language can reach. If, therefore, it appears to be a cramped and narrow proceeding to criticise the arts by subjecting them to religious and dogmatic tests, instead of judging them by the ordinary canons of taste, it must be remembered that in this age of free-thought and scientific unbelief there is not a single author of distinction that does not court criticism of the kind, by making religion, natural or revealed, the subject-matter of his teachings. In the ages of faith, Chaucer and Shakspeare could sing lightly of legendary and historical subjects, and leave the deeper chaunts to cloister and choir ; but in our age the literature of every country is weighted with ponderous conjectures on issues that we are assured are not of the slightest moment to humanity, inasmuch as they must ever remain outside the domain of certitude. And Mr. Arnold himself assures us that as "all roads lead to Rome,

so one finds in like manner that all questions raise the question of religion".<sup>1</sup>

Now, it may be fairly asserted that there is no author of modern times who so plainly assumes to be didactic as Matthew Arnold; and none whose teachings are less liable to be misunderstood. Putting aside his poems, such as *Tristram and Iseult*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, we find in all his shorter lyrics and sonnets some estimate of human life, and in many cases some ethical instructions whereby to meet its many evils. As we have already said, his estimate of this world is as poor as that of Plotinus, but for different reasons; and his poetry may be described as one long threnody for lost faiths and desires. Progress has overleaped itself; science has proved too much; educational methods, in which he was an acknowledged expert, have strained human knowledge too nicely; analysis has been carried too far; with the result of "that strange disease of modern times," whose symptoms are impatience of life, and the mournful belief that we have ideals in mind and conscience which mock us with the impossibility of ever attaining them. Something of the sadness of this unbelief was foreseen by Wordsworth, who in preference to its sordid dulness would accept as his faith the childish mythologies of the past:—

Great God ! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

But a denial of dogma under any form, and a shrouding of the Divine Personality under the veil of moral abstractions—these two negative principles break on us from every page of Matthew Arnold:—

Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole,  
Yet we, her memory, as she prayed, will keep.  
(*Monica's Last Prayer.*)

<sup>1</sup> *Mixed Essays*, p. 98.

*God's wisdom and God's goodness ! Ah, but fools  
Misdefine these till God knows them no more.  
Wisdom and goodness, they are God !—what schools  
Have yet so much as heard this simpler lore ?*  
(*The Divinity.*)

And following these slippery doctrines, as we have said, he has glided into that cheerless despondency whose low melancholy finds voice through all his verses and becomes articulate in that curious blending of Pagan philosophy and Christian ethics which he hopes will meet that despair which every day becomes more pronounced and acute. "Find thyself, and lose thy misery," is his lesson in that brief gospel of his called *Self-dependence*, forgetting Carlyle's contemptuous remark on that same Pagan precept: "Too long has that poor self of thine tormented thee". Then listen to the great ones who have gone—the "voices and sages" who are ever with us,

Radiant with ardour divine,  
Beacons of hope ye appear,  
Languor is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,  
Weariness not on your brow !

In other words, put aside the theology of the churches, and accept a theology of literature. Consult the hierophants of the past, live in spirit with Homer and Æschylus, with Shakspeare and Milton ! They too suffered, but became strong, strengthened by the immortal thoughts within them, and the ambition to hand down to weak-kneed, languishing posterity, words potent as fire to strengthen and inspire. Then reduce your Bible to a mere literature of Hebrews, and the central figure of the world's history to a teacher and a sufferer, and lose thyself like Him in labouring for a common good, and thou shalt find rest—the rest

Of toil, unsevered from tranquillity,  
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows  
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,  
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.

And this is Mr. Arnold's last word. This is his embodiment of the religion of culture. As a true understanding of the mystery of human life, and a final solution of its perplexities, it bears its refutation on the surface. But having said so much, we can now come down from the higher levels, and admit that Arnold has advanced one of the highest concepts yet formed of a purely natural religion. This intellectual cultus, whose secret shrine is the mind of man, whose divinities are ideas, whose worship is poetry and the arts, whose saints are the "kings of men" in the world's history—is unspeakably attractive to minds which have reached a certain level and will not admit a higher range of possibilities of perfection. And even to those whose faith would lift them to more exalted regions, this minor worship of intellect may be not only attractive but useful. For there is some gain, unquestionably, in finding, amidst the ever-increasing grossness into which the materialism of our century is descending, a renascence of that idealism, which has made in every generation poets and philosophers, and which, if vague and indeterminate, contains at least no doctrine incompatible with human dignity, and admits of no pursuits whose utility would suppose degradation. But it is for this very reason that Matthew Arnold can never be a popular poet. His verses are too laden with thought ever to reach the superficial culture of the vast masses of men. He is the singer of a chosen few. He had more varied powers had he chosen to exercise them. His lines to Marguerite, and the four poems marked *Meeting*, *Parting*, *A Farewell*, *Isolation*, prove that he could touch light subjects daintily, as well as high subjects with skilful reverence. But he has chosen for his themes thoughts and subjects that do not stir the feelings of the multitude; and so he must be content with the bookshelves of the student, and to be banished from the hands of the frivolous. But he has told the agony of his age more clearly than any other poet of the century; and the melancholy which pervades his verses will be ac-

cepted as a reverential regret for faiths that refused to blossom in his own soul. And we owe him the high praise that not a word has he written that could in the smallest degree be censured for irreverence towards faith or purity. Tender but subtle, keen but gentle, trenchant against all irregularities, yet always with a gloved, never with a mailed hand, he has taken a higher and truer view of the interests of humanity and the interests of letters than any man of his generation.

For with reference to the latter, that is, the dignity of literature, not the least conspicuous of his merits was that he held his own art in such reverence. If his poetry can be regarded as an index of his mind, we should say that he set out with the determination of saying nothing that would not benefit his race—of writing not one word that could be regarded as a blemish on his art. To his mind the vocation of a poet was one that was placed on “a hidden ground of thought and austerity,” and the Muse of Poetry was a Pythian priestess who never departed from the solitude of her temple to mix amongst the pleasures and passions of men. Hence, if “light and sweetness” are his ideas of what is most valuable in life, “thought and austerity” are the characteristics of his poetry. He makes no attempt at using any of the vulgar artifices which are so common amongst poets on lower levels; nor does he ever seek to rivet the attention of purposeless minds by involutions of ideas that make half our modern poetry as difficult to read as the Greek of *Æschylus*. His verses are clear and limpid, and, if thought-laden, the thoughts are neither mysterious nor occult. They do not hint and suggest, and leave the reader to conjecture and doubt as to their meaning. If passionless, they are tender, no lurid lights of heat and sin, but the calm, lambent play of gentle motions that never break into violence and rage. If not exactly dramatic, there yet is a deep charm in the scenes of his longer poems. There are few dialogues so skilfully constructed as that between *Tristram* and *Iseult of Ireland*—so much tender-

ness, so little passion. The slumbering mind of the dying king wakes up :—

I forgot, thou comest from thy voyage,  
Yes, the spray is on thy cloak and hair ;  
But thy dark eyes are not dimmed, proud Iseult !  
And thy beauty never was more fair.

And the stately queen grown humble by the bed of death is content to say of herself :—

I, a faded watcher by thy pillow,  
I, a statue on thy chapel floor,  
Poured a prayer before the Virgin Mother,  
Rouse no anger, make no rivals more.

And in the story told by the abandoned Queen, Iseult of Brittany, she puts the legend of Merlin and Vivien in a far more attractive and less suggestive manner than Lord Tennyson.

This high conception of his art is most clearly manifested in his *Memorial Verses*. Three poets he laments —Byron, Goethe and Wordsworth. Of the first he says :—

With shivering hearts the strife we saw,  
Of passion with Eternal Law.

Of the cynical Goethe, to whom the human heart was but a subject of analysis :—

He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear,  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said, *Thou ailest here and here.*

But of Wordsworth—

He laid us as we lay at birth,  
On the cool, flowery lap of earth,  
Smiles broke from us, and we had ease,  
The hills were round us, and the breeze  
Went o'er the sunlit fields again.

Time may restore us in his course,  
Goethe's sage mind, and Byron's force,  
But when will Europe's latter hour  
Again find Wordsworth's healing power ?

This is a correct estimate of these poets, two of whom have been more widely talked of and praised than the third. The fierce rhetoric of Byron, and the easy cynicism of the old German sensualist, have pleased the world more than the calm, prayerful, reverential attitude of Wordsworth. For the same reason the glitter of some of his own contemporaries, and the artificial perfection of others, have more or less hidden the "fugitive and gracious light, shy to illumine," of Matthew Arnold; but the highest praise we can give him is to say, that, wanting his master's faith, he had inherited his master's spirit; and that if Wordsworth could live again, he would probably preach his own Divine doctrines, but in the music of his disciple. Hence, hostile criticism is almost hushed in the universal sorrow that has been felt at his death, and it is thought that the future, which will certainly shatter many of our idols, will spare him, as well because he had a high ideal before him of his race and of his art, as that he died in despair of its attainment. For now is it asked for the hundredth time, when will the poet arise who will not only interpret, but lull into effectual silence, "the still sad music of humanity"; who will not only lay his finger on its wounds, but pour balm into its bruises and bind them, and set it forward once more with hope upon its eternal journey? Certainly no modern poet has this high calling. For the most part "mere idle singers of an empty day," from one and all we have to listen to the eternal plaint about lost loves and beliefs. Nor does the immediate future give much promise that it keeps enfolded a Shakspeare or a Milton. The civilisation of the day is perfecting itself in unbelief, and the shadow of dissolution is already upon it. Humanity is shifting uneasily to shape itself under new conditions. Men tangle themselves into huge ganglions of life in the cities, and then when society begins to fester and decompose, its elements stream forth questing new conditions of existence under fresher skies and closer to the Eternal Mother.

The world moves restlessly, feverishly onward, carrying with it its curse; and the voices of its poets, to borrow the metaphor of our author, are as the voices of mariners in a storm, or of guides in an avalanche of the Alps. Yet we must listen and be patient, and thank those poets for that most melancholy music in which one and all have framed their own beliefs, and sought, in sad sincerity, to make light the burden of life for many.

## RECENT WORKS ON ST. AUGUSTINE.<sup>1</sup>

1. *St. Austin, and His Place in the History of Religious Thought.* By W. CUNNINGHAM, B.D. (The Hulsean Lectures, 1885.) London: C. J. Clay & Sons. 1886.
2. "The Fathers for English Readers": *St. Augustine.* By EDWARD L. CUTTS, B.A. London and New York: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
3. *St. Augustine, Melancthon, and Neander.* By PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D. London: James Nisbet & Co. 1886.
4. *The Teaching and Influence of St. Augustine.* By JAMES FIELD SPALDING, Rector of Christ Church, Massachusetts. New York. 1886.
5. *Vindicatio Augustiniana.* By Cardinal NORIS. Paris. 1877.
6. *Veritable clef des ouvrages de St. Augustin, etc.* Par P. MERLIN, S.J. Paris. 1874.
7. *St. Augustine: A Historical Study.* By a Priest of the Congregation of the Mission. Second Edition. Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son. 1888.

IF we were seeking an example of the strength of prejudice, innate or acquired, against the force of rigid reason, combined with an overwhelming mass of clear, incontrovertible evidence, it would be found in the manner in which Protestant divines approach the study of Catholic history and theology. Whether the new awakening to the importance of these subjects proceeds from a Catholic instinct, that has been quickened from its dormant state by the interest attaching to modern controversies, or whether it is the result of that latitudinarian spirit which is so characteristic of Protestantism at present, it cannot be denied that the most

<sup>1</sup> *Dublin Review*, July, 1888.

thoughtful minds in the Protestant communion, rising above the petty and ephemeral works of local and transitory literatures, are concentrating reflection and research on the master-minds of the Church, and seeking with fear and hope to reconcile the doctrines found in their writings with the traditional beliefs which a thousand circumstances have made very dear to themselves. This movement unquestionably argues three things: (1) a spirit of liberalism in religion, which is eminently praiseworthy, inasmuch as it seeks information on subjects which, in past years, the Protestant mind could not rest on without grave scruple; (2) an utter dissatisfaction with the semi-religious, pseudo-philosophical conjectures that have been deluging the book-market these past few years; (3) a craving for some well-defined authority on vexed and perplexing questions, which no living voice, either in the Church of England or kindred communions, either affects or assumes to possess; and which their members will not yet acknowledge to be the peculiar and divinely conferred prerogative, which belongs exclusively to the Catholic Church. It would be well if we could end here; but alas! we must attribute to these timid seekers after truth either a most profound ignorance of the sources whence might be derived a clear, comprehensive view of the authors whose teachings they would reverence, or a disingenuousness in their studies, as if they dreaded the light that is thrown on the great authors by Catholic commentators, and would seize eagerly on any authority, no matter how weak or obscure, that might lend the least sanction to their errors. This is especially true of the study of St. Augustine by Protestant divines. It is notorious that Canon Mozley, one of the ablest teachers of the Church of England in our century, has derived most of the opinions embodied in his work,<sup>1</sup> which was criticised in this *Review*, March, 1856, from the condemned work of Jansenius;

<sup>1</sup> *The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination.* Murray. 1855.

and although later writers, as we shall see, have advanced by "leaps and bounds" from the Calvinistic interpretations of thirty years ago, they still remain in profound ignorance of the vast labours expended by Catholic theologians during fourteen centuries, to make plain the meaning of that wonderful saint and doctor, who, knowing but little of the Greek language, was endowed with more than Grecian keenness and subtlety; and whose scrupulous precision about every word and phrase, which made him in his last years the unsparing censor of his own works, has yet not been able to save him from being coerced into the service of sects whose doctrines he would have anathematised.

We shall limit this article to a review of the Protestant works which have lately appeared on this subject; and, after showing how closely they approach to the teachings of Catholic commentators, we will trace their divergence from Catholic traditions to causes which, on the supposition of good faith, can easily be removed.

It is not necessary to dwell at all on Mr. Cunningham's Hulsean Lectures, as they have already been fully noticed in the *Dublin Review*, January, 1887, and other Catholic organs; but, though he examines the Protestant tradition from a rationalistic point of view, we cannot regard his opinions otherwise than as a clear indication of advance towards a right appreciation of St. Augustine. He completely ignores Dr. Mozley, whose works, although written by a professed High Churchman, have been generally regarded as the text-books of the Calvinistic element in the Church of England; and for this he, Mr. Cunningham, is severely taken to task by a writer, apparently of the Low Church School, in the *Church Quarterly Review*, July, 1887.

The little volume, issued from the pen of Mr. Cutts, and under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, would be very admirable were it not for the two chapters which treat of doctrinal subjects under the headings "The Augustinian Theology" and "The Appeal to Rome". The former is simply a series

of quotations from Canon Mozley's work, *The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*. In one of the few sentences in which the author ventures on an original remark, he has included within the small compass of four lines as many doctrinal and historical errors as were ever compressed in so limited a space:—

“The Augustinian theology,” he says, “excited little attention in the Eastern Church, which continued to hold the traditional belief.<sup>1</sup> In the Western Church, though never authoritatively sanctioned, it had a deep and widespread influence, and in the theology of the schoolmen, *e.g.*, of St. Thomas Aquinas, in the Middle Ages. Calvin, with his logical and systematising French mind, revived it, with certain exaggerations, at the Reformation.”

In Chapter XXI., page 201, he falls into a mistake similar to that already made by Milman, and refuted in the *Dublin Review* of December, 1854 (pp. 433, 434, 435). Dean Milman had asserted that Pope Zosimus had made “a rash concession to Pelagianism,” and that “he had annulled at one blow all the judgments of his predecessor, Innocent”. The reviewer proves that:—

- (1) Pope Innocent's condemnation of the doctrine taught by Pelagius and Celestius was final.
- (2) His personal sentence on themselves was made dependent on their contumacious maintenance of these doctrines.
- (3) That a full retraction of these doctrines was made on the part of both, conveyed in writing by Pelagius, and in his own person by Celestius, who repaired to Rome for this purpose.

<sup>1</sup> If Mr. Cutts would consult *St. Augustine contra Julianum*, lib. i., Nos. 6, 15, 16, 19, 22, 25, 30; lib. ii., No. 7; lib. vi., No. 70, he would see that there was no difference of belief between the Eastern and Western Churches. Under No. 19 St. Augustine quotes sixteen Greek writers to show how fully he was in union, not only with the West, about which there could be no question, but with the East as well. This was quite conformable to his doctrine (*Opus Imp.*, iv., 112) that the uniform teaching of the Fathers was final.

(4) Therefore, if Zosimus had absolved them, which, as we shall see, St. Augustine's words disprove, Pope Zosimus did merely what Innocent had fully determined to do.

We take up the controversy where the reviewer has left it, and give Mr. Cutts' own words:—

“Zosimus, the Bishop of Rome, was won over to believe in the orthodoxy of Celestius, and after having held a Council, at which Celestius disavowed all doctrines which the Roman See had condemned, he wrote a letter of reproof to the Africans, blaming them for listening too readily to charges against good men. The African prelates, assembled in synod at Carthage, asserted their independence of Rome; declared that their condemnation of Celestius must stand till he had clearly retracted his errors; and passed nine canons, which were afterwards generally accepted throughout the Church. . . . The civil power now intervened, probably at the solicitation of the Africans.”

It is quite clear that Mr. Cutts has not seen the correspondence that passed between Rome and Africa during the year March, 417-May, 418, for which period of time the controversy, at the request of the Africans, was left open. Neither has he read the very remarkable words of St. Augustine on this subject (*contra duas Epistolas Pelagianorum*, No. 5; *De peccato originali*, Nos. 7, 8). We give the last reference in which St. Augustine commends the firmness and gentleness of the Pope:—

“The venerable Pope, Zosimus, in possession of this declaration (of Celestius), treated with this man, who was puffed up with the pride of false doctrine, as with a madman, who, being gently soothed, might be calmed down; but who was not as yet thought worthy to be absolved from the bonds of excommunication”.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Hanc ejus prælocutionem, venerabilis Papa, Zosimus, tenens, egit, cum homine quem false doctrine ventus inflaverat . . . atque ita velut phreneticus, ut requiesceret, tanquam leniter fotus —a vinculis tamen excommunicationis nondum est creditus esse absolvendus.”

These words prove that the Africans had no idea whatever that Zosimus had revoked the condemnation of his predecessor Innocent on Pelagius and Celestius. And certainly it was not at their dictation that he renewed that condemnation. For during the whole year in which the question was left undecided, correspondence was passing from Rome, not only with Africa, but also with Jerusalem, Antioch, and the other churches of the East; and in the Encyclical in which Zosimus pronounced the final condemnation of the heresiarchs, he quotes not only the African Synods, but also St. John Chrysostom, Paulinus, and others. Moreover, *that Encyclical was issued prior to the Council of Carthage*, whose nine canons, Mr. Cutts thinks, gave the deathblow to Pelagianism; for that Council did not commence its sittings until the 1st of May, 418; and the Rescript of Honorius (which was issued, *not at the solicitation of the Africans*, but *in consequence of, and subsequent to, the Papal condemnation*) is dated 30th April, 418. The words of Possidius are final on this subject:—

“But these bishops (Innocent and Zosimus) of so great a See, having, each in his own time, pointed out those men, and having issued letters to the African Churches of the West, and to the Oriental Churches also, came to the conclusion that these (Pelagian heretics) should be anathematised and avoided by all Catholics. And this judgment of the Catholic Church of God, having been heard and followed by the most pious emperor, Honorius, he ordained that by his own laws as well they should be condemned and regarded as heretics.”<sup>1</sup>

This writer, also, ignoring all that has been written on

<sup>1</sup> “At illi tantæ sedis antistites (Innocentius et Zosimus) suis diversis temporibus eosdem notantes, datis literis et ad Africanas occidentis, et ad orientis partis Ecclesias, eos (Pelagianos) anathematos et devitandos ab omnibus Catholicis censuerunt. Et tale de illis Ecclesie Dei Catholicæ prolatum judicium, etiam piissimus imperator Honorius, audiens et sequens, suis eos legibus damnatos inter hereticos haberi debere constituit” (Ch. XVIII.).

the subject of the appeal of Apiarius to Pope Zosimus, repeats the assertion: "That the affair of Apiarius gave occasion to a solemn reassertion of the independence of the African Church, and placed the great name of St. Augustine beside that of Cyprian, as the defender of the independence of individual churches against the usurpations of the See of Rome". In trying to prove this assertion, the writer falls into errors of date and of the sequence of events; and he suppresses collateral circumstances, which go far to show the obedience of the African Church to Rome, and the perfect union that existed between St. Augustine and the Roman See, as the following facts will show:—

(1) At the Synod of Carthage, opened 1st of May, 418, a canon (the seventeenth) was enacted, forbidding *priests or any of the inferior clergy* from appealing to any tribunal beyond the sea. (2) St. Augustine went straight from this Synod, accompanied by Alipius and Possidius, to Cæsarea, "whither necessity led us, arising from an ecclesiastical injunction from the venerable Pope, Zosimus, Bishop of the Apostolic See".<sup>1</sup> (3) This same year, Apiarius, a priest of Sicca, suspended by his bishop, Urbanus, a disciple of St. Augustine, appealed to Rome, and was absolved by Zosimus. (4) This offended the African bishops, although their new canon was a proof (if instances were wanting, but they are not) that such appeals were usual in Africa. (5) On hearing this, Zosimus sent a legate, Faustinus, to Africa, and Aurelius summoned a Council of his province to meet the legate this same year, 418. (6) Faustinus set forth the claims of Rome to hear such appeals, citing the general canons of Nicæa, but relying principally on two of Sardica, which were quoted as of Nicæa, as Sardica was the complement of Nicæa. (7) Out of respect for Rome, the assembled prelates wrote to Zosimus to say these canons should be observed, pending

<sup>1</sup> "Quo nos, injuncta nobis a venerabili Papa, Zosimo, Apostolice sedis episcopo, ecclesiastica necessitas traxerat" (Ep. 190, No. 1, written in the same year).

an investigation into their authenticity. Meanwhile Zosimus died, 26th December, 418, and was succeeded by Boniface, who immediately wrote to the Africans through his legate, 26th April, 419. (8) On 25th May of the same year, a Synod of 217 bishops met at Carthage, and again an appeal was made by the legate to the same two canons. The first of these, not being found in the archives of Carthage, Alipius proposed that it be observed, pending further inquiry at Rome, Alexandria, etc. Faustinus objected to any inquiry in the East, as it might give rise to a suspicion that there was disunion amongst the Western Churches. The second canon was then read, and Augustine proposed that this, too, be observed, pending an inquiry; the whole Synod approved of this. A Synodal letter communicated the proceedings of the Council to Pope Boniface, and also informed him that Urbanus had obeyed the injunction of Pope Zosimus regarding Apiarius. We have here, then, the acceptance of a Papal legate, the acceptance of the decrees of Nicæa and Sardica, the acceptance of the Papal decision by Urbanus, and two Synodal letters to Rome, informing the Pope of the proceedings of the Council. As a further proof that there was not a shadow of disunion between Rome and the African Church, we find Alipius at Rome towards the close of this year, lodged in the Pope's palace, treated most affectionately, and returning to Africa with two Pelagian letters, sent by the Pope to Augustine to be refuted. Augustine wrote the refutation in his *Four Books to Boniface*, in which he says: "I have addressed these books to your Holiness, not with a view to teach your Holiness anything, but to have them examined, and, if you should see fit, corrected". Finally, in 424, a few bishops (fifteen), out of a province which contained 160, addressed an expostulation to the Pope against the action of Faustinus, who imprudently insisted on the restoration of Apiarius after a second suspension and a second appeal; but this expostulation in no wise questioned the right of Rome to hear appeals—it was

couched in respectful language, and concluded with the words: "May the Lord God long protect the Pope, and may the Pope pray for the Africans". The subsequent history of the African Church proves that the right of Rome remained unquestioned.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Schaff's work affords a remarkable proof of the decline and almost utter disappearance of the Protestant tradition. He is silent on St. Augustine's teaching on the Church, the Sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Eucharist, Miracles, Papal Supremacy, Vows, Fast and Abstinence, Lent, Confession, Confirmation, Exorcisms, Traditions, and almost every distinctive doctrine of the Catholic Church. He is an Evangelical, and seems to have written with the fixed intention of conveying to his readers the impression that St. Augustine was a co-religionist of his. He makes the singular admission that—

"St. Augustine is responsible for many grievous errors of the Roman Church; he anticipated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and his ominous words, *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*, might almost be quoted in favour of the Vatican decree of Papal Infallibility" (p. 98).

Yet he is gently reminded by the *Church Quarterly Review* (July, 1887, p. 260) that his projected edition of the Fathers "would look down upon him from their shelves with a certain reproach so long as he continued a member of a sect". Nothing daunted, however, Dr. Schaff tacitly assumes that the Church is the aggregate of all Christian communities, and thus, like so many other teachers, as we shall see, he claims St. Augustine as a co-religionist, and ignores the custom that universally obtained in St. Augustine's time of marking as heretics those who did not belong to the unity of the Church.

Dr. Schaff proposes to bring out in America an English edition of St. Augustine's works. We shall point

<sup>1</sup> See *Hefele's Councils*, vol. ii. ; *Hist. Study*, pp. 193-257.

out a few inconsistencies in his estimate of St. Augustine's teachings later on. Might we ask him to translate afresh a passage which he has misinterpreted,<sup>1</sup> and to correct this misstatement about the convent presided over by St. Augustine's sister?—

"On one occasion he (St. Augustine) assured his congregation that he could not easily find better, but had also nowhere found worse, people than in these cloisters" (p. 83).

For St. Augustine did not refer to the nuns, but used the words (*Epist. 78, No. 9*) in reference to a scandal which had taken place in his own house. And might we ask him further to re-examine the statement he makes in page 93: "They (St. Augustine's Manichean writings) defend the freedom of the will against fatalism; afterwards he changed his opinion on that subject;" and his repetition of the statement in page 103, where he discusses the "Augustinian system" without coming to any definite conclusion; for if there be any point in the saint's teaching better established than another, it is that he never changed his opinion on that particular point?<sup>2</sup>

The evidence, however, afforded by Mr. Spalding's work in support of our contention is the most valuable, inasmuch as the volume purports to be not a biography, but a critical examination of the writings and influence of St. Augustine. We may fairly presume, therefore, that the author has carefully digested the evidence which has led him to traverse and reject the Protestant

<sup>1</sup> "Nam neque in iis precibus quas tibi fudimus, cum offerretur pro eâ sacrificium pretii nostri, jam juxta sepulcrum posito cadavere, priusquam deponeretur, sicut illic fieri solet" (p. 73).

"For, neither in those prayers which we poured forth unto thee, when the Sacrifice of our ransom was offered for her, when now the corpse was by the grave's side, as the manner there is, previous to its being laid therein," etc.

The loose paraphrase of Dr. Schaff runs thus: "After the corpse had been buried, and the holy Supper celebrated on the grave, according to the custom of the age," etc.

<sup>2</sup> See *Dublin Review*, March, 1856.

tradition. He is of opinion that on all points, except that alone of Papal Supremacy, the Augustinian doctrines are incorporated in the teaching of the Church. He is most candid in his interpretations of St. Augustine's very remarkable sayings on faith and authority, and the canons of Scriptural exegesis; and is almost indignant at the attempted identification of St. Augustine's teaching with those of Luther and Calvin:—

“Others again,” he says, referring to the claims of the sectaries, both in the Church and in the dissenting bodies, “have a more or less mistaken conception of this great Saint and Father—they almost take away his individuality, and identify him in their minds with Luther or Calvin or Jansen; while they think of his teaching as some dreadful notions of predestination, original sin and eternal punishment. Both these classes need to gain a knowledge of St. Augustine (p. 8) . . . . The modern world should never be suffered to forget that what is Lutheran or Calvinistic is not necessarily Augustinian (p. 103). . . . In the reaction of our day from the mischief of so-called Calvinism, we may observe with trained vision both a recoil from a narrowing and base bondage, which God never appointed, and also a desire for a freedom, which is lawlessness and licence.”

And alluding to those who think it necessary to reject St. Augustine with Luther and Calvin, he says:—

“Nor can we consider the rejection of his teaching anything less than perilous to the best interests of Christianity” (p. 106).

These admissions are so novel and important, that we can almost forgive Mr. Spalding for cherishing that pet assumption of the High Churchmen, that the Catholic Church is the aggregate of the Greek Church, the Anglican, and what they are pleased to call the Roman. We have seen how Dr. Schaff makes a similar claim to Catholicity, but is reminded by the *Church Quarterly* that he is a sectary; and Mr. Spalding, as an Episcopalian, speaks of the “Church and the dissenting bodies around us” (p. 8), and again of “the historic

Church of Christ, and the outside world of sect and dissent" (p. 105). He apparently forgets that St. Augustine regarded the Donatist *Episcopal* Church as a sect cut off from Catholic union; and whilst he admits that St. Augustine always held the necessity of external organic union with the Church, and not a mere invisible and spiritual connection, and that he also taught the primacy of St. Peter, he seems to think that the saint regarded unity with Jerusalem and Carthage as indispensable as union with Rome (p. 44). Mr. Spalding gives two references in support of this contention, *De Baptismo*, ii., 2, and *Con. Lit. Petil.*, ii., 118. The first makes no allusion whatever to the subject. The second runs as follows:—

“ But even if all Catholics throughout the entire world were such as you most foolishly represent, what has the Chair of the Roman Church done to you, in which Peter sat, and Anastasius now sits; or the See of Jerusalem, which James filled, and John now fills; with whom we are linked in Catholic unity, and from whom you, in wicked fury, have separated yourselves? Why do you call the Apostolic See a chair of pestilence? If it be on account of the men whom you think preachers, and not doers of the law, did our Lord Jesus Christ, on account of the Pharisees of whom He said, ‘ *they speak and do not*,’ offer any injury to the chair in which they sat? . . . If you would consider these things, you would not, on account of the men whom you defame, blaspheme the Apostolic See, with which you do not communicate.”<sup>1</sup>

1 “ *Verumtamen, si omnes per totum orbem tales essent, quales vanissime criminari, Cathedra tibi quid fecit Ecclesia Romana, in qua Petrus sedet, et in qua hodie Anastasius sedet; vel Ecclesia Jerosolymitanæ, in qua Jacobus sedet, et in qua hodie Joannes sedet; quibus nos in Catholica unitate connectimur, et a quibus vos nefario furore separastis? Quare appellas Cathedram pestilentiæ Cathedram Apostolicam? Si propter homines quos putas legem loqui et non facere, numquid Dominus noster Jesus Christus propter Phariseos de quibus ait, *dicunt enim, et non faciunt*, Cathedram in qua sedebant ullam fecit injuriam? . . . Hæc, si cogitaretis, non propter homines quos infamatis, blasphemaretis Cathedram Apostolicam, cui non communicatis?* ”

This is an *argumentum ad hominem*, addressed to the Donatists, the force of which will be seen when we mention that, like the sectaries of to-day, they maintained that they were not cut off from Catholic unity, merely because they denied certain truths held by the universal Church ; and also objected that no sacrament could be validly administered, nor sacred dignity inherited, by an unworthy minister. They contended, therefore, that the Popes were *traditors*, and therefore not legitimate successors of Peter, since Pope Melchiades had admitted Cæcilian to his communion. St. Augustine answered by asking them to name a single church in Christendom that would acknowledge the orthodoxy of their doctrines, or the justice of their revolt ; just as to-day we challenge English Ritualists to show the validity of their position by an acknowledgment from the churches of France or Germany that they are in visible union with them. And against the second argument that the unworthiness of a minister invalidates the acts of his ministry, he quotes continually the text (Jer. xvii.), "cursed be the man that trusteth in man," and reminds the faithful that they must rely upon their pastors, not as "men but as ministers of Christ". There is therefore in this passage no equalisation of the claims of Jerusalem and Rome as Apostolic Churches. To prove this fanciful theory, Mr. Spalding should show that St. Augustine proved the legitimacy of bishops by a list of the Bishops of Jerusalem, similar to that which he gives of the Roman Pontiffs ; and should also prove that St. Augustine ever demanded union with a church not united to Rome, as a proof of its incorporation with the mystical body.<sup>1</sup>

We see, then, that in the latest Protestant writers, the venerated Protestant traditions have been reduced to two points—viz., that St. Augustine was anti-Papal, and that he did not hold the Catholic doctrine of free-will. Dr. Schaff practically abandons the first (p. 98) ; Mr. Spalding reduces the second to a mere doubt

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Study*, pp. 126, 410.

(pp. 28, 29, 68); Mr. Cunningham asserts both, not, however, in the dogmatic style of Milman and Mozley, but in a hesitating and rationalistic fashion. Whilst, however, we cannot but feel pleased at this wonderful change, it is impossible to close our eyes to the fact that in one and all of these books, and in the whole pile of literature which has issued from the Protestant press on this and cognate subjects, the same faults of style and spirit are equally discernible. We think we shall be doing a service to these writers, and, indeed, to Christian literature in general, when we state our reasons for considering these volumes superficial and uncritical. Protestant writers seem to regard St. Augustine's works as written without purpose or unity, a mere magazine of haphazard opinions, capriciously assumed, and quite as capriciously rejected, without the least consideration for consistency of thought, for preserving harmony with the teachings of the Universal Church, or for the consequences that might result to weak intellects from the facile acceptance, and equally facile rejection, of most important articles of faith. From the storehouses of thought which the genius of these great teachers has accumulated, every succeeding generation is quite at liberty to select whatever doctrinal opinions may suit the prevailing religious feeling; for it is supposed that there is neither unity of purpose nor homogeneous thought in St. Augustine, and what is agreeable may be accepted, and what is unpleasant may be rejected, without the loss of veneration for the august character of the saint, or for his marvellous intellectual powers, and without being committed to the rest of his philosophical or religious opinions, which may not suit present propensities or the temper of the times. This mode of action may be liberal, but it is not logical; and it proceeds from the groundless assumption, which more than once St. Augustine indignantly repudiated, that the living Church of Christ is an invisible abstract body, consisting only of the just or the elect, without any external indications of its concrete visibility, without any "links of union in the bond of peace" amongst its

members, without a visible teacher to direct, or a visible authority to govern, and with no dogmatic definitions to test its living and united from its dead and dissevered members. It may be very well for Protestant students and divines, who apparently take but a literary interest in these matters, and who study the Fathers just to fill up a course of lectures or sermons, to exercise this elective privilege, and to use this mighty sun to light their tiny lamps of learning ; but it implies in our saint a facility for change, or a dulness of perception, or a fatal eclecticism in these questions of supreme moment, which we would much prefer to attribute to themselves. No one knew better than St. Augustine that there is no room in the Catholic Church for Socratic licence of discussion, or for an Academia independent of her councils ; that the body of defined doctrine, the deposit of faith, committed by Christ to His Apostles, and left by them to the Church, can know no change or diminution ; that within the rigid lines of these doctrines there may be freedom and elasticity enough for controverted opinions and purely scholastic disquisitions ; but that no one from the beginning has tampered with its definite teachings and remained its member. His constant and nervous appeals to tradition and authority, his inflexibility in supporting the unity of the Church against schismatics, and his wonderful clear-sightedness, which, with a kind of natural infallibility, separated the true from the false both in persons and opinions, are sufficient proof of this. Yet writers such as we have quoted see no disrespect whatever to St. Augustine in imputing to him doctrines which they reject as narrow and reactionary ; and they ridicule, whilst they admit, his teaching on subjects so exclusively Catholic as the veneration of relics and the invocation of saints, and triumphantly deny his adhesion to articles of faith, the rejection of which, at any period of the Church's history, would have placed him at once outside her pale. They write of the "Augustinian system" as they write of Platonism or Zenoism, discuss

and debate it as a purely literary or philosophical question, reject what they consider untenable, and adopt whatever is concordant with their own views, without the least reflection of the awful bearings of such questions on general Christianity, and the interests of immortal souls. Could anything be farther from the mind of St. Augustine than this? With all his enthusiasm about the Church, his reverence for her august institutions, his perfect repose in her simple and Divine doctrines after his sublime discontent with Platonism, his love for the distinctively Christian teachings, his "ominous" words about the authority of Rome, his tenderness, his mysticism, his ecstasies about God—is there not something irreverent in making him the mere precursor of a sect, in representing him as fallible and inconsistent because they make him independent of Church authority, ignoring and suppressing him on those points, where beyond all controversy he is at one with the Church, and ignobly lauding him whenever an ambiguous expression in the hands of loose and illogical thinkers seems to place him in antagonism to her teachings? The few examples already quoted will go far to prove this; but these works abound with such conceits and irreverences. We have already cited Dr. Schaff's very candid admissions about the saint; we now quote him with a different purpose. In page 67 he writes: "The solemnity of the festival was still further heightened by two circumstances—one connected with superstition and relic-worship, the other with the effect of hymns upon the heart". That is, St. Augustine was superstitious, and yielded to the "current belief of that credulous age"; for Dr. Schaff gives the saint's own words in a note, from *Conf.*, ix., 7, in which the saint plainly announces his belief (1) in a vision to St. Ambrose, by which (2) the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius, martyrs, were discovered incorrupt, through which (3) the fury of a woman was repressed, demoniacs were healed, and sight restored to a blind man; and to put it beyond doubt, St. Augustine refers to the miracle again (*De Civ. Dei*,

xxii., 8), as having occurred in the presence of an immense multitude. Yet with this declaration from so great an authority, Dr. Schaff says sublimely:—

“The subject of post-apostolic miracles is involved in inextricable difficulties. Augustine himself is not consistent on this matter.” But see Schaff’s *Church History*.

Again, in quoting the words of St. Monica (p. 71), Dr. Schaff in his text translates them:—

“Once there was a reason why I should wish to live longer, that I might see you a *believing* Christian before I die; [but he subjoins in a note] Or more strictly, after the original, *Conf.*, ix., 10, ‘*Christianum Catholicum*,’ a *Catholic* (or orthodox Christian), in distinction not merely from a *Paganus*, but also, and particularly, from a *Christianus hereticus* and *schismaticus*, which Augustine had been”.

The translation in the text is not quite ingenuous; but what will Dr. Schaff say to the *Church Quarterly*, which calls him a schismatic or heretic? and what exactly made a sectary *then*, when *now*, according to the most recent Protestant theory, the Church consists of the aggregate of those who call themselves by the name of Christ? And again, whilst translating correctly the touching valediction of St. Monica: *Tantum illud vos rogo, ut ad Domini altare memineritis mei ubi fueritis*;<sup>1</sup> and immediately subjoins:—

“This *Thanksgiving* and prayer for the dead can be traced in its innocent form as far back as the second century, and became the fruitful source of the doctrine of Purgatory. Neither Monica nor Augustine grasped the full meaning of St. Paul’s assurance that ‘it is very far better to be with Christ’.”

But it is tiresome to follow out these presumptuous comments. Dr. Schaff is so exceedingly candid, that on every page we meet historical truths and contradictory

<sup>1</sup> “This only I request, that you would remember me at the Altar of the Lord, wherever you be.”

and gratuitous assumptions side by side—e.g., St. Augustine was vigorous and masterful, then superstitious and reactionary; he was a thorough ascetic, yet opposed to the narrow bigotry of monks; his system is not Calvinistic, but gave birth to the strongest thinkers amongst Jansenists, Huguenots, Calvinists, Puritan Covenanters, and Pilgrim Fathers; he is responsible for many grievous errors in the Church of Rome, yet has also an Evangelical Protestant significance; he was so scrupulously exact and conscientious that he revised during his last years every line he wrote, but then he became illiberal; he is the father of scholasticism and mysticism, but is free from the Pharisaical self-righteousness and bigotry which connect themselves so readily with monastic piety; and Dr. Schaff finally quotes Dr. Bindemann, “one of the best Protestant biographers of St. Augustine,” as saying: “The first place amongst the Fathers is due to St. Augustine, and at the time of the Reformers only a Luther was worthy to stand by his side. He forms the mightiest pillar of Roman Catholicism, and the leaders of the Reformation derived from his writings, next to the study of the Holy Scriptures, those principles which gave birth to a new era.” And, as if to emphasise the importance of this testimony, Dr. Schaff gives a page of notes containing the most profane and scurrilous passages from Luther’s writings against the Fathers, and very disparaging remarks about St. Augustine himself. And this is not a mere popular work, where loose and incorrect reasoning might be overlooked; it is a work written for theological students and dedicated to them, and Dr. Schaff is Professor in the Union Theological Seminary, New York.

From this illogical and arbitrary treatment of so great a teacher as St. Augustine, it will be easily concluded that these writers’ study of St. Augustine is unscientific in method and opposed to the best canons of criticism. The first fault proceeds from the shifting, unstable and ill-defined tenets of Protestantism; the latter from the absence of scientific theological training in their colleges

and universities. It has been the fashion for modern liberals to decry and ridicule the old scholastic system of syllogistic reasoning, and the gradual process of thought from definition to proposition. The rejection of the Aristotelian logic, brought about by Bacon and Descartes, has admirably suited the development of those vague and unsubstantial systems which we are asked to accept in room of those religious and philosophical principles which have stood the most rigid tests of twenty centuries ; and its most fatal effect is discernible in the loose and unconnected habits of thought it has generated amongst men who have enjoyed a liberal education. Now the scholastic system cannot be set aside or neglected without grave detriment to habits of exact thought ; and even admitting that it sometimes gave rise to puerile subtleties and distinctions, it cannot be superseded, because absolutely there is no substitute for it. It is necessary in the study of St. Thomas Aquinas, whose system of reasoning is mathematically exact. It is still more necessary in the study of St. Augustine, who wrote when theological subjects were debated in intermittent controversies and had not yet been incorporated into a science. Victorinus, a contemporary of St. Augustine's, traces the obscurity of writers to either of three causes : *Vel rei magnitudini, vel doctoris imperitiae, vel audiencis duritiae.*<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine himself admits that some of the subjects he treated were involved in darkness and mystery. In that difficult question of Divine prescience and human free-will, where the Stoic philosophers had to fall back upon Fate, and Cicero denied the foreknowledge of God, the great Christian teacher recognised an apparent autonomy where human reason might confess itself at fault. In his *Epist. (214, No. 6) ad Valentimum* he calls the question of efficacious grace *difficillimam et paucis intelligibilem* ; and (cap. 47, *de gratia Christi*) *ad dis-*

<sup>1</sup> "The greatness of the subject, the inexperience of the teacher, or the indocility of the pupil."

*cernendum difficultem*; and in his fifth sermon, "De Verbis Apostoli," when he was preaching on grace, he said: *Habeo propter obscuritatem rerum difficultem disputationem.* Yet non-Catholic writers, instead of admitting this difficulty and their own inexperience, attribute their imperfect knowledge, and sometimes very singular misconstructions, of St. Augustine's writings, to the traditional explanations of Protestant historians and commentators. They declare that he was so imbued with Platonic modes of thought that he was essentially a Christian mystic and transcendentalist, to whom the ordinary language of men was quite inadequate to convey the lofty thoughts which filled his mind; that if he had abandoned Platonism as a religion, he was yet unconsciously influenced by it; that therefore there is mystery, and prefiguring, and foreshadowing everywhere to his mind; that even the simplicity of the Gospels concealed for him meanings which never could have occurred to an ordinary mind. Singularly enough, he is accused of excessive subtlety side by side with this idealism, and that he often attenuates his arguments by distinctions, until they become almost unintelligible. This supposition applies to a very small portion of St. Augustine's writings, *viz.*, the *Confessions*, the *Sixth Book on Music*, the work on the Trinity, portions of *The City of God*, and some homilies and enarrations. It does not apply at all to his controversial works, than which, in language and reasoning, nothing can be more clear to an experienced student. We have no hesitation in admitting of St. Augustine, as of all the early writers, that there are involutions in thought and term in his works, which can only be unravelled by scientific methods of criticism. With his wonderful enthusiasm, he was in the habit of throwing himself, heart and soul, into those controversies in which from time to time he was involved; and in the heat of battle his terminology, which was clear enough to his contemporaries, but was not limited by such scientific distinctions as were afterwards made

by the schoolmen, became enigmatic to those, in after times, who would not trouble themselves to discover his real thoughts by following the simple method of context and parallelism. Thus he drew a distinction between *certainty* and knowledge (*De Utilitate Cred.*, xi.; *Retract.*, i., 14), saying of notorious facts, he was *certain* of them, but did not *know* them, meaning the knowledge of intrinsic evidence, apart from the certitude that comes from human evidence or otherwise. Yet it is clear that this distinction might lead in after times to much misinterpretation. Again (*Enchir.*, cap. 30), he says: "By a bad use of free-will, man has lost himself and it". By free-will, he there means that of our first parents before the Fall—not that of fallen man. In fact, in his whole controversy with the Manichæans, he appears to have used the term indiscriminately of the freedom before and after the Fall, because he had to contend against their assumption that sin arose from a principle of evil and from natural necessity. He was also fond of using that mode of reasoning called the *argumentum ad hominem*, and his favourite method of instruction was that of his master, Plato, by dialogue. It will be easily understood how errors have been attributed to him in this form of argument, which he merely recapitulated in order to refute. And, finally, he spoke under the "Discipline of the Secret," which prevented a full, comprehensive statement of doctrines and practices, and the complete forgetfulness of which has misled Protestants in their attempts to reconcile the practices of their creeds with the customs of the early Church. There was no expression so familiar to the people of Hippo as that used by St. Augustine, "The faithful will understand".

We have stated those difficulties, to which Protestant writers never even advert, as the chief causes of the misinterpretation of the mind of St. Augustine. It is needless to say that they are never brought under the notice of the students of patristic literature in non-Catholic colleges, nor is there the least attempt at

scientific examination of Church authorities, whose writings, after all the changes of fourteen centuries, might be fairly presumed to be more involved and intricate in thought and language than the theological writings of to-day. Yet there can be nothing half so certain as that St. Augustine himself had no fear whatever of the absolute conformity of his writings to the general teaching of the Catholic Church. After a most scrupulous and searching examination, made two years before his death—so severe that he characterises as “ declamation and levity ” a simple statement<sup>1</sup> in his Fourth Book of *Confessions*—in his controversial writings against the Pelagians he found but two errors to be corrected : (1) that in lib. v., *contra Jul.*, he gave as certain the name of a physician, which he afterwards discovered to be doubtful ; and (2) that in his work, *De Natura et Gratia*, following a quotation from Pelagius, he ascribed to Pope Sixtus a book that was edited by Sixtus the Philosopher. And with very clear insight into the future, he makes an almost pathetic appeal against being misunderstood :—

“ But let those who think that I am in error reflect again and again, lest perchance they themselves might be led astray. But I acknowledge God to be most merciful to me, inasmuch as I become not only better informed, but more accurate, through the services of those who read my works ; and this I always expect, especially through the Doctors of the Church, if my writings should reach their hands, and they should deign to consider what I have written.”<sup>2</sup>

On which very humble appeal Cardinal Baronius remarks : “ The dignified modesty of St. Augustine,

<sup>1</sup> “ I said that our souls, being in some sort one, I feared perhaps to die myself.”

<sup>2</sup> “ Qui vero errare me existimant, etiam atque etiam quæ sunt dicta considerent, ne fortassis ipsi errant. Ego autem, cum per eos qui meos labores legunt, non solum doctior, verum etiam emendator fio, propitium mihi Deum agnosco, et hoc per Ecclesie doctores maxime expecto, si et in ipsorum manus venit, digneturque nosse quod scribo.”

and his humility of soul, combined with such admirable submission, show plainly, even if it could not otherwise be understood, that he wrote under the influence of the Divine Spirit ; since God Himself hath testified by His prophet, that on no other than on the humble, gentle, and trembling word, does the Divine influence descend".

Hence it is that we consider that the most valuable chapter in the only Catholic work<sup>1</sup> we can notice in this article, is that where the learned author lays down and exemplifies the rules of criticism which readers of St. Augustine ought to follow, and every one of which the Protestant writers we have mentioned have violated. After laying down the ordinary canons of judging by parallelism and context as internal rules of interpretation, and contemporary circumstances and history as external rules, and having shown by two glaring instances the bad faith of Calvin and Gibbon, the author proceeds to the application :—

" Suppose we wish to ascertain what was St. Augustine's doctrine or opinion on some point, how are we to proceed ? If the subject was controverted in his time, and he was engaged in the controversy, we must obviously turn to his controversial writings. If he had no controversy, but wrote a special work on the subject, we must, of course, read that work. If the subject be one of the great fundamental truths, such as the end of man, etc., or, again, some vice to be denounced, or some virtue to be encouraged, we must turn to his conferences and sermons. If we want to know his explanation of some text of Scripture, we must consult his Scripture Commentaries. So far there is little need of rule or compass. . . . But if our subject be one that was neither controverted in his time, nor specially treated in his works, we must only consult his occasional references to it in his books, sermons, or letters. It is chiefly here that

<sup>1</sup> *An Historical Study*. Dublin: Gill & Son. This little work has been commended as an excellent biography by the Protestant writer in the *Church Quarterly Review*, July, 1887.

we shall feel the need for the rules of interpretation. For, in such references, a writer is less on his guard in the selection of his words, especially when addressing friends or persons not likely to misunderstand him. We must also keep always in mind that in his public writings and discourses St. Augustine was subject to the 'Discipline of the Secret'. Nor, should we forget that some of his writings, indicated by Possidius and himself, have perished, and that others have come down to us in a mutilated state; this will account for many omissions" (p. 334).

It may be safely said that this sound sense as well as scientific advice is grossly violated in each of the works we have chosen for criticism. The fault did not arise from defective or unsafe editions, for there are large quotations from very excellent issues of the saint's works—notably from the Benedictine edition; but there is an absence of any evidence of original research, or even of close reading. In Mr. Cutts' work, for example, the only doctrinal chapter is a reprint of quotations from Canon Mozley's work, *The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, and one allusion, on quite an indifferent matter, to the valuable work of M. Poujoulat. The author quotes once from Milman, whose testimony is eminently untrustworthy; once or twice from Gibbon, once from Döllinger, and once from Möhler's *Symbolism*. Dr. Schaff is worse. Nearly all his quotations are taken from the *Confessions*; there is no evidence of more extensive acquaintance with St. Augustine; there is hardly a reference, if we except one to Baur's *Church History*, and one, of course, to Gibbon; we are referred very often to Schaff's *Church History*, and he dismisses the "Augustinian System" in three pages. Mr. Spalding's is the most scientific work of the three, and is professedly a critical examination into the writings and influence of St. Augustine. But although it shows an intimate knowledge of the saint's writings, there is not one reference to the Fathers, not one to the numberless Catholic commentators, who for fourteen centuries have

been lovingly studying the works of our saint under circumstances more favourable to scholarship than students of our century can command. Milman and Neander, Mozley and Owen, Trench and Maurice, Owen and Fremantle, and the *Church Quarterly Review*, are quoted largely; and of these, two at least are mentioned incidentally as supporting the charge of Agnosticism against our saint (pp. 78, 79). Not a word of Cardinals Noris, Berti, Perrone, Tournely, Merlin, etc., who approached this difficult study in a more serious manner, and with far different appreciation of the importance of their task. Not even a word about the philosophers who have long since settled the vexed question of Free-will and Predestination on the lines laid down by the Catholic Church.

Yet if, with such misleading, those writers have found their way through the tangled paths of prejudice almost to the threshold of the Catholic Church, what might we not expect if they would read St. Augustine in the clear light of Catholic comment and history? If Mr. Spalding is almost able to form a right judgment on that perplexing question of Free-will, can we doubt but that he would have acknowledged St. Augustine's adhesion to the See of Peter, if only he had read generously the overwhelming evidence on that subject? Not that we are unwise enough to cherish the idea that the most convincing proofs of St. Augustine's attachment to Catholicity would have the least effect on thinkers of this school in leading them to any practical steps towards the truth. The day has gone by when patristic teaching was regarded as identical with the teaching of the College of Apostles, and when dogmatic belief was considered a necessary condition of union with the mystical body of Christ. The High Church School, in its adoption of the branch theory, has unconsciously co-operated with Broad Church latitudinarianism in breaking down the barriers between Deism and Christian orthodoxy; for when the motive of faith is denied by rejecting a visible authority, the dogmatic factor in religion is removed,

and nothing remains but such vestiges of Christian teachings as sect or conventicle may capriciously approve. But even on the supposition that our opponents admitted the total identity of St. Augustine's teachings with the deposit of doctrine once delivered to the Church, it would by no means follow that they would imitate him in seeking shelter within its fold. Literary research, historical knowledge, keen criticism, even a mind open to receive the truth, are yet very far from that *donum perfectum desursum descendens a patre luminum*, which we call the gift of faith. Calm and even minds have reached the threshold of the Church by patient and laborious investigation, then turned away sadly and for ever. When Dr. Pusey could write as he did about authority,<sup>1</sup> yet refuse to recognise its existence in a living Church, what further proof do we need to show that intellectual illumination is not faith; and that if mental conviction does not always precede conversion, neither is the latter its necessary imperative sequence? In saying, therefore, that we welcome new workers in that wide field of investigation which the writings of St. Augustine open, we do so because literary labour in so high a sphere of thought must always be productive of good, even though it be not the highest. And surely it is a gain to find at last that our saint is no longer identified with doctrines which he abhorred, nor quoted in support of creeds he would have detested; that future generations will be spared the pain of seeing so glorious a name linked with dark, unchristian teachings that were utterly foreign to his spirit of gentleness and love; and that we are not likely to hear again of independence of thought, which he would have regarded as riotous licence, nor of freedom of opinion, which his fidelity to the Church would have characterised as treason, nor of a system which he would be the first to condemn, if it condoned sin by the pretext of fatalism, or clashed with the high voice of conscience and the traditions of the Christian Church.

<sup>1</sup> See Notes to translation of *Confessions*.

## MR. AUBREY DE VERE'S NEW VOLUME.<sup>1</sup>

### A STUDY.

OUR appreciation of Mr. Aubrey de Vere's poetry depends in great measure on the mood in which we approach him. If we have been touched by the glamour that hangs around our highly decorated, introspective modern verse, probably we shall be just a little disappointed at lines that appeal more to sense than sound. But if we have passed the initial surprise and intoxication that touch sensitive minds by analysis and self-questionings conveyed in words many-jointed, and strung together from the Greek, it is very likely we shall find a repose and a harmony in Mr. de Vere's poems, that strike us as more in accordance with the canons of true poetry than all the artificialities by which younger poets strive to be original in these latter days.

In the subjects Mr. de Vere has chosen he has always preferred studies of Nature and of men to idle self-questionings. If he chooses to leave the world an autobiography, and few would be more interesting, we shall never be able to trace his mental growth and experiences through the long series of beautiful poems he has given to the world. There is not a trace of egoism in them all. He has completely obliterated self. In this he has followed the example of his master, Wordsworth; and if so keen a critic as Matthew Arnold can say of the latter, "Wordsworth and Byron stand out by themselves. I place Wordsworth above Byron on the whole.

<sup>1</sup> *Irish Monthly*, March, 1894.

When the year 1900 is turned, and our nation comes to recount her poetic glories in the century which has just then ended, the first names with her will be these," we may attribute the fact to Wordsworth's love of Nature; and we may add, that if Ireland has to make a similar estimate of her singers, she will have little hesitation in naming Mr. de Vere the first Catholic poet of the century, not only to our nation, but to the world.

In the little volume now before us, Mr. de Vere goes back to mediæval times for those themes, Catholic and chivalrous, in which he takes such delight. He has done in poetry for the Middle Ages what Mrs. Jameson has done in prose. He has taken legends or historical deeds, and made a beautiful framework for them in graceful and sonorous verse. He has taken even disputed and controverted subjects; and boldly assuming the Catholic view, has made them additionally attractive to Catholic readers by presenting them in a much pleasanter form than we are accustomed to in ordinary histories. These mediæval poems may be divided into what are purely historical or epic, one or two that may be called lyrical, and a few dramatic studies, which, with the sonnets, form the most interesting features of the volume. It was a bold attempt on the part of Mr. de Vere to try and interest modern readers in the fate and fortunes of the Cid. The old heroic romances of chivalry are hardly esteemed in our day as they were fifty years ago. The world is now not much interested in the battlefields of the past. Knights *sans peur et sans reproche* are too mythical to our hard century to be easily believed in; and historians of the destructive school of criticism have been so busy in demolishing all our cherished ideas of the chivalry and heroism of the Middle Ages, that it is difficult to excite and retain the attention of readers for great national legends, even though already enshrined in the epics of the world. Nevertheless, Mr. de Vere has been so judicious in his selections of the legends of the Cid, and has put them so attractively, that many will read for the first time and

with pleasure of the deeds of this Spanish Bayard. And then, as we shall hereafter note more fully, Mr. de Vere has taken in many cases the Catholic, as distinct from the national, view of our hero, and thus made the central figure more generally interesting, whilst adding to the picturesqueness of the details. Here are lines that remind us of Arthur and the Round Table:—

Three days we rode o'er hill and dale ; the fourth,  
 The daylight slowly dying o'er the moor,  
 A shrill voice reached us from the neighbouring fen,  
 A drowning man's. Down leaped our Cid to earth ;  
 And, ere another' foot had left the stirrup,  
 Forth from the water drew him ; held him next  
 On his own horse before him. " 'Twas a Leper ;"  
 The knights stared round them ! when they supped that eve,  
 He placed that Leper at his side. The knights  
 Forth strode. At night one bed received them both.  
 Sirs, learn the marvel ! As Rodrigo slept,  
 Betwixt his shoulders twain that Leper blew  
 Breath of strong virtue, piercing to his heart.  
 A cry was heard—the Cid's—the knights rushed in  
 Sworded ; they searched the room ; they searched the house ;  
 The Cid slept well ; but Leper none was found.

Who was this ? and what was the reward for a deed which, to use the author's words, speaking of Father Damien, preaches the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection more powerfully than the most eloquent treatises ?

Thy Brother-Man am I,  
 In Heaven thy Patron, though the least in Heaven,  
 Lazarus, thy brother, who unhonoured lay,  
 At Dives' gate. To-day thou honourest Me :  
 Therefore thy Jesus this to Thee accords  
 That whenso'er in time of peril or pain,  
 Or dread temptations dealing with the soul,  
 Again that strong breath blows upon thy heart,  
 Nor Angel's breath, that Breath shall be, nor man's,  
 But Breath immortal arming thy resolve,  
 So long as Humbleness and Love are Thine,  
 With strength as though the total Hosts of Heaven  
 Leaned on Thy single sword. The work Thou workest  
 That hour shall prosper. Moor and Christian, both,  
 Shall for Thee and Thy death be glorified.

With such a prayer and prophecy, Rodrigo passed from victory to victory, always brave, always merciful, invincible in battle and illustrious in peace. In the four Idylls of this brave knight which our author gives us, and which certainly sustain their interest to the end, there must be of necessity many passages which are rhetorical rather than poetic. Yet the rhetoric is always of a high and sustained character; and it breaks by rapid transitions into poetry, which remind us of many well-known passages in our author's legends of St. Patrick and of the Saxon saints. These passages are most frequent and most marked in the fourteen pages marked "The Cid of Valencia". Eloquent and beautiful lines abound in these pages. For instance:—

The moon was drowned  
 In plunging storm of hail and rain and snow ;  
 Emerging thence it stared on wandering floods  
 From sea and river, and the mountain walls  
 Whose torrents, glimpsed but when the lightning flared,  
 Thundered far off.

And this might have come from the *Inferno* :—

Yea, as the blind they groped about the streets,  
 Or staggered on like drunkards ; neither knew  
 Each man the face of neighbour or of friend,  
 But gazed at him and passed ; at other times  
 Old enemies clasped hands but spake no word ;  
 And some flung forth their arms like swimmer spent  
 That sinks in black seas lost.

Some curious analogues in modern verse suggest themselves to our mind in reading such lines as those—resemblances that never occurred before to us in reading Mr. de Vere's poems. At one moment we think we are reading a passage from Klopstock's *Messiah*, then there are lines that suggest long-forgotten pages in that well-nigh forgotten poem *Festus*, and again we are irresistibly reminded of certain turns of thought and expression in the Bishop of Derry's beautiful poems. But the idiomatism, to use an expressive Greek word, of Mr. de Vere is unmistakable. We think

we would recognise it under a French or Italian translation.

Before passing to the higher studies, there is just one little poem, modest and humble like the subject of it, but on which we dwell and linger with more pleasure than on more ambitious and eloquent themes. Perhaps it is for memory's sake; for there is a very clear recollection in our minds of having seen this little poem in leaflet form many years ago in the hands of an old Franciscan Tertiary from Limerick, and of having kept it as a treasure, and read it and re-read it until it became creased and frayed with use, and discoloured by age. And there was just a slight thrill of pleasure in seeing this old acquaintance enshrined permanently in this volume, and in knowing that we should not lose it again. It is called *St. Francis and Perfect Joy*; and whoever possesses this volume and knows anything of "dear St. Francis," will have this poem well marked when perhaps statelier verses are still in a state of virginal whiteness. The opening stanza runs thus; and whoever reads it will read it to the end:—

Blessed St. Francis in the winter time  
 When half the Umbrian vales were white with snow,  
 And all the northward vine-stems rough with rime,  
 Walked from Perugia down. His steps were slow,  
 Made slow by thought; yet swift at times, for love  
 Showered o'er his musings, fired them from above.

If Mr. de Vere would repent of his resolution to make this volume his last, and give us such beautiful metrical renderings of the whole of the *Fioretti* as this, one reader at least would bless him, and placing it side by side with the *May Carols* would think he had two books of devotion which probably he would open much oftener than many elaborate works of high spirituality that lie upon his shelves.

Very devotional, too, and very poetical are four hymns developed from the writings of St. Gertrude. They deal with high and sacred subjects; and, perhaps, for this reason, and partly from their abstract nature, it is pos-

sible they will not be so widely read as the lines on St. Francis. But for those who love to dwell in spirit on the inaccessible heights, and who aspire after what is sublime as well as holy, these four hymns of praise will be welcome reading. One can imagine how St. Augustine would have prized them—the great saint who has written so many beautiful things of God in a kindred spirit and with equal sublimity. It is a great gift to be able to translate into rhythmic measures the prayers of the saints, and to add the graces of poetry to the loftiness of such aspirations as these:—

Height inaccessible of Sovran Power ;  
 Unfathomed depth of wisdom hid and sealed ;  
 Limitless breadth of all-embracing love ;  
 None but Thyself can yield Thee worthy praise ;  
 Thou alone canst know Thyself. Our Hymns  
 Are as a little breeze that dies.

Or these lines to the Humanity of Christ:—

Jesus, Thou son of God, true God, true Man !  
 A voice from earth would join the choirs that sing  
 The sweet refreshment of Thy heavenly rest ;  
 That clear, sabbatical, and mystic clime,  
 Whereby Thy deified Humanity,  
 Its suffering past, is equally embraced,  
 The embowering sunset of its endless peace,  
 And that vivific fragrance evermore  
 Breathed from that underlying Eden vast,  
 The Bosom of the Eternal Trinity.

But we are of opinion that the two most interesting poems in the volume are those entitled: *The Higher Purgatory* and the *Death of Copernicus*. It is in this kind of work that our author's genius manifests itself fully. He is here in his own natural element. Dealing with mediæval records, blank, bare facts, there is a sense of effort and labour, as of one who tries to raise an airy structure out of gross and too solid materials. But here Mr. de Vere passes into the abstract—the region of pure imagination; and it is not difficult to see that here he is quite at home, for the two

elements are present that suit his genius—religion pure and simple ; and high and abstract conceptions such as would have delighted a dialectician in the ages of scholastic philosophy. It is at least curious that that prince of modern dialecticians, Cardinal Newman, should have chosen Purgatory, too, as a theme for his longest poem. The subject has a singular fascination for men of high thought ; whilst the mystery and vagueness of that strange world poised between heaven and hell, and inhabited by that blessed but unhappy people who have seen God, and lost Him for a while, give free place to imaginations that are speedily fascinated by whatever appertains to the interests of immortal souls. Our author reminds us that the whole gist and matter of this poem are taken from a treatise on Purgatory by St. Catherine of Genoa ; and that we must not be surprised at recognising two familiar ideas that have already found place in the *Dream of Gerontius*. The poem is in blank verse, whose metres are not quite regular, here and there a redundant syllable being noticed ; and as the form of a poem has a great deal to say to its artistic excellence, we are glad to find the long lines relieved and broken by pauses and questions that make the whole much easier and pleasanter reading.

What land is that—  
That land, majestic, mystic, wondrous, blest,  
Yet heart-subduing too, and soul o'er-awing,  
Where passion riots not, where love earth-soiled  
Divinely blighted, withering to the root,  
Leaves room for heavenly love ?

This idea is developed through many lines, and then comes the second suggestion :—

What clime is that  
Still as the Church's Holy Saturday ?

whose peace and serenity after the gloom of Lent and before the exultation of Easter Sunday are finely pictured ; and this is the conclusion :—

Deepest that rest

Man knows on earth : yet deeper theirs the souls  
 That breathe that cleansing clime. They sinned on earth ;  
 They sin no more. In them that buried sin  
 Severed from circumstance of time and place  
 Sleeps like a sheathed sword. Their will with God's  
 At last—now first—is one. Such unity  
 Alone could breed such rest.

Then the final question,

What grief is that  
 Which, teaching man his primal greatness, shames  
 His joy foregone in pleasures wed to dust ?

And as the sorrow of our first father was swallowed up in love, so is the grief of the holy souls steeped, though not extinguished, in that perfect love which surrounds them. And we should say these were the best lines in the poem :—

Life veils from us love's greatness :  
 Life veils not less the greatness of high grief :  
 We are but trivial lovers all our life—  
 We are but trivial mourners. Thanks to God  
 Who grants us at life's close one Sovereign love,  
 One grief, the cure for all.

Our author here has an interlude—a pause to consider the analogy between the soul's first glimpse of the Beatific Vision at its birth, and its fuller, though still momentary glance at the face of God, at the moment of death. The effect of the first is, that eternal craving after God of which St. Augustine spoke, *et cor nostrum inquietum est donec requiescat in te*. Thence also come "those winged ideas which are creation's essence ; ideas of the Good, the True, the Fair, the Just, the Pure, the Infinite," that form man's panoply of armour against the evils and temptations of life, and bring him scatheless and victorious before the face of God. We fear that Mr. de Vere here rather closely approaches that system of philosophy which originated with Malebranche, and which, adopted and developed by Gioberti, became known as Ontologism. Or, perhaps, we should rather

say that this beautiful conception belongs to that milder system, which was favoured by Fénelon, Bossuet and Gerdil, and which traces the origin of universal ideas back to our first ideas of God. We merely allude to this matter, not to introduce a metaphysical discussion into these pages, but rather to point out an error which has been frequently made, even by those to whom Catholic literature might be supposed to have been familiar. Quite lately, in one of the many laudatory reviews which have appeared about a certain rising poet, the remark was made, that he was seeking subjects in the as yet untried fields of Catholic philosophy. Now, every reader knows, or ought to know, that for forty years the poet whom we are now reviewing has been taking subject after subject, not only from Catholic philosophy, but from Catholic theology; that his mind appears to be saturated with the lofty ideas that belong to these kindred sciences, that he has achieved his greatest successes exactly in these great departments of human knowledge, and that, unlike the fabled Antæus, he has never lost strength but when he touched the earth—that is, worldly and ephemeral subjects. In his *Legends* he opens up a mine of theological subjects; in his *May Carols* he is perpetually in the society of the first Catholic thinkers and scientists; and even in his shorter poems he not only affects spiritual subjects, but enshrines the driest maxims of scholastic philosophy in lines that form musical apophthegms of themselves. How wise he has been in these selections we may hereafter see; but it is either a curious ignorance of contemporary poetry, or a still more curious forgetfulness, that attributes to a new poet the attribute of pioneering all future Catholic singers into the fruitful regions of the purely Catholic sciences.

To return. Mr. de Vere, after discussing this delicate question of the origin of ideas, next turns to a still more complex and debatable problem, the Mystery of Pain, not with a view of reconciling the existence of sorrow with the existence of One supremely good; but with a

view of showing how great joy is consistent with great suffering—in a word, the meaning of the Beatitude: “Blessed are the mourners”. He puts it pithily:—

The discipline of earthly pain suffices  
To unfilm pure eyes to mysteries of grace  
Withheld from worldly sight. Austerer pain  
Unfilms them to the mysteries of glory :  
Not servile pain, not selfish ; greater pain  
Born of a greater love.

Then follows a description of what we might call the purification and elevation of a soul to a higher level of sanctity: and the education of all its faculties and their fullest development until they become proportioned to that spiritual universe which is man's destined heritage. Finally, the extinction of self-love—the complete divestment of the soul of all its selfish instincts, and the absolute subordination of all its faculties to the supreme will to which it is driven by irresistible impulse. Then these folds which sin and self-love have wound around the slumbering soul during life having dropped aside, and only its pure ethereal essence remaining, the final moment comes when it is admitted to the Beatific Vision. “Man's eyes are opened: man beholds his God.”

Altogether this poem is a very fine piece of spiritual writing. The subject was difficult in itself, and difficult of treatment, because it had already passed through the hands of Dante and Cardinal Newman, not to speak of lesser lights. And our author leaves the subject to future Catholic poets, its interest increased rather than diminished, and its importance very much enhanced by the light his pen has thrown upon the complex subjects that are connected with this Catholic dogma.

In the *Death of Copernicus* our author grapples with a much more serious and difficult question. The great astronomer is debating on his death-bed whether he shall give to the world, or withhold, the work that, out of respect for the faith of the weak, he had hidden for thirty-six years. In the minds of the ignorant and

the unthinking, then as now, science was supposed to be in conflict with faith, and their revelations to be mutually contradictory. The dying scientist soliloquises that both revelations, proceeding from the same source, must of necessity be in agreement; but men's minds, warped by pride, and exalting their own poor discoveries, must perchance place in direct conflict teachings that come from the same Divine source. But he remembers how patient and lowly were his own thoughts during the progress of his discoveries; and he recalls his nightly vigils, from the Minster Tower at Warnia—vigils which so numbed his feet that he could scarcely ascend the altar steps in the morning, and his hands that he could hardly hold the chalice at the Mass. Yet he prayed:—

If, my God,  
Thou seest my pride subdue my faculties,  
Place me a witless one among those witless  
That beg beneath church porches.

But this night he must make his election—to fling his book abroad on the trackless deep, or to cast it on the still wider sea of men's minds. But he is scrupulous about the faith of others: and memories throng back upon his mind of doubts and difficulties that were suggested to him years ago by the timid and by the impious. The first was a youth, daring, yet afraid to utter that great objection against the Advent of Christ, which is the first to suggest itself to inquiring minds.

Mankind will learn  
This sphere is not God's ocean, but one drop  
Showered from its spray. Came God from heaven for that?  
Speak no more words!

It was but a passing word of a passing mood, and that youth held the Faith; but "moods have murdered souls". But what is the sublime answer?—

This earth too small,  
For Love Divine! Is God not Infinite?  
If so, His Love is infinite. Too small!

One famished babe meets pity more from man  
Oft than an army slain ! Too small for Love !  
Was earth too small to be by God created ?  
Why then too small to be redeemed ?

The sense

Sees greatness only in the sensuous greatness ;  
Science in that sees little ; Faith sees nought ;  
The small, the vast, are tricks of earthly vision  
To God, that Omnipresent All-in-Each ;  
Nothing is small, is far.

The second sceptic is different,—

A zealot barbed with jibe and scoff still launched  
At priests and kings and holy womanhood.

He puts his objection thus :—

A God, a God incarnate but for man,  
That reasoning beast—and all yon glittering orbs  
In cold obstruction left !

Amongst our lengthened quotations, this the reply  
must be the last ; but we cannot omit it :—

They that know not of a God  
How know they that the stars have habitants ?  
'Tis Faith and Hope that spread delighted hands  
To such belief ! no formal proof attests it.  
Concede them peopled ; can the sophist prove  
Their habitants are fallen ? That too admitted,  
Who told him that redeeming foot divine  
Ne'er trod those spheres ? That fresh assumption granted,  
What then ? Is not the universe a whole ?  
Doth not the sunbeam, herald from the sun,  
Gladden the violet's bosom ? Moons uplift  
The tides ; remoteest stars lead home the lost ;  
Judaea was one country, one alone ;  
Not less Who died there died for all. The Cross  
Brought help to buried nations ; time opposed  
No bar to love ; why then should space oppose one ?  
We know not what time is nor what is space ;  
Why dream that bonds like theirs can bind the unbounded !  
If earth be small, likelier it seems that love  
Compassionate most and condescending most  
To sorrow's nadir depths, should choose that earth  
For love's chief triumph, missioning thence her gift  
Even to the utmost Zenith !

We should hardly have given such extensive quotations, but to remark that here our author seems to have abandoned a very fascinating theory of a certain school of theologians, that sin was not the sole cause of the Incarnation, but that this great event in the history of the world would have taken place, if man had never sinned, in order that God might unite Himself thus more perfectly to His Creation. That this had been a favourite idea of Mr. de Vere's is quite evident from that splendid preface to the *May Carols*, which we commend to our readers, theological and otherwise, as an example of how beautifully Catholic philosophy and theology can be rendered by a poet. We shall not do our author the injustice of quoting it fragmentarily here, but merely refer our readers to it, and give the following sentences from an advocate of that sublime conception, the Oratorian, Malebranche, to elucidate our meaning. "Though man had never sinned," he says, "a Divine Person would not have failed to unite Himself to the universe, to sanctify it, to draw it from its profane condition, to render it divine, to give it an infinite dignity, so that God, who can only act for His own glory, should receive a glory perfectly correspondent to His action. Could not the Word unite Himself to the work of God, without becoming incarnate? He was made man; could He not have made Himself of Angelic nature? It is true that, in making Himself man, He unites Himself at the same time to two substances, and that by this union He sanctifies all Nature. For this reason, I know not if sin has been the sole cause of the Incarnation of the Son of God."<sup>1</sup> To this sublime speculation, which Mr. de Vere embodied so beautifully in the prose of his preface, and in that exquisite carol, *Caro factum est*, he now, in the verses we have quoted above, adds the almost equally sublime speculation of another and later school of French theologians. This may be expressed by Fr. Gratry's theory that the

<sup>1</sup> *Entretiens sur la Metaphysique*, ix., 5.

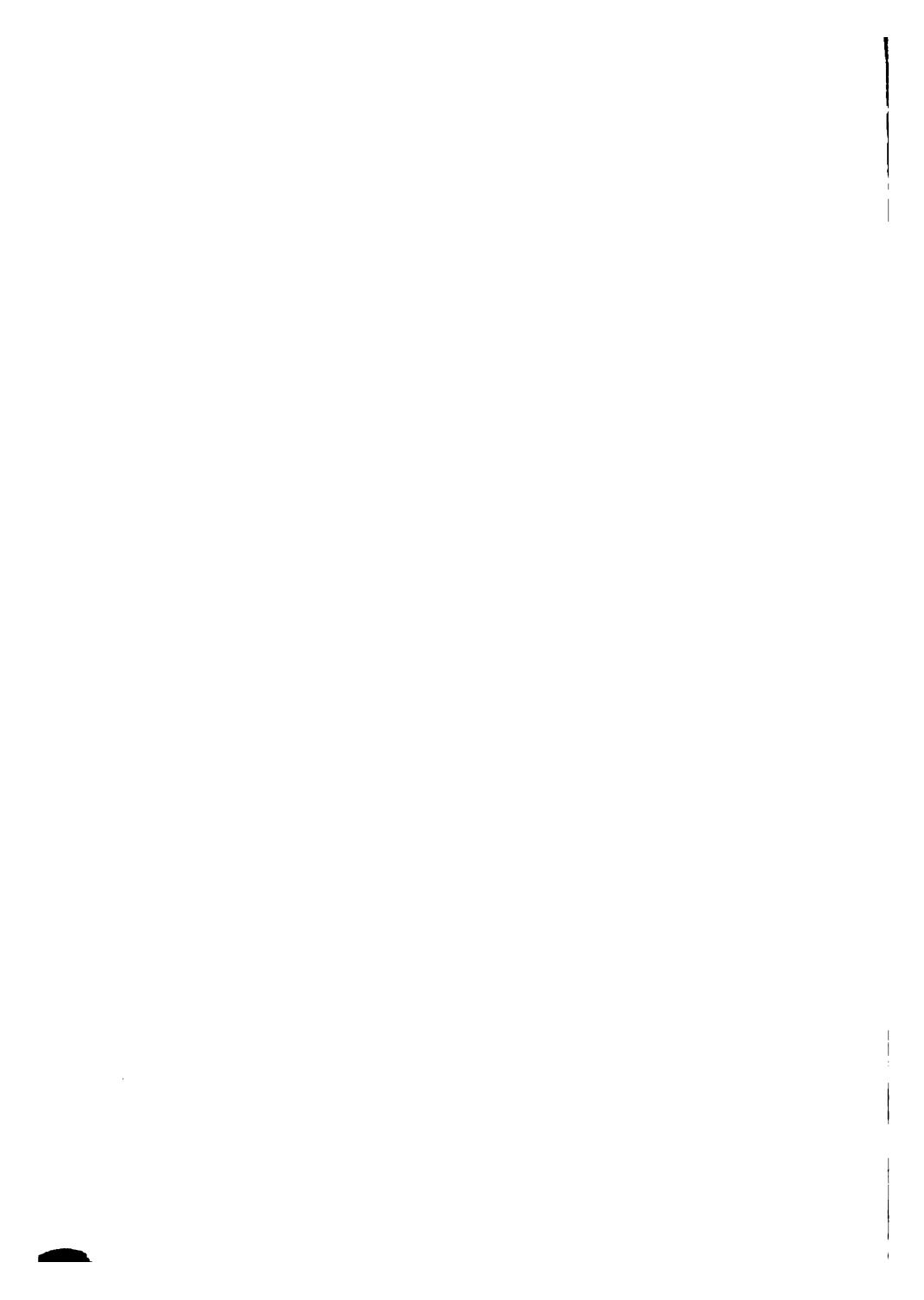
words of our Divine Lord : "I have other sheep who are not of this fold ; these, too, I must bring into My fold, and there shall be one sheepfold and one Shepherd," may be possibly applied to the inhabited worlds of the universe.

It seems impossible to write about poetry of this high class without being tempted into a disquisition on theology. We have left ourselves, therefore, barely space to say that this sublime poem branches at once into a splendid forecast of the future of the Church, especially the conflict and reconciliation between Religion and Science. If these fine ideas had been put into eloquent prose, of which our author is quite the master, probably they would reach a larger number of readers. But for the many who will read them in this form, they will have the additional advantage of communicating knowledge in its most attractive guise.

Of the other poems, the pages devoted to *Joan of Arc* and her marvellous history will take additional interest from the fact of her coming beatification. The volume closes with sonnets unvaried in form, but touching quite a variety of subjects and persons. Probably the purely poetic reader will turn to them first ; and if he be a student of this most difficult, but most artistic form of poetry, he will be able to make a satisfactory comparison between Mr. de Vere and all the many masters of the sonnet that have written in our century. Those on Catholic art and its masterpieces have had the greatest attraction for ourselves.

And this suggests a reflection with which we will close this paper. The two great Italian artists who seem to have a special fascination for even Protestant tourists are Giotto and Fra Angelico of Fiesole. Yet they are the two artists who painted exclusively Christian and Catholic subjects. The crucifixions of the latter with all their boundless variety of imagery and detail are never-failing subjects of interest for exalted minds. And if ever the question should arise, Has Mr. de Vere lost or gained by his exclusive devotion to

religion? I think we might find the answer here. It is quite true that it is easier to write on secular than on religious subjects. It is much easier to compose a sonnet on the *Venus Anadyomene* than on the *Madonna*. And such writing would unquestionably be more popular in our days. Yet we make bold to say that if Mr. de Vere's works are now too high, too severe, too ascetic, or too exalted for the multitude, they will owe their permanent place in English literature (for such a place we can promise them) to this very fact, that they are Christian poetry and transcendently religious. For if ever (and many believe the delay will not be long) a revolution shall take place in public opinion, especially Irish public opinion, and that the educated classes in Ireland, rising far above the conventional ideas they have borrowed from English imitations and English intercourse, shall reject the Neo-Paganism of this century with all its tawdry finery and affected art, and a new taste be born for science that shall be Christian, and art that shall be supersensual and moral, then we may be assured that in Mr. de Vere's work will be recognised in their fulness the true constituents of legitimate poetry, the pleasure of art and the profit of instruction; and in Mr. de Vere himself a rare combination of the qualities of teacher and singer to his age and race.



## **LECTURES**



## IRISH YOUTH AND HIGH IDEALS.<sup>1</sup>

### I.

As an artist requires a model for his picture or statue, and as a musician is helpless without a key-note, so a preacher, when he assumes for the time the rôle of lecturer, finds it difficult to be close or consecutive in his reasoning, unless he can lean on that familiar aid and adjunct of all his discourses—a text. In casting around for a text for this address, I thought I could not do better than consult the pages of one who has written more strangely wise and more strangely foolish things than any man of this generation—one who has been alternately hailed as a prophet, and denounced as a pedant and a cheat, but one who has exercised, and continues to exercise, a more powerful influence on the young minds of this generation than any other writer and thinker—I mean Thomas Carlyle, the Philosopher of Chelsea.

In one of his most popular essays, in which he insists on the nobleness and sacredness of work, he lays it down that the primary condition of all success is a knowledge of the work each one of us has to do in this world. “Know thy work and do it,” he says, is the latest message that has come to us from the “Voices and Sages,” the men that have thought and spoken and written for the well-being of mankind. And again: “To make one spot of God’s world a little brighter, better, and happier, here is work for a god”. And

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address at Mallow Literary Society, 11th November, 1880.

I have chosen these two extracts because I believe that the first contains the healthiest and safest motto for each individual member of this Society; and because the second is a perfect embodiment of the ideas that suggested the formation of this Society, and of the principles that will actuate its founders and helpers in a steady and uniform perseverance in the great work they have undertaken.

That nothing in Nature is stagnant—that everything is capable of and demands development, and that education is second only to Nature in its effects—these are truths that require no proof, for they are almost axiomatic. They govern the world of matter, and, still more, the world of mind. Nature never rests; and its glories and splendours, that make pale with wonder the observer of refinement and sensibility, are not the work of a moment, but the result of slow growth and development, carried out in obedience to secret but imperative laws. Those great shining worlds that rest in the Dome of Immensity, apparently so silent and still, have been moulded out of nebulous and other matter, have been subjected to the action of fire, have been and still are the theatres of the mightiest upheavals and revolutions. Stars have grown into space, have revolved in their orbits, and have been broken into fragments, and these in turn have resolved themselves into gases, and these in turn have formed in the hands of the Almighty Creator the material from which new and more beautiful worlds have arisen. If the law of development and perpetual change and progress did not exist, this mighty universe, instead of being, as it is, a stately, majestic, harmonious work, beautiful in its obedience to the unseen powers, would be a vast chaotic mass of matter in collision with matter, and worlds hurled upon worlds; and this earth of ours would become in time a mere slag—a cinder drifting dangerously through space, instead of fulfilling the vision of the poet who sees—

Its growing mass,  
Pelted with star-dust, stoned with meteor-balls,  
Heat like a hammered anvil, till at last

Man and his works and all that stirred itself  
Of its own motion, in the fiery glow  
Turns to a flaming vapour, and our orb  
Shines a new sun for worlds that shall be born.

And so with our own earth. It seems so peaceful with its pleasant green fields and shining seas, that it is difficult to believe that day after day earth and water are changing places, the mountains are descending to the plains, and the seas are rising above their level, and a few centuries will behold the ships of merchants sailing over what are now busy and populous cities, and golden corn waving where now in impenetrable darkness the deep-sea monsters are hiding in the mammoth forests of the ocean. Nature never rests. Nature demands disturbance. It will grow a foul jungle of weeds if let alone. It is only when its breast is torn open by the pickaxe of the miner or the plough of the husbandman that it yields rich ores, or the richer grain that is needed for the sustenance of men. In a word, Nature is one vast laboratory, ever dissolving and destroying, but ever, too, combining and creating.

If this be true of the material world, if masses inert of themselves are moulded into form and invested with secret, mechanical power, if even a dull brown clod, when Nature's treatment is afforded it, becomes a centre of fertility, teeming with life and strength and sweetness, shall we not say that the same great laws hold for us in the development of the mighty faculties with which we are endowed? Shall it be said that man's mind alone is barren and fruitless, or fertile only in things that are evil? Have you ever seriously considered the power, the strength, the swiftness, the far-reaching dominion, the comprehensive sympathies, the only less than infinite attributes that belong to the mind of man? It is the one thing that is really terrible in created Nature, because whilst striving to master all Nature's secrets, its own workings remain the most impenetrable secret of all. That mass of grey pulp that is hidden under our foreheads is the mightiest of

natural agencies—it has forces more than electric in invincible strength and unimaginable swiftness. Look at the tenacity of man's memory. Not an idea, not an impression or experience is ever obliterated from it. Faces are photographed on the mind, and they never die. Impressions are stamped upon it, and it never loses them. They may seem to be crushed out in a medley of succeeding thoughts; but no! the perfume of a flower, the echo of a song of our early days, even the very lights and shades of a landscape, will bring back to our minds thoughts and sensations long buried and forgotten. For the mind folds its pictures as you would fold a map or a panorama; touch the secret spring or unloose the secret cord, and memory unfolds them undimmed and unfaded by time. And that other great God-given faculty, the intellect, is yet more wonderful. With the quickness of lightning it grasps an idea or a fact, and holds it, and turns it over, and studies it even unconsciously and runs through a train of reasoning, and compares one fact with another, and deduces from the comparison some great truth that was hidden away in the bosom of Nature. It is thus we have become acquainted with what are called the "Wonders of Nature"; it is thus that the great heavens, glittering with galaxies of stars, have become an open scroll to the many; it is thus that granite rocks, and beds of gravel, and boulders of flint, are so many books in which the geologist can read the ages of their formations, and trace the effects of deluges and earthquakes; and it is thus that the student of chemical science can resolve all things, except his own mind, into their original elements, and create new substances at his own will.

Like the watchers of old upon the mountains of Chaldaea, in some remote and lonely observatory our student of astronomy sits. He is far away from the earth, and he works when sleep is on the eyes of men and all things are silent. And what is his work? He is pursuing a truly sublime vocation. He is watching the stars that look down upon him kindly, he is study-

ing their construction and trying to bring into system their apparently erratic motions. He knows every mountain and fissure and ravine in the moon as intimately as the farmer knows the ridges and furrows of his fields. He sees the seasons come and go upon the planets, as you and I see them come and go here. He sees where the sun shines, and where the snows fall and gather on these far-off worlds. And all the burning questions that agitate the minds of the millions below him, and all the passions that fret the heart of man are as nothing to him—

He is as old as Egypt to himself,  
Brother to them that squared the pyramids ;  
By the same stars he watches, and reads that page  
Where every letter is a glittering world.

A lonely, desolate, solitary life ! but does it not fill us with legitimate pride to think that it is a mind like our own that has spanned the wide abysses of space, and wrested their latest secret from the stars ? Isaac Newton saw an apple fall in his garden, and in that simple fact his great intellect discerned the great law, up to that time unknown, that holds the great worlds of this universe together. A young boy sat and saw the steam hissing and gurgling and raising the lid of a kettle. It was a small thing, but what was the message that small thing conveyed to the great mind that beheld it ? Look around the world, and see every country under heaven covered with a network of railways, every railway laden with locomotives dragging men and merchandise after them quicker than the wind by the same power that stirred the lid of the kettle ; and see the ocean, hitherto man's greatest enemy, now completely conquered, and covered with convoys and fleets that sweep with the most perfect security over its bosom. What has thus revolutionised Nature ? What has conquered space so far, and made man perfectly independent of those forces of which he had been so much afraid ? A simple circumstance—but it was grasped by a mighty mind !

This moment outside New York, in a laboratory that would suggest to a poetic mind those things Dante saw in his Vision of Hell, amid roaring furnaces, and horrid electric batteries, and miles of wiring that stretch round and round his apartments, and chain cables that would hold the Great Eastern, and mountains of jars full of chemicals, in darkness and solitude and smoke, there is a student who of late years has startled the world by new applications of scientific truth. Nature has revealed some of her most wonderful secrets to him. The world, it is true, was aware of the existence of that unseen but awful agent, subtle as a spirit, that is diffused through all things, called electricity. But Edison is the first that has made electricity the study of his life, and that has seen how widely utilised it may be, and how universally applied. And therefore he is threatening to set aside all the accessories of our boasted civilisation. The newspaper reporter will very soon take his place with the transcriber of the Middle Ages, for the phonograph takes down human speech accurately word for word, and gives it back again. And he even threatens to supersede the newspaper itself. Gentlemen of the London Clubs last year sat at their firesides and distinctly heard the debates in the House of Commons; and a concert given in the Crystal Palace, London, was heard and appreciated hundreds of miles away in Birmingham.

Here, again, is a proof of the magic of the human mind. But we must remember that all these miracles of science are the result of the development of the intellectual faculties—that development being the result of hard labour and much research. “Know thy work and do it,” says Carlyle. And men like Newton and Edison understand the truth of that maxim. Newton, as his biographer tells us, on one occasion forgot that he had eaten his dinner; and Mr. Edison was married last year, and forgot all about it three hours afterwards, so absorbed was he in his studies.

The thoughtful philosopher of old dreamed of these

victories over Nature; we have seen them. What was a thousand years ago a fancy and a chimera, came by degrees into the regions of probability, and thence into the regions of fact. Napoleon and Hannibal boasted that they had crossed the Alps; we, nineteenth-century people, have cut right through them. We have labelled and ticketed nearly every star in the firmament. We have constructed new telescopes, and by their aid discovered new stars, in reality new suns, the centres of others systems immeasurably greater than our own. Our ocean steamers cross and recross the Atlantic at a fabulous speed. The world is girded with coils of wire, along which the electric spark is for ever flashing, communicating intelligence instantaneously to dwellers under far distant skies. We have opened canals, and let seas mingle with seas, and oceans pour their waters into oceans. Nay, even so rapid is the march of science, so marvellous the activity of man's mind in our age, that when thirty years ago the Poet Laureate

Dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonders that would be.  
Saw the heavens filled with commerce, argosies of magic sail,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales,  
Heard the heavens filled with shouting, and there rained a ghastly  
dew  
Of the nations' airy navies, battling in the central blue,

he was scoffed at as a visionary. But that vision was fulfilled in the Franco-Prussian War, when balloons were sent up from the German army on one side and from the battlements of Paris on the other, and both armies watched with interest the conflict of their navies in the air.

Looking through all these victories over Nature gained by the indomitable energy of those silent but best benefactors of their race—the students of the garret and the closet—he who runs may read the lesson I am teaching you to-night; the power of man's mind when carefully educated and inured to constant labour and study,

and can understand the enthusiasm of the poet who speaks of

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new,  
That which they have done but earnest of the things they mean to do.

## II.

I have now shown you that Nature needs development, and that man's mind, when educated, is master of Nature. You will bear with me for a moment while I explain to you the still more extraordinary power that man has over his fellowman, when either the Divine gift of genius is given him, or the want of that gift is supplied by judicious and uniform studies. And lest it should be tedious if I confined myself altogether to abstract truths, I shall show you what I mean by three examples—of a preacher, an artist and a poet—and take these examples from one city and one particular period of time. Towards the end of the fifteenth century a strange sight was witnessed in Florence, the intellectual capital of Italy. In the grey dawn of the morning for weeks in the springtime, around a pulpit in one of the largest churches in that city, was to be seen clothed in the garb of penitence and mourning a vast crowd of people, the majority of whom belonged to the better and higher classes. They had ashes on their heads and their feet were bare, and they held in their hands unbleached candles, such as are used in Masses for the Dead, and they prayed, not in the conventional fashion, but with moans and sighs and tears that would touch any heart. They were listening to the words of a Dominican Friar, one who for the moment, too, had put aside the conventional sermon, and thundered forth words of mighty truth with all the passion of an ancient prophet. You will say—not so wonderful after all! But when I tell you that before that monk appeared these people were the most sceptical, luxurious, licentious people in Europe, that they spent their days and

nights in revelry, that their books of devotion were the Pagan classics, that their houses were covered with statues of gods and goddesses that they almost worshipped, that they spared no money to procure relics of Pagan times, and that they considered themselves the most advanced, refined, æsthetic people in Europe, you will agree with me in thinking that if ever the empire of a great mind over lesser minds was exhibited, it was here. But Savonarola went farther. He made that proud and sensitive people strip their halls and corridors of their fairest ornaments. He made the Florentine *savans* bring their books and statutes and pictures to the public square of the city. He made the Florentine ladies bring their lutes and guitars, and all the accessories of the Oriental magnificence in which they lived. He piled all these treasures in the centre of the square, covered the pyre with gunpowder, burned it without remorse, and in its smoke beheld the ghost of a false art-worship—in reality Pagan worship—depart.

I cannot help mentioning that three centuries later another Dominican, Lacordaire, stood in the pulpit of Notre Dame, Paris. His audience consisted of 5,000 Parisian Atheists. They came to scoff and blaspheme; but he literally took away their breath by the magic of his eloquence, and when they could speak, it was to utter an unconscious profession of faith, for looking on his inspired countenance, and hearing his inspired words, they cried out with one voice: “Il voit Dieu! Il voit Dieu!”—“He sees God! He sees God!”

A few years after Savonarola had crushed the Paganism of Florence, a poor artisan entered that city. A huge block of marble, belonging to the City Fathers, but rejected by them as worthless, was lying outside the walls. After much trouble this wandering artist obtained possession of it and built a shed over it. Why? Because he believed that an image, an idea of his own mind, was embedded in the rock, and he was determined to find it. He went to work, and so fierce was his energy that he, with chisel and hammer, cut away

as much material as three labourers in a day. At night he put a candle in his cap, and worked into the small hours of the morning. At last he found his idea, and left it without a word to the City Fathers. They took it and called it the wonder of their own age, and to this day, standing on the gates of their city, it is the pride and glory of the Florentines. It is the famous statue of the youthful David, in the act of smiting the Philistine giant, and that poor artist was Michael Angelo! He went straight from Florence to Rome, built himself a scaffold in the Sistine Chapel, and from the top of that scaffold, stretched at full length day by day for three years, he painted those wonderful frescoes that are still the first attraction in the Eternal City.

Michael Angelo was a genius—one of these rare minds for whom Nature strikes a special mould ; but he understood the philosophy of education and of work. Even at the age of ninety, the age of second childhood to most men, he was found brush in hand before a picture of the “Dead Christ,” and whilst thus engaged he turned his face to the wall, and died.

About two centuries before Michael Angelo appeared, a fierce political fight took place in Florence. It arose out of one of those hereditary feuds that were so common among ancient States, but which are unheard of in these days of broader ideas and higher civilisation. But one, then unknown to his people, was driven by the dominant faction from the city, and like all proud minds he found refuge in solitude, and forgot “the schoolboy rage” and vindictiveness of his countrymen in the vision that his great mind conjured up, and which he has framed in verse to charm and fascinate and terrify the world. His biographer tells us that he grew “lean from mighty labour,” and there cannot be a doubt that this great work of his created a profound impression on his own mind, for we know that to the end of his life he was silent, solitary and sad. This was Dante, the greatest of all poets after Shakspeare—Dante forgotten and neglected by his countrymen even after death, but

now worshipped by them with all the fervour of Italian enthusiasm. For five centuries his *Divina Commedia* has been acknowledged as the great national classic. Its strong poetic expressions have passed into the homely but graphic language of the people, his pictures of heaven have been made the favourite subjects of painting and sculpture, and his awful descriptions of hell, terrible in their realism, have been utilised by poets and essayists so far, that they would have lost their awful significance if the majesty of genius did not make them ever fresh and original. And his fame has passed into other countries. There is scarcely any important work issued from the press at the present day in which allusion is not made to Dante's poem. He illustrates oratory, poetry and fiction; and that weird vision of his will carry his name side by side with that of William Shakespeare to the minds of all future generations, when lesser poets shall have passed for ever from the memories and traditions of men. Mr. Lowell, one of the first of American *littérateurs*, speaking the other day to a society like our own in London, said that no matter how extensive the range of our reading may be, we know nothing of poetry until we have studied and mastered that vision of Dante. Here is fame! Here is mind power! The petty despots and tyrants of that day, the heads of the faction that expelled him from their city, are long since forgotten—their ashes are

Blown about the desert dust,  
Or buried in the iron hills,

while the vision seen by their victim is the one object before the eyes of the cultured thinkers of an age that believes that Guelph and Ghibelline alike were barbarians in their brute power and ignorance. If ever the immortality of genius was proven, it was here—Dante speaks of the men of the nineteenth century, who venerate and worship him, as he spoke of the men of the fourteenth century, who made him an outcast and a beggar; and

*Firenze la Bella*, his own beautiful but ungrateful city, knows that when its own fame has departed as the home of all that is choice and rare in art, it will still be remembered in the annals of literature as the cradle of Italy's greatest poet. Its wild threat, long since bitterly repented of, remains fulfilled: "Dante will not return living or dead". A stately cenotaph is the eternal reminder to Florence that the dust of their poet is enshrined among strangers at Ravenna.

Coming home to England, is William Shakspeare dead? No. His works live after him, and influence the minds of thousands and millions who linger over them, and study that subject which is always attractive—the passions, hopes, fears and eccentricities of men. From his grave he stretches forth his hands through all time, holding the mirror up to Nature; and in that mirror most men look for a true insight into their own hearts, and into the thoughts of other men. That wonderful mixture of madness and philosophy in Hamlet,—the despair of all actors, the passion and supernatural character of the tragedy of Macbeth, the madness of King Lear, the pitiful fate of Desdemona, will fascinate readers and spectators as long as the speeches from Julius Cæsar will be the staple subject for recitation in Colleges and Academies. Kean and Kemble, Foote and Siddons, have, from time to time, cleared the stage of minor plays, and brought the colossal genius of Shakspeare before the public. In our days Henry Irving and Barry Sullivan have paid their tribute to the memory of the immortal bard, and have been well rewarded in crowded houses and large receipts: and to show the catholicity of Shakspeare's genius, the proprietor of a low theatre in one of the London suburbs last year put aside for a while his nigger melodies and fast dances, introduced Shakspeare to the coal-porters and dock-labourers, and had the pleasure of seeing that true genius is always universal in its sympathies. The spirit of Shakspeare was worshipped by the hard hands and lusty voices of the multitude, as well

as by the dainty gloves and tame applause of the Lyceum.

I could multiply examples indefinitely. I could show that the mind of man has even more power over the will of nations than the wills of individuals. I could appeal to United Germany as a proof of the influence of poets and philosophers, not only over their own generation, but even over the future destinies of their countries, for it was the poems and philosophy of Goethe and Schiller that changed the whole current of thought in the German universities, and through their students permeated the masses of the people, and created the ambition, now realised, of being a united people, and the first military power in the world. For we must remember that the Germans are not only the best soldiers, but also the best students, and there is scarcely a private soldier in the German forces that does not know more of military science than the best trained officer in the English army.

Again, cast your eyes across the Atlantic and see the greatest wonder of modern times—a state, composed of men of all nationalities, grown in thirty years to be the first power in the world—first in manufactures—first in arts—first in the enterprise of its people—every day widening its empire, and promising to be, before the dawn of another century, the exact counterpart of the old Roman empire in dominion, and wealth, and intelligence, but infinitely superior in the broad freedom and humanity of the ideas that prevail amongst its people and are reflected from the people on the Government. What is the cause of all this? What, but liberty of thought freely and wholesomely developed? America is the living proof of the truth of the first axiom in political science: "Freedom of thought is the first element of civilisation".

And taking an example from our own country, if at the present day there is a stronger feeling of patriotism and nationality amongst us than at any former period in our history, is it not to be attributed to our superior education, to the great minds that have thought and

spoken for us, and to the glorious voices that have poured their songs for freedom into the hearts of the people? Béranger kept alive in France the spirit of devotion to the Napoleonic dynasty years after its first great founder had perished; and it is not too much to say that the poets and orators of 1848, Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy, Clarence Mangan, Thomas Francis Meagher, Speranza and the rest, had quite as much to do in keeping alive, with renewed vigour and vitality, the spirit of Irish nationality. In a word, we must change that old, fast-rooted idea that we learned long ago in political geography, that there are five great powers in Europe—great in their armies and navies—great because prepared to butcher one another at a moment's notice. The world is beginning to have clearer ideas on these matters—more truthful ideas of silent agencies that are at work, and whose work is every day becoming more visible because more successful. The five great powers, not of Europe but of the world, now are the memory of man, the will of man, and the intellect of man, and the voice and the pen as their agents and exponents.

It is not necessary to put the reverse of the picture before you. Nature's laws are not to be violated. Nature retaliates whenever it is abused or neglected. If man neglects the cultivation of fields, soon he will have a foul jungle of weeds breeding pestilence; and if man neglects the cultivation of his mind, very soon it will become the receptacle of everything that is coarse and evil. If you need proof of this look around the asylums, jails, reformatories and penitentiaries of the world! What has filled them? Ignorance. What has made society expel their inmates, and put them under restraint, as dangerous to its well-being and order? Ignorance. Ask the governors, chaplains and other officials, what is the cause of the moral insanity that forces criminals to set their faces against their fellow-men, and violate every law with the certainty of being summarily punished? Ignorance, they will answer, and neglect of early education. Ask the political economist

of the day and the men who have studied sanitary science why diseases are propagated, and future generations punished for the neglect or crime of one man? They will tell you it is ignorance. For next to the great primal curse, the one evil that haunts our race is the neglect of these means which are given us to withdraw ourselves from that curse, or change it to a blessing.

What is true of individuals is also true of whole nations. Wherever the masses of the people are allowed to remain in ignorance, wherever the Arts are without favour or patronage, wherever Science is shunned and enterprise undeveloped, there is slowness, backwardness, discontent and revolution. And the most powerful weapon at all times in the hands of the despot has been the enforced ignorance of the people. Whenever it became necessary to stamp out the spirit of a nation, the tyrant has stifled the voices of its patriots in prison, has checked the freedom of the press, and has taken away from the rising generation the means of education. So it was in Ireland. Because she was independent, because she repudiated any connection, religious or political, with England, because she aspired after her own freedom, her moral and intellectual teachers were persecuted, the priest and schoolmaster were proscribed, and the "oldest, the most acute, subtle and speculative race in the world"<sup>1</sup> was reduced by the operation of merciless laws to a state that would have bordered on barbarism, were it not for the high principle and the unconquerable spirit of the people. Dungeons, gibbets and racks are nothing. Men can always despise them. But what hope is there when the voice of a nation is stifled, and the mind of a nation paralysed?

### III.

I have dwelt a long time on this matter, because I wish to impress these great truths upon your minds.

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Newman.

It is easy to perceive their application. Here is your work—here is your duty—your duty to yourselves, and to the two great communities to which you belong—the Catholic Church and the Irish people. You see now that if you do not develop your faculties by study and reflection, you are violating the fundamental laws of Nature. You can see, too, that, by obeying those laws, you are protecting yourselves from unwholesome thoughts and evil passions, and filling your minds with everything that is pure and high and noble. Educate yourselves, and I promise you the reward that comes from all labour—the consciousness that you have done your duty, and the intense satisfaction of acquiring knowledge. When an architect has erected a stately church does he not feel a glow of satisfaction in thinking that it was his mind conceived the idea and his hands executed it; and that men in after times, admiring its even proportions and stately dimensions, will say, "This is the work of a great and a thoughtful mind"? When the farmer, after the labour and hardships of the spring, sees his work fructifying in autumn harvests of green crops and golden wheat, has he not the satisfaction of knowing, not only that it will increase his wealth, but that it is his work and Nature's work combined? So with a student; and you will understand what I mean if ever you have waded through a difficult problem in science, or if after many painful efforts you can strike off some piece of music on flute or violin or piano. Knowledge is power; but knowledge also is pleasure, the keenest and highest and best of pleasures. I have often thought that I would sacrifice a great deal to be able to sit at that beautiful organ in our own church, and thunder along the aisles the glorious symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven.

Seek after knowledge therefore. Take up some one subject, scientific or literary, and master it. Form your tastes. Acquire a love of whatever is beautiful in poetry, or science, or art, or literature, and you will have in your possession a talisman against all physical

and mental pain. Many a dark, tedious, and lonely hour will be lighted and made happy by good books. When Charles Dickens was writing the *Pickwick Papers*, one poor invalid amongst many, bedridden and afflicted with an incurable disease, wrote to him again and again to expedite the issue of his tale, "because," said he, "when following the career of Pickwick, or laughing at the witticisms of Sam Weller, I never feel pain". Charles Dickens' little volume was worth more to him than all the prescriptions of these necessary evils—called Doctors. Acquire, then, a taste for literature. I mean for high-class literature; I do not mean the gutter literature of the unclean, obscene Babylon—London; acquire a taste for literature, and you have a charm against everything evil. The troubles, vexations, and disappointments that are incident to our condition here can be defied, because forgotten, by going out from your own minds for a while into the new world that the philosopher or the scientist, the historian or the novelist will show you. And insensibly you will become better and wiser men. A stone is dropped into the water, and in a moment it is hidden away and unseen. But far above on the surface there is circle after circle, widening and widening until they strike on the shore. So with the acquisition of new ideas. They pass away and are forgotten, but they always leave an impression behind them that grows wider and deeper and more deep. For every new idea is a new growth. Read and read, and every moment as you read, even for pleasure, your mind is developing and expanding and becoming illuminated, until by degrees you see yourselves becoming wiser, more thoughtful, truer and better men, with greater confidence in yourselves, and trusted more largely by others.

It must not be lost sight of either that no one can be so completely isolated from his fellowmen, as to be able to establish a republic in his own mind so independent that he can be heedless of the shame or glory that reflects upon others from his actions. Now it is our pride and hap-

piness that we belong to the most ancient and perfect organisation that exists in this world at present; that we are, to use the familiar but striking language of Macaulay, members of a Church "that saw the commencement of all the governments and all the ecclesiastical establishments that exist in the world, and is destined to see the end of them all—that was great and respected before the Saxon set foot in Britain, and before the Frank had crossed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, and idols were worshipped in the temple of Mecca". From that Church we have received innumerable blessings, and it behoves us to pay back a filial debt of gratitude by making ourselves such worthy members of it, that our intelligence and advancement even in secular knowledge shall be accepted as a refutation of the ancient calumny that the Catholic Church is the enemy of human progress. It is assuredly a far-fetched accusation to attribute to the mother of arts, the custodian of all ancient literature, the patroness of the sciences, a spirit of hostility to the advancement of human interests. But the charge is made and we must refute it—refute it by our knowledge of the religion we profess, and even by our knowledge of all those subjects that are considered essential to a liberal education. For when men of different creeds meet they do not care to launch at once into religious controversy, but measure one another by conversation on all those branches of knowledge that are supposed to be included in the curriculum of the studies even of self-educated men. And then they slide gradually into the one subject that has always a supreme interest for the thoughtful—the subject of the human soul and its destinies, and all the mysteries that circle round the one great central question. And this leads me to speak with sorrow of the neglect of the study of Catholic theology that is so common amongst us. Theology is justly called the queen of all the sciences, partly because of its sacred subjects, and partly because it is so intimately connected with all other sciences. Now there

is an idea prevalent amongst many that theology is only for priests, that laymen have no need of it, and thus it happens that, though most Catholics have clear ideas of the principles, doctrines, and discipline of the Church, very few have that detailed knowledge that comes from judicious, well-regulated and sustained study. This should not be. Catholics should take a pleasure in studying those subjects that have had such an attraction for the greatest minds. And to take a utilitarian view of the matter, we must remember that we are by compulsion a migratory race, that it is not given to all to die in sight of the "fair hills of holy Ireland," but that hundreds and thousands are compelled to go amongst the stranger, and to be subjected to the critical glance of free-thinkers, who identify every Irishman with Rome and Catholicity. Is it not well that we should show them that our religion is not a superstition, and that our love for it is not founded on ignorance ; that if we have been denied the blessings of education for seven centuries, we had amongst us the great civilising agent of the world—the Catholic Church ; that she supplied what our rulers denied ; and that at any moment we are prepared to enter the lists even against trained controversialists, and take our stand on the eternal principles of truth and justice to prove the teaching of the Church to be in all things consistent with the eternal verities of God ? This is what most of our fellow-countrymen have done in the large populous centres of America and England. But many, too, from want of education have betrayed themselves and their country, and prevaricated, because, finding themselves helpless before ridicule, they were made ashamed of the religion which they were unable to defend.

Again, we owe a duty to the grand old race from which we have sprung, of whose history, dark and melancholy though it be, we are so proud, and of whose future we have such great and well-founded hopes. It is a subject which it is difficult for any Irishman to approach without emotion. When we consider what

our race has suffered, and why it has suffered, the ferocity with which its enemies sought to destroy it, and its unflinching adhesion through the bitterest trials to the great principles of nationality and religion, we cannot help thinking that sooner or later the world at large will do it justice, and that the impartial historian of the future will have for his brightest page the record of the sufferings of our people for the highest and holiest principles that can govern the mind and stir the heart of man. Side by side with this fidelity to principle, the distinguishing characteristic of our race has always been a thirst for knowledge, a love for learning. It was so in times of old when the halls of Bangor and Lismore were thronged with students from all parts of the Continent, and Ireland held up, undimmed and unextinguished, the lamp of learning that had flickered and died out of Europe. It was so even under the penal laws, which proscribed learning even more rigidly than religion, and books were studied, where the Mass was read, under the friendly shade of the rock, or far out on the bleak and unfrequented moor. And it is so now when, all disabilities being removed, our people are free at last to indulge the national passion for knowledge. I do not believe that any race of men in the world could have made such progress in learning as the Irish in the fifty years of their freedom. In a period of time that would be required by any other nation to shake themselves free from the habits and instincts of serfdom, the Irish people have sprung into all the privileges and all the acquired tastes and attributes of free men. Even within the last ten years the ambition of the people has run far ahead of their resources. The learning and accomplishments, that ten years ago were supposed to be out of reach of the multitude, are now considered utterly inadequate to the wants of the multitude. Students are now familiar with subjects that were formerly the exclusive property of the professor. The demand is far beyond the supply. The cry of the dying Goethe for "More light! more light!" is now the cry

of the Irish people—more light to understand themselves, their rights, their wrongs, and their power—more light

to cleave a path to right  
Through the mouldering dust of ages,

more light till at last Ireland resumes her old privilege of enlightening the world, and, holding up the beacon lights of faith and knowledge, takes her rightful place amongst the nations of the earth in the vanguard of human progress.

It is to make you, gentlemen, worthy of yourselves, worthy of your religion, and worthy of your country, that this Institute has been established. We know the vast importance that attends the education of young men, we know what a power they are in every community, what great influence they wield for good or for evil ; and in inviting you to join this Institute, we have hopes that through your assistance we shall, in the words of Carlyle, " Make this little spot of God's world a little brighter, better and happier ". We utterly disclaim the intention of making this Institute a mere place of amusement, where a few hours may be spent with pleasure, but without profit. We have a higher ambition. We desire to make it the means of supplying to you a knowledge of all those subjects that are interesting to the modern world, and are familiar to the minds of educated men. We hope by monthly lectures to create a taste for such studies, and by monthly debates to train you to reason closely and logically, and to express your thoughts with accuracy and ease. In a word, to create a taste for literature, to foster, encourage and develop talent, and to engraft on the enthusiasm and subtlety of the national character a serious and earnest habit of thought ; here is our work, and with God's blessing we shall do it. You will perceive that, whilst our Institute is thoroughly Catholic, we shall not impose on our members any rigid rule of religious observances. We have already in the parish

two Confraternities that supply all the religious wants of the people. We earnestly desire that all the members of this Institute should become members of the Men's Confraternity, and it is with that hope we have refrained from making our rules in that respect so exacting as they would otherwise have been. And now one word about our future.

It is supposed by many that one of our national faults is a certain fickleness, a want of perseverance in any work we undertake. I cannot, in the face of one fact already mentioned, receive such a doctrine. I have said that we alone of all the peoples of the earth have been steadfast and faithful to principle. We alone of all nations have not apostatised. We have taken as our watchword the words of our Divine Master in the desert, when all the kingdoms of the world were offered Him as a bribe : "Get behind Me, Satan ! " And that word has been transmitted from father to son, and has come rolling along the centuries to us, strengthened and intensified by every profession of faith bravely uttered by the agonised but strong hearts of our martyred people. In some respects it is true we are careless ; but it is because up to this time we had so little to be careful about. Such was the answer of Father Burke to Mr. Froude. But give our people a reason and a motive for constant and sustained action, and they will be as determined in the pursuit of an object as any other race. I have no hesitation in saying that such a reason and such a motive is supplied to us ; and I have just as little hesitation in saying that you recognise it, and are determined that it will be at least no fault of yours if this Institute shall not fulfil the splendid promises it makes. We commit it with the fullest confidence to you. Difficulties of course will arise ; we shall not turn aside from them, but surmount them. If weak and timorous members shall become disheartened, we shall treat them as the captain of a merchantman treats women and children in an hour of peril. We shall hand them out with all respect. But we ourselves will

remain with the vessel to the last. And we shall be sustained by the consciousness, that humble and circumscribed though it be, we are engaged in a sublime and sacred work that is sanctioned and encouraged by wise and thoughtful men, consecrated by our own motives, and blessed by anticipation of the happy results that will accrue from it to ourselves, our friends, our faith, and our country.

## THE TWO CIVILISATIONS.

### I.

THERE is a poet in America named Walt Whitman, considered inspired by his friends, half insane by his enemies, and he has written a certain chaunt, called *Salut au monde*, in which he takes a most comprehensive, and, at the same time, minute view of the world, and all its wonders of men, and salutes all at the same time as his brothers. I often wonder what he would feel, could he stand on the quays of Queenstown, and see the floating cities that glide day after day into our port, and as silently depart, each with its freight of humanity gathered from every part of the civilised and even uncivilised world. To any reflective mind it is a strange and suggestive sight. What the mind of the poet conceived is brought directly under our eyes. Men of all nations under heaven are gathered together in those huge black vessels that steal into our harbours every morning, and as silently steal away at midday or in the evening; and many of those visitors of ours represent not only their own individuality, but are the originators of ideas which are revolutionising the world—the high priests of new philosophical systems—the centres towards which thousands, ay, even millions, are looking, very often in vain, for inspiration and light. In fact, if we had time or taste for these things, our transatlantic steamers would give us a perfect panorama of all the leaders of thought in every department of science, art, philosophy, and even religion.

I will, therefore, take you in imagination on the deck

of one of these ocean steamers ; and on a little group of men we will make a brief meditation.

— We move up in the tender and attach ourselves to the mighty ship which rises dark and gloomy from the waters, its black mass only broken by the small circular lights that speak suggestively of the terrible buffeting and drenching the good ship will have to bear before she anchors at her destination. And suddenly a sight breaks upon us which we cannot soon forget. For, as we touch the vessel, its dark profile is broken by the light of a thousand human faces, on each of which is written that strange, anxious look which you notice in persons who are leaving accustomed modes of life and embarking on new, and perhaps perilous, enterprises. And what a medley ! What strange pranks Mother Nature plays with "the human face divine" ! What mighty ingenuity she shows in moulding and casting the countenances of men, so that there is no mistaking one individual for another ! Lean and hungry Italian faces, from which centuries of poverty have beaten out the grand old Roman type of feature ; calm and heavy Teutonic faces that speak of easy lives and plenty of lager beer ; the high and angular Norwegian face that has been buffeted and withered by the storms which sweep up the fiords and gulfs of their rugged coasts ; here the face of an Armenian, who stood a month ago on the most sacred soil that feet ever pressed ; and here the olive features and white burnous of the Arab, who was baked a few weeks ago under the pyramids, and is now shivering in the cold east wind that is churning the waters into yellow foam. And here side by side are the two races, whom a strange destiny has linked together but whom Fate has kept sundered apart as widely as pole from pole—the tall and muscular Saxon, and the little, active, nervous form of the black-eyed and black-haired Celt. And here, too, are their descendants—the mixed race of Americans, who have inherited all the thoughtfulness of the Saxon and all the brightness of the Celt, and whose pale features and eager eyes

speak the national character—bright, alert, and speculative.

But we are moving. You can see the ridges fall away in white foam from the keen prow of the ship as the screw churns and tosses the waters on the stern. "Cast off" comes from the bridge high over our heads; and whilst the noble vessel moves forward in silent dignity on her course, the little tender sheers off at an angle to make the circuit homewards. And now I become suddenly aware that whilst I am soliloquising, I am in the midst of many tragedies, and probably, excepting the captain and the crew, the most unconcerned spectator on board. All around are very sad faces, filled with a yearning look towards the land they are leaving. Even the blue-black eyes of the merry Celt are filmed and clouded as they look for the last time, perhaps, on the green hills and purple mountains of Inisfail. Here is a lady whose society training in the most rigid conventionalism cannot withal prevent her hands from trembling, and her eyes from growing red with weeping. And here is a stalwart athlete trying to look supremely indifferent, but I notice some strange moisture gathering under his eyelids; and I know, if I spoke to him, his voice would quiver and break in his effort to reply. But it is no time now for useless regrets. The vessel of their fortunes and hopes is already far upon the waters. The grim shadows of Carlisle Fort frown upon her; and now she glides before the sunny walls of the lighthouse, and now she turns her broadside to the bay. She is looking straight to the west, walking the waters towards the Empire Republic, the mother of many nations. A thousand hearts are pulsing beneath her flag—each with its marvellous history of the past, its rich, beautiful dreams of the future. The stars are not more lonely in their orbits than these human hearts—each with its secrets sealed to all eyes but God's. The great wings of mighty storms are winnowing and sweeping the Atlantic before them. Billows are rolling towards them from far latitudes. Yet not

a single soul has a fear of reaching the promised land in safety. This little world—this microcosm on the waters—what is it but a type of humanity and the world? Or what is the world and humanity but a ship in the ocean of space?

However, it is not multitudes but individuals we have come to see—not races, but marked types and representatives of races—not the *hoi polloi* who fret their little hour upon the stage and sink into obscure graves, but the *anakes andron*—the kings of men, they who are stirring the great heart of the world with impulses that issue in healthy reform, or unhealthy revolution. And fortunately there are a few of these chosen minds here amongst our passengers. Men who, from the dark recesses of laboratories and museums, have strengthened a hundredfold the hands of their fellowmen, have annihilated distance on the globe, and tamed the terrible agents that stand at the beck of untamed Nature. Men who, from platforms, have thundered forth the ancient, but ever new, principle of a common humanity, and the right of every child of Adam to a place on this planet, with air enough to breathe, and room enough to swing his arms in—men who, by their words, have touched the great heart of the world, and made hoarse voices cheer, and brawny hands to strike approval, and tough hearts to vibrate with new emotions of revealed strength and power, and a possible happiness that may be far off, but yet shall be reached—poets and sages, patriots and dilettanti, political, scientific, and social revolutionists are here—and we shall just look at them, and then let them speak for themselves.

This age of ours is an age of revolutions. There is not a single branch, even of a single science, that has not been studied and investigated, with the result that our most carefully formed ideas even on scientific subjects have been obliged to undergo a complete transformation. Another peculiarity is, that there are specialists in every branch of science, art and literature; and that certain branches of science and art become the

fashion at certain periods, and exclude all others in the public mind as effectually as a new fashion in dress excludes those that are considered antiquated. And, again, as Solomon said, "there is nothing new under the sun," so there is scarcely a fashion in art or a discovery in science that was not quite familiar to the ancient Hellenists, who, under the warm sky of Greece and by the pleasant waters of the Mediterranean, were making daily pleasure of things, which in our days are the exclusive property of the highest circles of wealth and intelligence. For example, if there were one thing the ancient Greeks worshipped more than another, it was the Beautiful. What they called the *to Kalon* was the Divinity, whom they worshipped with all the passionate adoration of natures into which the Sun God had stricken his fire. The Beautiful in Nature—the Beautiful in mind and soul—the firmament glittering with stars, the meadows glittering with flowers, the wide levels of the sea glittering under the sunshafts—the dark eyes of men and women glittering under darker eyebrows; all these to these children of Nature were feasted on and worshipped as types and symbols of some rarer Beauty, unseen but yet to be revealed. These wonderful old Greeks have passed away; but here in the midst of our nineteenth-century civilisation is an apostle of æstheticism, and æsthetics or the science of the Beautiful is once more the fashion of men. You see over there leaning against the bulwarks of the vessel, a tall and dark young gentleman, with a huge sunflower in his buttonhole. He is gazing on the setting sun as if this were his last evening upon earth, and his eyes are dazzled with the lane of light that stretches to the horizon. He is the son of a Dublin oculist, and of a lady who sang the fiercest and loveliest battle-odes of that sad, that glorious period in Irish history which we call '48. He is, without doubt, the best ridiculed young man that has come before this cynical age. He is now going to be dreadfully disappointed with the Atlantic, and his mission is to evangelise the Americans with two

lectures on art that shall be repeated again and again, until the world grows tired even of laughing at him, and his adopted country takes him back to her bosom. Yet, although his mission shall be a failure, we must not suppose that there is not a deep substratum of truth underlying a vast superstructure of absurdity ; and by and by you shall hear another who has for fifty years preached much the same doctrines with far different success, and who, with many eccentricities, has won for himself a homage that is rarely given to a living celebrity.

The next department in the ascending scale is social science ; and here, walking arm in arm along the lee side of the ship, are two men whose ideas in some things are identical, and on others widely different, and who have said many things that have stirred many hearts. One is from San Francisco, and he used to be called a prophet by his admirers ; the other is from the County Mayo, and during the greater part of his life he has been styled a rebel and a felon. In physique they are not unlike. Dark and determined men, with deep eyes flashing under bushy eyebrows, but the right sleeve of the one hangs tenantless—the arm was left some years ago in the steel meshes of an English factory. The education of the one was matured under the bright dazzling sun of California ; the education of the other was finished in a convict's dress out on the bleak wastes of Dartmoor and in the blinding quarries of Portland. He has seen some terrible things, and has studied the strange riddle of humanity deep down in awful depths of suffering. Of him it might be said what the people of Verona used to say of Dante :—

*Eocovi l'uom ch'è stato all' Inferno.*

And hence men listen to him as they listen to no other, for they know how true is that saying of Goethe's :—

Who never ate his bread in sorrow,  
Who never spent the darksome hours  
Weeping and watching for the morrow,  
He knows you not, ye unseen powers.

But lest it should be tedious to paint for you portraits of all the different representatives of human thought who paced the deck this spring afternoon, it will suffice to say that there was scarcely a single fantasy of modern thought, sensible or whimsical, reasonable or extravagant, that had not a disciple here. Followers of Herbert Spencer, who has reproduced in our time the ancient Athenian worship of the "unknown God"—followers of Frederic Harrison, who disagrees with Herbert Spencer, and takes great trouble to tell the world that Agnosticism is a very different thing from Positivism—a very considerable number of believers in the "evolution theory" and the Simian origin of man—a large gathering of latter-day infidels who are trying to resuscitate the ancient theories of Epicurus and Democritus—a few ladies who belong to the new sect of Theosophists, and talk glibly about what they call "esoteric Buddhism"—and moving here and there young intellectual Americans, fresh from the German universities, and holding all European philosophers very cheap compared with the humanitarianism and pantheism of their beloved master, Ralph Waldo Emerson. And, if you ask me what could have brought such representative men together, I will ask you to believe that they were *en route* for Montreal, where the last session of the British Association was held.

It is growing chill, and we descend to the saloon. Just as we enter, a voice, with a foreign accent, exclaims in conclusion of some interesting conversation:—

"Vorwärts! Vorwärts! This is the watchword of our century. Does not your own Poet Laureate proclaim it to you—even to you, conservative Englishmen, immovable as the pyramids, insensible as their granite?—

Not in vain the distance beacons, forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of  
change.

Through the shadow of the globe, we sweep into the outer day,  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Locksley Hall.*

"Yes," said a deep, melodious voice that came floating down along the table. "Yes! forward is the cry—but whither?"

All looked up in amazement, and saw a venerable man, whose high forehead, clad in the honours of seventy summers, betokened the very highest powers of thought. There was a hush for a moment. Then came a bustling and a shuffling of the feet, and a harsh, strident voice, pitched to the highest intonation, spoke. It was Mr. Verdun, scientist, Fellow of the Royal Society, London.

"How can you ask such a question?" he exclaimed. "Whither should we go, but where the finger of science is pointing? With all the wonders we have shown you, why will you not believe us? We have as yet only touched the fringe of Nature's garment, and behold what she has revealed to us, what we have revealed to you. We have captured the lightnings, and compelled them to carry our messages around the earth; we have weighed the sun, we have put the ponderous planets in the scales; we have shown you in the meteoric stones the fragments of former satellites that swung their huge bulk round the earth; we have taken the suns of other systems, whose distance is so great that it paralyses the imagination, and told you the very materials of which they are composed; we have walked among the nebulæ of the milky way, and put the very rings of Saturn upon our fingers. We have torn open the bosom of the earth and shown you in stony manuscripts the handwriting of Nature in the days of the mammoth and leviathan; and as the service of man is the only service we acknowledge, we have bade the 'little god of this planet' to rest from labour, for Nature shall be compelled to work for him. For him we harness its most dreadful powers, and bid them take him from place to place with a speed that outstrips the hurricane; for him we have paved a pathway on the mighty waters, and he laughs at the waves that thunder harmlessly over his head, and he spares his soft fingers in labours that are unworthy of him, for hands of iron and teeth of steel rend and tear and weave

again garments of royal purple and tapestries that might hang before the windows of heaven. And as all things are the same to us, for all is but matter in the end, we have divided and subdivided your creation until we have reduced it to an atom that can only be seen in a microscope, and then we have built up the same creation again even to its crowning glory—the mind of man. But you—you to whom we have revealed these things—you for whose advantage we have toiled and laboured—whose silly minds we have emancipated from antiquated superstitions about morality and virtue—you whom we have delivered from the debasing pursuits of arts and music and poetry—”

“ Stop ! ” said the old man, with a vehemence that startled us all, “ stop this blasphemy against things you do not and cannot understand. It is true you, men of science, have revealed certain secrets of Nature, but how ? By laying sacrilegious hands on her awful face ! You have cut and delved, and maimed and sacrificed Nature and her children, until her beautiful face is scarred and blotted by you, and the hideous ugliness has fallen upon the souls of the children of men. Wordsworth spoke with contempt of old of those ‘ who would peep and botanise on their mothers’ graves ’; but you, from an advanced platform of scientific inquiry, would not only sacrifice to your sinful curiosity the poor beast that licks your hand in his agony, but you would even exhume your father’s remains for the sake of an experiment. And after all, what have you done ? Does the sun give more light or heat to our earth since you discovered that he is a furnace of liquid fire, flinging out tongues of flame to every part of the system which he rules ? Are the planets more brilliant since you discovered that in reality they are as dull as the earth itself ? Is mankind better or happier since you drove him from the green fields and the blue skies to the cloudy and choking city, which by a kind of infernal chemistry drags the strength from his limbs and the blood from his veins ? Is childhood more pure and joyful since you brought it into your factories,

and bade it stretch forth its soft and tiny hands to grasp and control mighty limbs of steel and iron, and chased the roses from its cheeks, and the laughter from its lips, and the light from its eyes, and the music from its life, and the tender love of God from its heart? Yes, you can analyse Nature in your test-tubes, you can spy at her in your microscopes, but can you see her with your own eyes, or receive her into your hearts? You can tell us what she makes her wonders of, and how she makes them, and how long she takes about it. But you cannot tell us what these wonders are like when they are made. When God said 'Let there be light, and there was light, and God saw that it was good,' was He thinking, as He saw thus, of the exact velocity it travelled at, or the exact laws it travelled by, which you, wise men, are at infinite pains to discover? Or was He thinking of something else, which you take no pains to discover at all, of how it clothed the wings of the morning with silver, and the feathers of the evening with gold? Is water, think you, a nobler thing to the modern chemist, who can tell you exactly what gases it is made of, and nothing more; or to the painter, who could not tell you at all what it is made of, but who did know and could tell you what it is made—what it is made by the sunshine and the cloud-shadow and the storm-wind—who knew how it paused by the stainless mountain trout-pool, a living crystal over streams of flickering amber, and how it broke itself turbid with its choirs of turbulent thunder when the rocks card it into foam, and the tempest sifts it into spray? Ah, masters of modern science," he continued, "you can tell us what pure water is made of, but, thanks to your drains and mills, you cannot tell us where to find it. You can, no doubt, explain to us all about the sunsets; but the smoke of your towns and factories has made it impossible for us to see one.<sup>1</sup> Here to-day is a beauteous landscape, with its luxurious colourings, its broad rich meadows, carpeted with wild flowers, its ivies and

<sup>1</sup> *The New Republic*, by W. H. Mallock.

mosses draping its wells and waterfalls, its clusters of violets in the shade. Here in its clefts and in its dingles, in blanched heights and woody hollows, above all by its floretted banks, and the foam-crisped wavelets of its streams, the traveller finds his joy and peace. But here comes your scientific engineer and an army of navvies, and with a snuff-box full of dynamite blows all this loveliness into Erebus and diabolic night for ever. And close in their wake, into the very heart and depth of all this beauty, and mercilessly bending with every bend of it, with noise and shrieking and howling, your railway drags its close-clinging damnation. The rocks are not big enough to be tunnelled—they must be blasted away ; the brook is not wide enough to be bridged—it is covered in, and is thenceforward a drain ; and the only scenery left for you in the once delicious valley is alternation of embankments of clay with pools of slime. All this is bad enough for us ; but what is to become of our children ? What favours of high destiny has your civilisation to promise her children who have been reared in mephitic fume, and not in the mountain breeze ; who have for playground heaps of ashes, instead of banks of flowers ; whose Christmas holidays brought them no memory, whose Easter sun no hope ; and from whose existence of the present and the future commerce has filched the earth, and science blotted out the sky ? ”<sup>1</sup>

A deep silence followed the outburst of indignant eloquence. The scientist fidgeted and tossed about in his chair, and somehow every one felt that science was a kind of criminal that, under pretence of doing a great deal of good, had in reality effected an infinity of evil. But the stream of the conversation had tended so much towards the lines within which Mr. George is working out his theories, that every one looked to him to say something on the important subject they were discussing.

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin.

## II.

Mr. George rose slowly, and in a grave, methodical manner he said :—

“ You have raised the question of questions—the one supreme problem that is stirring and agitating the world to its deepest depths. *Forward* is the cry ; but ‘ the farther we go the deeper we sink into the sad complexity of a civilisation where wealth and want in sad companionship are seen side by side, where the few are glutted and the many are starving, and the gifts of the Creator, and the improvements of man, alike seem only to increase the misery of the multitude. I do not find fault with science ; but I say that so long as society needs readjustment, as it does, so long as our social laws and systems are completely out of harmony with the eternal laws of justice and truth, science and all the other ministers to man will be angels of destruction, and not messengers of mercy. In the very centres of our civilisation to-day are want and suffering enough to make sick at heart whoever does not close his eyes or steel his nerves. We dare not put the blame on Mother Nature, or upon our great Father, God. Supposing that at our prayers Nature assumed a mightier power than it possesses, supposing that at the behest by which the universe sprang into being there should glow in the sun a greater heat, new virtue fill the air, fresh vigour the soil ; that for every blade of grass that now grows two should spring up, and the seed that now increases fiftyfold should increase a hundredfold. Would poverty be abated and want relieved ? Manifestly no ! The result would be in our present environments, that the luxury of a few would be increased, the misery of the many would be deepened. This is no bare supposition. The conclusion comes from facts with which we are quite familiar. Within our own times, under our very eyes, that power which is above all, and in all, and through all ; that power of which the whole world is but the manifestation ; that power which maketh all

things, and without which is made nothing that is made, has increased the bounty which men may enjoy as truly as though the fertility of Nature had been increased. So my friend here, Mr. Verdun, has declared. Into the mind of one came the thought which harnessed steam for the service of mankind. To the wiser ear of another was whispered the secret that compels the lightning to bear a message round the globe. In every direction have the laws of matter been revealed ; in every part of industry have arisen arms of iron and fingers of steel, whose effect in the production of wealth has been precisely the same as an increase in the fertility of Nature. What is the result ? The few are more powerful, the many more helpless ; under the shadow of the marble mansion is the vile kraal of the working-man ; and silks and furs are ruffled by contact with rags in the streets.<sup>1</sup> Ay ! even your philosophers have told us that all this is as it should be—that success in life is the test of virtue, and that the weak must go to the wall. Yes ! your society is like the Hindoo idol-car, that flings to the earth and crushes those who have not power to keep pace with it. In the amphitheatres of the Roman people, when the gladiator was mortally wounded, the people passed sentence upon him, and commanded that he should die. In the world of to-day the same cruelty prevails. The moment a man sinks under the burden of this world's cares, little pity has the world for him. And now, gentlemen," he concluded, " perhaps as you have allowed me to speak so far, you would just hear another who has said exactly the same thing but in verse :—

#### IO VICTIS.

I sing the hymn of the conquered who fell in the battle of life—  
The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died overwhelmed in  
the strife ;  
Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the resounding  
acclaim

<sup>1</sup> Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*.

Of the nations was lifted in chorus, whose brows wore the chaplet of fame—  
 But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary, the broken in heart  
 Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and desperate part.  
 Whose youth bore no flower of its branches, whose hopes burned in ashes away ;  
 From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped at, who stood at the dying of day  
 With the work of their life all around them, unpitied, unheeded, alone,  
 With Death swooping down o'er their failure, and all but their faith overthrown.

While the voice of the world shouts its chorus, its power for those who have won,  
 While the trumpet is sounding triumphant, and high to the breeze and the sun  
 Gay banners are waving, hands clapping, and hurrying feet  
 Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors, I stand on the field of defeat  
 In the shadows 'mongst those who are fallen, and wounded and dying—and there  
 Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-knitted brow, breathe a prayer.  
 Hold the hand that is helpless, and whisper : They only life's victory win  
 Who have fought the good fight and have vanquished the demon that tempts us within ;  
 Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that the world holds on high,  
 Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight—if need be, to die.

Say history, who are life's victors ? Unroll thy long annals, and say  
 Are they those whom the world called the victors, who won the success of the day ?  
 The martyr or hero ? The Spartans, who fell at Thermopylae's tryst,  
 Or the Persians of Xerxes ? His judges, or Socrates ? Pilate, or Christ ?<sup>1</sup>

“ Would to heaven that once and for ever this great gospel of humanity were accepted ! ‘ If it were so, the

<sup>1</sup> *Blackwood's Magazine.*

possibilities of the future were unlimited ! With want destroyed, with greed changed to noble passion, with the fraternity that is born of equality taking the place of the jealousy and fear that now array men against each other ; with mental power loosed by conditions that give to the humblest comfort and leisure, and who shall measure the heights to which our civilisation may soar ? Words fail the thought ! It is the golden age which poets have sung, and high-raised seers have told in metaphor ! It is the golden vision that has always haunted men with gleams of fitful splendour ! It is what he saw whose eyes at Patmos were closed in a trance ! It is the culmination of Christianity—the city of God upon earth, with its walls of jasper and its gates of pearl ! It is the reign of the Prince of Peace.''<sup>1</sup>

"Fine talk ! fine talk !" said a young man whom I had not hitherto seen. He seemed scarcely more than a boy ; yet there was a vehemence and earnestness about him which commanded respect. And the man that is in earnest about anything is always sure of a respectful hearing. "Fine talk !" said he again, " if to-morrow were the millennium ! You preach a doctrine of science," said he, turning to Mr. Verdun, " but in the same breath you degrade humanity, and belie the sanctity of man's origin and the grandeur of his future destiny. And you," said he, turning to Mr. Ruskin, " advocate culture and refinement as a salve for all our wounds, forgetting that the higher your cultured men and women advance the nearer they are to barbarism as loathsome as Rousseau suggested. And you, Mr. George, preach a Gospel of Humanity. That is the best teaching yet. But so far as I can see, Humanity left to itself is perpetually disgracing itself. From every side what do we hear but charges and counter-charges of cruelty and brutality flung from the poor against the rich, and from the rich back again against the poor ? Take the opinion of the one man who has voiced the

<sup>1</sup> Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*.

sentiments of the century more clearly than any other, and what does he say?—

Science sits under her olive, and slurs at the days gone by !  
 When the poor are hovelled and hustled together each sex like  
 swine,  
 When only the ledger lives, and when only not *all* men lie,  
 Peace in her vineyard, yes ! but a company forges the wine.  
 And the vitriol madness flushes up to the ruffian's head,  
 Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
 And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
 And the spirit of murder reeks in the very veins of life.  
 And sleep must lie down armed, for the villainous centre-bite  
 Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,  
 While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps as he sits  
 To pestle a poisoned poison behind the crimson lights.”<sup>1</sup>

“ He wrote that fifty years ago when he was a young man,” said Mr. Verdun. “ We have progressed since then.”

“ Did he ? ” said the young man, with a sneer ; “ did he ? But what did he write yesterday, in his old age ? Listen :—

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set us meek ones in their  
 place,  
 Pillory wisdom in your markets, and pelt your offal in her face.  
 Tumble Nature heel over head, and yelling with the yelling street  
 Set the feet above the brain, and swear the brain is in the feet.  
 Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer,  
 Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure,  
 Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism—  
 Forward, forward, ay, and backward, downward too into the  
 abyss.  
 Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men.  
 Have we risen from out the beast ? then back into the beast again.

There is your Literature ! Now here's your Progress !

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,  
 Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.  
 There the master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily  
 bread,  
 There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, *Maud*.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'Forward!' yours are hope and  
youth, but I—  
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry.  
Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night,  
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.<sup>1</sup>

"So would I! But the light won't come! And neither science nor culture nor humanity will bring it! For my part, I have thought the whole thing over, and I agree with old Thomas Carlyle, when he declared, looking up at the splendours of heaven and down on the gloom of earth, 'Eh! it's a sad sight!' I agree with George Eliot in that famous remark she made to her bosom friend in her old age: 'There is but one remedy, my child, for the sad race of men—one grand simultaneous act of suicide!'"

This was rather too much, I thought; so I went on deck. It was a glorious night. Far, far down the horizon great masses of cloud, their blackness softened into purple by the lingering light, overtopped each other, and built up their airy battlements high into the zenith. Everywhere beside, the sky was a pale liquid azure, through which the dim stars shone, and peace, Nature's sublime peace, slept over all. I strolled up and down the deck, alone with my thoughts, and these thoughts were of the strange discussion I had heard. Who was right?—or who was even nearest the truth—apostles of humanity, of science, and of culture? Had they found the great central secret of the universe, or were they, after all, but blind leaders of the blind—men puffed up with knowledge and pride, to whom the great Revelation should never come? I confess my sympathies were altogether with the prophet of humanity. Yet I knew, and knew well, that all his wealth of sterling probity and enthusiasm could never reduce his theories to practice—it would be all in vain:—

The still, sad music of humanity,  
Like moanings of a midnight sea,

<sup>1</sup>Tennyson, *Locksley Hall: Forty years after.*

would still be heard, and still would the words of the poet continue :—

For morning never wore to eve,  
But some poor human heart did break.

And yet how could the Almighty Creator have framed this marvellous universe, with all its splendours, for a race of splenetic and unhappy men? Look around! what a miracle of splendour! The great moon is lifting itself above the waste of waters, and flinging a rippling splendour over the waves. She is scarved and clothed with fleecy clouds, which she drops one by one, until now she looks forth the acknowledged empress of the night, and the stars grow pale and draw in their lights when they behold her. The silence which Nature loves is upon all things—that silence which Nature never breaks but in music—the music of the birds and streams, and the solemn Gregorian of the ocean! I can hear the splash of the water at the stern, and the throbbing of the powerful engines, that with every sweep of the propeller drives the giant ship through the waters. I can hear the tinkling of a piano in the saloon, and a lady's voice, and the first notes of *La ci darem la mano*. My friends have turned from philosophy to music. So much the better. But here, too, is another sound, which I certainly have heard before, but I cannot locate it. It seems to be creeping along the side of the vessel, and even to be rising from the water. It pauses and swells in rhythmical rotation, like the sweep of a storm in a pine forest, or the mournful cadences of the sea, as it thunders in cataracts on the beach. And there is a something about it which reminds you of a Greek chorus. The tiny monotone of one voice, and the hoarse murmur of many. It comes not from the saloon or deck of the steamer; not from the wind, there is none; not from the waves—the shores are fifty miles distant. Let us look forward. Yes, here it is coming unmistakably from the dark depths of the steerage.

We descend. What a sight! All along the sides of the vessel, pale and angular Norwegian faces, lean and hungry Italian faces, calm and heavy Teutonic faces, are looking—at what? A spectacle for angels and men, and even for philosophers! An aged Irish peasant, clad in rough, homespun frieze, and without any ornament save the glory of white hair that streams upon his shoulders, is surrounded by a group of Irish men, women and children. Their heads are reverently bent, and the deep bass voice of the men and the light tenors of the women and children blend in touching harmony. And what are they chaunting? Not the *La ci darem* of an Italian maestro of yesterday, but a certain canticle that was composed by an archangel some nineteen centuries ago, and his audience was a woman, but blessed above all and among all. And the chorus is another canticle, composed by a chorus of 100,000 voices fourteen centuries ago, and on the streets of an Asiatic city, when the gates of the Cathedral were thrown open, and mitred prelates came forth, and the people anticipated the decision of their pastors, and proclaimed the woman of Nazareth to be the mother of the living God. And these two canticles go on and are repeated in the musical murmur of human voices, until they conclude with the great hymn of praise to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, who are and have been and shall for ever be! The canticle of the Rosary is familiar to these poor exiles. They learned it at their mothers' knees—they sang it in the lonely whitewashed chapel on the Irish hills—they will carry it in their hearts and on their lips, and, like the children of Israel by the waters of Babylon, they will sing that song of Sion in a strange land!

Once more upon deck—this time with some new sensations. Here I find myself right in the midst of two civilisations.

The civilisation of the saloon, though in concrete form it dates but from yesterday, is but a series of broken lights, caught from the suspended or rejected

philosophies of the past. The mysticism of Plato, the doubtings of Epicurus, the blank materialism of Lucretius, have been revived in our time, and find issue in speculative and intellectual Atheism, and in such barren and hopeless solutions of the great problem of human happiness as those to which we have just listened. Science, groping with a thousand arms in every direction, finds itself even in the material world confronted by a wall of blackness, impenetrable, insurmountable; and somehow the wayward movements of humanity, which it hoped to bring under cosmical discipline, break away from its arbitrary laws, and rush into chaos and disorder. With every appliance that wealth can afford, with all the facilities that private patronage and governmental support can give, with all the enthusiasm with which the public follow each fresh advance, and hail each fresh revelation, modern Pagan civilisation is inconsistent and illogical in its teachings, false in its professions, and a dismal failure in its attempts to meet the moral and intellectual needs of men. A teacher without knowledge, a prophet without inspiration, a magician who has lost his charm, its judgment is the reverse of that which fell on the Jewish prophet, for it curses where it seeks to bless.

Far different is the civilisation which is represented by the humble occupants of the steerage, far different the philosophy on which it unconsciously rests, far different the gigantic effects which it produces and will never cease to produce. These poor exiles do not know that the philosophy which they profess is the steady light of reason that burned in the mind of Aristotle centuries before Christ, and was afterwards incorporated into the scholastic teaching of the Church. They do not know that their faith is buttressed by weighty arguments which all the ingenuity of satanic intelligence has not shaken, though put forth in language so eloquent that the soul refuses to forget its music, even when the reason has recognised its falsehood. They do not know that Augustine and Aquinas, that Jerome and Bernard,

exhausted all the riches of their matchless intellects to illuminate and adorn the faith which they, in all simplicity, profess ; and that in the full white light of the nineteenth century such colossal geniuses as Newman and Manning, having passed through every phase of speculative belief or unbelief, have become at last, in the full vigour and maturity of mental power, little children, professing the same doctrines the exiles hold, and finding their strength in the same prayers the exiles are just repeating. They only know that the history of their faith is this. A morning of sunshine, when, like the haze over a summer sea, the sunshine of faith lay warmly over the land ; and then a long night of darkness and gloom, streaked with fire, into which their historians plunging, have only heard, as Richter in his dream, the rain falling pitilessly in the abysses, and the cry of a despairing people, " Father in heaven, where art Thou ? " From the gloom and the storm and the shadow, from the wreck and ruin of seven centuries, they have saved the memory and tradition of the loftiest ideas that can guide the principles and sway the emotions of men. And now at last emancipated, about to tread on free soil, to breathe the free air, under the pulsing of a free flag, they will be given an opportunity of testing and showing, side by side with the barrenness of Pagan civilisation, the fruitfulness of the Christian ideal. For " Forward," too, is the motto of these exiles ; and their eyes, wet with the despair of the past, are straining after the hope of the future. Let us follow them. In a few days, masters and servants, the wise ones and the foolish, will be hustled together for a moment on the quays of New York, and then will separate. The masters will go into their drawing-rooms and counting-houses, the servants into the kitchens and workshops. The masters will hang their splendid rooms with Oriental tapestries, and wonderful pictures of actresses and opera singers, of horses and dogs, will gleam from the gilded walls. The servants will hang on the whitewash of their attics some penny prints, but they

will be pictures of angels and saints. The masters will write and lecture on humanity and philanthropy. The servants know nothing of these things, but they will build with their hard earnings convents, colleges, asylums and magnificent hospitals, where the highest medical skill will minister to suffering humanity, where holy nuns will lay their soft hands on the throbbing brows of the sick, and priests will whisper to dying ears the only message that can bring solace to the stricken. The masters will build superb palaces for themselves, glistening in white marble ; and, with a kind of unconscious irony, the servants will erect side by side with these palaces, mighty temples which look down with disdain on these abodes of mortals, and whose glittering spires, like fingers of fire, teach to these proud masters the lesson of the kitchen and the attic, that "forward" means "upward," or else a rushing towards eternal destruction. And some day, when the sun is shining very brightly, the masters will come down from their high places and they will stand on the mosaic pavement of these temples, and they will stare and wonder at their marvellous beauty—the carving and the fluting and foliating of the pillars, the white glimmering statues of saints ; the poems that are wrought in the stained glass of lancelights and rose windows. But they will never know that all this architectural loveliness was wrought by the prayers and faith of the rough-handed labourers on the quays and railways, and the modest Irish girls who minister to their own lordly wants at home. Unnoticed and unrecognised, they carry on the great process of civilisation save when some great seer, like Emerson, points to their work and tells his countrymen that even the material prosperity of their great Republic has been built by the hands of the Irish race. And not only in America, but in Australia and New Zealand, in "the summer isles of Eden" that slumber on the broad bosom of the Pacific, in every region that is hallowed by the light of the Southern Cross, the same miracle is wrought by the same consecrated race.

To them has been whispered the great mediæval secret that built Cologne Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, the secret that has placed St. Patrick's Cathedral a shining symbol in the heart of the most worldly of modern cities—the secret that made the Irish miners of Australia take the Cathedral of Sydney three times from the teeth of the flames, and three times fling it higher and higher into the blue vault of heaven. And the spiritual influence of the race is quite equal to the material. Wherever they go, they shed around them the light of a faith that is almost vision, of purity unassailable, of strong enthusiasm for what is just and right, of fierce hatred for what is cruel and wrong, and a passionate love for that hallowed isle in the Northern seas, where they believe that every blade of grass that grows springs from the relics of a hero or a saint. And who can doubt that if truth is great and must prevail, if all these wonders are manifestations of a supernatural mission and a supernatural power—if they are evidences that the faith these exiles hold is the only philosophy on which civilisation can be built—who can doubt that the final revolution in the history of the world will be effected by the silent forces these exiles wield—by the new life they will quicken, by the contempt they will pour on the idols of a vanishing philosophy, and by the mastery in every department of religious and scientific thought they will infallibly win? Let the world and the leaders of modern thought say what they please. To my mind it is certain, as if written with a finger of fire on the firmament of heaven, that the only civilising agency in the world to-day is the Catholic Church, working chiefly through the apostles of the Irish race.

Whilst I am thus thinking of them, they are sunk in profound slumber. They are dreaming of the purple heather and the yellow gorse—of the pattern and the dance—of the white-haired mother who stretched her hands in a long farewell from the cabin door.

It is just striking twelve. I hear steps coming up the

companionway from the saloon. Three men stand before me in the moonlight.

"I tell you," said one, "the kings of the future are the men of science."

"No," said the second, "but the men of culture, education and refinement."

"Nay, nay," said Mr. George, "but they in whose hearts are found some deep echoes of the great voice of humanity."

"Not even these," thought I, "but the men of faith and prayer."

## THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF O'CONNELL'S DEATH.

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? Not as cowards are wont to die, hath Abner died. Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet loaden with fetters; but as men fall before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall. And all the people repeating it, wept over him" (2 Kings iii. 38, 39).

THESE were the words in which David the king announced to his people the death of a prince in Israel; and these might aptly have been the words, which, wafted from Genoa to Ireland, would have told a mourning people how the greatest of their leaders, and the most eloquent of their tribunes, had passed from labour unto rest. And after the lapse of half a century, in which this people has passed through many vicissitudes, that have not lessened nor dimmed their grateful memory of him who was their deliverer, might we not say to-day, "Know ye not that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel?" And if we do not lift up our voices like the king, and weep, at least we must renew our grateful remembrance for priceless favours, that were won for us by the indomitable courage and the transcendent gifts of our great Catholic leader. But here let me change the application of the text, and, instead of apostrophising the dead Tribune for a personal prerogative of liberty, let me say to the Irish people, "Your hands are not bound, nor your feet loaden with fetters"; for it was the hands of the dead that struck the shackles from your limbs, and gave you, the Irish people, that highest and noblest privilege of conscience

—the right to serve your God according to those principles which you deem more precious than your life.

There is put before us, therefore, to-day, this great luminous figure, that, rising out of the darkness and dismal abysses of Irish history, has not made the darkness more profound, but dissipated it; for it is the privilege of small minds to accentuate their importance by comparisons, but of great minds to be lost in the brilliancy and magnitude of their work. To those who knew O'Connell, he is the memory of a grand personality, whose transcendent greatness has not grown less in the perspective of time; to us, who never saw him, he is a vision of heroism and power, passing victorious over the frauds and violence of malignant enemies; to future generations, he will still be the embodiment of great power, used for rightful principle, and his name will be invoked by generations yet unborn, as a watch-word for civil and religious liberty.

It would be presumptuous to investigate the motives which influenced the Vicar of Christ in suggesting to Irish Catholics the propriety of celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of O'Connell's death. Perhaps they will be indicated as we proceed. But it is a consoling reflection that the arms of Pius IX. were extended to welcome to the capital of Christendom the champion of religious liberty; and that his great successor, whose finger appears to be on the pulse of nations, has thought right, amidst the threatening of great revolutions and the trembling expectation of nations, who ask one another, "What's next?" to signalise the closing years of a great Pontificate by prayer for the soul, and praise for the memory of him who was a great lay-pontiff, and who understood, best of all men, how to reconcile the principles which the world is always placing in antagonism—loyalty to God's Church and fidelity to our country.

It is the teaching of all history that every race, and principally the chosen ones, has had to pass through alternations of slavery and deliverance; and it has passed

into a proverb, that it is only in the very extremity of their distress that a Deliverer has been sent. When the tale of bricks was doubled for the captive Israelites, Moses appeared. And surely if ever a saviour was needed by a nation, it was when, in the dawn of this century, Ireland lay bound hand and foot at the feet of her mistress and conqueror. It is difficult for us, who enjoy comparative freedom, to understand the despair and the smothered anger of our people, when after the disbanding of the Volunteers, the Insurrection of '98, and the passing of the Act of Union, all the disabilities of Irish Catholics, in spite of hopes previously held out, were accentuated by sworn protests of kings and ministers that, come what would, these disabilities should never be removed. Once and again a great, generous mind, like Grattan's, strove to enfranchise the Irish people; but every effort was doomed to defeat, and every defeat only riveted more closely the fetters of the conquered race. Strong, vigorous protests were made by prelates and those in power, who felt the shame of their subjection and the stigma of their slavery; but in vain. A Government, always tenacious of ill-gotten privileges, steeled itself against plea of orator and prayer of prelate, until one of the latter, the great Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, declared that "if an insurrection raged from the Causeway to Cape Clear, no Catholic prelate would fulminate a sentence of excommunication"; and another, the gentle Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Murray, declared in his cathedral in Marlborough Street: "The contemplation of the wrongs of my countrymen makes my soul burn within me". When grave prelates spoke so strongly, you may imagine how the less reposeful spirits of the people flamed up, for one instant, into the heat of red revolution and revenge, and then died away in the ashes of despair.

It was just at this crisis that a young Dublin barrister who had been educated in a French Seminary, and had studied law at Lincoln's Inn, London, saw two careers opening before him. The one had every promise of

success ; the other every sign and omen of failure. The one beckoned to wealth, honour, dignity. The other to poverty, disgrace, possibly a prison. There was every reason to hope that the name of the young barrister might be enrolled with such immortallities as the names of Flood, Grattan, Yelverton. There was every reason to fear that it might go down to posterity with only the dim aureole that hangs around the memories of our patriot dead. It was a question of law or liberty—the law of the land or the liberty of the people ; a selfish career culminating in perishable glory ; or a self-sacrificing career ending in defeat and the immortality of honour. It was a critical moment for Ireland—that in which the young barrister balanced these alternatives. Thank God, like the prophet of old, he heard the voices of eternity, and, disdaining all lower and lesser ambitions, he flung in his lot with the destiny of the conquered and martyred race. It is true, that choice spirits had walked the rough way before him. It is true, that all the consecrated and canonised spirits of the earth have had to choose the bitter before the sweet, ignominy before honour. But we must remember, when calculating the nobility of O'Connell, that all natural ambition would have led him to walk the easy ways of honour and preferment, rather than the narrow ways of thankless toil and unrequited sacrifice.

And, if ever a soul might have been daunted by the difficulties of the task it had undertaken, it might have been O'Connell's. He undertook the task, which only the angels in Scripture performed, of rolling back the stone from the sepulchre of a martyred people, and summoning the dead to life. And to do so, he had to cancel the history of three centuries, and to face a most inexorable despotism that was pitiless in its barbarity, and unscrupulous in its ministers and instruments. The very names of O'Connell's worst opponents, even history, which loves evil things, has willingly blotted out. On the other hand, was a nation not sick unto death, but already clothed in the cerements of the

grave. It needed all the faith of the prophet of old to believe that these dead bones could live again. Had he a strong, virile people behind him, O'Connell would have still appeared to have been desperate in undertaking the task of wresting their rights from the Government; but, with a bloodless and famished race behind him, nothing surely, but an inspiration from heaven, could have justified him in undertaking the work of their emancipation. He succeeded; and we measure the greatness of his success by the difficulties he had to surmount. He succeeded; and we calculate his prowess by the magnitude of the obstacles he overcame. He succeeded; in spite of the awful malignity of his opponents, who had recourse to every vile subterfuge to discredit him and supplant him. He succeeded, in spite of the almost incurable indifference of the prostrate people. And his success was absolute and perfect. The dead bones did clothe themselves with flesh, and became a disciplined and irresistible army. His voice rang through the land like the trumpet of the archangel, and faces were uplifted to him, radiant with hope; a new light dawned in eyes that had only seen the blackness of despair; fettered hands were lifted up to him; and the voice of the nation grew from a wail of despair to a shout of defiance and triumph. But you who remember, and we who imagine, his triumphal marches through the land, the majesty of his figure, the ring of his voice, the inspiration of his words, the magnetism of his great personality, as he swayed the vast multitudes that hung upon his lips; ah, we can form no idea of the heart-burnings of the great leader, when, in the silence of his closet, every taunt came back to burn him, every vile epithet of the English press stung him; and he had to measure and to cope with the criticism of his own people, and the treachery of small minds who could never rise to the lofty stature of his genius or nobility.

Twenty-five years of such labour and sacrifice rolled by, and the year 1828 found O'Connell as buoyant and

hopeful as when in 1803 he began his glorious Crusade. Nay, more so. For surely it was a hopeful spirit that contested Clare in that year, and a dauntless spirit that won it. And when, armed with the mandate of the electors, he strode into the very citadel of the enemy and defied them, it was felt that half the cause for which he struggled was won.

There have been two great historical, because revolutionary, scenes witnessed in the House of Commons—the one was dramatic, but valueless; the other was dramatic, but it entailed vast consequences. The one was, when Cromwell strode into the House with an armed mob, and bade his soldiers "Take away that bauble," meaning the Speaker's mace; the other was, when O'Connell took up the Oath of Apostasy, read it, tore it in shreds, and declared that "one part of it he knew to be false, the other he believed not to be true". The House was startled from its staid respectability, ministers stormed, the press thundered, there were threats of treason and the Tower. O'Connell went back to his constituents, returned armed again with their mandate; and in the following year he saw the whole edifice of British intolerance crumbling before him, and a reluctant minister demanding and obtaining from a still more reluctant king the Charter of Catholic Emancipation.

It was a victory greater than that of Blenheim or Waterloo. And it was a victory won unaided. But I am wrong. O'Connell had two invisible allies besides the powers that were working with him from above. The great ones of the earth had heard, in the dawn of the century, two voices that could neither be despised nor ignored. The one was the voice of the American, the other the voice of the French Revolution. The one uttered its solemn protest against injustice, and its solemn demand for liberty, with all the reverence and decorum that the great crusade for freedom demanded; and, even amidst the thunder of cannon and the fury of fight, the patriotism of America enforced, but bounded its claims, with all the reserve demanded by the prin-

ciples of religion and the traditions of their race. The other was a truth "clad in hell fire". The sacred voice of liberty was drowned in wantonness and libertinism, as the sacred figure of liberty was profaned and polluted on the altars of Notre Dame. Yet both were voices whose meaning could neither be mistaken nor ignored. The ark of freedom was carried by enthusiastic people around the walls of ancient despotisms; and they were heaving and trembling before it. Even British institutions, that are supposed to be impregnable in their cohesion and solidity, felt the effects. Then, at the voice of the Irish people, heard from monster gatherings, caught up by the press, and thundered in the ears of Englishmen by O'Connell, the citadel of British intolerance was shaken and fell; and Irish Catholics had the glory of winning back the priceless heritage of religious liberty for themselves.

Yes, and for the world. For I do not think it is generally understood how far-reaching in its consequences was this measure of Catholic Emancipation. You can generally limit such charters of freedom to a race or a particular period of history. The liberation of the negroes from slavery, the removal of Jewish disabilities, have hardly affected the general interests of the human race. But this measure of Catholic Emancipation was the initial step towards the broad toleration, which the world enjoys to-day. For fifty years the ideas of the world have been deepening and broadening towards the freedom of thought, which has now become the characteristic of our dying century. It is quite true that irreligious governments in Catholic countries have shown a tendency towards retrograding to persecution. France has warred against the religious communities, and is carrying on a petty guerilla struggle against nuns and children. Italy has marked its secession from the paternal authority of the Holy Father by imprisoning him, and confiscating Church property. Germany, a Protestant nation, has tried to smother the free speech of Catholic bishops, and has been shamefully worsted

in the conflict. But all this is recognised as being in direct defiance of all modern principle, and those politicians know that these petty persecutions are not only futile in themselves, but an insult to the progressive spirit of our century.

Under the English flag, let it be said, we have little cause to complain in this respect. Whatever reforms are still needed in civil affairs, and they are many, we enjoy religious freedom. If we are not fostered, we are tolerated, and no British statesman dare appeal to his nation to-day for support in any measure, that would tend to limit the liberty of the people in the profession of their creed, or the form of their worship. One by one the ancient prejudices are disappearing. Wider knowledge, and more charitable interpretations of opinions and principles, are drawing closer together men who were supposed to be hopelessly estranged. And Catholics and Protestants to-day can meet and co-operate on the broad platforms of charity, education, social science, temperance. The spirit of religious vindictiveness has been exorcised, and the angel of Christian charity has come to take its place.

But furthermore, Catholic Emancipation was the setting free of a race destined to mighty conquests. It was the equipment of an army that was destined to overrun the earth. For it gave at least a few years of preparation to that race that was destined, under Providence, to evangelise the infant nations of the world. Its Pentecost had not yet come—that awful Pentecost of death and famine and fiery tongues, which scattered the apostles of Ireland over the earth, just at the time when the surplus populations of the older nations were pouring out to found new empires under unfamiliar skies. In those twenty years of emancipation the population leaped up to eight millions, and the excitement of political agitation and the newly developed systems of education were sharpening the faculties and elevating the ideas of the people for that exodus that was the prelude to the spiritual conquest of the globe.

Did O'Connell see the vast results of his labour? Did he calculate the stupendous issues that were to flow from his work? No! We who are but puppets in the hands of Omnipotence can never measure the vast consequences that issue from our acts. The heresy of Arius poisoned six centuries of the Church's life, and the souls of millions. The quarrels of the Crusaders have left the tomb of Christ even to-day in Moslem hands. The apostasy of Luther has torn whole empires for three centuries from the sacred unity of the Church. Thank God, the principle holds for good as for evil, and we cannot forecast the immensity and importance of work done for God, however trivial it may appear. Did the world know that those half-starved emigrants that left your shores in the coffin ships of '48 and '49 were the evangelists going forth without scrip, or purse, or staff, to conquer the world? Did the world suspect that they were leaving their mud cabins to build the stateliest cathedrals of the earth, and that out of the rags of their poverty would be woven the chasubles of cloth of gold that clothe half the high priests of the Church? Did the academic debaters of Oxford and Cambridge, when the question of Catholic Emancipation was discussed in their halls, dream that in a few years the voice of the emancipated slaves would penetrate those halls and beckon forth their choicest spirits? Did the Catholics of England, hiding in ancient castles, and trying to keep the holy fire burning during their political exile, foresee that in a very few years every city and town and village in England would swarm with votaries of the ancient creed, who would preach their faith in the market-places, and marshal their solemn processions with bands and banners through the public streets, not only tolerated, but envied by their Protestant brethren? Did O'Connell see that in a quarter of a century after his death, that huge fabric of intolerance and inequality, the Established Church of Ireland, the cause of so much heartburning, and even blood-shedding, would come toppling down? Did he dream

of the re-establishment of the English hierarchy ; of the vast influences of the Tractarian movement ; of Catholic colleges planted in the very centre of the great English Universities ; of Catholic military chaplains recognised by the State ? Would he have believed it if he had been told, that England would be a refuge and home for persecuted priests flying from the evil laws of France and Germany, and that her southern coasts would be dotted with monasteries and convents, filled with refugee monks who are envious for the toleration of England, contrasted with the angry despotism of the continent ? Would he have believed it possible that in thousands of English Protestant churches to-day the old Catholic doctrines are preached, the ancient rites renewed, the schism with Rome deplored, Catholic symbols brought back, the Reformers repudiated and condemned ; and whilst a remnant of penal times still subsists in the coronation oath of the sovereign, thousands of Anglican ministers perform daily what we must regard as a travesty of the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass ? Nay, did O'Connell think that the day would dawn when the Archbishops of Canterbury and York would be taunted by their co-religionists with having hauled down the flag of the Reformation ; and that the day has come when tens of thousands of English hearts are yearning for union with Christendom, for the one fold and the one Shepherd, that was foretold by our Father, Christ ?

One would have supposed that such a victory would have sufficed for a lifetime. But there are souls that cannot tire. Some are carried on by the lust of fresh conquests ; some by the desire of perfecting their work ; some by the revelation, that dawns upon us all at one time or other in our lives, that the activity of evil powers is always more effective and vigorous than the most strenuous efforts after the things that are pure and good. O'Connell found that when the glitter and the tumult of his great victory had passed, and men had ceased to speak of the king who broke and trampled

the pen that signed Catholic Emancipation, and the sword fell from the statue of Walker in Derry, that still the people were galled by all the petty tyrannies that will last even through great revolutionary changes. The tenantry were crushed with rackrents; were ruined by that tax—that was an insult to their religion and an injury to themselves—the tax of tithes, wrung from unwilling hands by the ministers of an alien religion. He saw then that single measures were of but little avail to sweep away the vast mass of injustice that still burthened the people, and that it were better to concentrate the energies of the nation in effecting a complete and radical change of Government, than in attacking the myriad injustices that had their origin in the system, and not in individual acts of legislation. Then he raised the war-cry—Repeal of the Union. And then he organised what was perhaps the most perfect system of agitation the mind of man ever evolved. Every parish had its branch, every branch its offices; there were wardens and stewards, all obeying implicitly the great central mind; and the people, flushed with victory, and animated with new hopes, rose up and corresponded bravely with the splendid efforts that were being made for their freedom, until from Mullaghmast to Mallow, and from the wilds of Galway to the Hill of Tara, multitudes, numbering from 100,000 to 350,000, gathered together, and by their enthusiasm and devotion gave O'Connell not only some of the prerogatives of royalty, but also a higher and loftier commission than even his ambitious mind contemplated. A vast meeting was summoned to the plain of Clontarf. Four hundred thousand men would be there. The last word would be said for Ireland. Alas! the last word was never said. The meeting was proclaimed a few hours before the time appointed. O'Connell had to face the alternative of the massacre of the people and the defiance of the Government, or the honourable defeat that consulted for the safety of the people. He chose the latter, and he has been censured

for it. This is not the place to defend a memory which has been now placed beyond cavil or criticism. But from that moment O'Connell's power waned.

Two years later, one dismal summer, the odour of death hung over the land—the Angel of Death was there. The verdict of the last great Assize will tell who was to blame for the awful holocausts of '47 and '48. The country threw the blame on the Government, and verdicts of wilful murder were brought in by coroner's juries against the Prime Minister. In the midst of the horrors, a grey-haired broken-hearted man passed out over the Irish seas, like the Irish chieftains of old, to see Rome and die. But, before he reached it, in the very sight of its minarets and domes, and whilst the Eternal City was *en fête* for his arrival, he died. He never received the welcome, he never passed under the triumphal arch. So much the better. It is well to find the laurels of eternity on the Cross. O'Connell died a broken-hearted exile, and his wrongs, silently endured, demand our compassion, whilst we give him our reverence and gratitude; and from that day until now his figure stands forth in all its beauty and grandeur. The people of his own day gave him their love and admiration, and that love and admiration are transfigured into worship with us, who have inherited with his memory the fruits of his labour and sacrifice.

Shall we close here with barren admiration for O'Connell's genius and courage; or shall we say that his life has a lesson? Certainly the latter. And our first thought shall be surprise that for fifty years O'Connell has had no successor. No great Catholic layman has arisen in Ireland, strong and firm in his faith, strong and firm in his determination that the twain interests of faith and fatherland shall not be sundered. And yet it is only what we have a right to expect. A great Catholic nation has a right to a great Catholic leader. For remember we are a Catholic nation. Catholicity is the dominant note in our history. Catholicity is the first characteristic of our race. Take away our fidelity

to our Church, which was fidelity to our country, and the history of our nation is a squalid record of internal struggle, and impotent efforts to shake off foreign domination. But our history is glorified by that one principle ; nay, it is rendered unique in the history of the world.

Now, if the history of our race has been a history of supernatural patience and tenacity of principle, the destiny of our race is also a supernatural one. I am quite well aware that this position may be controverted. We have become so imbued with the materialistic spirit of the age, that finds its expression in books and pamphlets, in the entire literature of the country, that many are dreaming of the time when Ireland shall become a great mercantile nation, competing for success with half the globe. God grant that her children may flourish on her soil in the full numbers that her natural resources fit her to support ; but I hardly think or hope that Ireland will ever rank amongst the great Powers, that her armies will be invincible, or that her navies will sweep the seas. Neither would I desire it. I had rather see her mountains crested with monasteries, from which God's praises ascended by night and by day, than see her valleys blackened with the smoke, and her rivers polluted with the slime of great factories. And, surely, there is no true Irishman who would not rather see your harbour ploughed by the emigrant ship, carrying your evangelists over the world to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, than to see its waters blackened with the hulls of warships crammed with deadly instruments of destruction for the annihilation of the weaker nations of the earth. No ! Ireland has one great mission—that of Christian teacher and apostle ; and Irish Catholics should have one great ambition—that of liberty enough to preserve the traditions of the motherland, and to strengthen and consolidate the mighty race to which they belong—in a word, to make Ireland once more what she was from the fifth to the tenth centuries, the home of religion, the

sanctuary of learning, the Pharos of the Western seas.

I do not know whether there may not be in Ireland some chosen soul to whom God is speaking now, as He spoke to His Prophets, as He spoke to O'Connell, and revealing the future of the race. I wonder whether in the classroom of some Irish seminary, in the hall of some great college, in some lonely Dublin attic, or walking the streets of our cities—in the dust of our towns, or dreaming on the purple mountains—I wonder whether there may not be even one, who, gifted with fine genius and instincts, is looking into the future, and beholding possible conquests greater than those of Alexander and Napoleon, more stupendous and epoch-making than even their victories? If so, he has a vast vocation, a mission that belongs but to the genius of sanctity—that of drawing the world to the feet of Christ and His Vicar. If I may suppose such a great Catholic leader, full of the Church's philosophy, enthusiastic for the Church's rights, proud of the Church's history, I say he has a magnificent theatre before him, and such an audience that the greatest of orators or dramatists might envy. France would inspire him with the example of De Maistre, De Bonald, Montalembert; Spain with the example of Donoso Cortes; his own Ireland with the example of O'Connell. He would have to contend with the materialism of the age, the spirit of indifferentism in religion; and that evil genius of France, the anti-clericalism that is the badge and token of Freemasonry on the Continent and of secret societies at home. He would have to contend, in Parliament or out of Parliament, for the material interests of the people—for these are bound up with their spiritual well-being—and to labour for liberty without licence, and progress without perversion of principle. The great questions of Catholic education, temperance, social purity; the elevation and refinement of the home circle, the revival of the ancient religious spirit of Ireland, that filled her valleys with convents and her convents with saints, would pass into his special

programme. He would preach the splendid socialism of the Gospel, the dignity of labour, the sacredness of poverty, the dignities of wealth. His armoury would be the Acts of the Martyrs, the philosophy of St. Thomas, the Encyclicals of the Roman Pontiffs, and every brave precedent and episode in the history of Christianity from the days of the Catacombs until now. His allies would be all great and good men, who only want a strong voice to reawaken the slumbering instincts of a people of God. And, as it is human to err, he would have the spiritual insight to guard himself against grave mistakes of policy by looking habitually towards the centre of immutable truth, the chair of Peter. And thus armed and thus safeguarded, he would speak through press and from platform to the Irish race, and through them, to the world. And as his voice echoed from colony to colony of our fugitive people, the exiles of Ireland would turn to us once more, and say, "Thank God, our motherland is not dead, nor stricken. Behold, in her old age, she has brought forth a Samuel or a Baptist, and the nations are hearkening and wondering at the preaching of the old Gospel of peace through the truth."

But, perhaps, you will say: "We want no more leaders; we want no watchers on the mountain heights, but workers in the valleys". Well, be it so. Nevertheless, there is need of some power to bind up your strength and direct it. We want a voice to embody your feelings and declare them. We want a soul to touch your souls as with a flood of light, to be reflected back in an illumination of words and works. Meanwhile, we give you the inspiration you seek, the model you require, the counsel you need, in the life and works of him whom we commemorate to-day, and we tell you in a word, the secret of his success in life, his immortality in death, when we say that O'Connell loved his country with all the warmth of his great Celtic heart, but, above and beyond his country, he loved his God.

## OUR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.<sup>1</sup>

ON a certain tombstone, laid over the remains of an ancient knight in the North of England, these words are written beneath the epitaph :—

I shall not pass this way again.

I believe it is only a pithy paraphrase from the Book of Job ; but it is a pregnant saying, and I take it as a text. Generations will live after us, generations have lived before us ; but we shall not pass this way again. Our life's journey is our one and only experience of this world. No words can paint the seriousness and sublimity of the thought. No great thinker, in the ranks of sacred or profane literature, has ever faced it, without putting his fingers on his lips, and pausing to realise its awful significance. This little planet of ours is, for the moment, the theatre of the universe ; and our little lives the drama in which the Great Unseen are so deeply interested. If we merely consider the rapidity with which scene follows scene, and actor succeeds actor, before the headlights of the Heavens, the play and the performers are absolutely insignificant ; but, if we consider that the drama is but a rehearsal for eternity, it assumes an aspect of momentous significance.

Heard are the voices,  
Heard are the sages,  
The worlds and the Ages,

<sup>1</sup> An Address to the Limerick Catholic Institute.

Choose well : your choice is  
 Brief, but yet endless :  
 Here eyes do regard you  
 From Eternity's stillness,  
 Here is all fulness,  
 Ye brave ! to reward you,  
 Work ! and despair not !<sup>1</sup>

It seems, then, that our lives are of supreme importance ; and that, therefore, there must be a tremendous personal responsibility resting on each of us. My aim in this paper is to strengthen those who read my words, and, perhaps, inspire them to make their lives worthy, by creating a consciousness of their great significance. For, to vary the metaphor, we are but

Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing.<sup>2</sup>

And may my solitary voice, echoing over dark and turbulent seas, be a voice of strength and encouragement.

Now, there is one instinct of our natures, which, if we follow wisely, cannot lead us too far astray. I say, if we follow *wisely* ; because if we follow it unwisely, it means wrecked hopes, shattered lives, disappointed ambitions, crushed hearts and dishonoured graves. This instinct is our craving for happiness, the universal and unquenchable quest of our race. It is the one thing of which we are ever dreaming. The young look forward to this Land of Promise ; the middle-aged seek it frantically, although they begin to think it a desert mirage ; the old are privileged to look upon it only ere they die. How many enter into perfect happiness ? Not many. They move forward to enter its shining gates : only to find a desert. The miner rushing over snowy crevasses to Klondyke, the emigrant leaving behind his happy home for the speculative gains at Kimberley or Coolgardie ; the young professional man at home, straining after a lucrative practice, or the blue ribbon of the Bench ; the shopkeeper, dreaming of leisure and a marine villa ; the statesman, striving for

<sup>1</sup> Goethe.

<sup>2</sup> Longfellow.

fame ; the orator clamouring for applause—all these, to say nothing of the hapless victims of the marriage markets and mammon marts of the world, dream of happiness ; and to all it is as elusive and as visionary as the heaven of Islâm, or the paradise of the eater of opium. And all these athletes for life's prizes divide themselves into two classes—the successful ones and the failures ; and both are unhappy, the one class from attained desires, that are ashes in the eating ; the other from the eternal hunger after desires that are unattained. It would be difficult to say whether the briefless barrister or the overworked Q.C. is the more unhappy ; whether the great doctor that attends on queens is a whit happier than when he was an apothecary's apprentice compounding poisons ; whether the peasant is not better off than his landlord, and the hind than his master ; and whether the whole see-saw of social life is not, after all, a perfect equilibrium of happiness and unhappiness, swung from the hands of the Omniscient. But then, there must be a flaw somewhere, if gratified ambition, dreams that are realised, and hopes that have been fulfilled, do not bring this happiness in their train. I will endeavour to point out this flaw, and try to mend it, by one or two principles that will help to form a correct idea of our personal responsibilities.

The first principle is this, that happiness is to be found, not in our circumstances, but in ourselves. And the one grand mistake of humanity lies in supposing that we change ourselves when we change our circumstances. Hence it is that men are for ever thinking of improving the mere accidents and outer coverings of life, and neglecting the one matter of supreme importance—that which lies within themselves. I do not agree for a moment with the ridicule cast on this principle by that unchristian pseudo-philosopher, Thomas Carlyle, when he says : "Know Thyself ? Too long has that poor self of thine tormented thee. Know thy work, and do it." The latter phrase is quite right. The

former question is unsound and unphilosophical ; and I venture to say that half the miseries of mankind—personal, social and political—are directly traceable to the unhappy forgetfulness or neglect of the great Socratic maxim. And if at the expense of a little Greek and Latin, and even of science, our children were taught the supreme lesson of self-knowledge, self-reverence, and self-control, the world would not be so full, as it is to-day, of souls unhappy enough to constitute another circle of the Dantean *Inferno*.

Let me prove this. The seat of pleasure and of pain is, as we know, the mind. It is the receptacle of all sensations. The perfume of a flower, the waves of some rapturous melody, the glory of summer seas, touch our senses ; but do not remain there. The gentle visitants knock at the door, and pass into the vestibule of sight or smell or hearing ; and immediately, the servant, sense, telephones up to the master, mind, and it stoops down and admits the gratification. So, too, with pain. The odour of asafoetida, the harsh shriek of a siren on a warship, the sight of deformity or disease strikes the senses, and they wire up to the master, and he declares his pain and dissatisfaction. And when the humane doctor wishes to neutralise the necessary pain of an operation, whilst he is hacking nerves and veins and muscles, he sends the mind to sleep with his anæsthetics ; and lo ! there is no pain. The passive body may protest by involuntary shrinking under the scalpel ; but there is no physical agony, and no mental torture, because the master, mind, is drowned in popped sleep. Hence, in times of old, the mercy, which we no longer know with all our boasts of civilisation and humanity, that drugged with myrrh the senses of those who were passing to execution ; and even to-day in China, criminals about to be executed are allowed the privilege of opium, that they may pass to a painless death. Now it is clear that if the mind be the centre and source and subject of pain or pleasure, our happiness depends not on external circumstances, which merely knock at

the outer doors of the senses, but on the constitution, and the phases of our feelings and our thoughts. It also follows that, if we can exclude from our minds all painful and humiliating and irritating thoughts, and if we can fill the mind with all pleasant and noble and inspiring thoughts, we shall have moved far forward towards the goal of happiness. Can we, then, control our minds and every faculty of them, as easily as an organist can pull out and close up the stops of an instrument? Can we not only suppress in a moment every passionate feeling, every turbid desire, every unhallowed thought; but even the little worries and troubles that make life unhappy, can we, in one instant, set them aside, and successfully refuse to listen to their importunities? Certainly. The mind is as capable of discipline, as the body. Phrenologists have mapped out for us in every convolution of the brain its distinct faculty. We know the seat of memory, we know the chambers of intellect, we can place our fingers on the lobes of diverse sensations. Here is the coil, from which Shakespeare flashed the electricity of his great poetic genius; and here is the exact battery of nerve power whence Newton projected his theory of gravitation. Oliver Wendell Holmes pointed out, what we all experience, that the greater and nobler the thought, the higher you have to drag it, until it touches expression in the very highest attics of the brain, as the highest notes of music are the sweetest and the most far-reaching. Now, if all these faculties are under the direct control of ourselves, that is, of our immortal spirits, we should understand that, by careful training and discipline, it is perfectly possible to suspend the operation of the faculties by one act of the will, and refuse to accept their protests, their suggestions, or their complaints. What a tremendous power and privilege! What a complete and easy destruction, not only of worry and fretfulness over disappointments, but even of the dread passions of envy and jealousy, of foolish striving after the unattainable, and mordant remorse for a past that is irreclaimable.

But this, you will say, will lead to Oriental passivism and fatalism. Do you want us to become fakirs, like the Thibetans and Hindoos, until our finger-nails become as the claws of eagles, and the birds can build their nests in our hair? If happiness consists in the exclusion of all thought, there is an end to progress and advancement. True, but we don't stop here. We move a step forward on the road to happiness, by filling our minds, which will never admit either complete rest or complete vacuum, with all kinds of high and holy thoughts. We shall enjoy all the simple pleasures of life, just as our Great Father hath given them; and all the intellectual pleasures of life such as the kings of thought have revealed them. Here there is no necessity either of great wealth or of great learning. The purest pleasures of life are at the beck of all. And they lie under our hands to touch them, and beneath our eyes to behold them. Let me exemplify this by a story. Many years ago in Devonshire I made the acquaintance of one who was not only a priest, but a philosopher. At least, he was a perfectly happy man; and if that is not philosophy, I should like to know what is. He had eighty pounds a year, a presbytery about large enough for a doll, and a bijou church, built from designs by Pugin. That was all. No! I am wrong. He had God's great sea, stretching from the threshold of his door to the far infinites. Well, one day he took me for a stroll in a magnificent park, studded with all kinds of noble trees, and embellished with artificial lakes, fountains and cascades. Deer lay under the trees, and vast herds thronged the meadows. The house, a perfect replica of some Louis Quatorze château, was perched at the summit of a series of terraces, these latter laid out in superb parterres. The interior of the mansion was quite in keeping with the grounds. France, Italy, and even Greece, had been put under requisition to suit the costly tastes of the master.

"Who is the proprietor of this splendid place?" I asked.

"I am," he said, without moving a muscle.

Then I thought that this good priest was possibly a nobleman in disguise, who had given up all things for Christ, quite a possible thing in England, and I was silent.

"I don't mean," he said, after a pause, "to deceive you. The legal dominion of this paradise is not mine. The natural title and usufruct is mine. For ten years I have come here every day with my books. Here I spend hours in the keenest enjoyment of all these beauties. Flowers and trees, deer and kine, lakes and swans, pictures and marbles are all mine—mine to see and enjoy. The legal parchment is in London. The legal owner sees the place once in ten years. He is now in Egypt. What could he give me that I have not, except gout and a bad conscience ?

Cleon, true, hath acres many ; but the landscape, I ;  
All the charm to me it renders, money cannot buy ;  
Cleon hears no anthems ringing in the sea or sky ;  
Nature sings to me for ever, earnest listener, I.  
State for state with all attendants, who would change ? Not I."

I thought of the story told by the late A. K. H. B. of the Duke who, looking out from his palace upon the beautiful reaches of the Thames, exclaimed in a tone of despair: "Oh ! that dreadful river ! always running, running, and never will run away !" and the shepherd, in his mountain cot in Scotland, five miles away from a human habitation, who declared that, when his day's work is done, his supper eaten, and *Chambers's Journal* in his hands, he does not envy the Duke of Argyll.

Well, all this is in our power, too ; and we, Irishmen, are specially blessed in having for our home one of the fairest spots in God's fair world. But we need an interpreter. We must look through the eyes of others before we can see ; we must wait until others translate for us the strange mystic language of Nature. How many of us listened year after year, in the springtime, to the singing of the skylark, but never knew his music

until Shelley interpreted it for us? How many of us were buffeted by the west wind, but never knew what it breathed on us, until we read that noble ode of the same great poet! Men stared at Mont Blanc for years, never seeing its majesty, until Coleridge wrote his *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamonix*. And generations have listened without articulate emotion to the falling of the cataracts of the sea, until Tennyson, in that immortal lyric, reminded us of what it meant—the yearning for “the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still”. We need, therefore, interpreters of Nature; and the two interpreters whom I should recommend most earnestly are Ruskin in prose, and Wordsworth in poetry. Of the former, I shall only say, that it was a happy day for the world when John Ruskin turned aside from being a Reformer of Art to become a preacher on morals; when he made himself the protagonist against the dread materialism and mammon-worship, which, with the usual accompaniments of vulgarity, are the chief characteristics of the British Philistines of to-day. But you shall never know the beauty of running waters, or sailing clouds, of sea and shore, of mountain mist, or “shadowy-pencilled valleys,” of sunrise or sunset, until Ruskin shows them to you.

His poetic precursor, Wordsworth, is, to my mind, the tenderest and safest guide in that great department of poetry, where if sages have been high priests, satyrs, alas! have wantoned. I cannot share in the idolatry of Shakspeare as a moralist, though as artist and dramatist he may be unrivalled. Browning lies on the shelves of scholars; and Keats and Tennyson are delicate voluptuaries, who saw surfaces and painted them. But the large, luminous mind of Wordsworth penetrated into the recesses of Nature, and he laid his ear to her breast, and heard her heart beating. I know no better book for the study or the seaside, for the river walk or the friendly conference, than Wordsworth’s poems. I cannot share, but I can appreciate, the enthusiasm of

another graceful, gentle poet, Matthew Arnold, when he said that he had no other idea of an earthly heaven, except a long holiday, free from care and labour, with the companionship of Wordsworth's poems.

Then you must have a science—not the science “that peeps and botanises upon a mother's grave,” but the science that shows you what God's universe is—the infinitely great and the infinitely little. And there is no science half so well adapted to this end as the tremendous and overwhelming revelations of astronomy. Before these silent dioramas of the heavens, man's mind sinks down first to an understanding of his own nothingness, then rises up to an idea of his majesty, then falls down prone in adoration before the awful face of God.

But all this needs education? Yes! Intermediate or university education? No. Self-education? Yes! And, let it be remembered, there is none other! The final result, even of university education, is to teach men how to train themselves. The greatest professors in Oxford, Cambridge, Königsberg, or Berlin, can only teach their graduates what to learn, and how to learn. The real work belongs to the students themselves. And the real result of all kinds of successful education, without which distinctions, gold medals and fellowships have no more intrinsic value than the medals of veterans, is the acquisition of a taste for reading, I don't care how desultory that reading may be; the passion for self-improvement, and the faculty for distinguishing between a taste for the froth and foam of so much contemporaneous literature, and the desire, if you would be strong men, of feeding your minds on great and inspiring thought—the marrow of giants. And if ever the day shall come, when the artisan in his workshop, the labourer in his cottage, the clerk in his office, the student in his attic, shall understand that the legacies of all the ages are theirs, and that beneath their hands are the priceless treasures, garnered for them by the intellectual kings of our race, and that this means the ecstasy of noble

thinking, then we shall have moved forward towards that national felicity which, after all, is our real prosperity. Here is our second step forward.

You will have noticed that I have not introduced the sacred name of religion here, because I take it for granted that we all acknowledge this as the necessary constituent of all human felicity ; and I am speaking in the porch, not in the temple, where wiser heads and more eloquent lips can, and do tell you, the secrets of Divine philosophy. But neither in the exclusion of painful thoughts, nor even in the acquisition of noble thoughts, shall we find perfect peace. It is the ideal life, of course, after which the world has ever sought—the life of lettered ease and calm culture—the very antithesis to that stormy life, where, “like an Egyptian pitcher of tamed vipers, each struggles to get his head above the other”. But it won’t do for the strong, young athletes for whom this paper is mainly meant. Life is a process of renewal, of increased effort and ever-changing activities. Stagnation is repugnant to all our ideas of existence. Even in the dreamy, languid, somnolent East, men were obliged to invent some outlet for the suppressed activities of this life ; and hence they devised the doctrine of re-incarnation. They called life, rest ; and eternity, a succession of ever-changing activities. We make life the season of work and effort ; and in eternity we seek for rest. Let us see if there be work under our hands to seek and accomplish ; and let me point to two urgent necessities, where we have to conquer both our heredity and environments—two material difficulties which hinder the efficiency, and circumscribe the utility of the great spiritual mission, which I believe to be the inheritance of our race. It would be well for us, of course, if we could make this land of ours a lotus-land, which, according to the Breton legend, “was anchored by God with chains of diamonds in seas the sailors do not know. When the waters touched it they lost all bitterness, and for a circle of seven leagues grew sweet as milk to the lips. The

isle was hidden from all eyes by a fog none could penetrate, but a peaceful light was in the centre. There, in the form of great white birds, flew the souls of pre-destined saints, and from thence, at the first signal, they came forth to teach the world." Alas ! the fog lifted, and the strangers came ; and to-day we are confronted with the problem of how to save for civilisation our country, our racial characteristics, and even our religion. The problem for youthful activities is, how to conserve and advance the material prosperity of our race without allowing it to degenerate into mammon-worship, and so that it may be an effectual help in promoting our spiritual and intellectual destiny. This I call our social responsibility.

We are made, then, by historical tradition, by force of circumstances, and by the experience of unrelenting injustice, essentially a fighting race. Let us remember that we are still on the tented field ; that the fight which has lasted longer than Trojan or Punic wars is not yet over ; and that, if the historian of the future shall write the history of Ireland as unconquered and unconquerable, he cannot do so, unless we, in the dawn of the twentieth century, take up the tradition of 700 years, and, with one great rally, wrest from the outstretched hands of Destiny the palms and laurels for which our fathers bled. Now the battlefield is no place for slumber ; and the mattress and the pillow are not part of the equipment of a soldier on the field. Let us, therefore, have our watchwords and our sentries posted, and let us sleep with the arms by our sides, lest the enemy steal a march and surprise us while we slumber. And lest you should think there is no cause for vigilance, let us see the trend of current events.

Those who read the English papers, which voice English opinion, cannot fail to have noticed the tone of exultant triumph that was elicited by the Spanish defeat in Cuba. The cry went forth, and was echoed insolently : The Latin races are going ! Decadence, and prompt final extinction await the Catholic races of

Western Europe. Santiago and Fashoda closed the history of Spain and France ; and Italy, bankrupt and insolvent, is but awaiting the political *coup de grace* that will sink her into the pleasure-ground and museum of the conquering and dominant races. The Slav in the East, the Teuton in the midst, and the Anglo-Saxon in the West of Europe, are the future masters of the world and the future pioneers of progress ; and the old, proud, Celtic races, the races of chivalry and conquest, the founders of the arts and sciences, the children of the Crusaders, the legatees of priceless canvasses and marbles, are to pass away, and be submerged in the wave of brute force and materialism that is now sweeping over the world. How far our sympathies may go out to these kindred races of ours, linked to us by the commingling of blood by birth and battle, I do not inquire ; but it may touch us more closely to learn that we, too, are threatened ; and if it is folly to exaggerate danger, it is madness to ignore it. True, we may believe, and with all the best thinkers of Europe we do believe, that the world is not going to write "Finis" just yet on the glorious historical pages of the lands of the Cid and of Charlemagne. Human history, evolved by the puny hands of men, is controlled by a larger power. Once the English flag floated over the walls of Orleans and the sands of Calais. But, less than a hundred years ago, French armies were concentrated on the same coast for the invasion of Britain ; and if we have seen the tricolour of France dipped in the dust before the mobilised fleet at Spithead, the wheel may turn again, spun by the higher power, and the final conquest be placed as far away, and rendered as problematical as ever. But how does all this concern us ? And why, says the lotus-eater, do you trouble me with phantoms of fears for what shall never arise ? But do we not see that the inevitable course of human events must precipitate the armies of England on Ireland ? I do not mean her red-coats and her Maxims ; but I mean her commercial hordes, driven from the markets

of the world by modern competition, and thrown by the stress of circumstances to find in Ireland, not only a market for English manufacture, but a vast broad field for enterprise and industry, where the native population, through the lack of initiative, or lack of education and training, have only been able to earn a precarious living, eking out by the charities of the world.

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and blinks behind a slowly-dying fire.<sup>1</sup>

Who are the hungry people? And who are these that nod and blink? You have only to cast your eyes around you, and see. In the agricultural districts Englishmen and Scotchmen are rapidly realising fortunes, where the native peasantry earned a pittance; and in our great cities, enterprising foreigners are swallowing up commercial wealth that lay at our doors, but which we were powerless to touch. Simultaneously, vast tracts of land are passing from the people into the hands of landlords and graziers; and by a singular paradox, our people, banished to the States and Colonies, accumulate rapid fortunes by the very shrewdness and intelligence which lay dormant and unproductive at home. Meanwhile, Irish hands and brains are building up the British Empire in every remotest corner of the world; and Irish intellects are able to think deeply and wisely for every land and race but their own. And yet, what Irishman is there whose eyes are not filmed with tears, and whose heart is not saddened with regretful love, when he thinks of his Isle of Destiny, washed by the western seas, and beaten and buffeted by the storms of centuries, and the blows of fate that appear to be relentless and unforgiving? Reason as we may, with all the light of modern advancement and modern selfishness, we cannot rid ourselves of that abiding and eternal love which we feel for our common mother. Go where we please, reason as we will, our thoughts turn to the motherland, from whose womb we sprang, and

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, *Locksley Hall*.

at whose breast we were nurtured. Great philosophers may argue on cosmopolitan lines, and say: "We are all one race, and we have all a common heritage. Why limit our interests to one little span of earth, of homely features, and barren of mines and minerals, and to one race, whose history has been a history of sorrow and defeat? Our sympathies are universal, and embrace every race, even the flattened heads and yellow faces, that make for the progress of mankind." It won't do. Back we come from philosophy to affection; and purple mountain, brown bog, and granite shore loom up through the mist of tears to waken recollection, or enkindle an enthusiasm as passionate as it is undying. From the swan-song of Columba as he left his own Derry hills, down to the wailing threnodies of Clarence Mangan; and from the dying cry of exiled Sarsfield to the battle speech of Meagher, under the dread escarpments of Fredericksburg, it is all the same—Ireland! and Ireland! and Ireland! the home of our heroes, and the cemetery of our saints! the haunting spirit of our dreams, and the everlasting burden of our waking hours.

A few months ago I stood in the midst of the world's show-place—the lakes and mountains of Switzerland. All around me Nature had tossed up the earth's surface into fantastic forms of crags and mountains; and here were pre-Adamite glaciers in the clefts of the hills, and there were sea-green lakes in the hollows of the valleys. It was a picture from the drop-scene or back scene of an Italian opera; but I confess I felt as in a prison of granite, granite rocks pressing down in their awful desolation upon the spirit, and only a little square of blue overhead, serrated by the sharp pinnacles of snow-clad hills. And the first free breath I drew was when I passed out of the prison, into the glorious freedom of the French horizon, and the long receding vistas on the Genevan lake. And I said, we have something better than this in Ireland. We have purple mountains with their infinite varieties of mist and shade; we have lakes as fair as Lucerne or Zurich; and above all, we have,

surrounding our shores, vast cliffs, known only to the penguins and the gulls, and beneath—the infinity of the sea! I could not see how Switzerland, the land whose mountains are the walls of a prison, and whose lakes are pools of dead water, could be the land of freedom; and I could see how the spirit, that haunts the hills and shores of Ireland, must be, of necessity, a spirit of liberty and expansion. And yet, wherever you travelled in Switzerland, its nationality, untainted but in one particular, that of language, was the predominant feature. The spell of the legendary William Tell was everywhere. Here is the place where he leaped from Gesler's boat, and they have erected a chapel where Mass is said; here is the place where he pierced the apple on his child's head with an arrow; here, springing from the waters of Lake Lucerne, is the monolith pillar, erected to the honour of Schiller, who immortalised in his drama the great national hero. Here, in the vast palatial hotels, peasant girls wear the national costume, varied from a score of their cantons; and here, in the hand of every young Switzer is an Alpine staff, and in his hat is a sprig of Edelweiss. And, here, in the lonely valley of Andermatt is a camp of Swiss artillery; and down the awful gorges where Russian, and Austrian, and Frenchmen clambered for the deadly embrace of battle, you shall hear the booming of the Swiss cannon; for this land is theirs; and if they were the mercenaries of Europe, at least this country is their own. And yet Tell is but a legend; and I would not give one page of Irish history, tear-stained and blood-blackened, for all the myths and romances that imagination has woven about the land of the Alps and the lakes.

Well, then, what remains for us to do? It is quite clear that, however nice chivalry may read in the pages of Sir Walter Scott, neither chivalry nor enthusiasm will help the cause of Ireland at present. We saw not long since how a vast army of Soudanese, intoxicated by fanaticism and a love of glory, were mowed down by the

machine guns of the Sirdar. Chivalry won't stop the mouths of cannon, or escape the bursting of shells. But *fas est ab hoste doceri*. Let us take a lesson from the enemy. Nothing excites so much astonishment and admiration as the silent, stealthy, dogged persistence with which England pursues her career of universal conquest. No noise, no boasting, no defeat. Twice she was beaten by the Boers, at Majuba Hill and at Krugersdorp. Now, she is drawing a ring of steel around the devoted Transvaal, and—time will tell. Her army was swallowed up in the desert ten years ago under Hicks Pasha. Then, with patient persistence, she commenced her railway from Cairo to Khartoum ; and we know the rest. Now, here at home, we have to face the same science, the same courage, the same perseverance. English capital is invited into Ireland. Beaten back from the markets of the world, her capitalists are now finding that there is coal in Tyrone and Kilkenny, and gold in Wicklow. We don't object to see English capital flooding Ireland, but we should like to see the sluices of Irish capital also opened. Shall we be able to meet these foreigners on their own ground, and turn this new attempt at conquest into a victory for ourselves ? Yes. But we must oppose science to science, enterprise to enterprise, education to education, shrewdness to shrewdness, if we don't want to see a new plantation in Ireland, and strange merchants in our cities, and the old Celtic population "hewers of wood and drawers of water" once more in their own land. An important Commission sat lately in Dublin on the subject of Intermediate Education. I cannot help feeling sorry that the evidence was limited to educational experts. A few managers of Irish banks, a few missionary priests, a few directors of great Irish companies, would have told the Commission what the Intermediate Act had done ; and, probably, would have told them that what we want in Ireland are classical and scientific colleges for the professions ; but of far greater importance, commercial and scientific schools for the creation,

the maintenance, and the success of an industrial and commercial race. The Belgian Catholics have discovered the secret. The Jesuits and the Josephites have done in ten years for Belgium, by the creation of commercial schools, more than Boards and Commissions without number could do for Ireland in a century. I say, therefore, at present, we are unprepared for the commercial invasion that must follow on British expansion, and which the London *Echo* has already forecast and recommended. Education, even in its crudest form, has not penetrated down into the hearths and homes of our people. And yet we are not without a gleam of hope. There is a restlessness, a sublime dissatisfaction that is strangely stirring the hearts of the young men of Ireland. And our enemies are beginning to admit it. A few days ago I read, with an upleaping of the heart, the following sentence written by a British traveller on Ireland. He had journeyed from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear ; and his verdict on the modern Irishman was : "That he had become less humorous and more dangerous". Thank God ! The stage Irishman is passing away from reality as well as from romance ; in his place is appearing the strong, silent, determined, far-seeing race, that our best thinkers have dreamed of and hoped for. These can do what they did before.

Young men of Limerick, you have already voiced the common opinion of Ireland on certain things that you deemed vital to our race. I want you to draw a long, deep breath ; and then let your voice go forth again ; and let it have in it the depth and volume and emphasis that will make dead bones live again. You have a right to be heard ! You, who have on your streets the record of unspeakable perfidy ; you, who have on your walls the record of unspeakable heroism ; you, whose mighty river has passed into the deathless poetry and romance of the Irish race, you have a right to speak to Ireland ! And when your voice, and the voice of your sister cities is heard, demanding union, silence, determination, in place

of the barbaric strife and semi-articulate rage, which we employ to exorcise the evil spirits that are closing in around us, then may we hope that, at last, our country shall not pass into the hands of the stranger, nor our race be swallowed up and assimilated under the dread constriction that appears always to have followed in the path of the Anglo-Saxon domination. Here is your social responsibility to your country and your race.

I have no time to speak of the necessity of conserving our racial characteristics, especially our language. I shall content myself by saying of this latter, that I consider its extinction, partial though it be, a greater evil than penal laws or the Act of Union, and its revival a greater blessing than even our emancipation. The Irish race would have had a different history for the past fifty years if it had been welded, by a common language, into unbroken solidarity. And the Catholic Church in America and England, marvellous as its expansion has been under the ferment of Irish faith, would to-day have been fixed even on a firmer basis if the Irish Catholics, like the German, had the strength and force of a national language behind them. There is no place nor occasion for despair. What the Jews did, after they had lost their common Hebrew tongue in the Babylonian captivity; what the Germans have done to revive their language, after it had been extinguished by Frederick and Voltaire, that we can do. And if it ever does come back, may there come back with it the old, genial, Celtic spirit, instead of the Anglicised, mammon-worshipping, neo-pagan manners and customs, which in many places at home are the chief characteristics of our race to-day.

I should feel I had been guilty of culpable omission if I did not say one word of that undying principle that is interwoven in our every fibre, that has animated our history, that has been the main cause of our material defeats, and of our spiritual and intellectual victories—namely, the principle of our faith. Irish Catholicism

and Irish nationality are interchangeable terms. The one means the other. So true is this, that English converts to Catholicity are known to their compatriots as Irish, so completely wound up is the one idea in the other. And, on the other hand, as we well know, it is not the fact of being Irish, so much as the fact of being Catholics, that excludes our people from positions of authority and responsibility, even in their own land. However glaring may be these injustices, we cannot fail to see that in some respects we are responsible for them. Our supineness and apathy, which we are careful to euphemise as toleration, militate against our advancement, and confirm our helotry in our own land. The result is plain, and is quite on a parallel with the inferior and subordinate conditions into which the Catholics of kindred races have fallen. We know how the entire government of Italy, much to her loss, has passed into the hands of Freemasons; we know how French Catholics tolerate the government of their country, the control of their finances, the action and guidance of the press, by Jews and their allies, the Freemasons. But we do not know how far this apathy has carried them; and how far their institutions have passed under the control of organisations hostile to their country and their faith. Let me quote a few facts. Out of the 33,000,000 of French people, barely half a million profess Protestantism; yet out of eighty-six prefects ten are Protestants; there are a hundred Protestants in the Chamber of Deputies; there are eighty Protestants in the Senate. This is not all. All the higher officials in the Ministry of Public Instruction are Protestants; Protestant seminaries are supported by the State; Catholic seminaries are unendowed; the faculty of Protestant theology is placed at the head of the faculties in the ancient Sorbonne; and all the faculties of Catholic theology were suppressed in the same university in 1884. That is a pretty picture; and I daresay there are some who think it reflects credit on the toleration and charity of French Catholics. To my

mind, such toleration, that is, such cowardice and want of grit are only deserving of condemnation and contempt. But are we much better off at home? The continued dismissal of the Catholic claims to the higher education should teach us a lesson. Admitted by all the best minds of Great Britain and Ireland as sound in principle and safe in policy, our claims have been contemptuously spurned at the dictation of the most illiberal, and reactionary, and fanatical faction in the world. But this is only on a par with everything else. What percentage have we of the leading departmental offices in our country? Who are the directors of our banks and railways? Who are the engineers and architects of our public boards? How many Catholic officials are connected with all legislative or executive faculties in this country? Who are the controllers of our taxes, and the final judges of our legal responsibilities? These are questions worth answering; and, when we do answer them, perhaps we may spare for ourselves a little of that contempt which we lavish on Catholics abroad. But here I am met by two objections. One I cannot answer, as I should wish; the other finds an easy reply. When I am told that young Catholics, coming out unfledged from our Catholic schools, are unqualified to occupy prominent positions in our banks and boards; that they may know, indeed, a little about Herodotus and Pindar; but a bank wants book-keeping, and a knowledge of the fluctuations of stocks and shares; when I am told, as I have been told, that leading institutions, founded and supported by Catholic money, are obliged to man their staffs with young Protestant gentlemen, because educated Catholics, in the sense of business men, are not to be found, I really cannot find an answer, unless I am privileged and empowered to contravene and deny that statement. The other objection is: That it would be inconsistent with our patriotism and independence to ask favours from a hostile Government. Our members of Parliament, therefore, and our leading politicians, decline to

ask a position for a young Catholic, or a fair percentage of the "loaves and fishes," which others are so eager to monopolise. But this is not asking a favour ; it is demanding a right. We have just as much right to demand public or governmental positions for our young Catholics, as to demand Home Rule, or a Catholic University. It makes no difference whatever, whether we are dealing with a hostile or a friendly Government, whether it is Lord Aberdeen or Lord Cadogan rules the Castle, whether it is a question of bank or board. We are neither mendicants nor time-servers, when we demand for our young Catholics the right to positions in the emolumentary offices of their country, if, in other ways, they are qualified. Again let us learn from our opponents. The Presbyterians of the North are a compact, perfectly united, well-disciplined body, thoroughly organised, and moving with the precision of a machine at the beck or command of their leaders. Well, they hold Synods periodically, where ministers and laymen meet in conference, and over which their Moderator presides. At these secret consistories, for they are too wise to babble through the public press, everything is discussed. They are not troubled about questions of doctrine ; they have full time for business. Their agents tell them from all parts of Ireland what is being done, what ought to be done. If there is a disability to be removed, a point to be gained, a post to be filled, a loan to be granted, a legal decision to be rescinded, a glebe house to be erected, property to be acquired, the possession of property to be legalised—all is discussed without acrimony or jealousy. A decision is come to ; and, armed with that decision, the Moderator presents himself at the gates of the Castle. "We demand this inspectorship on the Board of Works, this place in the Four Courts ; we require this decision to be recalled, this grant to be disallowed ; and behind me are a quarter million of votes, and their representatives in the House of Commons." And does he succeed ? Invariably. Look at the latest question. "We won't have Roman

Catholics educated ; and you mustn't do it." That's all ; and Mr. Balfour's generous private instincts are promptly extinguished. Compared with this silent strength, what are the vapourings of your public bodies and the resolutions of your boards ? I'll tell you. Materials for the waste-paper baskets of the House of Commons.

What, then, do I advocate ? Aggression ? No. Assertion ? Yes. I say, Come up from the catacombs, and assert your rights. Come up from the catacombs, and claim the rights of citizens. Your money is supporting the British Empire ; your blood has been, and is being spilled to cement it ; your talents go to consolidate it. If you are aliens, they have no right to tax you. If you are citizens, they have no right to oppress you. With the charity of our Church, and the kindness of our race, we are glad to extend the hand of fellowship to our separated brethren. But whilst we gladly concede privileges, we refuse monopolies. We shall not attack ; but we must defend. And we are no longer prepared to expatriate the genius and the talent of our young Catholic countrymen, and see strangers occupying the honourable and emolumental positions, built up by subsidies extracted from the hands of Catholic ratepayers.

But, again, we must speak ; and our voice must be weighted by all the force and energy that comes from an united and organised people. Hitherto, the isolation of individuals has made their protests as " the voice of one crying in the wilderness ". What we want is " the voice of many waters " thundering from the lips of a people who claim emancipation from penalism and freedom from disabilities.

But whilst I should not advocate aggression in our social and political life, I should not be sorry if our Catholic literature were a little more enterprising, and a little less apologetic, than it has been. Hitherto, we have been the patient butts of every kind of scurrility and profanity, levelled against the most sacred tenets of our faith. From the Oath of the Sovereign of England, down to the offensive tract, that is flung before servant-girls and

school-children, everything is a reviling and a mocking of our faith. And when the vials of scorn were poured upon us from the lips of agnostics and atheists, our agony was complete. Well, our vindication—I won't say our revenge—has come. The proud Philistine boasts of a few years back, when Tyndall uttered his ultimatum to Christianity at Belfast, have been subdued to the humble and stammering apologies of science to-day, and the secret confidences of its high priests *in camera*. "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in our philosophy." And the pitiable condition of the Church of England, now more than ever the city of confusion, is exciting the laughter and ridicule of the world. If such a condition of things existed amongst us, if our bishops were dumb and speechless, whilst anarchy reigned around them, if we were told that our doctrines were made and unmade by Acts of Parliament, and if our comprehensiveness took in all kinds of clean and unclean things, we would be swept off the face of the earth by the scorn and satire of the British press. Imagine how the *Times* and the *Saturday Review* would gloat over our helplessness, and hold up our inconsistencies to the laughter of the world. Should we grasp our opportunity and retort? Against unreason and irreligion? Yes! Against individuals? No. We cannot feel anything but scorn for that institution, which, deserving all the hardest things which its great Whig defender, Macaulay, could say of it, is now passing through the agony and death-throes of dissolution. We cannot feel anything but compassion and sympathy for the tens of thousands of good and excellent souls who see their homes and altars crumbling around them. Let them know that fairer homes and holier altars await them in the city of God. Time and God have vindicated us. But if the time for apologies and defences has gone, the time for apostleship has come. And our young apostles must be dowered, like the poet,

With the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, *The Poet*.

Hate for everything that touches the sanctity of human souls, or the honour of God ; scorn for these ephemeral and lying systems of human philosophy, that like envenomed reptiles spit out their spleen against God, and die ; but love for everything pure and holy, and for all the sad souls that are straining their eyes for the light, yet walk in darkness as the noonday. Here is our mission and our destiny. The world is waking up to new ideas ; and in Catholic countries the young are beginning to feel that they stand in the light of a fresh and prophetic dawn. In Germany, in all the university towns, Catholic clubs are being established. There is an Association of German Catholic Students' Corporations, which ramifies from Berlin to Cologne. You have the Novesia at Bonn, the Sauerlandia at Munster, the Cheruscia at Warzburg, the Rhenania at Fribourg, Switzerland, the Armenia at Freiburg, Baden, the Bavaria, just opened at Berlin. These will be centres of life and energy to Catholic Germany. Why cannot we have the same at home ? But what do I say ? We have them, thank God, in abundance. You cannot read the daily papers without seeing accounts of flourishing literary societies in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. Well, in the words of the Hebrew prophet : "*Enlarge the place of thy tent, and stretch out the skins of thy tabernacles. Spare not. Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.*"<sup>1</sup> Ideas rule the world, and are more powerful than empires and their armaments. I do not know in this distracted country of ours, where righteous ideas and correct principles are to be cradled for propagation, if not in the societies I have named, and in similar societies. Great issues are at stake in our land ; and we must rise up to meet and direct them. The destiny and vocation of our race is a purely spiritual and intellectual one ; and in the far future, when, like all other material empires, the empires of to-day shall have met the fate of Assyria,

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lii. 2.

and Babylon, and Rome, it may be that our race shall have a place in history as immortal as that of Israel or Greece; for armies melt away like that of Sennacherib, and fleets, like the Armada, are the sports of winds and waves; and great cities, like Tyre and Sidon, are the abode of the stork and the basilisk; but ideas are indestructible, and great thoughts are immortal, and great principles, enshrined in the history of a race, pass on to new generations with ever-increasing vivifying powers. Here is the only glory and immortality that we seek; and this it is our destiny to attain. But here, too, is the greatest of our social responsibilities.

## THE STUDY OF MENTAL SCIENCE.<sup>1</sup>

*Labia Sacerdotis custodient scientiam ; et legem requirent ex ore ejus.—Malach.*, ii., 7.

*Clericus secretorum Dei non ignarus esse debet.—Hugo a S. Vict.*

A PRETTY general verdict on our Ecclesiastical Colleges is that they impart learning, but not culture, to their *alumni* ; that they send out priests, able and accomplished, but somewhat devoid of the graces, “the sweetness and the light,” of modern civilisation. If this be true, it is no reproach. We will go farther and say, that it is one of those delightful truisms that appear to be quite superfluous. No college, no university even, can turn out a perfectly formed character. It needs the teaching of the great University of Life, the experience of the world, the formation of solid judgment, the friction of human intercourse, and a large acquaintance with the world’s wisdom, enshrined in the world’s literature, to mould a character to perfection. And to suppose that all this can be effected in the halls of a college, and with students that have scarcely reached the age of twenty years, is a delusion that needs no refutation. But this is a truth, and not a truism, that our Irish Colleges turn out, year by year, a young body of priests, the best equipped in the world for the work that is set before them. If this equipment does not embrace polished perfection, it is neither a reproach to the colleges nor a drawback in the ministry. It is no censure on the Irish people to say that they are not a cultured race. Culture is the privilege of the few—it is

<sup>1</sup> Paper read before Maynooth Union.

not the inheritance of the many. They are a quick, witty, rather caustic race—but not cultured. It is not their fault. Centuries of an iron despotism have trodden out the flowers and the fruit of civilised life. Art is a product of Nature—the veriest slave may be an artist, as well as a philosopher. Poetry and eloquence may be found in a cabin, as well as in the Senate. But that indefinable thing called culture is a growth of civilisation ; and not a mushroom growth, but the gradual, ripening process of the centuries ; and centuries of enlightenment, freedom, civilisation, ease and education. It is the autumn mellowing of a free and happy race. Such conditions and results are not the portion of the Irish race, in the past or present. But as we are all deeply concerned with the prospective interests of the Irish Church, and as it is now universally recognised that a highly cultivated, and not merely a learned priesthood, will be necessary to meet the requirements of an advancing civilisation, it may be well to consider the swiftest and surest means of attaining so desirable a result. The very word "culture" supplies at once a syllabus or schedule of its essentials. Taken literally, it means "a tillage of the soil"—the artificial improvement of qualities supplied by Nature. The development of the definition would be "that culture is the raising of previously educated intellectual faculties to their highest potency by the conscious effort of their possessors". Therefore, it presupposes learning, and it means moral as well as intellectual training ; and, to quote the same author,<sup>1</sup> "when character is thus formed, each mental force, whether it belongs to the contemplative or active order—each self so cultivated, will possess the privilege insisted on by the poet, of being able to live resolvedly in the whole, the Good and the Beautiful—not in the warped, the falsified, the egotistical ; not in the petty, the adulterated, the partial ; not in the school, the clique or the coterie ; but in the large sphere of universal and enduring ideas".

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Symonds.

With regard to the first condition of culture, therefore, what we say is this, that our Irish colleges are second to none in the world in imparting the solid groundwork of Theoretical Science, and, at the same time, developing the intellectual faculties of the students. And the second condition would be attained, and the very perfection of an intellectual character formed, and formed in the swiftest and surest way, by the liberal study of moral and mental science. It may be quite right to regard philosophy as the key to theology ; or rather, as the vestibule to the temple of the queen of all the sciences ; and to make it, therefore, the initial science into which the student is inducted. But, considering its importance, its intricacy, and its singular involutions of ideas and phrases, we should be disposed to teach its rudiments as preparatory to theology, but its deeper and most difficult problems as subsequent and supplementary. As this, however, is impossible during the short limit of a college course, it will be seen at once that these remarks apply almost exclusively to that larger course of studies which a priest must pursue in the great University of Life.

Now, the importance of philosophy is derived from the twofold fact, that it is (1) the basis of all intellectual conclusions on the great problems of religion and faith. There may have been skirmishing with other sciences. The great pitched battles between the Church and the world have been fought, and shall ever be fought, on the broad tablelands of Mental Science. And, in the second place, it occupies a place in contemporary thought from which theology is summarily and almost contemptuously excluded. All the best poetry in the world is metaphysical, from the *Bhagavad Gita* to the *Paradiso*, and from the *Paradiso* to the *In Memoriam* and *Abt Vogler*. If Dante had mastered Aristotle, Shelley had his Plato always in his hands. All the best oratory and didactic narrative in the world is metaphysical. If Lacordaire trained himself for the pulpit by a course of philosophy ranging from Plato to

Pascal, George Eliot trained herself, alas ! with Feuerbach and Spinoza. And if it be true that great mental speculations as to the principles of certainty and credibility do not now excite the public interest as in the days when the publication of a volume by Descartes was regarded as an event of European importance, still the decadence of learning has not gone so far that all public interest has died out in philosophical questions. Nay, even those who have lost faith have yet retained an interest in supramundane questions. A recent writer says: "Our age admits no certainty but science, yet it cannot help throwing its sounding-line into the bottomless deep of the unknowable, producing into the infinite the lines of hypotheses suggested by the sciences, and lifting itself on the wings of dreams into the world of mystery". There is a most decided reaction in our day from the gross materialism taught by physical science ; a certain amount of indignation at its dogmatic and unwarrantable assumptions, and a tendency to revert to the older forms of thought as the only means of approaching, if not understanding, the insoluble problems of the universe.

In the great University of Harvard in America a vast number of students are pursuing advanced philosophical studies. "Many of them," says an inquirer, Mr. W. G. H. Palmer, "intend to devote their lives to the subject. I asked twenty or thirty of them why they had turned to philosophy. Nearly half answered that they hoped for light on a religious perplexity. Others have met some difficulty in mathematics, literary criticism, or the care of the poor, which, followed up, became a philosophical problem. And the case of Harvard is not peculiar, but illustrative. All over the land there is going on a great philosophic—I had almost said, religious revival. More patiently men are asking searching questions about themselves and the world they live in than ever they asked before. A company of experts is growing up determined to push inquiries in this field as seriously as the last generation pushed them in physical

science. Philosophy bids fair to become not merely an individual way of life, but an organised body of knowledge, to which successive generations may add." History repeats itself, and revenges the neglect or hostility shown by too proud generations to methods of thought pursued by those preceding. The human mind never has been, and never will be, satisfied with a mere bundle of dry facts as a solution of the mystery of the universe. And if Lord Macaulay, in his enthusiasm for the inductive and physical sciences, could say, in one of his most flippant and superficial sentences: "Such speculations are in a peculiar manner the delight of intelligent children and half-civilised men," we can advance against such flippancy the opinion of such a giant genius as Rosmini: "Like the sun untouched by the clouds of the atmosphere of earth, he felt certain that, though heaven and earth should pass away, the Word of God should not pass away. He knew, indeed, that Divine Wisdom has no need of any philosophical system for the salvation of men, and that it is, in all respects, perfect in itself; but that the errors, the prejudices, and the doubts, which arise from the imperfection of reason, and which interpose so many obstacles to the full assent that is due to revealed truth, may, and ought to be, solved and dispersed by reason itself. He remembered that the Catholic Church, especially in the last Council of Lateran, invited and excited philosophers to apply their studies to this duty. But the study had been long neglected, and, as a consequence, false philosophy invaded every human institution, art and science, producing a hideous perversion in the mental and moral life of individuals, families and nations. Influenced by this false philosophy, the passions and the base calculation of material interests gradually became the counsellors, the only masters of men's minds, which were left open to every prejudice, and ready to give their immediate assent to the most extravagant propositions, or to withdraw it from the most plainly demonstrated truth on any trivial pretence. They

became credulous even to absurdity ; incredulous even to evidence. Embracing irreligion, they willingly lost themselves in shameless licentiousness. Finding virtue and truth a check to all this, they cast them aside as inventions of superstition, or, at least, as things that have no proven existence."

It would be easy to fill a volume with quotations such as these, culled from the great thinkers of the world. But this thesis needs no further proof ; and if it did, we might refer to the famous Encyclical of the Holy Father —the *Æterni Patris*—as conclusive evidence of the vast, the supreme importance of cultivating an exact and minute, and, at the same time, comprehensive knowledge of mental and moral philosophy.

Now, to compass this it seems to us that both for students in college, and for priests on the mission (and it is for the latter that this paper is primarily intended), a negative as well as a positive view must be taken of this complicated science. We must learn Catholic Philosophy by the errors of its opponents. In other words, the history of Mental Science seems to be of as much importance as the mere propositions of the science itself. We cannot understand St. Thomas aright without knowing the theories which conflict with his teaching. And these theories must be studied, understood, and sifted, until their worthlessness and extravagance are clearly brought home to our minds. Long ago, it was quite enough to say to students in their adolescence :—

Spinozismus falsus est ;  
ergo  
Rejiciendus est.

That comfortable enthymeme will not do for latter days and riper experience. Nor will it do to say that the system of Spinoza (which its holders maintain to be irrefutable by human reason) is Pantheism, and that Pantheism is atheism. For all these propositions are denied, and volumes have been written to support the denial. But let the theories of this unhappy man, who

is responsible for the greatest part of modern infidelity, be distinctly understood; then let the full light of Catholic teaching be thrown upon them, and the mind of student and priest is made up for ever that such a system is untenable, that it is disrespectful to God and blasphemous, notwithstanding the charitable enthusiasm of Novalis; and when he finds that system advocated in after-life in books or by men, he can lean on his firm conviction, instead of wavering and doubting whether, after all, there may not be many things in philosophy which our unformed minds did not dream of. Furthermore, it is well to remember that we may, in after life, particularly if we are obliged to do missionary work in England or America, be thrown into contact with those to whom Hegel and Schelling, Mill and Spencer, Schopenhauer and Leopardi, are familiar names, but who do not know that there is a philosophy which justly regards these men as dreamers, and their doctrines as illusory and hypothetical, almost to the verge of insanity. They know no better. They have never heard of Catholic philosophy. In their universities the names of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Suarez, Fénelon, Balmez, were never heard. Kant is their sage; Spinoza their saint. The spectacle of the life of the former, prolonged for ninety years in the calm, even routine of philosophical meditation, without break or disturbance, is simply sublime. The life of the latter, spent in lofty speculations, when the frail body, supported on a little milk, seemed unable to hold the soul to earth, is a life of sublime sanctity to his followers. It is a life of pure thought, that in which the Buddhist hopes to find his Nirvana. They do not know that Spinoza really was a haughty, cruel, imperious spirit, whose very asceticism was animated by contempt for men and hatred of God. Yet how irresponsible and illiberal must not a Catholic priest appear who knows absolutely nothing of these men, who are to their followers the saints of science. And how large-minded and sympathetic must he not appear who can say:

"Yes, I have seen it all. I know what all the champions of deism and atheism can advance. I have counted, weighed, and measured it all. It is dust in the balance against the pure gold of Catholic philosophy." For the deeper one goes in such studies, the more one sees how utterly fallacious and absurd are the speculations of unchristian or antichristian philosophy. That German school which, originating in the doubts of Descartes, has plunged deeper and deeper into scepticism, until it has become a tangled net of sophisms and negations, what is it all in the end? Human speculations about the unknown, couched in a phraseology which has quite an arbitrary meaning in the mind of the philosopher, and from which he derives certain syntheses, to which he lends the name of a system. Then comes his pupil, who denies his axioms and first principles, and brings the whole edifice tumbling down, whilst he tries by new and arbitrary definitions to build up his own cloud-towers, which again he dignifies by the name of a system. All this has gone on for years, until the name of metaphysics has become a synonym for confusion, and materialists have had excellent reasons for repudiating the intangible and invisible as illusions, and building up, on their own provable hypotheses, this last and most dangerous system, which is called agnosticism on the one hand, and positivism on the other.

Now, what we require is a contempt for these human systems, based, not on our ignorance of their elementary theories, but on our complete acquaintance with them. We need to have all the scorn of a superior knowledge, a superior philosophy, and a faith that soars above systems. This I call "reaching the zone of contempt"; just what, in another sense, Carlyle spoke of when he represented a soul "rushing through the howling wilderness of unbelief into the sunlit regions beyond". And let us understand that metaphysics are the guide to faith. The late Lord Tennyson, a great metaphysical poet, declared almost on his death-bed:

"After religion, metaphysics are the hope of mankind. They must stem the tide of materialism. They show materialists that you cannot escape from mystery by escaping from religion."

And so it might be said that, whilst all other sciences appear to have but an ephemeral interest for the race, mental science alone never loses its grasp. In our own times, within the narrow space of a quarter of a century, we have seen, first, geology, then biology, then Scriptural exegesis, held up as the paramount sciences that were to explain all things. They have now, one by one, been driven back to the class-rooms of specialists. But there never was a period in human history when mental science was regarded as of other than supreme importance, and it is safe to prophesy that it will hold this supremacy until the final revelation.

So far for the intellectual aspect of the question. But there is another reason why the study of mental science should be regarded as of paramount importance. It is the moral and elevating influence such studies have on the human mind. They lead on to a spiritual idealism, which is the antithesis and corrective of the gross realism and materialism of our age. The mind is fed upon sacred and lofty ideas, and grows and expands accordingly, until a relish is excited for all that is sacred and sublime in nature, and a corresponding distaste for all that is sensuous and material. And it has been remarked by more than one writer, that countries and ages that have been signalised by devotion to metaphysical studies have also been characterised by remarkable purity of morals; and, on the contrary, purely natural science has seemed to bring in its train a taste for the baser or sensual pleasures. This was particularly exemplified in the history of the Eastern and Western Empires, in which the superior morality of the former has been traced by historians to the almost universal study of theology and philosophy in the East. Finlay, in his *Greece under the Romans*, says: "Philosophical and metaphysical speculations had, in the absence of the more active pursuits of

political life, been the chief occupation of the higher orders ; and, when the Christian religion became universal, it gradually directed the whole attention of the educated to theological questions. These studies certainly exercised a favourable influence on the general morality of mankind, and the tone of society was characterised by a purity of manners, and a degree of charitable feeling which have probably never been surpassed " (p. 175). Now applying these principles to ourselves, we should say that the great majority of missionary priests would find relief from the *tedium vitiæ*, which presses so strongly in remote and unfrequented districts, a source of great elevation of thought, a subject of daily and most inspiring reflection, a loftier idea of their sublime vocation, and even a stimulus to greater zeal, in those studies that bring the soul face to face with the mysteries of life and eternity. And let me repeat that this system of education can only commence in college courses, where studies are necessarily rudimentary, and must be continued during life, at whose end the most careful and successful of priestly students and thinkers will be forced to admit that here below knowledge is fragmentary, uncertain and elusive ; and that it is only in the dawn of eternity we shall see the perfect light.

Hence, these high studies tend to make one very humble. There is a curious dread, not the dread of aversion, in many minds of that abstraction, " a great theologian ". There is always an idea of dogmatism, self-assertion and even intolerance associated with that abstraction—an idea of absolute certainty that makes argument or suggestion impossible. I suppose all this arises from the firm ground on which the theologian stands—the defined and ultimate principles which he advocates. But the student of Mental Science must be cautious and humble ; for the farther he goes in his noble science larger and wider vistas open up before him, and the higher he climbs towards the supreme altitudes, the more frequently he beholds " Alp after Alp " arising, snowclad, visionary, unattainable. And

he sinks into the valleys overwhelmed by the sense of the boundless and inexplicable, and a corresponding sense of his own limitations. Hence was philosophy called, with perfect truth, The Meditation of Death, *Μελέτη Θανάτου*, which the wise monks turned into the very greatest of monastic axioms.

There is just one objection that may be made here, and summarily dismissed—the old, stereotyped objection, that these studies tend to make men visionary and unpractical; and as we are living in an essentially practical age, such studies are altogether out of place. And, again, such studies paralyse human endeavours by infusing a contempt for purely human thought and action. There is something in it. When a man says: “I don’t want a mitre,” it means one of three things—either he is a great saint; or he has no chance; or the springs of human ambition are relaxed or dead. The two first conditions may be desirable. The last deplorable. But as we are distinctly of opinion that it is not always excess in philosophical meditations that produce that effect, we may, I think, pass it by.

Then, again, it is said we have no books but the old, dry, class-books. It is quite true we have not done here quite as much as we ought; but the demand will create the supply; and if we could inspire priests with the desire for pursuing these elevating studies, we can also encourage them by saying there is no necessity of limiting themselves to the dry and rather deterrent scholastic system of question, answer and objection. The dry bones have been clothed with flesh, and, in the pages of many Catholic philosophers and apologists, the great principles and truths of Catholic metaphysics have been presented in a form, not more secure by its consistency and fidelity, than attractive by its eloquence. This is especially true of the French school. Bossuet and Fénelon, in remote times; Lacordaire, Gratry, Montalembert, De Maistre, Ozanam, Maine de Biran, in our own, have lent to Catholic philosophy a distinct charm, which has been by too many supposed to be the exclu-

sive privilege of heresy. Balmez, in Spain; Newman, in England, and Brownson, in America, have clothed truth with elegance and style. But it will not be considered invidious to say that the French school predominates in influence by reason of the crystal clearness of its language, and its adaptability to precise and eloquent expression. And sometimes, in hidden places, you will find light. In Father Faber's works, especially in his *Blessed Sacrament*, and in Father Dalgairns, you have philosophic thought and literary style absolutely unsurpassed.

Outside the Church, too, are many who have written eloquently and wisely of these high things, but this is not their place. Among my own favourites I should say Emile Saisset holds an honoured place, if only for his expressed desire "that the world should be fed with the pure marrow of St. Augustine (*nourri de la moelle de St. Augustin*), guarded by the discipline of the Church, and led by faith on all sides paramount".

Amongst ourselves the great desiderata would seem to be :—

1. A History of Catholic philosophy.
2. A synopsis of systems, compared with St. Thomas.
3. Lives of Catholic philosophers.

My argument, therefore, has run in a sorites :—

The highest culture is the product of the highest thought;  
The highest thought is to be found in the highest literature;  
The highest literature is that which deals with mental science;  
Therefore, the highest culture must spring from mental science.

One word more. In writing suggestive papers of this kind, there seems to be sometimes a querulous

undertone, a note of dissatisfaction that may be misplaced. If there be such, set it down to a passionate desire to see utilised and developed the vast, intellectual resources at our command. The word "Waste" seems to be written in large letters over Ireland, from Malin Head to Cape Clear, and from Loop Head to Howth. With all attempts at reclamation, politically and socially, we must be in perfect sympathy; for those who have time to think and observe can never rid themselves of the reflection of what Ireland has been, of what Ireland might be, of what Ireland shall be. With all kindred workers in other departments we may have sympathy and toleration—toleration for all, except the intolerant. But our own special department is the spiritual and intellectual. I do not think we shall do much in physical science. The genius of the race appears to be opposed to studies demanding a careful sifting of details, and a patient examination of minutiae. I often wonder whether the artists who wrought those exceedingly intricate gold ornaments in the Royal Irish Academy, or the still more beautiful and still more intricate scrollwork in the Book of Kells, and other priceless manuscripts, were of the same race as we. But I know right well that we are of the race of the men who, forsaking their fatherland, planted in Lutetia Parisiorum the world's first university, and then streamed over rivers and mountains to leave the priceless heritage of their sanctity and learning, and the material records of their zeal, enshrined amongst the lovely valleys of the Alps, and the vine-clad slopes of the Apennines. And I also know it was the same race that sent *Erigena*, like a meteor across Europe, to show barbarous tribes or a weakened civilisation the wonders of that science, whose attractions I am feebly advocating to-day. Is the race struck barren? The world says "No!"—tells us that we are even still the most learned body of priests in the world. Let us accept the compliment, but make ourselves worthy of it. Everything is in our favour. The great majority of us have a good deal of leisure-time for study;

there is the same subtle power for pursuing thought through its labyrinths that our race has always possessed. There is also that intense idealism that, never satisfied with mere analysis, is for ever looking through and beyond the outward show of things into the depths of the unseen. What then is wanting? Only a desire to lift ourselves on a higher plane of thought, where, amongst all the masters of the higher thought, we may understand that life has a dignity with which all meaner ambitions are incommensurable, and a destiny which enhances and ennobles even the most puny and sordid details of daily existence.

## CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER.<sup>1</sup>

THE selection of a suitable subject for such an assembly as I have the honour of addressing this evening was by no means easy. I had choice of a literary subject, which might be rendered entertaining ; and, if not immediately useful, at least suggestive of certain trends of thought which might be afterwards developed and utilised in the prosaic business of everyday life ; or of some more practical issue which would suit your age and its immediate requirements. I selected this latter as more economical of time and thought, and of more proximate interest and utility ; and I elected to speak of the elements of character, derivative and formative, inasmuch as character is the moral basis of life—the foundation on which the lower habitation of our earthly destiny, and the higher superstructure of our eternal Fate, are built for woe and destruction, or for permanency and weal. For this life of ours is—like the Bridge of Sighs—“a palace and a prison on each hand” ; with the difference that it is no longer a Council of Three, masked and veiled in impenetrable disguises, but our own selves, who, with perfect freedom, construct those elements that lead to happiness or misery, by guiding the conduct of our lives.

We go back to the etymology of words to get at their real meaning ; and we find that the word “character” means an engraving—the something that is cut, and graved, and chiselled on the individual soul. The Greek word *χαράσσω* has that meaning ; and it is a signifi-

<sup>1</sup> Library Conference, Catholic University College, Dublin.

cant one. Character is that which individualises us, which separates the Me from the Thee. It is the distinctive feature of every soul—the sum of excellences or defects, which make us what we are. We speak of the character of a landscape, the character of a race; and our Catechism perhaps best describes the meaning of the word as applied to our souls, when speaking of certain sacraments it says: "They imprint on the soul a character, or spiritual mark, which can never be effaced".

Now, whence comes this character? Who is the engraver? How long does the mark, cut into our souls by the terrible edge of some invisible stylus, remain? And how is that mark either altogether obliterated, or sculptured more deeply by the accidents and environments of life? And here let me at once premise, that, to avoid confusion of ideas, I am only speaking of the natural order, if, indeed, it can ever be fully dissociated from the supernatural. The vast effects of supernatural agencies, such as grace, prayer, the Sacraments, etc., I leave to other times and places, with the simple but essential proviso, that they form, in their own order, an indispensable portion of the factors which go to make up our mental and moral well-being.

We find, then, that in the formation of character three elements are to be taken into account, namely: heredity, associations and education. I shall briefly touch the two former as derivative elements; and dwell mostly on the latter as the formative element of character.

The world—at least that portion of it which thinks—is beginning to recognise, with some concern, that which has been called "the terrible law of heredity". Its secret operations are only beginning to be known, and are still subjects of investigation in the closet and laboratory. Its public manifestations are forcing the tremendous truth upon the notice of statesmen and legislators, theologians and physicians, philosophers and economists alike. It cannot now be ignored in any science. It seems to permeate Nature, and influence all its operations. The scientist who

refuses to see it is blind ; the philosopher who neglects or despises it may rush to unhappy conclusions ; the physiologist who neglects it neglects what is almost an axiomatic truth. The whole of our future, and, let us hope, more merciful penal legislation, will probably be framed on it. It will be the basis of a new psychology. And even our moral teachings may have to be considerably reconstructed in order to meet and adjust themselves (not so far as their positive truth, which is unchangeable, but so far as charity and prudence are concerned) to the revelations of this imperious and inexorable law. And it seems, so far as we can judge, to be this : That just as the physical characteristics of parents are transmitted to children—the colour of the hair and eyes, the shape and hue of features, the deformities or defects in the frame, the tendency to disease ; so, too, are the moral lineaments handed down—the tendency to a virtue or a vice, the power of repression of evil instincts, or the incapacity to resist—in a word, all these faint lines, sculptured on the virgin tablets of the soul, hereafter to be obliterated or deepened by the various accidents or circumstances of life. The exact moment of this transmission, whether it comes from father or mother, or both—are interesting physiological questions not quite so important, but as widely debated, as the question of the moment in which the soul is infused by the breath of God and the new creation springs into the form and life of man. Here, too, comes in the convergence, not the clashing, of ideas between the physiologist and the metaphysician in the problem—how far the bias, when evil, is due to heredity or to the consequences of the first great fall.

That this strange and portentous inheritance does take place, that the tendency to violence, or drink, or other specific vice, is transmitted, just like a scrofulous affection, appears to be universally admitted ; and it is the first element we have to take into account in the formation of character.

The second is, the environment, or associations, in

which the infant or, indeed, the adult soul, is placed. This, too, has an enormous influence in determining what that character shall be. The soul is as soft and plastic as wax, or as clay in the hands of the potter. It takes impressions and retains them, until they become indurated into habits that are permanent and ineffaceable. The example of those around it, the words heard every day, and which the mind remembers because of its very effort to disentangle their meaning, the power of parental authority, greatest in its example and influence, the intercourse with servants, the first book, the first picture—from all these elements is character derived, and they must be taken into account, not, alas! to remove and displace them, because it is too late, but only to deplore them, when we calculate the future of little children. There is a Spanish proverb: “Live with wolves, and you will learn to howl”; and a plainer sentence in the Psalms: “With the holy, thou wilt be holy; and with the innocent, thou wilt be innocent; and with the elect, thou wilt be elect; and with the perverse, thou wilt be perverted”. “Is example nothing?” said Edmund Burke. “It is everything. Example is the school of mankind; and they will learn at no other.” How terrible the truth is, we who have daily experience of school-life, and its transient and temporary effects compared with the far more powerful and permanent effects of the home influences, know but too well. The real teachers of mankind are not the priest, the professor or the schoolmaster; but the parents, or those who stand *in loco parentis*. The real academy of life is not the church, or the school; but the domestic hearth. It is, alas! our daily experience to find that every lesson of Christian decency and morality is scattered to the winds of heaven by home influences; and that the zealous and honourable efforts of our Sisters and other teachers are neutralised by the closer and more intimate teaching that goes on insensibly in the children’s homes. And, what is even sadder still, is that we often find our young people, carefully trained

in high-class schools in all the habits of refinement and all beautiful tastes for clean and beautiful things, steadily retrograding the moment they cross the threshold of home, and are subjected to the influences of the less refined, but not less powerful circumstances in which they then find themselves. It is the bitter prophecy of the lover in *Locksley Hall* :—

Yet it shall be ; thou shalt lower to his level, day by day,  
All that's fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

On the other hand, it would be difficult to exaggerate the influence for good exercised by wholesome environments. Nay, the very evils sprung from heredity are often eradicated by the slow, but sure, process of betterment, arising from clean and healthy surroundings. As good food, pure air, wholesome exercise, cleanliness of mind and body, may build up a rickety constitution ; so good example, the daily contact with the virtuous, the surroundings of a sweet and healthy home, may transform a disposition prone from its evil inheritance to vicious habits into a virtuous and happy temperament, with every bias towards a good and a noble life. Nay, the good example of one man has often shed sweetness and light not only over a family, but over a whole nation. For, as the thought of a good action done by day makes "music at midnight," so the reflection of a great character throws its lighted shadow across the night of nations, and wakens them to a new morrow of truthfulness and love. "I was common clay until the roses were planted in me," says an Eastern fable ; and the common clay of ordinary humanity is not only fertilised, but beautified by the transplanting of noble thoughts, or sublime deeds, or holy inspirations, fallen from the lives of those whose pathway is towards the stars.

The third element of character, and that which is distinctly formative, is education. It concerns us, too, more deeply than the others. The two former are altogether or largely beyond our will or control, at

least in origin. We cannot determine our birth nor parentage, neither can we control the circumstances in which our childhood or boyhood is placed. But we can educate ourselves physically, intellectually and morally ; and, by this means, remove even the taint of heredity, if such exists ; and counteract the effects of evil associations, if unhappily our early years should have been vitiated by them.

Of physical education I know nothing. I have a great admiration for those ancient, supple Greeks, who lived altogether in the open air, and refrained from many things in order to win the prize. Very like them were our own countrymen, of whom Spencer wrote to Queen Elizabeth 300 years ago : " Yet sure they are very valiant and hardy, for the most part great endurers of cold, labour, hunger, and all hardiness, very active and strong of hand, very swift of foot, very vigilant and circumspect in their enterprises, very present in perils, very great scorers of death ". How far we are changing, under new conditions, it is not for me to say ; but if, as the same author alleges, Cyrus changed the Lydians, who were a fierce, warlike people, into a nation notorious for effeminacy and cowardice, and this by a simple change in apparel and music, it is quite possible that our adoption of less Spartan methods of physical education than those the race has been accustomed to for 700 years, may likewise eventuate in similar physical decadence.

Of intellectual education, too, little need to be said or suggested, especially in such venerable presences. I should feel that I was guilty of the irreverence of the Goths in the Capitol, who, after a moment's hesitation, came near and stroked the beards of the Senators, if I were to presume to speak of intellectual training here. But one observation I may be permitted to make, or rather one appeal. That is, that you, gentlemen, should utilise your college training here, not altogether for utilitarian purposes. Most of you will pass into the professions ; and earn your daily bread as doctors, bar-

risters, soldiers. But it would be, nay, it has been, the saddest fatality, that the great sublime purposes of education have stopped short at the crust of bread and the flagon of wine. The excitement of the bar, the dissecting-room and the field prove too much for the hard-worked professional; and those quiet dreamy hours which perhaps we pictured for ourselves here—the garden nook and our favourite author, the quiet arm-chair within easy reach of the bookstand or bookshelf, the hours with the gods, when we would forget life and its cares—alas ! these, too, become unrealisable, and pass, like so many dreams of youth, into the lumber-rooms of memory.

Yet, why should it be so ? Why should this life, so transient, but so important, be one millgrind from morning to night, with just an occasional break for food, or a still rarer interval on the golf-links or at the billiard-table ? Have we not minds as well as bodies ? And do not these require the daily pabulum of high thought, if they are not to become hebetated and out-worn, even in the meridian of our lives ? Nay ! do we not require intellectual, as distinguished from purely animal pleasure ? I pity from my heart the professional man who has to drudge from morning to night, like Hood's poor sempstress, with never a moment's relaxation—never the sublime luxury of a lonely hour with the kings of thought. No success, however great, can pay back to our world-weary and lonely toiler the intellectual losses sustained by voluntary banishment from the society of the great aristocracy of intellect in every age. But, then, these must be the aristocracy —nay, even the kings of thought. We may play in childhood with our little comrades of the slums and alleys. In middle life we must select our society. And, as we are at perfect liberty to select, let us make companions of our solitude from the princes of intellect in every language, and of every age, and of every race in the world. At first, we are somewhat embarrassed in their society, just as when we are introduced to some

great man we feel uncomfortable, until we have grown accustomed to his greatness. We cannot commune with our great men from the arm-chair. We must sit on the tripod to receive the inspiration. But after a little intercourse we become familiar. Like the visitor to St. Peter's, the mind expands to the dimensions of thought, and from potentate and prince, our great author comes down to our level as familiar and friend. And once you become happy in his society, you can never decline to plebeian, or less royal, company again. And your kings are so near and so approachable! You must go to Rome or Florence—to Pitti or Uffizi galleries, to see the great masterpieces of ancient sculpture. No plaster cast can give you an idea of the originals. You must go to Dresden to see the Sistine Madonna. No engraving or photograph can convey the faintest reflection of the surpassing beauty of that eighth wonder of the world. You must go to London, or Paris, or Petersburg to hear a great opera, or see a great drama. The days seem to be departed when a Handel might stray hither to Dublin, and find here the recognition of his genius or his work. But the kings of thought are at your door, and within easy reach of the most modest purse. You can have an *Æschylus* for the price of a game of billiards; a *Homer* for a package of cigars; *Hamlet* for a tram-fare. You throw sixpence to a beggar; and with it you can buy a king. Sophocles, Euripides, Homer, Cicero, Dante, Milton, Montaigne and Macaulay, Bacon and Marcus Aurelius, are all waiting, in very humble apparel, lest they should frighten you, down there in O'Connell or Grafton Street, or along the quays. You can take them up, and carry them home—the hostages who, 300 years ago, could not be had for their weight in gold ten times over; and who were kept royal prisoners, under lock and key and chain, in the scriptorium of some fortress-monastery. Now they are yours; the kings have become your slaves; and they exercise their kingly magic at your bidding. "Give me a great thought," said Herder, "before I die."

You have but to wish it, and great thoughts are poured into your mind with all the lavish generosity of genius ; and not to help you to die, so much as to enable you to live. And these great thoughts, better than minted gold or diamonds from Golconda, are yours—to take with you wheresoever you please. And often, perhaps, in seasons of defeat and depression, they recur to you to cheer you, for I believe the most powerful mental tonic is the magic of a great word. And the great lines of the world's poetry will come back to you, with all their melody and sweetness, to haunt you. You have such lines by the thousand in your Greek—it is not your grammar, but that subtle sense called taste, that will reveal them—great mouthfuls of harmonious words, with such a sweet kernel of thought within them. You have them in Dante, every line of whom is resonant with sweet or horrid music. You have them in Milton and Shakspeare, and Tennyson and Browning, etc.

And is this education ? Yes ! And formation of character ? Yes ! Whatever tends to sweeten, to purify, or to exalt, helps to form character. If there are "sermons in stones," there is magic in poetry, the kindly magic that builds a new heaven and a new earth above this valley of tears. And, what is more, this education, or formation of character, may pass from the university to the cottage, if men were wise enough to conduct it thither. And strenuously as Irish Catholics have to work, and plead, and organise for the national boon of university education, university education is not the end. There is something wider than a university ; and that is a nation. And when we shall have attained our desires in that respect, we shall look farther and see that the education of a university is but the first step to a wider ambition—to make education universal. Spartan simplicity of life, purity of morals, and high thinking—these are the desiderata of our time and race.

A very distinguished French critic, Edmond Scherer, in his valuable notice on "Wordsworth and modern poetry," remarks that : "Life is the confluence of two

currents, the point of intersection between the trajectories of two forces, those of Nature and of Destiny. No matter what we are; what we shall be depends on the accidents of education, the chance meetings of life. There are even moments when this thought is a troublesome one, 'What will the future bring?' 'How shall I come out of the trial I cannot avoid?' For in fact, Destiny is the stronger, and in the case of most men she seldom allows Nature to exercise her rights fully." I quote this remarkable sentence to disagree with it. I should like to eliminate that ugly and suggestive word *Destiny*, and put in its place Freewill, moulded and formed by that sublime discipline and training which is the peculiar province of each soul towards itself. This brings us to the third department in this matter of education, and which we may designate "moral". This regards not only the formation of character, viewed as a passive and inoperative faculty or condition; but also the conduct of life. It strikes us at once as a most singular fact that this department of moral training does not command the same attention as other less important branches in the vast curriculum of modern education. The reason is plain. It is left absolutely to the priest and the Church. It is excluded from the hearth and the schoolroom. Nevertheless, it is a subject that requires constant and unceasing attention. I take to-night one chapter, and only one—our duties to ourselves—otherwise, self-government—otherwise, the conduct of life.

Now, this moral education is completed in three ways—I believe I am quoting from Lord Tennyson—by self-knowledge, self-reverence and self-control. Given those three; and with every inherited defect, and every defect acquired by association, you have, apart from the supernatural effluences that raise the soul to another order, the perfect man.

It is a far cry from Thales to Thomas Carlyle—from the first year of the thirty-fifth Olympiad to the twentieth century after Christ. But the divergence in

time is not greater than the divergence in philosophy. Some thousands of years are not so far apart as the "know thyself" of Thales, and the "know thy work" of Carlyle. It may be almost said, that the old Greek doctrine had governed the world, until the sage of Chelsea spoke, and spoke in his usual contemptuous and destructive manner. The philosophers of Greece accepted it. It was the foundation of all the Socratic disputation. It passed into the monastic discipline of the Church. It is the secret of the great, spiritual science of meditation, and of the examination of conscience, recommended to us so strongly. Sometimes it has been abused, as in the introspection and morbid mysticism of the Gnostics and Neo-Platonists. But there it is, that *γνῶθι σεαυτὸν* of antiquity, the basis of philosophy, the essential of morality. It is the first step, the first great falsehood, or the first great truth, according as we comprehend it. I think Carlyle was the first to contradict the experience of centuries and sages; and to give us his own Gospel. Even for this alone he stands out distinct from his age. Whether it is an eminence of littleness or greatness is a matter of opinion. But he protests against that ancient doctrine, and he protests forcibly:—

"The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work, and do it. 'Know thyself?' Long enough has that poor self of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to know it, I believe. Think it not thy business, that of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual. Know what thou canst work at, and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan!"

Few and simple words! Yet words to which might be traced in some measure not a little of that fret and fever and output of energy, sometimes lawless, sometimes useful and generous, which have characterised the latter half of the nineteenth century. Might we not say: If now and again nations and individuals paused in this tremendous tendency towards expansion and reproduction, it might be better for themselves and

for the world? A little leisure, a little meditation, a little folding of the hands to rest, and that still, small whisper: "Know Thysel!" might obviate a great many of our social and political dangers. For how can you know your work, if you do not know your capacity, and how can you measure your work if you do not know your natural limits? How many men find themselves in wrong places in life, because they have mistaken their life's work by mistaking their own tendencies and capabilities! And surely there is nothing on earth so saddening, as to see men in great and responsible positions, without corresponding endowments. They found, not their own life-work, but the life-work that belonged to men of larger mental and moral calibre; and there they remained to the end, unconscious of their inferiority and unsuitableness, and confusing and retarding important work, because they never knew themselves. Indeed, it may be said that the work of great men in the world is to correct and bring into clear harmony the confusion effected by fools, as a Homer might gather into an *Iliad* the street-ballads of Greece, or a Napoleon might construct an empire from street-barricades, or a *Code* from the sanguinary principles of a Revolution. I think, then, that the first business of young men setting out on life's journey is to know themselves—to know first of all their tendencies, the bent and bias of their minds; and then their talents, in order to ascertain whether these latter are of such a nature as to carry on the selection of a life's calling to complete success. Men often mistake their vocations; still oftener, their powers. Then, you must know your weaknesses, not with a sense of morbid restlessness to overcome them, but with a view to guard against the dangers where the inner enemy might prove traitorous. There is no use, however optimistic we may be, in denying that life has its pitfalls, which by foresight we may avoid, out of which we may emerge badly bruised—from which we may never rise. But the traitor is not so much the enemy who has dug

the pitfalls as the domestic enemy who has led us thither—that is, ourselves. Assuredly, of the four classes of *εἴδωλα*, or false divinities, which Lord Bacon warns us against, those of the den, the *Idola specus*, the false gods who lurk in the caverns of our own souls, where the light is imperfectly admitted, and before which we are so fond of burning incense, and sacrificing truth, are the most dangerous. *Know Thyself*, therefore, and turn thine eye inward upon thyself. Other sciences will be learned at little cost, will come to thee almost without seeking. But in Self-knowledge is all knowledge; and this is not attained without much watchfulness and disinterested honesty in judging ourselves.

From this will follow the second condition: Self-reverence. It may seem at first paradoxical to say so, because I have been presuming that this Self-knowledge will reveal mostly hereditary evils, secret defects, the weakness and wounds of mortal infirmity. How, then, can this introspection create Self-reverence? How can we respect what we have learned to fear and to despise? Here, again, we go back to the old sophists; for it seems that, apart from revelation, these mighty Greeks did use up and exhaust all the wisdom of the world, and we find in Hindu, Egyptian and Greek philosophy, that we are confronted with this identical paradox—men despising their bodies, and worshipping them; making them to-day vessels of clay, to-morrow the abodes of gods. The fakir on the banks of the Ganges, Diogenes in his tub, Socrates in his blanket—all these despised their bodies; yet, side by side with this contempt, we find an almost morbid anxiety for gorgeous obsequies, stately mausoleums, costly embalmings, as if in some mysterious manner the soul hovered over the crumbling remains, an unseen witness to the reverence and homage of the survivors. The old monks took this contempt for the body into Nitria and Libya; called the body their enemy, and reduced it to subjection by fasting and vigils, and smiting with stones and thorns and chains. The Neo-Platonists again pro-

tested against this prison-house of earth. Plotinus said he was ashamed of his body ; and, as Grecian philosophy permeated the theology of the Church, we find many of the Fathers speak of the body so contemptuously that in our less robust and more sensitive times we must leave the exact words to imagination. And yet, never was the Church more sensitive than in these ages about the reverence due to the living and the dead—from the sacred anointings, as of a king or a priest, in Baptism, to the final lustrations with holy water, and the incensation of the corpse, before it was finally lowered into the tomb. Nay, in the Epistles of that great Saint who would have been styled the greatest of the philosophers if he had not been a Christian—I mean St. Paul—we find what appears to be a similar contradiction : “I chastise my body” ; “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost ?” And most modern writers, who are by no means materialists or rationalists, seem to take this latter view. “You touch heaven,” says Novalis, “when you place your hand on a human body.” I need not trouble you with Shakespeare or Carlyle.

I confess I incline strongly to this latter view. If science says : “You are but a little phosphorus and water, a piece of saturated earth, of wet dust, which when it dries shall be dust again ; and how can you reverence what is so despicable and transitory ?” I answer : “I am something more ! This tremendous complexity of nerves, and tissues, and muscles, and brain, is more than you say, is more than any man has yet discerned. It is an awful revelation—a mystery of mysteries. Great thinkers have marvelled so much about it that they have begun to deny its existence. The fact alone that that one muscle, the human heart, has never ceased for a moment since my birth to perform its tremendous office, night and day, is enough to fill me with wonder. Often at night I hear it beating, throb by throb sending the red torrents swishing through the narrow canals that narrow still more

into the capillaries which feed lungs and brain and nerve. What is the secret of this mechanism? Life. You are only answering one riddle by another! Yes, I am a miracle in the midst of miracles. I see nothing, touch nothing that is not miraculous, at least in the sense that it is to be wondered at and adored. The whole firmament of heaven, with all its galaxies of stars and nebulae, pours its splendours into the narrow canal of the eye of a little child, and photographs itself on the retina. Yea, even disease, decomposition and death are miracles. They mean the evolution of new organic forms, each as perfect in its organism as myself. The bacillus of consumption or typhoid proves the existence of Omnipotence as well as the Constellation of Orion. The infinitely little tells of God as well as the infinitely great. And so, from the cradle to the grave, through every form of health or of disease, in every organ, physical and mental, in the red discs of the blood, in the convolutions of the brain, in the chemical foods that dissolve and re-form into life, in the agents of disease that lurk for death, there is that miraculous interchange of energies that make of these bodies of ours a revelation of unseen agencies that bring to life or death; and are for ever operating in life and death the eternal mystery of Creation."

And so, even under the revelations of science, we see the truth of the poet: "You touch heaven when you place your hand on a human body". And I am happy to be able to testify that, as science advances, so does reverence; and in that great profession that has for its object the conservation of life, and the prevention of disease and death, the physician or surgeon now approaches with reverence the patient whose life is to be saved, and sees in that fleshy tabernacle something more than a mere subject; and touches it, no matter how honeycombed and rendered repulsive by disease, as gently as he would touch the vessels of the Temple. It was not always so; but the irreverence of science is yielding to the spell of its own revelations. What, then, shall I say of the higher revelation: "Your bodies

are the temples of the Holy Ghost"? Such thoughts would, perhaps, carry us away from our present treatment. So in presence of such a reflection, we can only do what the Jewish scribes did when they met the name Jehovah or the Elohim in their transcriptions—veil our faces and pass by.

But what, then, are we to make of the mediæval ascetic Theology, nay, even of the modern fast, and the eternal reminder: "I have one law of my members and another of the spirit"; "I chastise my body and bring it under subjection"? What are we to think of:—

Move upwards, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die?

Ah, well, this brings us to our last duty of Self-control. The Christian revelation explains well what philosophy has never yet even attempted to explain—the origin and cause of the eternal warfare between flesh and spirit. There is the fact—which no evolutionist has yet explained—that the beasts infallibly obey their instincts; but that man is always in rebellion against instinct and reason combined. He has been endowed with the higher faculty—to repudiate its authority or dethrone it. It is a humiliating exhibition—"the slave on horseback and the king walking in the mire". And the very honour of our nature is at stake in that tremendous conflict, waged in each heart and brain, and from which we emerge triumphant, if we get the slave beneath; but shamefully dishonoured if the slave rules and the master grovels below. Here is the justification of all Catholic asceticism, apart altogether from the question of merit; here is the explanation of Lenten fasts and Friday abstinences, of the austerities of the Carthusian and Cistercian; of the rigid obedience of the Jesuit; of the poverty and bare feet of the Franciscan. "I chastise my body."

Move upwards, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

It is not the only passage where Tennyson is an apologist for the Church.

There, then, can be no doubt whatsoever of this paramount duty of self-control. And, like so many other things, it is a question of habit in the natural order, of grace in the supernatural. Habit is better than principle, and habits must be formed in youth if freedom is to be found in old age. They are tyrants for good or ill. They carry you gloriously to freedom and honour, or rush headlong with you to destruction. "More are made good by exercitation than by nature," said Democritus. And there never yet was a fine, pure soul that might not be ruined by evil habits, nor an evil inheritance that might not be sweetened and ennobled by good ones.

And here, at the risk of half-offending, I must make free with my audience and address myself to specific evils. We have the Celtic temperament—the tendency to extremes. We have no middle term; we scorn the adage: *In medio tutissimus ibis!* "Let us make a name for ourselves," said the Dublin Fusiliers the other day, as they rushed at the impossible, and perished. We are a branch—an offshoot—of the race that produced a St. Ignatius and—a Pombal; first cousins by blood, and brothers by the adoption of battle, with the race that produced a Vincent de Paul and a Bossuet; and also—a Robespierre and a Voltaire. We have the same instincts as those which created the Association of the Propagation of the Faith and discovered America. But those instincts, too, degenerated until they built a guillotine on the *Place de la Concorde*, and put a goddess of Reason on the altars of Notre Dame. The faculty is the same; but it takes a different bias. It leads to heroism or destruction. There is no middle term. Now, this Celtic emphasis is our inheritance—for better, for worse. And there is no lesson more needed by us, than this lesson of the necessity of acquiring self-control. You see the tendency to extremes everywhere—in our politics, our literature, our newspapers, our temperance

societies. Nay, that word "Temperance" has slipped in unawares. It has no place here. Most opponents of the drink-evil repudiate it. They protest that there can be no such thing. It is drunkenness or total abstinence. Moderation is impossible. They do not preach : "Control yourselves, like rational men, and children of God ! Hold the reins firm and let not the beast run with you !" No ! They say : "Come hither, and be muzzled ; otherwise you will be dangerous to yourselves, and others ". I daresay these zealous men are right. I should be very loth to say they are wrong. I am only instancing the fact to prove that we cannot rest on the middle term. We are a people of extremes. So, too, with our speech. The responsibility of words has never dawned on us. We fling them right and left unsparingly. We care not whom we wound in the pleasure of uttering sarcastic or satirical language. A *bonmot* cannot be resisted, no matter how winged with poison it may be. It is impossible to resist the temptation to jest. This is not confined to us. The Scoto-Celt, Carlyle, called Herbert Spencer "an immeasurable ass," and said Cardinal Newman had the mind of a rabbit ; the Breton Celt, Renan, declared Lacordaire's conferences to be, "theological buffooneries, which, by force of impudence and eloquence, enlisted admiration in Notre Dame ". And then our tendency to exaggerate. We speak in superlatives. We use up all the adjectives in the language. Fortunately, no one heeds now either sarcasm or exaggeration. We have grown used to it. And so, by the extreme use of injudicious words, they have ceased to have meaning, as great poisons, taken in little doses, cease to affect the human frame. Then, our temper ! "Anger," says Seneca, "is shortlived madness." With us, it has a tendency to longevity, for we rarely part with it ; and to ubiquity, for we carry it with us everywhere. We are good haters. Other peoples distinguish. We draw no line. To differ with us on any most insignificant point is to exasperate us. And we cannot differ on one point without differing on

every point in the whole orbit of human experience and social intercourse. Two English Ministers—Cabinet and ex-Cabinet—will exchange pretty strong language across the floor of the House of Commons; perhaps they will even break through the paralysis of British propriety to gesticulate wildly, and emphasise their contentions. To all outward appearance they are deadly and implacable enemies. Yet, at eight o'clock, they are dining at the same table in the grill-room, and exchanging views on the latest book or the last telegram from the Stock Exchange; and they can meet at a country house to shoot grouse in the autumn and enjoy social amenities, and go back to the House of Commons in January, to resume the old political warfare again. What is all this? The discipline and training of self-control, the tacit understanding that none of us is infallible, at least in all things; and that, if we are not of the same mind on politics, or literature, or science, or education, we can agree to differ on that one platform, and take up the rôle of politeness, and even friendship, on all the other points where we shall possibly be of one mind, and where our united and harmonious efforts may help along a weak and tottering cause.

I sometimes occupy myself in my solitude in trying to conjecture why Irish and French, and Spanish, and Italian Catholics cannot organise. I am told that there are barely thirty thousand secularists in France, who grind beneath their heel some thirty million Catholics. It is as wonderful as that little army in India, holding in serfdom those millions of the most intelligent race on the face of the earth. What is the secret? Organisation. But what is the secret of organisation? Discipline. But what is the secret of discipline? Self-control. A cynic said to me once, when discussing this ever-recurring question: "You see it is this way. We, Catholics, are members of a powerful organisation, with an infallible judgment guiding us; and an imperial authority ruling us. So we are compacted, in dogmatic and ethical matters, into a homogeneous mass,

from which we cannot break without destruction to ourselves. Now, the irresistible tendency of human nature is to expand and disintegrate. Therefore, in social matters and political matters, our tendency is against compact unity. We seek freedom; and we find it in differing from one another. You cannot organise socially the members of a perfect religious organisation. *E contra*, in other creeds, there is absolute disintegration, every individual an independent unit; and each carrying his church under his hat. Here, there is an irresistible tendency to unite, and form political associations, which in turn are themselves irresistible. And so you have societies comparatively insignificant in number, consolidated into squares that are as unbroken and irresistible as the infantry at Waterloo. And you, being but social units, go down before the wedged and solid mass." There may be something in it. I prefer to seek the solution in the greater educational advancement, and consequently, the larger discipline and power of self-control amongst those who constitute the rank and file of our opponents throughout the world. And, perhaps, too, in that half-pathetic, wholly-prophetic Divine utterance: "The children of darkness are wiser in their generation than the children of light".

And now a final word. There is a little German saying: *Ernst ist das Leben*. We like our texts, like our meats, disguised; and a dinner from a French *menu* card tastes twice as well. The words are: Life is a serious thing! So it is, my young friends. And it can only be regarded under two aspects. These were presented to the minds of the older generation by two books: the Gospel of St. John, and the *Nature* of Lucretius. In more modern times their exponents have been, the *Imitation of Christ*, and the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. And it is rather a singular thing that these two latter are perhaps the most widely circulated books in our generation. Yet, these two books are wholly antithetical. Every proposition in the one can be met by a contradictory in the other.

If there were no other life, unquestionably the philosophy of Omar would be in the ascendant. It is the "eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!" Life should be what it was in their prison to the aristocratic victims of the French Revolution—a round of amusements, and theatricals, for the tumbrils might roll into the courtyard at any moment, and our names be called for the basket. It would be perfectly pardonable, nay, it would be the only wisdom, to take the little round of life as pleasantly, and with as few pains as possible—without ambition, or love, or anything else that could disturb our equanimity, until the clock struck, and we passed out into the unknown. But this won't do. If there be any instinct stronger than another within us, it is this very contempt for useless and wasted lives. If there be any word which we loathe it is that new word for an ancient vice—Hedonism. And on the other hand, if there be any instinct within us to rival that contempt for a merely pleasurable existence, it is the instinct that all our unspeakable aspirations, this stirring of the spirit within us, this love for hard things, this desire of pain, because it makes us strong, point to a life the very opposite of that dream of Eastern voluptuousness ; a life, the great watchword of which is that most sacred of syllables—duty. We need not here seek deeply for the origin or reason of that reverence which we all feel for that sacred word ; and our admiration for those, who, perhaps, made it the crown and end of life. We cannot conceal our contempt for the voluptuary, who goes out of a useless life by a painless death. It is not to such we build temples and erect statues. But to the soldier, who flings away his life for his country ; to the physician, ay, more than physician, who, with all his family ties around him, takes up the typhus and small-pox patient in his arms, and lavishes on him every care that science and humanity can suggest ; to the apostle, who goes out to unknown lands and joins the tribe of narrow foreheads to redeem them ; to the priest, who becomes

a leper to save the lepers ; to the brave fireman, who mounts the ladder and sees beneath him a furnace of fire, and nothing to save him but the wall that is tottering beneath him ; or to the silent student in the attic, who is weaving at the cost of life and brain-power immortal thoughts for his brethren—to all these does our admiration extend, and their example is a tonic, and a very needful tonic, for a world that is self-seeking and pleasure-seeking, and which would like to believe

One flash of Light within the Tavern caught,  
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

And upon a lower level the same principles hold. Pleasure and duty, the Tavern and the Temple are before us all. The former hold out their hands and say : Choose ! The latter open their doors, and say : Enter ! And whether you are a dispensary doctor in some remote Irish hamlet, thrown amongst the poorest of the poor, without society, with scanty emoluments ; or a great physician in Merrion Square, with several door-bells, and only to be seen by special appointment ; whether you are mapping a labourer's cottage or a great exhibition ; defending a paltry Petty Sessions' case, or engaged in a *cause célèbre* in the Four Courts, it is all the same—Pleasure with its temptations and Duty with her stern demands are before you ; there stand the temple and the tavern, and you choose for better, for worse. For, there in that remote district are your brethren, the children of the Father ; and you have to lift up or cast down ; to bring to life or death. Wistful eyes are turned towards you from the sick bed. A mother in the toils and throes of a new life, or a little child, only conscious of agony, but who has thrown the strong cords of love about the weeping father or the disconsolate mother. And you are the health-bringer, the life-saver, the giver of hope and joy to the afflicted and the despairing. Was there ever such a duty—such a responsibility, or such a reward ? This is no Tavern, but a Temple. Or, some one is wronged—fouly wronged in fortune or character—a widow, an orphan, under

that fierce aggressive spirit so characteristic of our times. An appeal is made to Justice—Justice, blind-folded and with the eternal scales in her hands. And you are the advocate, the pleader for that justice which the lawless will not give, which the law, put into operation by you, must enforce. Is not this a solemn duty? What place is here for the philosophy of Omar:—

A hair perhaps divides the False and True ;  
Yes ; and a single Alef were the clue ?

And, if you sit at your desk at midnight and the white page is before you to be dotted by your pen with irrevocable words—again it is pleasure and duty—the Temple and the Tavern. You can write for lucre, or for spite; you can write also for edification, the building up of the many who will hang upon your words, perhaps when the hand that penned them is still for ever. Is not this a solemn thing? *Ernst ist das Leben!* Ay, there is no place for joking here. You may forget your responsibilities, but you cannot shirk them. They follow you everywhere. Life is a serious thing. It must not be allowed to evaporate in a jest; but be a happy round of great duties and simple pleasures. To meet the former, a strong and tender, cheerful yet reverent character must be formed. And here you draw the lines that form that character. From these your Book of Life shall be printed in letters that last for eternity. Take care in your daily engraving to allow no scrape or blot to mar the beauty of the characters you are forming. But let all the letters be clean and firm and fair; so that men reading your life, as men are wont to read, will find therein little to criticise and much to edify and enlighten; and that you yourselves, in your old age, may be able to turn over page after page of that Book of Life, and be able to say: “It is well written, within and without—chaste thoughts, kind words, noble deeds, cheerful sacrifices for God and man”. Nay, in all humility, and thanking God for it—“It is not altogether unworthy of a place in the archives of Heaven!”

## THE LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES OF CATHOLIC LITERATURE.<sup>1</sup>

### THE CHURCH STILL INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO THE WORLD.

IT is very difficult for us, who walk securely in the full noon tide of Catholic faith, to understand that the Church is still, even at this late period in her history, a strange and irritating puzzle to the world. She is as much a mystery as in the days when Pagan Rome was appalled by its credulous and puerile acceptance of the horrible calumnies about the Christians that were whispered in the baths by the Tiber and in the galleries of the Coliseum; and when, on the other hand, the same Pagan city was equally mystified, but unto edification, by the love which these Christians bore towards each other. In our days, the calumnies are become but faint echoes of the fierce, unscrupulous bigotry of the past; and if some poor unfrocked cleric holds forth in a little Bethel in England, or some Town Hall in the Colonies, men go to hear him, rather with the prurienty that demands sensational and revolting details, than with any disposition to accept or believe them. Nevertheless, we remain the world's great enigma; and if just now, owing to the influence of the great personality that has passed away, and the convergence of certain political and social influences, we are somewhat fawned upon, and even admired, we, in our corporate union with the Church, are still the great phenomenon, the secret of

<sup>1</sup> This article was prepared in the first instance as an address to the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.—P. A. S.

whose permanence and solidity amidst the vast fluctuations of modern life, neither reason, nor sense, nor science can adequately explain to those who are not of the household of the faith. They say to us: "You are fairly intelligent, and yet you accept mysteries that are incomprehensible; you are lovers of liberty, and haters of despotism,—nay, sometimes, you become painfully emphatic in your assertion of individual freedom—and yet you meekly bow your stubborn necks under the yoke of an old priest, hidden behind the walls of a Roman palace or prison; you are fairly sociable beings, and we like you well enough at our afternoon teas, or at a tennis party, but then you ruthlessly snap asunder every tender tie of human affection, and the fairest and best amongst you bury themselves in obscure convents, and wear ill-fitting clothes, and break every sacred and time-honoured distinction between class and class, and actually leave 'their own set' to go down and become the servants of the horrid poor. It is all unintelligible, unreasonable—so unintelligible that we are ready to cry with vexation over the puzzle." And so a stumbling-block to the unlettered and ignorant, a mystery to the learned, the Church pursues its wonderful career; and the attitude of the world towards it is unchanged and unchangeable.

#### THE WORLD ALSO A MYSTERY TO THE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH.

On our side, too, there is a certain amount of surprise and amazement about the world. We cannot understand its stupidity and malevolence. We do a great deal to make intelligible our position, and we fail. We make certain bold or timid approaches, and we are repelled. We put out a tremendous amount of energy, and we find we are ploughing the desert, and sowing seed upon the barren sea. We meet objections and destroy them, and they crop up as lively as before. We confute our opponents, and lo! they are not con-

futed. We scatter the myths and superstitions of the world, as the sun scatters the mists of the morning ; and lo ! they become as dark and as crass as before. It seems positively pitiful—that immense output of energy that our brethren in England are daily and hourly making—those splendid sermons and lectures, those beautiful and elaborate ceremonies, that perfect ritual and music, those saintly, and self-sacrificing, and devoted lives ; and then the utterly disproportionate results—a convert here and there, a little more respect for Catholicity, the saving from apostasy and perdition of the poor Irish in the slums—that is all ! We cannot understand it. We cannot see why all England is not at the feet of Peter and of Christ.

France, too, shocks us with the same sense of disproportion. "How can that country," we ask, "which has the miracles of Lourdes before its eyes, which has heard, and even boasted of, Paray-le-Monial and La Salette, which poured eighty thousand pilgrims annually into the little hamlet where an old priest created another Bethlehem and Assisi, stand by coolly and assent to the horrors that are being enacted in our own time ?" We are puzzled and shocked, until we recall the life of the Church's Divine Founder, and remember that the very same Jews that heard the awful words : " Lazarus, come forth !" and saw the swathed form rise up in horrible majesty from the tomb, and unfolded the very napkin that bound his head, formed part of the very crowd that but a few days later shouted, "Crucify him ! Crucify him !" to the Omnipotent Wonder-worker, whose power and glory they beheld.

#### DO CATHOLICS SUFFICIENTLY APPRECIATE THE POWER OF LITERATURE IN THE PRESENT AGE ?

Yet, while we shake our heads, and console ourselves by such reflections, as we witness the folly and blindness of men, it is well for us, Catholics, sometimes, and especially in Ireland, where we are so highly favoured

by God, to consider if we are really doing all in our power to make our position intelligible to the world, and our happiness communicable. This is all the more urgent, because, whilst there are amongst us certain of our brethren who are captious and censorious under the influence of that dangerous element in modern life—the little learning that puffs up with pride—there are at the same time many more who, under the influence of holy guides, are waking up not only to a sense of duty as Catholics, but to a conception of the tremendous possibilities that lie before us in Ireland, with such splendid resources of faith, intelligence and disinterestedness as we possess. Let us, therefore, look closely to our weapons and see what are polished and perfect; and let us see where we have allowed the rust to gather.

We certainly cannot blame ourselves for want of zeal in material matters. What this impoverished country has done during the last fifty years in erecting churches, schools, convents, monasteries, hospitals and asylums would be incredible if we ourselves were not witnesses of it. Neither can we be reproached for lack of zeal in our priestly ministrations, or in the silent but effective labours of our vast and well-organised sodalities and confraternities. If any hostile or critical examiners into the details of the working of our Catholic system should say to us, as they said to Frederick Ozanam: "Show us your work!" we could promptly challenge criticism, and fear no comparison with the efforts of other Churches. Where, then, do we fail?

In this, I believe that we have not yet fully recognised the vast importance of literature as a means of conveying Catholic truth to the world. We have been hoarding up our treasures without a desire of sharing them. We have been building pools of Solomon, but, unlike the all-wise king, we have forgotten the aqueducts. The Lord said: Go forth, and teach! We are content to say: Come and learn!

"The children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." From the printing-

presses of the world pours forth, day by day, a stream of pollution, poisoning the minds of the young and inexperienced, and preparing the way by its solvent and destructive properties for those social and political upheavals that threaten the destruction of civilisation. You may easily trace all the evils of the world to corrupt literature. The English Deists of the eighteenth century, Toland, Shaftesbury, Tindal, Mandeville, Bolingbroke, inspired the Diderot and Helvetius and Holbach of the *Encyclopædia*. Rousseau created the French Revolution. Voltaire inspires the attack on the Religious Orders in France to day. Mazzini completed the spoliation of the Roman States. Tolstoi creates a railway strike in Pittsburg. The Rationalist Press of London is, I am sorry to say, pouring out by the million its copies of works, nominally scientific, positively blasphemous and aggressive. You may see these infamous booklets, endorsed by names famous in science and literature, selling at sixpence even in our Catholic cities; and you may see them advertised and recommended in newspapers owned by Catholics. I have read these books, and can testify that an untrained mind would suffer serious injury to faith, if without precaution or antidote it read these books which are standard volumes on irreligion and infidelity.

Now, we have not yet fully realised the far-reaching importance of the written word. I do not mean Holy Scripture only, but literature in its thousandfold aspects. Perhaps we lean too much on the spoken word. Perhaps we think too much of the "predica verbum" ("Preach the Word") of St. Paul, and think too little of the solemn quotations with which our Lord verified His every word and act: *It is written!* There seems to me a solemn significance in this. I wish I could claim the idea as an original one—that our Divine Master did defend, as if placed beyond all doubt by the assertion, His attitude, His language, His very miracles by quotations from the prophets and Moses. "It is written!" "Is it not written?" As if these words were an affirm-

ation, equivalent to an incontrovertible proof, that His actions were not only justified by the words, but that even a forecast of them was given in the great prophetic books. So, too, when Dives besought Abraham to send a messenger from eternity, a preacher to his brethren in the flesh, he was coldly answered: "They have Moses and the Prophets!" And the Church itself, whilst rightly claiming to be the living Voice of God to the faithful, supports its claims, its teaching, its prerogatives by an appeal to the Written Word: *Scriptum est!* Hence those splendid Encyclical letters that come to the world periodically from Rome, and that remain in their magnificent perfection, unassailable by criticism—the Word of God to the hearts of the faithful to edify, to the hearts of the incredulous to irritate or condemn. But do we possess such a literature? Have we anything written that we may show without fear or shame?

#### COLOSSAL MONUMENTS OF CATHOLIC LITERATURE.

It is a singular question, and may provoke a smile amongst many grave theologians or philosophers here present, who understand better than I the colossal labours of our Fathers, theologians and saints. Some day, when general education is more advanced, the world, especially that world that lies within the walls of universities, will wake up, and stare, as men stare to-day, at Baalbec or the Pyramids or the Sphinx, at the stupendous intellectual output of the Fathers of the Church. They will ask with a certain amount of surprised incredulity, Did Augustine really write these immense volumes, replete with such close, consecutive, and exalted thought, that it is difficult to believe a merely human intelligence evolved it? They will stare at the twenty-two folio volumes of Suarez, broad pages and double columns, and refuse to admit that one man in a rather short span of life did pen down these columns after columns of abstruse and recondite reflection. They

will try and put the sharp penknife of criticism between the gigantic monoliths that build up the *Summa* of St. Thomas, and then admit that it is a perfect whole without flaw or break or a single pause in its logical continuity. And they will realise that in our own time the Church is neither barren nor decrepit, if they can be brought face to face with the products of the great intellectual activity of Catholic writers in France and Italy and Germany; and they will be taught to see that the great lords of thought, whom the world has placed on its pedestals, are pygmies compared with the intellectual giants born, reared, nurtured and developed by the great Mother Church of the ages and of the world. And perhaps it will be the first great lesson that shall be learned by our own young students, when they shall have paced the corridors of a Catholic University for a year or two, that Shakespeare was not "the greatest mind that God ever created," nor was Carlyle the "greatest of the prophets"; that Herbert Spencer is not the *doyen* of the world of thought to-day, nor is Haeckel the "heir of all the ages" in the domain of speculative or experimental thought. But, as I have said, we know nothing of our greatest men. We have the pools of Solomon without the aqueducts; vast quarries, but no statues; treasures beyond price or calculation, but the key is lost. No man yet has found it.

#### THE GOSPEL OF "THE MAN IN THE STREET".

All this, however, concerns the student of the closet and the class-hall. What about "the man in the street"? And this is a generic term, rather broad in its meaning, for it includes the lady in her boudoir, the artisan in his workshop, the labourer in his cottage, the commercial behind his counter, the teacher in his primary school—every one, in a word, who has no hope of wearing an ermine or silk hood and a square cap. And again, let me insist on the necessity of the "written

word," this time backed by the pagan authority of Horace, though used in a somewhat different sense :—

Segnus irritant animos demissa per aurem  
Quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.

Can we have any doubt about it? Will any one tell me that the girl who pushes the perambulator before her with the right hand, whilst she holds the novelette in the left, does not take her gospel, her code of ethics, her very religion, from that book, and not from the sermon which she heard imperfectly and distractedly last Sunday? Will any one maintain that the newspaper read in the club, in the taproom, by the fireside, by the ordinary artisan and labourer, does not grave deeper the lines of character than the pulpit-words heard the previous Sunday; and alas! forgotten as soon as heard? Where does the lady of fashion get her ideas of things in general? And if those ideas are not very exalted—if they range from the price of a feather to the altitudes of a desirable engagement, or from a ball dress to a horse show, who is to blame? What have we given the world in poetry? We had one great poet; but we promptly banished him to a Franciscan monastery. In fiction? In lectures? In essays? In the thousand and one channels through which thought may be made to filter, and irrigate unto wholesome life and profit the vast, and barren, and desolate wastes of the human mind?

Of course you do not for a moment take me as playing the ungracious part of an *Advocatus Diaboli*; or seeking to incriminate the whole Catholic community in a wholesale charge of indolence and culpable negligence. Quite the contrary! It would be a strange thing if I could stand here, without admitting, generously and gratefully, the noble work that has been done by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland. The prudent and zealous labours of its officials and committee, the great sacrifices of time and toil they have made, the judgment that has guided them, and the zeal that has urged them

on, deserve a most grateful recognition on the part of the priests and the people of Ireland. May I add that they have received their reward in the great and unprecedented success that has attended their efforts? Yes, gentlemen of the Catholic Truth Society, "You have cast your bread on the running waters, and after many days it will return"!

#### FETTERS OF THE CATHOLIC WRITER: HE CANNOT APPEAL TO LIBIDINOUS PASSION.

Neither am I insensible to the iron limitations that surround and embarrass, whilst they shield the Catholic writer. We can have no wish to conceal them or deny their existence, because their restraints are not only our apology, but our glory and our pride. We can never hope to produce a literature as attractive and popular as the world's literature, because we can never appeal to the two great elements of popularity—passion and untruth! So long as human nature is human nature it will seek excitement, scenes of dramatic interest, suggestive and voluptuous thoughts, dangerous and lascivious situations; and these we cannot give. Our fiction, our poetry, our drama, our art must be, above all things, pure; and, as the passions are atheists, the world will hardly care for the cold, pure holiness of the Catholic ideal. A Catholic writer would rather put his right hand into the fire than write much that passes for art and literature in our days. Hence, I have no toleration for those who cry out: We want a Burns! We want a Tolstoi or an Ibsen! Even as poets, I would not compare for a moment Robert Burns with our own Moore and Mangan; and no man or maid need blush for the melodies of the former, whilst Mangan was so scrupulously pure that he made the greatest sacrifice a poet can make by watering down in his translations the rather burning words of German or Irish poets. No! the cry of every Catholic heart must ever be: Perish art and science and literature, rather than issue one

word that could originate an unholy thought, or bring to the cheek of the innocent an unholy flame ! But this is a drawback, a limitation within which we are strictly bound, whilst the world wantons with vice and secures popularity.

#### HE CANNOT DISCARD DIVINE TRUTH.

Still more stern in its limitations on Catholic literature is Divine truth. Here there can be no indulgence, no compromise. A non-Catholic writer is absolutely unfettered in his choice of subjects, in his quotations and authorities, in his treatment of historical, philosophical or ethical problems. He wanders at his own sweet will wherever he pleases. No monitor warns him, no tribunal judges him, no authoritative voice checks him in his daring course, and if he is contumacious, condemns and annihilates him, until he becomes a proverb. The whole universe is before him ; and he may revel in every absurdity without let or hindrance. He is absolutely unrestricted, unshackled. The press may censure him. It only helps to sell his books. He may be denounced from the pulpit, although that is a rare and remote possibility. The congregation, piqued with curiosity, promptly buys his volumes and condemns his critics. Where every one has liberty of conscience, why should any one dare say what is truth or untruth ? It is a purely subjective matter. What is one man's food is another man's poison. And who shall dare interfere ? There is no authority but reason. And who shall say what is reasonable and what is not ? Lord Bacon says that Pilate jested when he asked that awful question, What is truth ? I doubt it. He was too much frightened to jest. But I know the world is always jesting when it asks ridiculously and contemptuously : What is truth ? Pilate did not ask for an answer ; neither does the world. And hence, disbelieving the existence of truth, it has every indulgence for error. And its writers have a free hand, a fair field and every favour.

Far different is the position of a Catholic writer. He must write in the solemn, majestic presence of Truth, which he has learned to love and revere all his life. And if tempted by ambition, or avarice, or a desire of fame, to ignore or forget her, there stands by the eternal monitor, Conscience, to rebuke and to remind him that he must write as if from his deathbed, and leave no line that he should wish to blot. And if still forgetful of such silent but powerful admonition, he should try to stifle it and write for the mere applause of men, he will find a hundred critics who will pounce down on every word and syllable, and bring it to the touchstone. If still heedless or contemptuous, the ecclesiastical authority of his diocese is invoked. And if yet contumacious and emboldened by treacherous praise, he perseveres in representing error as truth, the supreme authority on earth intervenes, and that is the "stone cut from the mountain, and filling all the earth, and whoever it toucheth is shattered and destroyed". Hence, a Catholic philosopher, sitting at his desk, has to draw his lines with the utmost circumspection; a Catholic historian has to be endowed with almost superhuman powers of discrimination to find the truth amidst the factious misrepresentations of rival cliques or creeds; a Catholic poet must guard himself against too daring flights of imagination; and a Catholic mystic must be ever fearful lest he should touch those bounds beyond which it is at least temerarious to pass. Is all this regrettable? Certainly not! It is quite right and proper. The Church is not sent to teach Art, or History, or Poetry. It is sent to teach and safeguard truth. It is the vicarious representative of Him who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life"; who said, "You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free," who departed from earth to send in His place "the Spirit of Truth, who would teach all Truth, and abide with His Church for ever". Hence, we never hear of "Catholic Literary Societies," or "Catholic Art Societies," or "Catholic Science Societies". But we do hear of "Catholic

*Truth* Societies," as if the very name "Catholic" were inseparably associated with "Truth."

CATHOLIC LITERATURE REPUGNANT TO THE CORRUPT  
HEART OF MAN WHICH CHAFES AGAINST RE-  
STRAINT AND HANKERS AFTER ERROR.

Nevertheless, all this protection and safeguarding of Divine Truth is a restriction upon literary efforts. The corrupt heart of man dislikes it. It hates restraint. It hankers after error. There is nothing so surprising in all human history as the manner in which the Israelites in the very visible Presence of Jehovah, within sound of His Voice, and touch of His Hands, leaned over and reverted to idolatry. It is inexplicable that right under the lightnings of Sinai they should build their golden idol and worship it. But we need not wonder. We see the same thing in our own times. The corrupt mind of man is for ever chafing against restraint; but most of all against intellectual restraint. Hence it hates Truth. Truth, clearly defined and outlined, is an iron bar, bolted across the pride of intellect; and man's mind revolts against this limitation of its freedom, and seeks to free itself. Hence, Catholic philosophy, with that sacred word "Veritas" written and stamped on every page, can never be quite as popular as the wild visionings and imaginings of the metaphysical dreamer, who builds up his cloud-castles on airy foundations, and who does not even pretend that they are true or can last, or be anything more than "the baseless fabric of a vision". So, too, a Catholic historian, who has to sift and discriminate, and then testify to historical facts, can never tell with the reading public like the delightful romanticists, such as Mr. Froude, whose histories are a happy blend of fact and fiction. And if a Catholic essayist ventures upon a discussion on social, political or economic subjects, he is brought bolt upright against decisions, acts, legislations, or warnings, that limit his speculations within the

domain of what is strictly ethical, according to the mind of the Church.

#### WITHIN ITS LIMITATIONS, WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES OF CATHOLIC LITERATURE?

But now we come to the question: Whether within those limitations, which we hold to be strictly righteous and just, there is a field for Catholic literature? Has it any possibilities? And we answer without hesitation, Yes, and a wide field, and many and varied possibilities! And first, with regard to the subjects that interest the learned and the educated, I hold that there is a great future before Catholic philosophy, if only we can bring it down in the vernacular of each country, from the library shelf to the desk, from the pulpit of the professor to the arm-chair or the dining-table. Again, let me repeat, we have the pools of Solomon without the aqueducts. And the great aqueduct of the modern world is what is known as Style. Here I know I am at issue with many who have thought more deeply or perhaps judged more wisely than I. I have some dim recollection that a certain noble lord, in a review of a certain remarkable and recent treatise on philosophy, did praise the book in a special manner for its dry, scientific, naked style of argument, as being the only style suited for philosophical or metaphysical discussion. That may be true for the schools. But I am now speaking for the arm-chair and the dining-table; and I contend that, inasmuch as it is style—the perfection of sentences, the symmetry of periods, the crisp and perfect fitting word, the rhythm and resonance of that best organ of communication, well-written and harmonious language—that brings the dangerous writings of unbelievers into the drawing-rooms of the leisured and the cultured, so we must study and emulate the same style if we ever hope to carry philosophic truth beyond the threshold of the college classroom.

Why is Rousseau still read? For his philosophy?

No! That is too absurd. For his style? Yes! What is the attraction of Tyndall? Science? No! That is now commonplace. Style? Yes! And Renan, Huxley, Spencer—all are stylists; and it is not for what they say, but for the way in which they say it, that a place is reserved for them on the shelves of the learned. Here is a broad field for the Catholic writer, unploughed, untilled, except for what Newman, Balmez, Brownson, and a few more have done.

#### UNTILLED FIELDS: THE DRAMA, THE ART AND THE SUBJECTS.

Then again there is the drama. You who visit theatres know better than I what a powerful educational factor for good or ill the stage is. You remember what a sensation such a religious representation as *The Sign of the Cross* created in your cities. Now, here we are absolutely barren. Let me put it more gently—here there are vast possibilities before us. I do not know any great Catholic dramatist, except Calderon; and Calderon's works are practically unknown. Dramatic art, indeed, appears to have died out everywhere. It is a characteristic of our age; and I do not quite understand its significance. But for a young, ambitious, aspiring Catholic author, I do not know any more immediate way to fame and the hearts of the people than a vigorous, well-knit and inspiring presentment of some great Catholic truth, or fact, or some scene from history, placed on the stage, and challenging the admiration of pit, boxes and stalls. And what a wealth of subjects, embarrassing in their perfect adaptation to the wants and tastes of the public! The whole range of the history of the three first centuries; the mysteries of the Catacombs; the holocausts in the amphitheatres; the nobility of the martyrs; the variety of races, Roman, Greek, Numidian, Asiatic; the deserts of Libya; the schools of Alexandria; the apostasy and persecution of Julian; the greatness of Con-

stantine; the Crusaders; Canossa; the Moorish empire in Spain; the Albigenses; Savonarola and the Medici; Avignon; Hernando Cortez and Mexico; Las Casas; the French Revolution; the Irish Famine—here are but a tithe of the subjects that have unquestionably the germ and potency of being developed into great and enduring dramatic representations. The novelist has already exploited them. Kingsley went to Alexandria for Hypatia; Sienkiewicz to the Coliseum for *Quo Vadis*; Dickens to the French Revolution for his *Tale of Two Cities*; you will remember many more; but there is the Art, there are the subjects, there are the expectant public. But where is the man?

#### FICTION: ITS MATTER AND ITS FORM.

To come down to the general mass of readers. In the department of fiction, we have done a great deal; but a great deal remains to be done. Here again we have great possibilities. We have not used up a fraction of the subjects that lie under our hands, and are supremely interesting. For example, town and city life have hardly yet been touched here in Ireland. Our novelists are still walking in the footsteps of Carleton, Banim, and Gerald Griffin. The priest, the rebel, the policeman still hold the stage. Cannot we make a break? Here in your own city are subjects, characters, incidents, accidents, student-life, professional-life, religious-life, soldier-life, slum-life, social-life, that seems to be clamouring for another Charles Dickens. What do we want? A little observation, a little fancy, the power of photographing with the pen, and—success. But, here let me say, we must be above all things human. Say what we like, man is the most interesting little being on this planet; and Catholic writers must really try and come down from the skies and present the little puppet in his most attractive shape. And, if we want to teach the world through the novel

we must not aim at being too didactic. The world takes its philosophy in homœopathic doses, or through a quill. If we want to teach it, we must laugh with it and weep with it. It is the secret of the enormous and abiding popularity of Charles Dickens. Tears, smiles, laughter, horror, blend in all his pages, and all circle around his inimitable creations, which are essentially and individually human.

And if I may introduce the subject here with all reverence, it is this very human element that creates and conserves the permanent popularity of the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. No artist could ever conceive anything half so touching as that scene in the house of Simon, the Pharisee ; or the weeping of our Lord with the sisters above the grave of Lazarus ; or the loud sobs of Peter, as he leaned his head against the cold wall of Pilate's palace in the midnight, and bemoaned his horrible denial ; or that scene in the garden, and the words : "Mary ! " " Rabboni ! " And did you not notice how all the teaching of our Lord was divinely human, and all His parables and illustrations taken from homely, everyday life ? The sower in the fields ; the master of the vineyard ; the shepherd seeking the lost sheep ; the poor woman sweeping the floor for the wretched coin ; the foolish virgins ; the sparrows on the housetop ; the grass of the field. " Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they labour not, neither do they spin ; and yet Solomon, in all his glory, was not clothed like one of these." " I would give all that Raphael ever painted," said Carlyle, in his old age, " to see the face of the young Jew who spoke these words." And so say we all.

#### BIOGRAPHY: WHAT CONSTITUTES ITS CHARM.

If all this be true of fiction, it is still more true of that department of literature, biography. Here again is another untilled field, with vast possibilities of development. We know little of our greatest men ; and

the truth is we want to know all about them. When you come to that time of life when you grow tired of fiction, you naturally turn to fact. And the facts you seek, and which have the greatest attraction for you, are the facts in the lives of your fellowmen, especially those whom you have come to love or to admire. It has been said, with truth, that there is an interesting picture to be made out of every human life, the lowest as well as the highest; but the interesting thing about life is its human side, its passions, hopes, virtues, aspirations, habits, thoughts, feelings. We all like dearly to see the inside of the mansion where dwells the human soul; we want the blinds taken down, and the windows raised, and the roof taken off, that we may see all the particulars of the interior. The same instinct that drives people to an auction drives them to a biography. It may not be a lofty instinct; but just now we are considering how to capture human nature; and human nature wants to pry into every secret recess of character and mind. Why do two or three thousand people yearly visit Craigenputtock, where Carlyle wrote his *Sartor Resartus*; and why do many more visit No. 5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea, now turned into a Carlyle Museum? They want to know all about the man, endeared to them by his own writings, but still more by the very candid biography of his friend, Mr. Froude. They want to see his desk, his chair, his coffee-pot, his pipes, to fit on his hats, to see the spot where he wrestled with Frederick, the garden where he smoked with Tennyson, and where on sleepless nights he saw the dawn breaking behind London and the stars paling in the western sky. And his own inimitable pen and ink sketches—how we remember these! Tennyson, with his shock head of dusky hair and smoking infinite tobacco; Coleridge, large, unwieldy, with his eternal “subject” and “object”; Lamb, with insuperable propensity to gin; Mill, with his white face when he came to tell of the holocaust made by the *French Revolution*. These are the things that interest men; and the Catholic bio-

grapher will do well to follow, while he conveys at the same time the grandeur, the holiness, the sweetness that must ever belong to any Catholic hero whose life is worth writing or reading. We want to see our great men with all their faults, wrinkles and all painted in, in order that by our perception of what is human in them we may recognise them as brothers, and receive the conviction that their greatness is not beyond our emulation, as their faults are not beyond our compassion and pity. And we want their letters—the outpouring of their hearts to friends, not the clear-cut, polished and reserved communications that are intended for press and posterity; but the candid communications of friend to friend, made in the moments when reserve was flung aside, and all the man's soul was laid naked before us.

#### THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC PRESS.

These, then, are the possibilities of Catholic literature; and they are wide and deep enough for any ambition, however great. You will see I have said nothing of the press, because it hardly comes under the scope of this paper. Let me quote the words of the late Pontiff, "A good Catholic paper is a mission in each parish"; and the conjecture of another writer that if St. Paul were living to-day he would be probably a great journalist.

#### CATHOLIC LITERARY RENAISSANCE.

But just here comes in the supplementary question, granted all these possibilities, good writers, wholesome reading, poetry, fiction, philosophy, biography, what about the possibility of finding a Catholic reading public? Must we fall back on the ancient platitude, that supply will create demand; or may we rather hope that in an universal intellectual awakening Ireland shall not be backward, but in her eagerness for "Light, more

Light," shall create the Light-Bringers, the literary workers of this generation? There can be no doubt of the fact that the spirit of intellectualism is abroad. I can testify that in America, the Church, having accomplished its material work in church-building, school endowments, etc., is turning its attention to the more intellectual demands of the age. The great cities have their Catholic Reading Circles, little coteries where books are discussed week by week, and nothing original or novel is permitted to escape unnoticed. At their summer-schools, lectures are daily delivered by priests and laymen, eminent in some department or other of science or literature. Priests far away in the Western States, on the very outskirts of civilisation, are accumulating vast libraries, and utilising the solitary intervals between their arduous calls in studies that keep them fully in touch with modern civilisation. And at home there is unquestionably a great educational revival. Men are getting tired of all this grubbing and delving for gold at such immense and costly sacrifices in body and soul. They are beginning to perceive that life is not worth living if it has to be spent in perpetual fever and fret after the imaginary happiness of wealth. And with this they are beginning to perceive that the best gifts of God lie beneath their hands. Here is the first and healthiest symptom of the general levelling up of the masses, not to the standard of wealth, but to the standard of cultivation and taste. The Governments of the world, adapting themselves to the ever-increasing democratic spirit of the age, will have to provide museums, music, art galleries, libraries, for the great toiling masses; capitalists will have to give their operatives time for mental rest and cultivation; Nature must be allowed to claim back her sick children from slums and streets and factories; religious and intellectual socialism will kill political socialism; and literature and religion, hand in hand, will be interpreters and pioneers of the New Order of things.

### ROOT-MALADY OF THE IRISH CHARACTER AND ITS REMEDY.

I know no more hopeful sign of the century whereon we are just entering than this intellectual renaissance. Hitherto, and even still, we are fighting against ignorance, prejudice and passion. Under the new dispensation we shall have to appeal to wisdom, liberal and unprejudiced minds, and human beings who shall have learned to curb and restrain themselves. For I am distinctly of opinion that all the evils we have been hitherto combating—drink, idleness, unthrift, emigration—are symptomatic of a deeper evil, a root-malady, that underlies all and vitiates all. You will find that root-malady in a certain flaw or defect in our national character, sometimes called servility, sometimes Celtic effervescence and want of stability, sometimes otherwise designated. But whatever be your diagnosis of the malady, I can see but one remedy; and that is, the larger enlightenment of the people, and the creation of a certain independence or individualism, by which each soul shall walk its own way, unattracted by custom or fashion, and undeterred by the fickle and foolish opinions of men. But this radical remedy can only come from principle and habit; principles can only be formed from ideas; and where are these elementary and wholesome ideas to come from? And how are they to filter down and interpenetrate the minds of the masses of our people? Clearly, through the book, the magazine, the newspaper, the pamphlet, the leaflet—through essay and article, poem and lecture, play and novel, through the fiction of drama and romance, through the facts of history and biography. Can we supply these? Hitherto great work has been done; but greater remains to be accomplished. Men will demand meat, and not milk. A masculine literature alone can meet their wants, and reflect credit on us. So far as great principles and thoughts are concerned, we have them already garnered and enshrined.

The great problem is, can we give them to the world in an acceptable and accessible shape ?

#### UNIVERSAL VOCATION OF CATHOLICS.

If not, our place will soon be supplied by the poisonous, deleterious literature of the age. Already, as I have said, it is in our midst, and we cannot keep men's hands from it. It is a horrible thought. It seems like a kind of obsession, this frantic desire on the part of scientific unbelievers to break down the faith of the masses. Perhaps it is not taken seriously in England. And if religion, too, to us meant nothing more than the listening to good music and a weary sermon on Sunday morning, followed by a full-dress church parade, each individual conscientiously and faultlessly attired—*bien coiffé, bien ganté, bien chaussé*—this deadly onslaught against Christianity would mean nothing, and cause less trouble than the bursting of a glove-button or the disarrangement of a feather. But, when religion is everything to us, high as heaven, deep as hell, wide as space, overshadowing and interpenetrating all things, the breath of our nostrils, the staff in our hands, our rock-shelter from the heat ; and whereas the maintenance of that religion is the one thing of supreme importance to our poor, whose lives without the eternal promises would be intolerable, it behoves us all, clergy and laity, to see whether we perceive in ourselves those mind - searchings and twitchings of the heart which those must suffer who have either the responsibilities of high office, or the cares of minds that believe that here all is endangered, and all is at stake. The sappers and miners of modern infidelity cannot do much harm on an airy fabric built on no particular foundations ; but when we hear them digging their mines beneath the City of God we must be vigilant and concerned to throw the searchlights of Catholic Truth along the dark ways and subtle windings of error. Such is the vocation of all ; and such in a very special manner is the mission