

11

THE ALPHA, *L*

OR

FIRST PRINCIPLE OF THE HUMAN MIND:

A Philosophical Inquiry

INTO

THE NATURE OF TRUTH.

“Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man’s mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of Truth.”—LORD BACON.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

—
MDCCLII.

LONDON :
THOMAS HARRILD, PRINTER, SILVER STREET,
FALCON SQUARE.



TO

THE DAUGHTER OF DIONYSIUS

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .

It has frequently been said that there exists a necessity for a New Faith. This volume is intended to supply the want :—**FAITH IN THE PERFECTIBILITY OF HUMAN NATURE.** It is also affirmed that men are yearning for a New Truth. It has been the object of the Author to supply the desideratum :—**THAT TRUTH WHICH IS THE EXPONENT OF ALL TRUTH.** How far he has succeeded in either of these objects will be best ascertained by an attentive and unprejudiced perusal of the following pages.

The serious, Truth-seeking Reader will wish the lighter portions of the work away : whilst he who reads chiefly for amusement will perhaps regret that it has not been rendered less serious and more amusing. But for this difference in tastes a smaller book would have sufficed, and the object aimed at would have been more directly, perhaps more successfully, attained. As it is, however, a perusal of the whole is necessary : and it is hoped that the task will not be found either uninteresting or oppressively laborious.

The subject would admit of much greater diffuseness and elaboration ; but it has been the wish of the

Author to be as concise as was consistent with clearness;—to suggest the whole subject rather than very minutely to develop it. It has also been his aim, however unsuccessful the attempt, to evolve his thoughts in the fewest words: and this has led him, in the more important portions of the work, to have recourse to Typographical aids for the accomplishment of his purpose. Some will set down this deviation from what is usual as a species of Pedantry or Conceit. Others will deem it dogmatical in its character, and a proof of bad Taste. If, however, the peculiarity in question is useful in the attainment of any of the purposes for which especial attention to particular passages might properly be called, it matters but little to what other motive his deviation from the usual practice may be ascribed.

The Author is also aware that in his comments on men and things;—on the great Luminaries of the world, and on the Institutions their genius has helped to raise around us—he will very frequently seem obnoxious to the charge of Egotism, want of Modesty, and, possibly, to something more heinous than either. But, it should be borne in mind that in all such cases he is not uttering Opinions, nor speaking in his own person or on his own behalf; but in the sacred name of Truth;—that what he utters (if he has not mistaken Falsehood for Truth) is not his own, but God's. Whenever what is called Modesty is not the result of Doubt, it is the result of Affectation. Absolute conviction knows nothing of Modesty; nor can it be

influenced by conventional Taste. It has its work to do, and does it, without intending offence or fearing to inflict it;—without asking itself what the “world” will say and think, or calculating on the consequences. He is, however, fully sensible that what has been attempted in the present work has been but imperfectly accomplished. This is a matter of his own; and for the inadequacy of the attempt he alone is answerable. Whithersoever Truth has marshalled him he has been obliged to go. Whatsoever it has commanded him to utter he has uttered. Whatsoever it has bid him do, to the best of his ability he has done. The mode of utterance he has chosen, and the means he has resorted to for the accomplishment of his task, are alone the things for which he is responsible: and, in these, he is sufficiently aware of his deficiencies to know that he stands in need of the reader’s benevolent forbearance. He has, however, no right to expect immunity from censure; nor does he seek it. Good intentions are not of themselves sufficient to exonerate misguided Folly from reproach.

The volume has been written in haste and amid the pressure of other than literary avocations. If, however, it meet with favour from the Public its Author might find time to improve it: if otherwise, the thought and labour it has cost him will have been a sufficient sacrifice for the oblivion that awaits his lucubrations.

It was the Author’s intention to publish the work

under the fictitious name of the narrator of the experiences the book is meant to memorize, but regard to truthfulness has admonished him to abandon the intention. It might be said that the same love of truthfulness ought to have induced him to supply the blank in the title-page by the insertion of his own. If, however, the positions assumed in the Alpha are true, a name cannot do anything in the way of enforcing them on the attention of the thinking portion of mankind: and if not true, they will not need the leaden weight of an unknown name to sink them in the stream on which he has had the hardihood to launch them.

LONDON,
November 4th, 1850.

CONTENTS.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction, 1—What Ramus Randolph saw and did in his travels, 2—His object, 2—What is useless in travel, 3—Some account of himself, 4—His brother Raphael, 5—Ramus Randolph unhappy, 7—A cause of his disquietude, 8—His dislike of the "Sports" of Gentlemen, 10—Falls in Love, 11—Ellen Raymond, 11—Randolph's notions of the sacredness of LOVE, 13—Public Worship, 13—MARRIAGE sometimes the cause of Selfishness, 15—Philanthropy not Happiness, nor its results a general good, 16—Randolph becomes a recluse and devotes himself to study, but is still unhappy, 17.

CHAPTER II.

Randolph meditates on the objects of Human life, 19—A description: his soliloquy, 20—A mysterious Stranger, 21—Knowledge once ours is always ours, 22—A Revelation, 23—Beauty a nonentity, 23—Ignorance the cause of Misery, 23—Intelligence the First Principle, 24—A Light begins to dawn on Ramus Randolph, 24—Philosophers and Philosophy, 25—Religion, Morals, Literature, and Laws inadequate to the suppression of Vice and Crime, 26—Knowledge is Happiness, 26—Danger of propagating the Truth, 27—Randolph's Happiness, 27—Why the Angels are happy, 28—The necessity of Human Ignorance, 28—The nothingness of the Soul without Knowledge, and its probable fate, 29.

CHAPTER III.

The Revelation continued, 31—Uselessness of the Metaphysician's labours, 31—There is no Evil Principle in the Universe, 31—Good and Evil, 31—Society is only Barbarism reduced to a system, 32—Man's nature described; Immateriality of Knowledge; certain false notions corrected; Ignorance a negation, 33—All Qualities of Mind are mere phases of our Knowledge, 33—Profanity of certain Religious dogmas, 34—Uselessness of moral precepts, 35—How we arrive at a conception of the Virtues, 35—The necessity for their exercise until they can be superseded by general Intelligence, 36—Happy results of general Intelligence anticipated, 36—Wherever there is Mystery there is Ignorance or Fraud, 36—The Deity is prescient Intelligence, 37—The Divine Will, 38—The Human Will within certain limits, absolute

on the Earth, 38—The original Error of Mankind, 39—The all-sufficiency of Knowledge, 39—Necessity for Knowledge; the Millennium of Mind, 40—To be brought about by general Education, 40—Signs of the Time; Charge of Dionysius to Randolph, 40—What Men mean by Beauty; Beauty is Perfection, 42—Sublimity defined, 43—Reasons of our appreciation of what we call the Beautiful in Forms, Colours, Odours, Sounds, 43—Knowledge, positive, and negative, 44—What Positive Knowledge will accomplish; the end of the Revolution, 45.

CHAPTER IV.

Randolph returns to his home, 46—His Happiness, 47—His reflections, 48—The difficulty of communicating his newly-found Knowledge to the world, 49—The consequences of Marriage sometimes evil; Catholicus; Madness and its causes, 50—Friendship, 51—His Delays and his Observations, 52—An Event; Dionysius Lackland, his character, perplexities and opinions, 53—Ellen Lackland, 54—A discovery, 55—Death of Dionysius, 56—Randolph sees his mission accomplished in a Vision or Dream in which Dionysius explains his new Philosophy, 56—The details of the Vision promised in the three subsequent chapters, 57—Its importance, 57.

CHAPTER V.

The Vision: its commencement and phases described, 59—Dionysius addresses the assembled thousands in Westminster Abbey; his objects stated, 61—The use of Philosophy, and what it is; it must have Truth for its basis, 62—Reason the sole Arbitrator of Truth, 63—Reason defined, 64—Perception or Consciousness innate, 64—Objection against the existence of Consciousness, and the infallibility of Reason answered, 65—Philosophy the basis of Religion, 66—What is Truth?—the mode of ascertaining what it is, 67—How to know what Man is; and thence to know what is Good and what is Evil, 69—The Human Soul an Intelligent Principle; its mission described, 71—Intelligence the First Principle of all things or Deity, 71—Man an embryo Intelligence and an Animal: he is liable to Error; but enjoys an immunity from Crime, 72—Recapitulation of the arguments, 73—From the Nature of the Deity his Will and Purposes are deduced, 74—The Nature of the Human Soul determines the purpose of its being, 75.

CHAPTER VI.

The Vision continued: Will, a Quality or Mode of Intelligence, 76—The Human Will why given, and how limited, 77—The misuse or misdirection of the Human Will the cause of the Inconveniences we call Evil, 78—Some of the Evils enumerated, and the means of their removal pointed out, 79—Intelligence all-sufficient for the work it has to accomplish, 80—The Soul or Intelligent Principle capable only of Knowledge; proofs of this, 81—The Nature and Attributes of the Deity

examined, 83—The existence of Spirit demonstrable as the existence of Matter, 84—Prescience, Omnipotence, Ubiquity, Omniscience, Perfect Justice, Perfect Goodness, the whole resolvable into Infinite Intelligence, 86—Man can be only relatively Just or Good, 88—Mercy, 89—Truth considered as an attribute, 90—Error of the Metaphysicians, 91—The Immortality of the Soul, 92.

CHAPTER VII.

The Vision continued: purport of former Chapter collected, 97—The Laws of the Deity are general, 97—Some things exist as a Necessity of General Laws; an example drawn from Human Labours, 97—There is a Purpose in all the works of the Deity, 99—Reason for concluding that Man is the Primary Purpose of all Creation, 99—Why Man is dual-natured, 100—Ignorance, and Blind Faith in Blind Leaders the causes of innumerable Evils, 100—Error exists in the exact ratio of our Ignorance, 101—Evil the result of Error, 101—The Desire to Know, the active Principle of our existence, 102—Error defined, and its source sought, 103—Its source traced to Man, 105—There is a beneficent necessity for Error, 106—Though an Erring being, Man is not a Sinful or Fallen being, 107—Human Nature and Brute Nature contrasted, 107—The Beaver, 109—What the Human Mind has accomplished, 110—Man's natural love of Knowledge, 112—The Human Hand: its uses a proof of his Immortality, 112—Reason liable to Error, 114—The absoluteness of the Human Will, 115—Man's chief Error, 115—Truth and Knowledge synonymous, 116—Philosophy conduces to the Religion of Christ, 117—Some of the sad consequences of Error, 117—Plato, Zeno, Aristotle, Socrates, Bacon, 119—Poets the chief pioneers of Truth, 119—Christ the greatest, 120—End of the Vision, 120—The Vision accounted for, 120—Society responsible for the Evil-doings of Individuals, 121.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

First Conversation, Randolph and Civilis, 123—Faith and Belief defined and contradistinguished from Knowledge, 125—The Inefficacy of Faith, 128 and 131—Miracles, 128—Sin, Crime, and Future Punishment, 131—Just Laws, 132—An Instinct of the Soul, 136—Beauty, our notions of it whence derived, 137—Beauty, our inquiries regarding it leads to the First Principle, 137—How to know Truth always, and how to estimate its value, 142—The Soul a Revelation to itself, 145—Scepticism defended, 146—How Society dwarfs the Intellects of Men, and how it makes its "Nobles" and Philosophers, 147.

CHAPTER II.

Effect on Civilis of former conversation, 150—The reason why Men are created Ignorant, 151—Free-Will and Necessity examined and explained, 153—The doctrine of Predestination refuted, 153—General Laws subject to accidents, 159—The failure of the Soul, or forfeiture of its individual existence hereafter—no Injustice, 159—Dreams: relation of two singular dreams by Civilis, 161—Singular characteristic of Dreams, 163—Reminiscences of a Pin, 163—The Philosophy of Work, Jenny Blanchard, Lydia Brierley, 170—Millinery Establishments, 174—Uselessness of Philanthropy, 176—Magdalens, Penitentiaries, Charitable Asylums, 177—The “dignity” of Work, 181.

CHAPTER III.

Man dual-natured. The Soul does not Live, and thence cannot die, 184—Error the result of wrong convictions: Man not a Sinful being, nor a Moral being, 185—Paul quoted, 186—Selfishness the Principle of all Life: but not of the Soul, 187—Mystic Religion, Morals, Sciences, Literatures and Laws; their origin and uses glanced at, 188—Self-reliance insisted on, 192—Phrenology, 192 and 220—First Extract from the Papers of Dionysius—Metaphysics, Morality and the Virtues examined, 195—All Qualities of Mind, and all our nobler Passions are only phases of the Soul’s Knowledge, 201—The “profitable” uses to which one portion of Society turns Vice and Crime, 204—Memory, 206—Madness, Lunacy, Derangement, not Mental *diseases*, 215—John Dalton, 215—Milton, 216—Probable cause of Derangement, 216—Remedy suggested, 217—The Muscum, 216—The Printing-Press may some time be dispensed with, 213 and 219—Opinion, 219.

CHAPTER IV.

Conversation continued, 220—Second Extract from the Papers of Dionysius: Didactic and Imaginative Literature examined, 223—The Reasons why Education at present tends to Evil as well as to Good, 223—Arguments *pro* and *con* stated, 224—Social Influences unfavourable to Truth and the happy results of Truth, 224—The natural potency of CONVICTION proved by examples, 226—Four important Propositions established, 229—Opinions, Speculations and Dieta not Knowledge, 230—The necessity for Certainty in our Strivings after Truth, 231—Innate feeling of the truth of things peculiar to cultivated intellects, 231—The evils of Uncertainty, 232—Human Nature falsified in our Literature, 232—The Virtues mere Sentiments, 234—Poetry and the Drama, 234—Tale and Romance writers, 236—Books not necessary to the highest knowledge, 237—The Soul the source of all Truth attainable by Humanity, 237—A word to the uneducated, 238—Conversation continued, 238—Want of Certainty the cause of the comparative uselessness of our Literature, 238—Why is Error as Influential as Truth?

239—The simplicity of true Philosophy, 240—Is all Crime the result of False Social arrangements? 241—The Question debated and determined in the affirmative, 242—Sudden Passion, 244—The Fear of Punishment no guarantee for Innocence, 247.

CHAPTER V.

A Storm : The Beneficence of the Deity, 249—Dread of Truth in a Clergyman, 251—Third Extract from the Papers of Dionysius : History and Biography examined, 253—An unerring test of Right and Wrong necessary before History and Biography can be useful : Religion and Morality do not supply this test, 253—The importance of a First Principle, 254—Civilization of Ancient Egypt, 256—Greece, 257—Rome, 259—Christianity, 259—Modern Civilization, 259—Biography : Genius not to be attained by imitation, 264—Conversation continued, 265—In what does real Knowledge and true Wisdom consist? 266—What is Laughter? Laughter and Wonder contrasted, 270—Wit, 271—Poetry, and what constitutes the Poetical character, 272—Anecdote respecting Laughter, 273—*The difficulty of acting in contravention of our Knowledge*, 274—The natural Homage the Soul pays to Truth is Religion, 274—The Religion of Christ, 275—Public Prayer and Public Worship, 275—Dionysius on Prayer, 276.

CHAPTER VI.

Quacks and Physicians, 279—Ignorance the Cause of disease, 280—Immortality, like Health, attainable only through a rational Effort, 281—Profanity of ascribing Pestilential visitations to God, 283—Overpopulation, 283—Spiritualism the only rational "check" to overpopulation, 284—The Religious phase of the Dionysian Philosophy brought into a brief view in the form of a Catechism, 285—Conscience, the Knowledge of Right and Wrong, 293—Fourth Extract from the Papers of Dionysius : Recapitulation of his inquiry into the value of Literature, 294—The *object* of its Authors commended, 225—Its general inutility deduced from its results, 295—Its real value pointed out, 296—Civilized Cannibalism, 297—The Knowledge contained in the First Principle, 298—Definition of true Socialism, 299—"Know Thyself," 300—Man cannot withhold from Man that which is necessary to his Spiritual perfection, 301—Address to Labouring-Men, 302—Conversation continued, 302—"Do Right" is the sum total of Morality and Religion, 303—Conclusion of the Chapter, 304.

CHAPTER VII.

What the Critics have to do who disagree with our reasonings and conclusions, 305—Reason for publishing them, 307—Satisfaction of Governments with the present system of things, 307—Last Extract from the Papers of Dionysius : Origin of Governments, Laws, Morality, the Virtues, and Mystic Religion : Society as it is, 308—Definition of Wealth, 308

—The Instinct which prompts us to the acquisition of Knowledge and Happiness misapplied to the acquisition of Wealth, 308—The Desire to get Wealth the mainspring of all Social movements, 309—Laws were framed to sanction this Acquisitiveness, 309—Theory of the origin of Governments and Laws, 310—Brute-Force or “*Might is Right*,” 310—Crime the result of Property, 312—Retributive Justice the result of Crime, 313—Injustice called Justice, and elevated into a Virtue, 313—Laws Civil and Criminal the offspring of Property, 313—The first Judge, 314—Commencement of Civilization, 314—Wrong has been practically converted into Right by Usage, 314—Serfdom obtains a Right of Property in its Labour, 315—Complication of Rights and Interests, 315—The Compromise universally recognised, 316—Advantages and Disadvantages of the Compromise, 317—Mystic Religion, the Moralities and the Virtues how fabricated, 318—Origin of Literature and the Sciences, 318—Law-made or Conventional Conscience, 318—Christ’s recipe for a Conscience, 320—The Social Compact (insisted on by some writers) explained, 322—Origin of Commerce, 323—The Sacredness of Property in England, 323—Summary of the Conventionalities resulting from the Selfish or Brute-force Principle, and reflections thereon, 324—The anomalies which are the result of the Selfish Principle, 325—The Impotency of Morality and Mystic Religion, 326—Reason for the same, 327—Justice a Lottery, 328—Circumstantial Evidence, 328—The influential Portion of Society interested in the continuance of Crime, 329—The Church and its Phantom war against Sin, 329—The result of our boasted Civilization, 330—Dickens, 331—Our Religion a mere *quid pro quo*, 331—Our Sensualism in all things, 332—Abandonment of the System the only remedy, 333—A word to the uneducated Working Classes, 334—Conversation continued, 334—Hopes for England, 335—The “Happy medium” of the Moralists, 336—Self-Education, 337—Uselessness of Association for mere Physical ameliorations, 338—What Governments ought to do, 339—What Social Institutions ought to be, 340—Objections against Equality in Education and Condition answered, 341—Fitness the perfection of all Art, 343—Beauty, 344—The Perfection of Social arrangements is the Mental elevation and Happiness of all, 345—Universal Enlightenment alone can accomplish this, 347—Anti-Slavery, and Peace Society-men, 348—End of the Conversations.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

The Author endeavours to set himself right with his Reader, 351—Rationalism, 351—The Church of England, 352—Infallibility of the Pope, 353—Defence of our Levelling propensities, 354—Propositions to which the attention of our Critics are directed, 354—Defence of our Pride, 355—Concluding Address to the Reader.

THE ALPHA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

It has long been the fashion amongst travellers to historize their wanderings over the world for the benefit of the stay-at-homes of their native country; and it must be confessed that many wonderful things have been seen and described by these vagrant gentlemen, and ladies errant, who have so courageously encountered dangers by sea and land for the edification and amazement of their wonder-loving readers.

For my own part I have been no great reader of travels; probably from the accidental circumstance of an early acquaintance with the most veritable, the most entertaining, and, withal, the most instructive specimens of this species of writing that our nation, rich in this literature, affords; I mean Robinson Crusoe, Peter Wilkins, and Gulliver. After these masterpieces, I confess that the tales of modern travellers have but little charm for me: they are tedious, insipid, and improbable.

Every one, however, to his taste: I have mine; and my reason for intruding it on thy attention, friend reader, is thus early to apprise thee, that though I am myself a traveller, and have seen the greater part of the world's wonders, and have had my share of

cockney ecstasy in beholding a sunrise from Mount Blanc, and of seeing the going down of the great luminary with a splendour almost equal to Turner's delineation of that every-day phenomenon, yet I have no intention to describe these raptures under the impression that thou, my dear reader, wouldst care to feast on such delights by proxy. The great Niagara has dashed over my head: I have spent months amongst the Trappers in the bush; I have had my share in perils of all sorts: I have smoked the pipe of peace with the Austral savages in the prairies, and with the polished Arabs on the plains of Palestine. I have fought with the Savages, and discoursed with the High Priest of Mecca. I have seen tempests on the Pacific, and tornadoes on the Plain: I have done battle with the Tiger and the Wild-Boar, and could show scars in proof that I have not escaped scatheless, though I have come off conqueror, in these dare-devil contests. But it is not to the relation of such experiences that I would ask thee to accompany me in these pages. There can be but few who have circumnavigated the globe without some difficulty and danger: and none but the most insensible of mortals could pass over the ruins of ancient kingdoms, or wander for weeks over solitudes where the foot of man had never previously penetrated, without feeling some emotion, and deriving some improvement. These, however, are all personal matters, and can be of no real interest or importance to others, except in so far as the advantages obtained are communicable. The result of our experiences are alone valuable:

“The rest is only leather and prunella.”

As I am not about to write my travels; and as Men, and their modes of thinking and acting, were the objects of my investigation in these peregrinations,

I will here briefly state the result of my inquiries and observations. In every part of the globe I found the "Many" degraded and miserable; and the "Few" miserable and luxurious. On the one hand ignorance and servility; on the other, cunning, rapacity, and power. I nowhere found more intelligence than at home; nor, on the whole, more freedom of action and contentment. I had a great object in my wanderings, but I did not attain that object, or only in part. I travelled to consult mankind at the Antipodes about that which is always best sought after nearer home. I probed other minds for that which can only be found, if ever found, by sounding the depths and shallows of our own.

Some men have spent the best portion of a lifetime in exploring the sources of a river: others in digging up the ruins of a city, or penetrating into the hidden mysteries of a pyramid or a people. Curiosity and a love of enterprise have been the chief stimulants to their labours; and the empty applause of a wonder-loving world, their half-despised, half-coveted reward. But, when the sources of the Nile shall have been found; when the hieroglyphics of Egypt shall have been deciphered; when Herculaneum shall have been disentombed; when all the sculptured fragments of *Ægæa* and Greece shall have been collected and arranged, will the living world of humanity be either the wiser, the better, or the happier for these labours? Say the circle had been squared; perpetual motion found; the philosopher's stone discovered; the elixir vitæ compounded, and each of us in possession of the immortalizing draught, again, I ask, would mankind be better, wiser, happier, than at present? In every case I believe the answer must be—not a whit; and probably for the gold and the elixir, far more miserable than ever. That which made a traveller of me, dear reader, and for many

years made every inn or hospitable hut my home, is none of these things ; but I anticipate a smile of pity when I inform thee, as I am about to do, what my object was. Undaunted by the ill-success of the princely Abyssinian, I wandered, dear reader, in quest of happiness. Instead of searching for the sources of the Nile, I have diligently sought for the source of Evil, and the ultimatum of human Good ! Whither I have wandered, what I have seen, what I have felt, are of no consequence : the mode of my operations, and the result of my researches, are the things which can alone interest thee. That I have discovered the source of all Evil, and that I have found the happiness I sought, is, however, of consequence as much to thee as to myself ; for if the happiness were not communicable, a good the world at large might share in, it would have been none to me, and, like Rasselas, I should have had my toil in vain ; but, unlike him, I would not have recorded my discomfiture. Having said thus much as to my object, let me proceed to give

SOME ACCOUNT OF MYSELF.

My name (as the title-page will have informed thee), is Ramus Randolph. I was christened Ramus after the celebrated French philosopher of the sixteenth century, from whose family I am a collateral descendant ; a Randolph having married a niece of the philosopher in the time of Mary Stuart. Indeed, she was a domestic of the princess and accompanied her to Scotland. Had it not been for the celebrity of Ramus as a scholar, and a martyr to his creed (for he was one of the victims of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew), the Randolphs would never have acknowledged a consanguinity to a poor shepherd-boy of Picardy ; for the Randolphs are a proud family, and boast of a descent from I know not what Chieftain

before Scotland had a king. My father had a literary taste, and was, moreover, somewhat of a connoisseur in Art. Probably these tastes induced my father to bestow on me a literary patronymic, and on an elder brother (respecting whom I shall say a word or two presently) an artistic one: he was christened Raphael. We had a sister whose name was Mary, who died soon after she reached womanhood. Peace to the memory of my sister! A massive tomb covers her remains: far fitter that those sweet emblems of her spotless mind, the wild-flowers which she loved, had been permitted to shed their dew-tears morning and evening over her too early grave! Raphael conceived a taste for the Fine Arts; probably from the circumstance that he bore a name sacred to one of them. He desired to follow Painting as a profession, and had secretly made some progress in the study. This was needless as regarded his means and prospects, for our family was rich as well as proud, and he its eldest representative. It may be that he had some hidden motive for this desire; it was, however, opposed violently by my mother, and ultimately abandoned by Raphael. He was a boy of singularly studious habits, and fond of solitude. I know not how it was, but my mother was never fond of him, although his nature was most inoffensive and affectionate. I have heard it said that he came into the world a little earlier than he was generally expected, and that the shame of an early imprudence had somehow strangely ripened into a dislike of the object which brought it to her remembrance. I am unskilled in such philosophy, and will leave the matter to those who pretend to a nearer acquaintance with feminine sympathies than I can lay the slightest claim to. Certain it is, however, that he was no favourite with my mother, who bestowed on me nearly all her care and affection. This my brother's extreme sensitiveness could not bear,

and solitude and study became a passion with him, and a resource. My father had been dead some years, and the management of the family property should have devolved on Raphael, who was of an age to undertake it, and possessed discretion and talent enough to have had this confidence reposed in him. He was, however, still a minor, and my mother had the legal disposal of everything until my brother should come of age. Home now became unendurable, and one day Raphael absented himself, leaving a letter addressed to my mother, taking leave of her for ever, and renouncing all claim to his legal rights, which, without his mother's love, he declared to be valueless. He preferred, he said, to lay aside his name, forget his lineage, renounce his wealth, and rely on his talents and his virtues to supply their place; or, if he should fail in this, to meet poverty, and want, and death amongst strangers, rather than submit to unkindness in his paternal home, where he had deserved nothing but respect and love. Another letter was addressed to my sister, of whom he was very fond, taking an affectionate farewell of her, "perhaps," he said, "for ever!" and so it proved. Year after year rolled on, but Raphael Randolph was never heard of: not the slightest trace of him could be discovered. I was his junior by eight years, and too young, and too proud of the favouritism I enjoyed, to regard his loss as a circumstance to be much regretted, but he had an advocate in Mary, who taught me afterwards how worthy he was of all my regard and affection.

There are but two things in the world which have the power to render a human being utterly selfish: what they are will be seen in the sequel. I was swayed by one of these temptations, but an angel whispered me, and I did not fall.

My brother's abandonment of his home, and name, and property; and my mother's and sister's death,

which occurred some twelve years after his departure ; left me a large revenue at my disposal, but happiness formed no portion of my patrimony. I believe this avowal will be scarcely intelligible to the majority of my readers :—young, educated, handsome ; the grand old hall of the Randolphs in the centre of the finest circle of estates in Northumberland for my residence ; friends of my own rank in life ; political prospects before me ; servants, horses, health, and withal unhappy ! I do not mean uneasy, unsettled, undecided ; but objectless, and mentally unhappy. All men are said to be constantly in pursuit of happiness. Generally, however, *their* aims are definable ; they can name their wants—wealth, power, pleasure, ease, a wife, or perhaps, a mistress : my aim was undefinable : I had no name for it but the vague one,—Happiness. It was a soul-yearning after a spiritual good ; the great good, to have which is to have all things ; to want which, though having all besides, is to be destitute ; and feeling the want,—to be most wretched. Such was my unenviable lot : but, in looking back to my coming into possession of the temporal advantages just enumerated, I do not regret that I lacked the power to enjoy them after the fashion of the world : indeed ; I should now despise myself had it been otherwise.

My old steward, Abel Sykes, who had been many years my father's gardener, used to tell me that I was like no one else he had ever met with, and, when a boy, was always unlike other boys. He did not, he said, dislike my odd ways, on the contrary, they rather endeared me to him ; but he could not understand why I should avoid my friends, and refuse to mingle in their sports and festivities. Perhaps one of my singularities consisted in this,—I never could treat my domestics as menials, and I never had any that did not deserve to be considered friends. One

day I remember when Abel had been kindly remonstrating with me about my "odd ways," I let him a little into the cause of my disquietude by remarking that perhaps the real owner of Randolph Hall was toiling for his daily bread. A light broke in on Abel, and he said, as a tear trickled down his furrowed face, "Ay, ay, I had forgot; though I never forget him in my prayers: but He who feeds the ravens, my dear master, will never forsake Raphael Randolph; nor will he ever forsake you:" and, turning away to suppress, or more probably to hide, and at the same time to indulge his sorrow, he left me to my reflections. I am not going to recount them: such details are not the purpose of these pages. They were, however, not ungentle, nor confined to my brother and Abel Sykes: they were extended to the entire human family. At that moment my soul signed, as it were, a bond of brotherhood with every creature that can sympathise with another's sorrow. I am not about to hold myself up as a pattern of virtue. I am quite certain that I am no saint. Every man who thinks, acts, as far as circumstances will permit him, in conformity with his convictions. A new conviction had taken possession of my mind; a conviction which diminished my inquietude, and ultimately gave an object to my being, a reality to my existence. It were to be wished that the wealthy could find time for reflection, and that some such incident as I have been describing could occasionally generate in their minds a new conviction. But of all men, those who are born to idleness have the least leisure, and were they not the most unthinking of mortals, they would certainly be the most unhappy.

I have acknowledged that I am no candidate for canonization. To extreme piety, in the world's acceptance of the word, I could never advance the slightest claim: nay, I even deem lightly of that re-

ligion which would make the world a charnel-house, and transform the "human face divine" into the custom-made visage of an undertaker. The happiness for which I have sighed and sought has no reference to "a call:" nor could the most perfect certainty of my being one of the "elect" afford me the slightest consolation. I would not for the world believe that nine-tenths of the human beings I meet are *without* the pale of salvation, myself the while snugly ensconced *within*. In such a case I should certainly endeavour to scramble back again, and take my chance with the greatest number.

If in these particulars, friend reader, we chance to differ, there will, most likely, be no necessity for me to advise thee to shut the book, or, shouldst thou chance to be a "reviewer" of books, to assure thee that thou mayest proceed to damn mine and me without further ceremony, and without sympathy or stint. But if thou art an unprejudiced seeker after Truth thou wilt bear with my plain-speaking, and my familiarity, and my egotism, to the end. Were I propounding *opinions*, it were meet that I should err on the side of modesty rather than of confidence; but as I write from conviction, and shall be able to give a reason for the faith that is in me, I hope I may, for a brief space, dogmatise without offence.

From my childhood I have been addicted to a sort of philosophic seriousness; and on examining the nature of my feelings after Abel had touched the string on which they slept in an uneasy slumber, I perceived that they had more reference to others than concernment for myself; and the discovery was not without a solid and a lasting satisfaction. Years before the occurrence of the incident just referred to, I had indulged in most of the dissipations, indulgences, and frivolous pleasures which make up the business of a young man of property and fashion;

and, but for an unspeakable void which even the most innocent of these enjoyments left in my mind, I should have become as selfish and besotted a sensualist as any lord or lady in the land. And this is saying a good deal: it is, in fact, the whole of Rousseau's long-winded "Confessions," and a little more, simmered down to a sentence. It is, indeed, probable, that this volume, as far as it refers to myself, will be viewed by many in the light of "confessions;" for, if Abel Sykes was right in considering my manners and modes of thinking totally unlike those of other people, it is to be expected that the results will prove sufficiently unorthodox to be numbered with my sins: but if so, I hope my confessions will procure for me the absolution in such cases made and provided. To begin, I am no sportsman. Even the "gentle Izaak" could never have initiated me into the cruel mystery of baiting hooks, or "playing" with the craftily ensnared denizen of the waters. I should have loved his songs, and tales, and gossiping philosophy; but not his unfeeling amusement. The "manly" sport of hunting to the death the timid hare; of "bagging" partridges by the hundred; of butchering deer after the modern "battue" fashion, by wholesale, and for the mere pleasure of the needless slaughter,—though I disgrace and shock the manes of my fierce-minded ancestors, I must confess that I never could perceive the sport, or discover the manliness of such unmitigated savagery. If such is the sport of educated men, of "gentlemen," let us not blame the more innocent and rational amusement of the skittle-ground and ninepins of the hard-worked artisan. Gambling in all its phases I abhor. Steeple-chasing I detest for its brutality. Yet these amusements are the chief components of the "happiness" of men who passed their studious youth in the classic

solitudes of a college! Again, I confess, such thoughts distressed and disgusted me.

I turned my attention to politics: I mixed much with the leading politicians and parliamentary orators of the day. I penetrated into its mysteries, and shrunk from its polluting contact. The happiness I sought did not lie in that direction. At last, dear reader,—but this I assure thee was purely an accidental circumstance, not a premeditated one—I fell in love! With a young and beautiful “right honourable” maiden? No, dear reader. With some dowager Countess? No. With the rich widow of a city banker? No: nor was it with a Dryad, nor a streamlet nymph, nor a sylph, nor a sentimental shepherdess; but a glorious woman: a virgin Eve!—a form and stature that would have left Praxiteles nothing to imagine of feminine perfection had he desired a breathing prototype for a Pallas or a Juno. She might have forced Phidias himself to become a copyist, and the Athenians to build another temple to enshrine his peerless labour. Making due allowance for the exuberance of love mellowed by time into poetic rapture, such was Ellen Raymond. I have seen eyes as large as Ellen Raymond’s: I have seen a mouth as finely modelled: but eyes so full of soul, and lips with such unspeakable expression, never!

Ellen Raymond—and this is another of my confessions—was a cheesemonger’s daughter of Cripple-gate, and a niece of Farmer Clutterbuck, the tenant of a little farm belonging to the Randolph estates, about three miles distant from the Hall. When I first saw her she was teaching a libertine honeysuckle to climb, more gracefully than had been its wont, over the entrance of an arbour in her uncle’s garden. Clutterbuck’s daughter, a handsome girl of sixteen, was

standing near her watching the operation. Ellen was lightly, but neatly clad: a pale blue ribbon encircled her waist, to which it held prisoner a half-blown rose. A handkerchief of some gossamer-like material had been tied carelessly round her head, apparently to restrain the freedom of her luxuriant hair, which was of the darkest auburn and fell chiefly on one side; whilst playful zephyrs with a vagrant freedom, waned amongst its wavy entanglements, ever and anon fruitlessly essaying to make pillage of a straggling lock. I have named the feeling which then possessed me, Love: it was more like Idolatry: it was Worship, for it carried my thoughts heavenward to the Author of that glorious being; and I said to myself, "Can such a creature have been formed for the empty conventionalities of earth? The soul of the universe might inhabit that fair temple! no spot or taint of sin should ever touch it!" To have known that she had ever tasted sorrow, would, at that moment, have been the bitterest draught of my existence. I hastened from the spot for fear of profaning it with a sigh.

I met Clutterbuck returning from his labours, and inquired of him with as little confusion as I could, the name and history of his fair visitor. These he gave me in a few words, adding that she was the only child of his sister; had had a good education; was a very amiable and affectionate girl; and, finally, was on the eve of marriage with a London clergyman. His daughter Lucy was, he said, to return with her in a few days, and perform the part of bridesmaid at the forthcoming ceremony.

Five-and-twenty years previously Ellen Clutterbuck had been waiting-woman to my mother; and now she was the wife of a London cheesemonger, and the mother of the noblest creature my eyes had ever looked upon, or my fancy pictured. I did not love

the old hall the less on account of these reflections ; but Ellen Raymond could never be its mistress ! and I felt that another void had been created in my mind, since (as I thought) Fate had interposed another barrier betwixt me and happiness. I rode down to Clutterbuck's the next evening, having promised that I would do so, or I should never again have seen the bride-elect of the nameless London clergyman. I partook with them of the evening repast, and conversed with Ellen much as I might have done with an angel ; that is, I gave occasion to her conversation rather than took part in it : and, although she conversed on ordinary subjects, and in an ordinary manner, but with much good sense and propriety, I felt myself to be of too mortal and gross a nature to do more than make brief replies to her remarks when addressed to me, and ask frivolous questions in return. Once during—but, no ! I have forsworn all needless details ; and of all topics, this is the one on which it would be most unseemly to indulge in them. There are some things too holy to be unbosomed even to a most dear friend, much less to be blazoned before the world in printer's ink : one of them is the soul's silent syllablings with its God ; another, the secret aspirations of its earthly love. As long as the world continues ignorant, what is called "worship" will continue to be performed in public ; and men will as publicly, and indelicately, babble about their loves or lusts : but as knowledge increases these improprieties will cease ; realities will be substituted for pretences, and men will be too conscious of the indelicacy of these practices to indulge systematically in either of them. The one savours strongly of cant ; the other of libidinousness. Sincerity and purity revolt at both. The mass of mankind are at present too animally-given to comprehend the sacredness of feelings which to utter would be profanation ; and which can only

be truly communicated from soul to soul by means of that mysterious power, that wordless spirit-language, Sympathy.

I have, however, an object in this narrative of my love, or it would have remained untold for ever. I stayed till near midnight, and then remounted my horse and rode towards the hall of the Randolphs, lighted on my solitary way by the waning moon. Three evenings afterwards I again visited the Cowslip Leasowes, as Clutterbuck's little farm was called, and was a listener rather than a talker on this occasion also. The next day Ellen Raymond and her cousin left Northumberland, and I took them in the old family carriage to the neighbouring town, whence they were to proceed by the mail to the metropolis.

On parting with Ellen I said to her, "Should I ever hear of you again in the great world, Miss Raymond, by what name shall I know you?" She replied with ineffable modesty and frankness, that she hoped to live and die Ellen Lackland. We parted. The horses flew along the dusty road like demons, and a cloud separated me from all of heaven I had ever seen on earth.

Time heals wounds, but it never effaces the remembrance of their anguish: it also mellows the passions into philosophic calmness, but it never obliterates first love. The impure animal portion perishes: the spiritual lives for ever. Love is unselfish, changeless, and eternal. Mine was too ethereal, and too intense not to have consumed its possessor had it not been capable of diffusion.

My unbreathed devotion for Ellen Raymond was perhaps of too spiritual a nature for creatures subject to all the "skyeey influences," and to the cares and vicissitudes of earth: and I have lived long enough to perceive that had my passion been less hopeless, my life had been less happy. The pure angelic being

my soul has ever idolized, may have been, to a certain extent, imaginary; but not being liable to change, my affection has suffered no abatement. This living image of womanly perfection has been my guardian angel through life: in the thronged city, in the desert, on the trackless deep, it has accompanied me: whithersoever I have wandered, the spirit of my love was there! I had seen, I had talked to an angel: I had loved that angel with an unuttered, an unutterable love: no matter that it was an unsyllabled secret: no matter that I had never been loved again! I have often thought that the rule of the Catholic Church is a wise one which forbids its ministers to marry. He cannot think well for the many who must prudently think first for himself. As society is constituted a married man must be, to a certain extent, a selfish man: and no selfish man was ever thoroughly happy.

It was when time had begun to pour its healing balm on my silent anguish, that the conversation with Abel Sykes which has been previously related, led me to perceive that the love I cherished for a single object was capable of diffusion over the entire family of men: that soul is of no sex; and that wherever there is soul there is something to care for, something to cherish, something to sympathise with and love. It was then I felt that there must be something radically wrong in human society that could in any case restrain this love within the narrow limits of a man's hearth and home. From this moment my life had an object: dim, shadowy, and indefinite it was; but it was based on a conviction that this beautiful world, and the inner life of humanity have a purpose in them holier than those we apply them to, and capable of all we can conceive of happiness could we but find it out. I determined to attempt this discovery though the attempt should

cost me my fortune, and only terminate with my mortal life. That I should have succeeded is doubtful, had it not been for a circumstance which will be fully described and commented on in its proper place. It will have been perceived that love, and loving service to the human family, was the panacea I relied on as the cure for all evil, and the source of all happiness: in other words, that riches, both intellectual and physical, are given to some and withheld from others, for the common good of all; that the rich man's happiness grows out of his benevolence, whilst the happiness of the poor man springs from the consciousness that he is continually cared for by his more happily-circumstanced and compassionate brother. It will be seen hereafter that my reasonings were superficial, and my conclusions false: that my theorizings and philosophizings, and the labours they led to, would have been as useless as those of the crowd of philosophers that have from time to time appeared in the world to steal its applause, and have then vanished in the mists they have raised around them, had not a fortuitous light gleamed upon me at the very moment I was about to abandon my well-intentioned labours in despair. For nearly twenty years I was strong in hope: and this hope, which was the spur to my activity, was the nearest approach I could make to happiness. I employed my fortune on every project that promised benefit to humanity. I used my influence to induce others to follow my example. Poverty is an evil: I almost dissipated my revenue to relieve it. Ignorance is an evil: I laboured hard in the work of its removal. Partial laws, tyrannical governments, excessive taxes, are evils: I joined associations to get rid of them. War is an evil: I aided in the agitation for universal peace. Slavery is an evil: I combined with the philanthropists heart and purse to crush it. Re-

stricted trade is an evil: I leagued with the leaguers to set it free. And all this while I dreamed that the practice of Benevolence is happiness to the individual dispenser thereof, and a benefit to the human race. Alas! Benevolence does little more than foster the misery it would eradicate; Legislation is merely a choice between two evils; and our highest Moral Philosophy, but Folly with a specious name! What is Evil? What is Good? Is Poverty *all* evil? Are Riches nothing but a good? Is Slavery all evil? Is Freedom unmixed Good? Until Good and Evil can be distinguished and defined, it is impossible to determine what condition is the most desirable; and equally impossible to be happy. Our virtues must tend to Good, or how can they be virtues? And if we know not what Good is, how is it possible to be virtuous? Is there such a thing as Virtue? Can there be such a thing as Vice? or is everything conventional? Does Providence or Chance direct the world? That which thwarts our schemes we call Evil: that which promotes them, we denominate Good; but, generally, that which is good in my case, is evil to another; and any advantage I gain is usually procured at another's cost. Thus I pondered in bewilderment the most distressing. After twenty years of ceaseless activity at home and in distant lands, what had I discovered? What progress had I made towards the attainment of that good for myself, which, with love in my soul towards everything capable of affection, is still no good to me, if it cannot be participated in by all men? Absolutely none! I shut myself up in a retired nook near London: I surrounded myself with books and works of art: I led the life of a recluse: I studied the writings of the sages, and philosophers and divines of almost every age and country: I sought to know what constitutes the greatness of the earth's greatest

men? Wherein were they wiser than others? The Greeks! what do I learn, what did they intend I should learn, from their Arts, from their Lives, from their Philosophy? From Italian Art, and from modern Philosophy can I obtain a clue to unexceptionable morality, to positive virtue, to real happiness? From the labours of the most pious and learned divines, is it possible to pick my way to heaven? Such were my thoughts. I endeavoured to generalize what are usually held to be the best thoughts of the best men, and thus obtain a principle; but, alas! the more I probed into the meaning of the lauded geniuses of the earth, the less certain I became that they had any meaning to impart. All concurred in asserting that Virtue is the groundwork of happiness, but none could prove to me what Virtue is. To burn a heretic says one: to be a heretic says another. Those only who have experienced my perplexities can form an adequate idea of my misery. It had, however, ultimately a termination. A gentle hand withdrew the film from my eyes. I saw clearly. How this desideratum was accomplished will be shown in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER II.

A REVELATION.

I HAVE meditated much on the evils that afflict humanity; on the good of which Man is capable; on the grovelling servility of his animal nature; on the high destiny of his mentality; on the happiness of which he is ever in search; on the miseries which dog him whithersoever he goes, and attend his motions constant as his shadow. I have searched for the principle of Evil, finding it not. I have sought daily for the Good which strives against this Evil, but it has eluded my search. I have read THE BOOK, and have caught glimpses of the angel, but whether this angel has a home on earth I have not been able to find out. My whole being; the beautiful universe of which I form a part, assure me that God is the author of all Good; but surely not of Evil. Are there, then, two principles in nature each warring with the other, and, like two opposite and equal forces meeting, end in nothing? Peace, peace, unquiet spirit! Three hundred generations of men have come and gone, and of this mystery have nothing known. Live out thy time as they have done: drain thou thy cup of bitterness when it is presented to thee: enjoy the good within thy reach: and when thy term of life shall have waned within thee, sleep soundly with the flowers thou lovest, and be a part of them. Haply the rose shall smell more sweetly whose roots have battened in thy clay!

On one of those fine afternoons in August which

occasionally remind the traveller of sunny Italy with its canopy of deep blue, such were my reflections, as I rambled from my suburban hermitage which occupies a nook in a populous neighbourhood westward of the Great City. I was alone. Without any purpose but to meditate on the subjects which have ever entwined themselves so strangely about my being, I took my way towards the adjacent common, where the breath of heaven is very sweet, but where many a dark deed has been done at midnight that morning has stood aghast to look upon. Summer zephyrs fanned my face as I moved quietly along. I was on the common a solitary wanderer, half-unconsciously threading my way amongst the tufts of golden gorse that gleamed in the slanting sunbeams. The air was odorous. The mossy turf yielded to my tread. "The blind mole could not have heard my footfalls." I now and then stooped to examine the delicate heather, which, in places, grew in such plentiful luxuriance, that I feared to tread lest I should crush it, and rob it of an hour's beauty. I had wandered to the highest part of the common, and, seating myself on the gently-sloping side of one of its mountain-like eminences, I occupied myself in the minute examination of a single plant of heather growing alone, that had, perhaps from its loneliness, particularly attracted my attention. As I gazed in admiration on its feathery foliage and tiny, bell-like blossoms, I said to myself, "Is not this little flower as beautiful as any of the gaudier nurslings of the garden? Certainly it is very beautiful: beautiful also is the many-petalled rose. Small, indeed, is the resemblance between them, yet assuredly both are beautiful: then in what consists their beauty? Ay, what *is* Beauty? Good, Evil, Virtue, Vice;—to define these I have often tried in vain. O, what

is Beauty?" Full of emotion I gazed towards the blue heavens. I arose; and with feelings not easily reduced to words, I surveyed the whole wide scene around me. Everything was calm, odorous, delightful. Not a living thing was near me. Not a sound was audible save the shrill voice of the lark trilling his blithe song far above me in the still, blue air: but so high was the winged twitterer that he seemed motionless: a speck, scarcely distinguishable from the eternity of ethereal blue into which he would momentarily melt, then dimly be seen again. But his shrill, clear notes pierced my ear as distinctly as though he had been singing a bondage-song, caged by some thoughtless cottager, in a neighbouring window. I felt to be alone with this sweet sound,—with it and heaven: and I exclaimed in a voice scarcely audible to myself, Oh! what is Beauty?" A low-toned, sweetly-modulated voice answered as though in reply to mine,—“Ramus Randolph!” I turned, and lo, a stranger stood beside me! Whence he came I know not; nor from emotion and surprise had I the power to ask. He was a man of full height, dressed in a garb more Oriental than European; sombrous, loose, and flowing. His neck was bare; his hair black and waving. Neither old nor young he seemed: his countenance was grave, noble, careworn, and commanding; yet full withal, of sweetness and urbanity. I had never seen such a nobly-benign expression in a creature of earth, but occasionally something resembling it in the spirit-world of dreams. His presence inspired a confidence free from all suspicion. I had no fear. I probably felt more awe than pleasure; but his benignity insensibly dispelled the former feeling. He gently touched my arm, and again said, “Ramus! you marvel that I know you?” I

motioned an assent. "You marvel also whence I came, and how?" I again replied in the affirmative by a movement of unrestrained respect. "Do you know," said he, "how long you have been listening to that sky-chorister?" "Only a few seconds," I replied. He rejoined, whilst a faint but expressive smile played on his noble features,— "Time flies us quickly in our ecstasies: we do sometimes live a century in a single day, and cram a lifetime 'twixt two tickings of the clock. Space is like time. A thought is swifter than the lightning. To an Intelligence, the remotest YONDER is ever HERE. To the Deity, the countless centuries, past and future, are an always-present Now." Taking me by the hand, he continued:—"Ramus Randolph, do you remember me now?" For an instant I saw, or fancied I saw, the features of a schoolfellow, whom since I was twelve years old I had never seen; and I said so. The impression was but momentary, nor could I then recall it, or bring to mind the name of the youth whom in that instant I fancied my questioner resembled. He remarked:—"Knowledge might slumber in the memory, but it never dies. It is like the dormouse in the ivied tower, that sleeps whilst winter lasts, but wakes with the warm breath of spring: it is like the life-germ in the seed: it is like the sweet music of the harp-strings, that waits but the master's touch to wake it into utterance. Yes, Ramus, we have pored on the same page together. Let us sit down: and I who was once thy fellow-pupil will be thy Mentor now. It lacks an hour of sunset." We sat upon the soft turf, which yielded to our pressure like an Oriental couch. Again taking me by the hand, he said:—"Ramus, that question of thine 'What is Beauty?' is not an idle one. Listen, and I will unravel something of the mystery, as well as disentangle thy per-

plexities concerning Good and Evil." I fixed my eyes inquiringly on his, and he began

A REVELATION.

"I am not going to preach to thee, Ramus Randolph. Thou hast thought too deeply and too well to listen long to words of dubious meaning and mere sound. Beauty is a name importing nothing. There is no such quality in nature. What men mean by it, and why they have preferences, I will by and by inform thee. Conceive of it for the present as one of those offshoots of Ignorance which stand in the way of human improvement and social happiness. It belongs to the same category as Justice, Mercy, Benevolence, Morality;—terms of human invention, to express human qualities, but which beyond the sphere of Ignorance and Error, have no existence. Good and Evil are of the same family. To disembodied Mind they are mere terms, nonentities, negations."

He paused: probably from observing a faint smile of incredulity overpass my countenance. With much gravity of manner, mingled, as I thought, with some severity, he resumed by remarking:—"We learn much in our youth which we must unlearn as men: Were there no IGNORANCE there could be no ERROR. Were there no INJUSTICE there could be no CRIME. *Were there neither Error nor Crime there could be no unhappiness, and the Moralities and the Virtues could have no existence.* Ignorance and Error are the cause of Selfishness. Selfishness is the cause of Misery. These all pertain to earth and to humanity. Love pertains to Heaven, and to the fulness of Intelligence. Perfect Intelligence results in perfect Love. By Love I mean that kindly consideration for others which is implied in the Christian precept 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' It is

the direct contrary of Selfishness. There is no virtue which is not included in this Love ; whilst Love itself is included in Intelligence. Perfect Intelligence, viewed passively, implies the quality of knowing all things, and the power of doing all things : viewed actively, it is Love : thus ;—every act of perfect Intelligence is Good because it is errorless, because it is Right ;—hence Active Intelligence is Love. INTELLIGENCE IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF ALL THINGS : it absorbs everything in its own being. It is more than Justice, more than Mercy, more than Benevolence, more than Morality, more than Religion ; inasmuch as what is meant by these—all that is good in them, is included in the ever-living, all-directing, all-absorbing, sole-existing principle, Intelligence. Intelligence is, therefore, the Great First Cause, or Deity ; and every act of Deity, which is of necessity errorless, is Love : and, Ramus, this all-embracing Love, is Happiness !”

As he pronounced these words—his large, clear, soul-fraught eyes intently fixed on mine—he seemed to grow in stature as he rose in energy, intense, but passionless ; and from Man to something too majestically superhuman for description : and as he spoke, his measured and melodious words were lights to my awakened soul ;—Reader ! may they be lights to thine ;—and those brief, happy moments seemed an eternity. Not only my whole past life was crowded in that space, but all past things, and all the glorious future ! I trembled and almost fainted with excess of pleasure. As if to calm my struggling spirit, and call it back to mortal consciousness, he touched the heath-plant I had been admiring, and said, in a tone of the most plaintive sweetness, “Henceforth, Ramus, when thou see’st this simple flower, all lonely and neglected, think of DIONYSIUS : both I and it have thriven best in solitude.”

My attention was awakened ; and again, for an

instant, I recognised the features of a youthful friend. His words had evidently reference to some remembered sorrow. It was contagious. I was again all human, and I wept. In the same grave, passionless tone he proceeded:—

“The Universe is not an accident. These mosses, this blooming heather, yon lark, still carolling above us, and Man, more wondrous than them all, are not the workmanship of Chance, the uncaused consequents of nothing.”

I acquiesced in silence, and he went on.—

“There are men miscalled philosophers, and almost miscalled men, to whom nothing exists they cannot see and handle: some of them have even doubted of their own existence. I am not recommending Faith; for faith amounts to nothing: by Knowledge only can the soul increase in stature; but Scepticism so irrational as this almost degrades humanity to the level of the brute. The only real existence is Spirit, which preceded matter, willed its being, and shall re-resolve it into its native nothingness. Transitory and illusive is the thing perceived: changeless and eternal, the percipient Mind. Baseless is the world’s philosophy: false are all its aims: degrading is the scepticism which clings to matter, but denies or doubts the being of the impalpable and viewless soul. From such misgivings *thou* hast not been free: but from the slough of Atheism, and the comfortless depths of settled doubt, thy reason hath preserved thee. Thou hast reflected too deeply, and reasoned far too well, to dream of consequences without a cause, or of design without a purpose. Though inarticulate, though voiceless, insentient nature has a tongue, a language, which only minds accustomed to reflection, and guided by perceptions more subtle than those of sense, can comprehend. Even from thy boyhood thou hast felt less lonely amongst the groves, and hills, and

quiet lakes, and foaming waterfalls, than in the society of men. Thou perceivest I am no stranger to thy soul. But if thou hast shunned mankind thou hast ever borne in mind their miseries, and diligently and hopefully hast thou looked around thee for a cure. In the world's Religion, in its Morals, in its Literature, in its Philosophy, in its Government and Laws thou hast looked in vain: nay, thou hast wellnigh despaired; and in dark moments thy sorrowing spirit has almost doubted of the controlling providence of God. Thou hast seen that the blind faith inculcated by Religion is no real barrier against vice and crime. Thou hast seen that Morals are more conventional than real: that Virtue is more productive of evil than of good; that Law is only legalized licentiousness; that Learning is little else than showy ignorance: and that the most sacred offices would go unfilled, but for the loadstone that moves everything—the pay. No wonder thou shouldst falter in thy faith. This can never be again. The light of truth, which nothing can extinguish, beams on thy soul, and doubt, and gloom, and misery shall be thine no more for ever! It is the Happiness thou hast ever yearned for; for it is communicable: it is the more thine own, because, without abstracting from thy store of it thou canst divide it, *ad infinitum*, amongst mankind. There is no mystery greater than this: and this thou perceivest is not a mystery. Knowing the cause of all the evils with which mankind is struggling, thou not only perceivest that the entire system of things is wrong,—wrong, false and hollow from its very base, but thou also perceivest the remedy. Of this knowledge, neither infirmity, nor age, nor fraud, nor force, nor men, nor Angels can deprive thee. It is the First Truth, the germ of all truth: it shall grow, and ramify within thee, and be thy glory and thy happiness for ever. Intelligence is the soul's true wealth:

its only wealth. It is the only possession thou canst disseminate infinitely, yet still retain entire.

“But darest thou,—for there is danger in it, darest thou, Ramus Randolph, disseminate this truth? Darest thou attempt to teach an ignorant, reckless, priest-deluded, mammon-serving world this only way to Happiness and Heaven? I conjure thee to accept the mission. Why, thou wilt know hereafter. Tell mankind that the prolific parent of all Evil is Ignorance: that Knowledge is the only Good: that the happiness of Heaven is unattainable save through the Intellect; and that to pursue any other means for its attainment is but mockery and delusion. But assure thyself that Bigotry will have its sacrifice: Power, its revenge; for Ignorance, which is necessarily ignorant of its ignorance, and believes itself to be wise, is blind: it is also cruel and vindictive. The Church shall anathematize thee: the lynx-eyed Law shall set its myrmidons to dog thee: Scribblers shall traduce thee; and that satire on Civilization,—the brute-visaged crowd, shall spit upon thy garments in the public thoroughfares. Thou shalt be denounced as heathen, blasphemmer, heretic. In the midst of this opprobrium thou shalt die. But ages hence, like the fabled Phœnix, thy spirit shall arise from out thy ashes, and millions of kindred minds shall bless thee as a martyr of the greatest Truth that ever was proved and promulgated to the world. Thou shalt sow the seeds of a world-wide reformation; and, Ramus, they shall grow! Art thou content? Shall I go on?”

I silently assented. I was all beatitude. I felt the whole of the momentous truth. The minutely-painted danger connected with its dissemination had no terrors. My blessedness was too great for words. As if moved by the same involuntary impulse we rose together, and with noiseless tread walked to and fro amongst the heather. The agitation of my spirits

gradually subsided, and I experienced an unspeakable calm. Then all the long-departed freshness and buoyancy of my youth came over me; and my busy, thoughtful, anxious life appeared to pass before me like a feverish dream. I reviewed it. There was but one phase of it that did not chill me: I had erred in everything but love. This was the rainbow of my life, spanning my whole existence: it seemed made of tears! My companion was similarly engaged during the time occupied by my reverie, and similarly affected by the retrospect. We did not speak. We had no need of words, or looks, or signs. We read each other's thoughts by sympathy. We were like two happy children whom care had never crossed, whom evil thoughts had never entered, whom sin had never tainted, all simplicity, all hope, all gladness—but with this difference—**WE KNEW THAT WE WERE HAPPY.** We felt the beneficent purpose of the painful turmoil to which humanity is subject. We felt that erring man might be hereafter happier than the Angels who (perhaps) have never erred, and never tasted sorrow: for just as little children are happy, and know it not, so might the Angels be: but he who has known care, must of necessity be conscious of his after-life felicity. Who can doubt but that the Angels have been, aforesaid, creatures of earth, and have erred and known sorrow, for otherwise they know not their beatitude; and that which they know not is to them as nothing. Without this consciousness, this knowledge, what were existence? what were happiness? Whilst to toil for it, suffer for it, die for it, and to reach it in its fulness by this suffering and toil, who can speak, who can imagine the sum of its fruition? God, who knows all things, whose Intelligence is as boundless as His power, knew from the beginning, that by contrast only can his creatures know felicity; and, hence, to people his universal heaven

with Intelligences who should be conscious of their blissfulness, He created them ignorant, and subjected them to the cares which spring from error, that as they grew intelligent enough to be happy, the very knowledge of previous misery might enhance their fruition. Can there be a higher, can there be a more beneficent purpose in the sublunary probation of mankind than this? Reader! can there be another? Such were the thoughts that occupied me whilst the mysterious stranger and myself walked up and down beneath the slanting sunrays. At length I said:—

“But, my dear Mentor, what has become of the many millions of souls, or sparks of Divinity, which in the baby-turmoil of the world have added nothing to their being?”

He replied:—

“As their material bodies returned to the earth, so these rays of Divinity, thus rendered incapable of an independent existence, have been absorbed into the Infinite from which they first proceeded; parting with their individuality, just as drops of rain lose their identity in the ocean. That which knows nothing has nothing to remember, and is as it were not. To thee, thy physical body were as nothing wert thou unconscious of its existence: and without a similar knowledge of thy spiritual being, to thee it were non-existent. To comprehend the nature of Deity, and of our separate selves, is to create a knowledge of our own identity: and the knowledge which ensures that identity, is that which shows us what we are, and teaches us the purpose of our being. Without this knowledge the identity would be impossible, and our souls would be as though they were not. To exist, absolutely, is to be conscious of our existence; and to maintain and enjoy existence, we must obtain that knowledge which is the germ and

test of all knowledge. Well might the old prophet exclaim in the name of the Deity :—

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

But time flies : listen I pray thee, and answer not : I must away at sun-down.”

We were again seated,—Dionysius and myself,—and the same calm, passionless expression that characterised his countenance at first, again solicited and compelled attention. What he said will be related in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THE REVELATION CONTINUED.

“WHAT has been accomplished in the science of Mind? absolutely nothing! The dreamy labours of the metaphysician have been worse than useless. The mental philosopher has never penetrated to the root of his subject. Observing only the superficies, he has amused himself with subtleties, and plunged both his reader and himself into deeper darkness. And what is the consequence? Why, that one-half the world believes that a man is so much animated dirt produced by chance, whilst the other half clings to the opposite belief by a tiny tether of hope so frail and full of fear that men shudder when they think of it, and take refuge in any occupation that brings obliviousness: and thus a race of Immortals steal abjectly through the world with less of dignity than the brutes that browse upon the mountains! I know how much these melancholy facts have weighed upon thy spirit and chilled the life-blood in thy heart: but be of good cheer: from this hour *thou* at least shalt be happy, and thy all-loving spirit dare to look abroad around creation, and hold converse with the Unseen.

“There are not two Principles in nature each warring with the other: there is but one, and that is infinitely Good. What men call Evil is not Evil: it is the inconvenience caused by Ignorance, warning them to be wise, and has within it the seeds of its own destruction. It is not Good which causes Evil; but blind Ignorance, and purblind Error only. It is not Good that Audacity grasps at through its crimes;

but something which Ignorance has misnamed a Good, and cherishes as a Good:—the owner and the thief are both mistaken. Evil has no potency except against itself. The conflict thou perceivest around thee is that of Evil fighting against Evil: the greater evil warring with the less: now this is uppermost, now that, in endless round. Against positive Good, Evil is impotent. Until it can pluck a planet from the sky; or stay the earth's fertility; or hush the voice of nature, which in every blade of grass proclaims the Deity, it cannot conquer Good.

“What an immense mass of this evil of man's own making exists, and ramifies through the ever-entangling medley of interests, and expedients, and antagonisms misnamed Society! But Socialism is not antagonism. Selfishness, the principle of Barbarism, cannot be the basis of civilized society. In a state of nature SELF is everything, and FORCE is law. Christianity, stripped of its mysteries, is the true principle of the social system. The civilization that men boast of is only barbarism reduced to a system. Men, at present, are tamed savages: the powerful kept tame by what they have; the feeble, by what they want. The powerful are said to commit crimes when they overpass the boundaries of Law to gratify their savage rapacity: the weak, when they overleap the barriers to make reprisals, or to take revenge. Before Man can shake off the savage, he must subdue the animal: not alone by quitting the woods to live in palaces; by cultivating the soil, by making laws, and by acquainting himself with sciences and arts to pamper his animalism more conveniently and effectually; but by subduing his lower instincts, cultivating his God-like Intellect, and erecting society and civilization on the broad and ever-enlarging basis of his spiritual nature.

“Man is an embryo Intelligence; the Angel and

the Animal conjoined. What he adds to his physical stature he obtains from the material earth and air; and back to these every particle of his bulk returns. But the Mind's nutriment, Knowledge, is as immaterial as itself, and both are eternal of necessity. The fair temple that enshrined the Soul of thy soul's idol, by change and subdivision shall perish utterly: but the IDEA which represents her in thy memory shall remain entire when suns and systems shall be wrecks. Man is related to Deity by Soul; and towards deific perfection he advances as he acquires Intelligence. His Virtues and his Religion (as certain acts and certain ceremonies are termed), cannot advance him a step; but, like his Vices and his Crimes, they will retard him in the exact ratio of his Ignorance. All Good is, therefore, resolvable into Intelligence, and all which bears the name of Evil, into Ignorance. Intelligence is an entity, the first Principle, the great First Cause of all things, or Deity. Ignorance is a negation; and, hence, all the abstractions which have their ideal existence in the circumstances supposed to be produced by the negation, are negations also. Let Knowledge progress on Earth, and in the other stages of the soul's existence, until perfect Intelligence is attained; and the virtues and moralities cease to exist so much as in idea, or are absorbed and swallowed up in the Intelligence, which is perfection—the Alpha which knows no end. Man has no moral nature: no immoral nature. His Soul is one and indivisible: it has no qualities or attributes whether good or evil. It is an intelligent Principle, emanating from Deity, capable of Intelligence, and needing it; nor is there aught else to need or to acquire but Intelligence; which to have in its entirety, is to have everything. All terms made use of to denote qualities in Ethics, Metaphysics, and Religion, are terms only: search for the Qualities they are supposed to repre-

D

sent, and you find them to be unrealities, notions, nothing. A human soul in a human body, may be more or less intelligent; which is synonymous with more or less Perfect, more or less Happy; but it cannot be essentially better or holier than another. What the Metaphysicians denominate qualities of mind are only phases or modes of the Soul's intelligence: thus, Judgment is the seeking after knowledge through the process of comparison; Imagination, by the swifter, but less certain, process of assumption. They are modes of intelligent action, not separate qualities or attributes. All Morality, all Virtue, is conventional. The Virtues and the Moralities exist by reason of their contraries; and these chiefly by reason of human usages and laws, which result from human ignorance. Metaphysicians and Philosophers know this, or they do not know it. If they know it, their teachings are dishonest frauds: if they do not know it, they are laborious blunders: in either case they are false, and worse than useless. Thus, on a basis of sand is built the world's Philosophy, and its wisest men are but much-reasoning fools; its best, but well-intentioned ones.

“There is more Quixotism in the world than the world in general is aware of. Assaulting windmills, warring with puppets, and with flocks of sheep, are not the only phases of the quixotic malady. To tilt with a windmill is not more insane, than to rush armed with mail and lance against a shadow. What crusades have been undertaken against ‘Sin!’ And what desperate battles are still fought with its reputed Father! How many ponderous volumes have been indited to prove the justice of the justice which damns without redemption impossible belief! on Mercy, which can be purchased by a death-bed prayer! and on ‘Grace,’ which indeed, ‘passeth all understanding!’ Oh, Ramus! to what shifts will fraud and

ignorance resort ! and to what profanity ! What superhuman efforts have been made, by well-intentioned men, to give perpetuity to virtue and morality which should not be, and which cannot be without giving eternal duration to their opposites ! This is but engrafting flowers on the stems of weeds ; nay, rearing and nurturing the noxious nightshade because it bears a flower !

“ Did men but know how ignorant they are ; how vapoury all their ‘ Learning ; ’ how profane their fancied piety ; it would be the first step to real knowledge. I charge thee, Ramus, teach them ! Lead them to what is true by showing them what is false. Grey-haired experience in the things which pass for wisdom, is full of sage precepts to the young. ‘ This path,’ it tells them, ‘ is safe and pleasant, that, slippery, and full of pitfalls.’ But youth seldom believes, and never knows, the value of these precepts until it has actually experienced the evils it is counselled to avoid. As long as there is doubt there is liability to error : and as long as the system of things is false, and wrong is ‘ profitable,’ the wisest precepts will be thrown away. Not precepts do men want but knowledge : not counsel, but enlightenment.

“ The Virtues and the Moralities exist by reason of their opposites. But for Vice, the product of Ignorance, Virtue could not be conceived of. But for their ill-favoured *opposites*, Justice, Mercy, Goodness, Truth could have no conceivable existence. They are human all : they belong to the atmosphere of Error : there is nothing Divine about them ; and beyond the confines of Ignorance they cannot be. The more need there is of Benevolence, the more Misery must exist for Benevolence to alleviate : the greater necessity there is for the exercise of the Virtues, the more must Vice abound. If the Deity could find pleasure in human Virtue, Vice would be pleasing too ! The

whole are human, Ramus ; and the existence of the one gives existence to the others, and Ignorance is the parent of them all. To suppose Virtue to be Happiness or the ultimatum of man's attainable perfection, were to suppose a necessity for Vice, and induce the belief that one portion of mankind must be sacrificed that the other portion might be saved ! a human thought, and very blasphemous ! I charge thee, blot it out ! Let the world cherish its Virtues as long as its Ignorance generates its crimes : but let it strive manfully to rid itself of all ; for all are evidences of its Ignorance, and marks of its dishonour. Laws will never repress a tithe of the crimes they foster and originate : but until Laws grow equitable, let the Moralities be encouraged ; let the Virtues minister to the defrauded multitude ; let mercy look gently on their crimes, and Benevolence pour balm upon their miseries. Thousands of men made miserable, systematically made miserable, that a few units amongst them might be happy ! The tiniest moss that vegetates beside thee, Ramus, and drinks its needful portion of the dews and rain, protests against such impious profanation !

“ When humanity shall take its stand upon its spiritual nature ; when men shall use their privilege of *knowing*, and their power of *doing*, in the construction of their social institutions, and, on the plan of nature, use the most perfect means attainable by their reason, to rational and righteous ends, Crime shall cease and Evil be extinguished ; Heaven shall be on Earth ; and God and Angels dwell with man : and all this, without a mystery ; for Intelligence shall convert Earth into a Paradise, as Ignorance has heretofore transformed it to a Hell. Without a miracle, without a mystery, shall all this be accomplished.

“ Wherever there is Mystery there is Ignorance or Fraud. Ubiquity, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Eter-

nity ; these are not mysteries, no more than the whole being greater than a part is a mystery. The only mystery thy flesh-encumbered mind will never fathom, is how Mind created Matter, and by an act of Will linked it to laws unvarying and eternal. But to infinite Intelligence this is not a mystery. Whatever is, and how it came to be, is known to the Deity that willed its being. How Intelligence multiplies itself without sensible addition, and subdivides itself without the smallest loss, thou hast seen : but how it first created itself, or whence proceeded ; and how out of an imponderable Idea it created ponderable Matter, is knowledge for another state of thy existence, a happiness to come.

“ To foreknow all things absolutely, that is, prior to their existence, is to be Omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and eternal. Such, of necessity, is Deity ; therefore Deity is PRESCIENT INTELLIGENCE, which necessarily includes Conscious Intelligence, or the knowledge of things already in existence, and the results of causes already in operation. In this latter mode of Intelligence Man is permitted to participate, to the extent of his ability to see and comprehend the created objects around him, and to discover and comprehend the causes which produce mutation in the modes of their existence : in other words, the human soul is an Intelligent Principle, capable of Conscious Intelligence. To create everything is first to foreknow everything : and to know all created things, and the Laws which regulate and modify their existence, is to be with and in all things eternally. This is omnipresence, this is omniscience. Thus, with Deity, the Past and the Future are included in the Present, and Eternity is concentrated in a point ! These hitherto mysterious terms are mysteries no longer. No longer is Man a mystery to himself : no longer is Deity a mystery to Man. To perceive this,

Ramus, is Intelligence identical with the Conscious Intelligence of the Deity : and this is thy Happiness now : and, in the language of the Oriental Job, thou may'st truly say : 'Though worms shall destroy this body, in my flesh shall I see God !' for knowing what thou knowest, even now thou beholdest Deity ! with thy awakened soul, with that deific part of thee—thy conscious Intelligence, thou already perceivest Him in whose spiritual likeness thou wert made !

“ A law once promulgated by Intelligence which cannot err, is immutable, and subject to no after-regulation, because needing none. Whatever its results, they are foreknown and right.

“ Creative, or Prescient, Intelligence is necessarily infinite ; infinite in duration, and infinite in power : with it, **TO WILL** is synonymous with **TO DO**.

“ It is impossible that anything but Intelligence can have, or exercise, a **WILL**. Absolute Will is synonymous with Deity : in the human soul, from the paucity of its knowledge, Will is synonymous with Desire. Man has some intelligence : he has, consequently, an independent will, limited in its capability of action to the amount of his acquired knowledge, and the necessities of his present existence. His will is, consequently, of the nature of Desire, capable of action proportionate to his limited knowledge, to his human condition, and to his sublunary wants. His will has a wide circle for its operations : it has the entire Earth for its dominion. It is, of course, restrained in its activity by the immutable laws, to which, as an animal, he is subject. He is featherless, and cannot fly : he is finless, and cannot inhabit the waters : he is vulnerable, and may be wounded : he is mortal, and must die. But the laws which limit him as an animal, can scarcely be said to set any bounds to the activity of his intellect. Within the limits of the laws which circumscribe the will ac-

corded to his double nature, he is absolute. He is, however, but an embryo Intelligence, and his Will, regulated by his Reason, in other words, by his imperfect knowledge, is liable to Error; consequently he has erred; and this fabric of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, Justice and Injustice, mystic Religion with its punishments and rewards, Poverty, Animalism, Misery, and Crime, are the natural and necessary consequences.

“ His original error sprung from an incorrect notion of the Deity, which still continues; and an almost total ignorance, which also still continues—of himself. This ignorance led him to adopt a social basis consonant with his animal nature, but altogether inconsistent with his intellectual nature and wants, and his immortality. Man the Animal, having animal necessities, capable of physical power, and physical enjoyment, but ignorant of his spiritual relationship and destiny, naturally adopted brute force as the basis of his social institutions. With the Strong, Might became Right. With the Weak, Obedience became a Virtue, and all resistance to Power was denominated Crime. BUT, WERE THERE NO IGNORANCE THERE COULD BE NO ERROR: WERE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS RATIONAL AND JUST THERE COULD BE NO CRIME.

“ Man, however, need not be all-wise to be just; nor need he be errorless to be happy. But before he can be either just or happy, he must rid himself of all Selfishness; he must know what he is; and comprehend the object of his being. To know that God is infinite Intelligence; that He is all we can conceive of perfection *because* He is all-intelligent; to know that Man himself is an embryo Intelligence, incapable of any acquisition on earth but knowledge; to know that to increase in knowledge is to make progress towards perfection and happiness, is knowledge sufficient in itself, when universally recognised,

to correct his social error, to banish crime, to annihilate evil, and to regenerate mankind. Whatever knowledge is based on the fundamental principle involved in the proposition just enunciated, *is* knowledge, positive, progressive, and abiding. Whatever of men's knowings want this basis, is transitory, retrograde, and false.

“The world is arriving at adolescence, and must begin to unlearn the errors of its youth. The helplessness of its infancy, the frowardness of its childhood, the lawless petulance of its youth, have passed away: it is time to settle down to serious studies, and make some use of the ill-understood lessons it has so long been conning over in the school of adversity. The animal has been developed: its prowess, its courage, its capability of endurance have been tried: let it begin to rely on its Intellect; let it cultivate the Angel portion of its nature, and depress the overgrown grossness of the brute: let the tall pile of its recorded indiscretions be to it as a beacon on a sunken rock: let Reason sit on the prow of the weather-beaten bark, and Love direct the helm; then, and not till then, shall the haven of peace, and the longed-for land of promised Happiness be reached. Then shall come, not the sensual joys of the Mussulman's heaven, nor the misanthropic gloom of the Quietists, nor the dismal paradise of the Latter-day Saints, nor the exclusive Eden of self-righteous bigots of any sect or creed; but the happiness-producing reign of Intellect, the true Millennium of Mind,—the spiritual sovereignty of Christian Love.

“To get rid of the ever-increasing mass of ignorance-created evil, which, like a dense cloud overspans the entire earth—from this to the Antipodes, from the Antipodes onward again to this—hindering the genial rays of Truth from smiling on the family of men, you must banish Ignorance, let light upon

the 'masses,' drop mysticism, and be rational. It is worse than useless to have recourse to nostrums, conjurations, charms: the only Exorcist is Knowledge. The hair-splitting quiddities of the Logicians and Philosophers; the solemn profundities of Hypocrisy and Cant, must cease. These are the blights and mildews which prevent the Amaranth from bursting into bloom. The time has come to sweep away the pestilence. It is the proper advent of a new Truth,—of that Truth which alone has power to dispel the circumambient, blighting, desolating darkness. I charge thee, Ramus, give it wings! My voice is but an echo! As our shadows lengthen our existence wanes: be thou my voice when I am shadowless, and propagate the Truth I came to teach thee! Thousands of thinking men have, at this very time, some dim foreshadowings of this Truth. There is a craving for it in the disturbed and restless minds of multitudes. The time has come when it might be propounded. It might take ages to work its way to the depths of abjectness, and to the heights of power, but this is its proper advent. Evil is at its acme; Crime has reached its climax: Mind is at work: the time is pregnant with change: the period of mummery is passing by: the hollowness of forms and ceremonies is felt: Religion is about to drop its mysteries and be rational: to be practical, instead of shrouding its few and simple precepts in dark enigmas, and the cabalistic language of imposture. Be fearless. Tell robed and ermined Power, surrounded though it be by guards, and fawned on by Obsequiousness, that its Justice is injustice, tainted at its very base. Tell solemn Sapience that it is not wise. Tell Virtue that it subsists on Vice. Tell Piety that it is Self-deception. Tell Moralists to go to school. Tell the deluded multitude to know themselves if they would terminate their miseries.

“Not idly didst thou ask thyself whilst bending o’er this solitary heather, ‘What is Beauty?’ Not idly, nor in vain. If Beauty dwell in this little flower, what is it? If its beauty consist not in the perfect adaptation of means to the end sought to be attained by its existence, it has no beauty: and if it does consist in this, still it has none; for it is the work of God; and to acknowledge its paternity is to admit its perfection. Perfection excludes all notion of ugliness, and has no need of any contradistinguishing appellation to describe it. The term Beauty is, therefore, conventional, and Man arrives at a notion of it through its *opposite*; and of this, through the imperfection or paucity of his knowledge. Perfection is only another name for the handiwork of God; and Beauty, for Perfection. It is only when we have no appreciation of the exquisite adaptation of an object to the end it serves in the magnificent scheme of Creation, that we pronounce it ugly. Whenever we perceive deformity in a natural object, or anything mean, or loathsome, or impure, we are but viewing, as in a glass, the reflex of our own Ignorance. Our preferences and dislikes have their origin in our ability or inability to recognise perfection; and in those circumstances in objects which more readily enable us to gratify our inherent *desire to know*. This last is the true but hitherto unrecognised basis of all conventional beauty. Metaphysicians finding no definable beauty in the works of Nature, explain that certain circumstances in objects produce in the mind, after an unsettled and lawless manner, an arbitrary bias, an accidental preference: this preference or bias, they say, is an emotion, a pleasure-giving feeling; and *this feeling*, they tell us, is Beauty. Here they stop. They do not tell us to what circumstance

or to what combination of circumstances in objects this feeling is to be referred; and, not affording this information, they afford none. Precisely of the same value is all their teaching. To have gone further they must have touched the First Principle, and we should have had philosophy instead of the cobweb tissue of which even modern metaphysics is composed.

“There is nothing purposeless in nature, and, hence, no natural bias of the mind is purposeless. In the FORMS of things the mind has a bias towards CURVES. But why? There are many reasons. I will mention one. Man cannot comprehend infinity: nor can he derive pleasure from what he cannot comprehend. A straight line has in it the *principle* of infinitude: unbroken it is infinite. The mind strives to grasp it, and is repulsed. There is more of awe than pleasure in this repulse. From its interminable vastness we cannot take in the thought: we are doomed to joyless ignorance. The emotion we experience is Sublimity. Whatever awakens the feeling, or impresses us with the idea, of undefined, or defineless, immensity is sublime. Of this the straight line is suggestive; hence, it affords the mind less satisfaction than the curve; and for this reason,—the mind *can* comprehend the circle. No matter how immense it be, the mind can travel round it. The process is easy. There is something cut out from space; something we can comprehend and know. This is the source and purpose of the bias. Every natural bias of the mind has the same tendency:—it yearns to KNOW.

“In the colours of things, unbroken uniformity would be flatness, sameness, suggestive of infinity. The difficulty of isolating objects, and thus, of *knowing them*, would be immense. Colours obviate

this difficulty; and those most distinguished by their brilliancy give a natural bias to the mind in their favour. This is the beneficent purpose of the bias.

“Sounds and Odours answer similar ends. As they tend to gratify the natural cravings of the soul for knowledge, and as they simplify the process, they are pleasure-giving. Link them by sameness to infinity, and they inspire awe.

“Wonder and Awe are the progeny of Ignorance. Mental pleasure is the invariable result of Knowledge. The emotion we call Sublimity originates in Ignorance. The emotion which we have any rational authority to name Beauty, originates in those circumstances in all natural objects, which serve as means to the growth of our Intelligence.

“All Nature woos mankind to KNOW IT, and thus to ascend to a closer communion with its Almighty Author. The flowers are not odorous, nor their forms and colours manifold, to delight the senses merely: the senses, as well as that innate feeling which directs our preferences, are the appointed inlets of our knowledge; and these various circumstances, the wooing aids to our perceptions. To convert the pleasure-giving means of knowledge into finalities is unmitigated sensualism;—an error to which even brute natures do not stoop. There is not, Ramus, a blade of grass that points to Heaven but bids thee be intelligent and happy.

“Knowledge amongst men may be positive or negative: thou hast the key to both. Positive Knowledge spiritualizes, ennobles, elevates, refines. Negative Knowledge sensualizes and degrades. Evil will no longer be a mystery to thee, nor Good elude thy search: nor shall the idea of two contending Principles in the world ever again throw gloom upon thy spirit, or shake thy trust in God.

“The sun is sinking : let us arise. As from this eminence thou viewest the varied landscape, so, from an altitude of knowledge unreached till now, shalt thou cast thy mental eye over the outspread page of History, and by the steady light of Truth see clearly whence ruin came on empires ; see from what single cause all the spurious systems of Civilization the world has known have crumbled into nothing. Thou shalt perceive in thy survey that wherever there is mystery there is fraud : wherever there is ignorance there is evil. Thou shalt see the emptiness of book-men’s learning, and how intellect weds itself to error. Thou shalt find that Law, the breath of Power, is based on selfishness ; and Government, the sinews of that Power,—on wrong. Thou shalt perceive that all the systems of Philosophy yet known to men are reared on falsehood : thou shalt supply a solid base of Truth. Thou shalt see in thy survey infinite perplexity, ever-involving involution : thou shalt restore simplicity. Out of this chaos of Ignorance and Evil shall proceed a universe of Intellect and Happiness. ‘Let there be light ;’—and mysticism shall vanish, and Intelligence, like yon sun, cheer with its equitable radiance the entire family of men. Gaze on that glorious object, my dear Ramus, that its last ray may rest on thee, as now do my injunctions !”

He ceased. A cloud of deepest crimson, edged with gold, rose from the horizon o’er the half-sunk orb, and twilight took the place of day. I turned. My monitor had gone ! I was again alone ! Reader ! was all this ecstasy ? or was it real ? It has been said :—

“Such bodiless creation, ecstasy
Is very cunning in.”

CHAPTER IV.

It was on the evening of the feast of St. Bartholemew that the mysterious communication narrated in the two preceding chapters was made to me. When the Revelation had ended and the sun had set, I found myself alone on the common amid the deepening twilight. I was in no haste to quit the spot sanctified by these revealings until the gathering darkness admonished to do so. In about a quarter of an hour I gained a footpath across the common which conducted to the public road. Quietly I pursued my way for several miles without meeting, as far as I remember, a living thing. The whole time I was entirely absorbed in my reflections.

Whether wonder at the strangeness of the events I had experienced, or the happiness they had produced in me, was the predominant feeling, I know not; but just as I was entering a village through which I had to pass on my way home, the current of my thoughts was interrupted by the ringing out of the passing-bell which told of some world-weary brother having gone to his appointed rest; and I thought of the words of the mysterious Dionysius, —“ My voice is but an echo: as our shadows lengthen our existence wanes: be thou my voice when I am shadowless!” He had uttered these words while his shadow slept beside my own on the mossy greensward. Could it be *his* knell I was listening to?

It was late when I arrived at my quiet home. I was occupied until far beyond midnight recording

in my journal the strange incidents of the evening ; and then, without taking any refreshment, I retired to rest and enjoyed a deep and refreshing sleep, unbroken even by a dream, until far into the following day. I awoke to the enjoyment of a new existence. To me the world was no longer the same world : at any rate I saw it through another medium. But though it seemed to me more miserable than formerly, I knew the cause of its miseries, and felt myself to be the repository of the secret of their cure.

It was an awful happiness ; too great to bear alone ; and I sighed for a friend to whom I could impart a portion of my responsibility. Such an one, out of a large circle of neglected acquaintances, I felt I had not ; and I bore my secret about me with a fulness of enjoyment, that had but to pass the boundary on which it trembled to become suffering and pain.

My feet still rested on the earth ; but my head was in the clear sunshine far above the clouds. Below me were the tempests, and the murky atmosphere of error-encircled Man : above, and around me were the peaceful glories of an intellectual heaven ; and my busy spirit seemed to enjoy a blessed intercommunion with souls made perfect by Intelligence. I was *in* the world of humanity, but not *of* it. I seemed to have parted with the calculating turmoils of time, and to dwell already in the smooth current of ever-enlarging felicity, caused by ever-increasing knowledge. I occasionally cast my thoughts towards the earth, and sympathised with the victims of its thick-coming miseries ; and, with the old leaven of superstitious earthliness about me, I sighed for the power to work a miracle for their enlightenment. I desired to breathe my spirit on the world, and convince it of its errors by an act of inspiration : and, for a brief

space, I thought the thought of a calumniated writer, long since dead ; Oh, that the Deity had written his high behests on the face of the sun, that all men might know his will ! But has he not, thought I, done more than this ? Has he not implanted an inextinguishable desire for the one thing needful deep in the soul of every human being ? Has he not adopted the more gratifying mode of communicating his will ? not in a material form by writing on the sun, or arranging the stars into a luminous decalogue ; not as man, the animal, communes with man, his brother animal, but as spirit communes with spirit ? Does it not say as loud as yearning soul can speak, and in an universal language which none who think can misinterpret : Know thyself : Know God : be intelligent, and be happy ?

I reflected that although the Virtues and the Moralities, abstractedly, are nothing, that Happiness is a reality co-existent with Intelligence ; and that Intelligence must exist eternally, even though Matter, at the fiat of the Almighty, were again resolved into its single element ; though it were again floating through space, imponderous, and without form ; subtle as electricity, which probably it is ;—for Matter must be One, and Infinite Intelligence, its soul. How either *came to be*, is of no consequence : enough for us, *they are*. Whether Matter, in its state of ultimate subdivision, thinks ; or whether in this subtle state it be but the assimilated agent of Infinite Intelligence, is of no real importance to us now : yet still we would, all human as we are, push our investigations further if we could, nor leave even this stupendous truth unknown. How active, then, thought I, is that ever-living principle within us which prompts us to this discovery ! and how besotted are mankind, how dulled their intellect by erroneous training and disuse, to need any other proof of what we are, of

what our business is on earth, and what is the end and purpose of our being! Still, alas! these facts are unperceived. Not one in a million has proved them to himself; or, in himself, where only it can be found, has he ever dreamed of searching for the evidence. Long and anxiously I pondered on these things. How, thought I, may these all-important truths be shown? how proved to the millions who have neither the desire (for it is dead), nor the aptitude, for the knowledge;—who are only animally cognizant of things, but, mentally, are blind? How shall one mind illuminate millions who are unconsciously enamoured with their darkness? Spiritualize those who are proud of their animalism? elevate those who are satisfied with their degradation? In what form of words can this newly-acquired knowledge be made to permeate all mankind? The responsibility seemed awful: the task too great to be attempted. An invisible power urged me onward: a growing sense of the difficulty restrained me. Should I abandon the task? or, relying on the innate power of Truth, attempt it? Thus I argued:—The blooming plant was once a tiny seed; the giant oak, an acorn: a grain of sand, the nucleus of a world: the greatest thing had a beginning. Had not my mentor, Dionysius, likened the truth he set before me to a seed? “Thou shall plant it,” said he, “and, Ramus, it shall grow.” I determined to attempt it; but, by what means I knew not. Whom, methought, am I? Almost a stranger amongst my Species: a voluntary outcast of society, living apart even from my kindred and acquaintances, and perhaps,—for experience had not tested the fact—perhaps without a single friend! There was sadness in the thought, but it was a momentary sadness. Like a cloudlet hurrying across the moon, this transient sadness overpassed my soul. I reflected that it might have been otherwise had I

married. Marriage has its consequences ; and these consequences are sometimes evil. I have known the very nature of a good man changed by marriage, that is, seemingly changed ; but the truth lies deeper : his nature struggled for a development which marriage checked. So gentle was the nature of poor Catholicus, that no sentient creature could suffer pain, nor any soul feel misery, but a sympathetic chord in his own soul was touched. Alas ! to wish only a good wish for any other being than his wife was treason in her eyes : but Catholicus was a *man*, and though a kind one, he grew tyrannous in defence of his humanity. His life was infelicitous : his character was misunderstood : he died mad : and Ignorance wrote his epitaph. How many of the inmates of Bedlam, past and present, have become demented from feelings and experiences akin to those of poor Catholicus ! I have sympathy with these madmen. Were the world's ways wiser than they are, these unfortunates had not gone mad. It is chiefly the most thoughtful and best-intentioned men amongst us that now become demented : men who think till they know not what to think, then, soul-sick, mope, or rave, or smile on vacancy till death enlightens them ! A chaos is theirs of glory and misery ; particles of the ineffable light of Divinity glittering here and there amidst an ocean of gloom ! the light supplied by nature interfused with the darkness supplied by authority, and called light. No marvel they are mad ! They are, however, wiser than the sane ; for they have seen that Evil is paramount on earth, and have had some luminous glimpses of a bright hereafter : and to both these experiences most of the sane are strangers. Sanity signifies an inordinate love of self. The wife of poor Catholicus was eminently sane, and as eminently short-sighted : she would have been more loved had her husband been permitted to bestow some of his

affection on his daughter or his dog. Touched with the fate of poor Catholicus, I rejoiced that I had not been married: I was happy in reflecting that probably I had no friend. If I had friends, thought I, if I had a particular predilection for a few amongst my species, I should of necessity have less active sympathy for the many: if I loved some in particular, the aggregate I could not love at all. It is assuredly better as it is. If I had preferences I must respect those preferences. If I were swayed by individual friendships, I should have no power even to do right in opposition to their insidious influence. The greater duty would succumb to the lesser, and Wrong would have all the charms of Right. In sentiment it is an amiable, perhaps a natural weakness; but in action it is a pernicious thing. Let no man act through friendship, or through friendship, be debarred from action, if he would do the work assigned to him on earth! Every act of partial munificence, every act of personal regard, is a wrong felt and suffered somewhere. It is better, far better that I should have no friend, than that out of respect to my friend I should betray humanity. I was happy that I had no friend. I was penetrated with an unspeakable, a deeply reverential thankfulness to the great Author of my being, that my love had a larger scope; that my affections embraced the universe. Night and day, every moment of my existence, this thought of my duty, with its accompanying homage to Him who had endowed me with thought, was present with me; and was to me, and still is, the most sublime religion. Go where I would this unutterable happiness attended me; and all I said and did, or desired to say and do, had reference to the one end I now so clearly saw before me. I felt to be above the reach of misfortune, and that Evil was powerless to harm me; and I thought, how blessed the time when there shall be no evil!

Days and weeks flew noiseless by ; moons waxed and waned ; but my momentous secret still slept untold. Prudence, not selfish fear, restrained its utterance. What is ill-done were better undone. If my felicity had a dash of misery in it, it proceeded from a growing sense of my inability to grapple with an evil which taints, and intertwines itself with everything, and has a power, torpedo-like, to paralyse the arm of him, who, with a hostile purpose, ventures but to touch it.

For months I resolved on commencing my hopeless task, yet still did nothing. In order to fix and concentrate my thoughts, I sometimes attempted to read : but reading had lost its relish. Books were full of absurdities ; more ignorant, most of them, than the illiterate beings whom the selfish policy of society shuts out from their perusal. Newspapers were but the heartless records of iniquity ; the glass in which an ignorant world might view the reflex of its ignorance. Whether the records of the Police Court, or the records of the Imperial Parliament, were the more sickening I know not ; but the motives of all the actors in the drama of life, from the pickpocket to the prime minister, seemed to me to be equally false. Wherever I directed my attention the result was the same. All the labours of men had taken the wrong direction : they were either purposeless, or their purpose wrong. I mixed more with mankind, and calmly observed whatever was passing around me. Everywhere there was intense activity, ceaseless aspirings, but all to a wrong end. If, thought I, the whole mass were inert or sluggish, "a little leaven might leaven the entire lump : " but, in full activity, who shall attempt to turn it in its course, check its headlong wilfulness, and guide it to its good ?

About a month after the event which produced the state of mind I have been describing, I became ac-

quainted, how it matters not—with the following circumstances.

At sunset, on the day of the feast of Saint Bartholomew, at his residence in Fulham, died the Reverend Dionysius Lackland; a man whose life had been consumed in study, and whose one object in living was to do good. He would probably have lived longer had his object been really attainable, and his labours less perplexing. But ever scrutinizing his own actions, noting their origin and following them into their more distant consequences, he perceived that his best actions sometimes originated in weakness, and frequently resulted in evil; whilst evil, whether intentional or otherwise, he observed, not less frequently conduced to some more ultimate good: in short, that the actions of men, in the abstract, are neither good nor bad: but that they are an unbroken chain of consequences and causes with which human misery is most mysteriously connected. To lessen the sum of this suffering was his aim; but every act was manifold, not single in its consequences: here it was the *remedy* of an evil; there its *cause*: and where would its influence, either for good or evil, cease to operate? Would happiness or misery preponderate in the endless progress of its consequences? How, said he, should any act of a human being be uniformly beneficent, when the very rain of Heaven which fertilizes my fields, deluges my neighbour's pastures and drowns his flock? Are Good and Evil names alone, and not realities? Could we have a sense of either if we were wise? During the latter years of his life he had devoted himself entirely to study with the view to disentangle these perplexities, and discover the source of these, to him, humiliating contradictions: and from this reason, as well as from certain conscientious motives, he had for several years relinquished his clerical ministrations. To be a

useful servant of God, he felt he ought to know something of the laws of God ; to assume to be His ordained Minister, he conceived that he ought to be more deeply initiated than other men in the latent mysteries of his will : to be a Shepherd, that he should know something of the true nature and necessities of his flock. He was a "Learned" man ; but with all his learning, he felt himself to be as incapable of distinguishing between Good and Evil as the most ignorant over whom he was exercising a teachership. He examined his credentials, and doubting of their genuineness, he was constrained to lay aside the arrogant title of "One of God's vicegerents here on earth." He had seen much, travelled much, read much, conversed much, and deeply had he meditated on all : indeed, few men were more conversant with all the surface-matters which make up the showy sum of human knowledge than Dionysius Lackland ; but, that Good and Evil should be so inextricably interwoven, perplexed him greatly ; his health failed him, he became a recluse, and was seldom seen beyond the somewhat narrow limits of his own house and grounds. His only daughter, Ellen, was his sole companion ; and through her agency nearly all his communications with the outward world were made. She was the instrument of his charities, the repository of his thoughts, the manager of his household, and the entertainer of his casual guests. Sometimes, his amanuensis ; sometimes she was to him what the youthful David was to Saul, the exorcist of his melancholy, and would charm away his sadness on the harp.

It was the opinion of Dionysius Lackland that he who prevents human suffering, by removing the causes of misery, is a greater benefactor to his race than he who spends his fortune to relieve it, and hopes by his charity to diminish its amount. He was himself a

Howard ; but his aim was to do away with all need of philanthropy. He held that Benevolence is as disgraceful to society as Crime, and that both are equal evidences of a world-spanning injustice. It was to demonstrate these somewhat startling positions, and to establish them on the solid basis of an all-embracing Truth, that the labour of the latter portion of his life had been devoted. His health, which had always been delicate, gave way, and he died, leaving the accomplishment of the task, as well as the guardianship of his daughter, to me. The task is before me, and the maiden at this moment by my side.

For form's sake I will now acquaint thee, friend reader, with a circumstance which thou hast anticipated already, notwithstanding that I have feebly affected the craft of the novelist with a view to a surprise : but as the events of my life have been few, and none of them very romantic, I expect thy forgiveness that I have attempted to make the most of this.—Ellen Lackland is my niece ; Dionysius, my long-lost brother ; and the long-ago deceased mother of Ellen, the Ellen Raymond of my early years, whose ideal I had so long cherished as my soul's secret idol, and who more than lives again in Ellen Randolph. Ellen is a girl in years, but more than a woman in intelligence and unselfish catholicity of mind. She has been nursed and instructed in a purer knowledge than falls to the lot of the generality of the daughters of men, and inherits a nature worthy of the teaching she has received.

Her father, Raphael Randolph, (or if the reader pleases, Dionysius Lackland,) had conceived the idea of a new Philosophy for mankind ; and if not of a new Religion, such a purification of the old as would render its practice new, whatever may be the antiquity or origin of its leading precepts. A mass of notes without order or arrangement,—the occasional jot-

tings down of ideas for the illustration of a system yet in embryo in his own mind, is all the assistance derivable from his papers. These are now in my possession, and the key to them—the mysterious communication made to me on the evening of the feast of Saint Bartholemew, the day of my brother's death.

The mode of this communication, whether it was what is called "second sight" that I experienced; or a trance, or a reverie, or a dream, or a ghostly visitation, I must leave to the sagacity of others to determine. The believers in apparitions and the supernatural visits by the dying to their absent friends, so often recorded, and so credibly attested, will most likely incline to this latter suggestion, when I shall have related the additional circumstances which invests this opinion with an air of probability; for, certainly, the power of long-pent-up affection, a strong will, and the accomplishment of a dearly-cherished object, are more than the usual superinducing causes generally urged by way of accounting for such out-of-nature occurrences.

He had said in the morning that he should die at sunset; and as the evening approached, he was, by his own wish, placed in his chair at the open window of his apartment, that, as he said, he might, for the last time, see the sun go down, and feel its warm rays play about him. His daughter sat beside him in the sunbeams. He now and then conversed with her on the subject of his translation until he fell into a sleep, calm as the slumbers of an infant when the Angels are whispering spirit-stories to its soul. At sunset he awoke, smiled an affectionate farewell to Ellen, and his other attendants, then slept the sleep of the blessed.

Agitated by feelings which it were useless to describe, and absorbed by reflections which have been faintly indicated, and, I fear, too tediously dwelt on already, I one night retired to rest somewhat earlier

than usual. I had taken a narcotic to promote sleep, to which I had lately been almost a stranger ; and my health was suffering from its loss. I soon fell into a delightful slumber, and in a long-continued vision,—the particulars of which it will be the business of the three following chapters to relate—I saw the object of my wishes realized ; my delegated task accomplished. More vivid than reality were the scenes and circumstances of that dream ; and the impression they made on me, more distinct and indelible than almost any occurrence of my waking life.

The description and details of this extraordinary vision-dream will conclude the first part of this little work, to which, indeed, the portion we are now concluding is merely the introduction ; and, if I have been thus far successful in convincing thee, my dear reader, that the world is neither as happy nor as wise as it might be, I am of opinion that thou wilt nerve thyself to the task of a deliberate and unprejudiced perusal of the ALPHA we are about commencing. Its object is to show the way—the only one—by which this world-wide desideratum—**THE GREATEST ATTAINABLE HAPPINESS OF THE ENTIRE FAMILY OF MEN**—can by any possibility be accomplished. And although thou wilt find the relation of these dream-experiences less fantastic than the Arabian tales, and far less diverting than Don Quixote, I promise thee that thou shalt extract germs of wisdom therefrom, which it shall be the chief business of thy after-life to tend and nurture, that their growth within thee may ensure thy happiness here, and thy felicity in the never-ending hereafter—*which will come*, whether it find thee watching or asleep ; *which will come*, whether thy soul, incapable of anything but knowledge, have added to its store, or neglected the acquisition.

Virtue is nothing : morality is nothing : holiness is nothing : religion is nothing : for true knowledge in-

cludes them all, and is at once virtue, morality, holiness, philosophy, and religion. The only difference between thee and other men is a difference in knowledge : the only difference between men and angels is a difference in knowledge : and probably the only difference between Angels and the Deity, however immense it may be, is a difference in knowledge. The soul is immaterial, and incapable of blot or stain : it can neither suffer pollution, nor add to its purity : it can neither perish, nor part with its consciousness, nor be deprived of its intelligence ; for intelligence and soul are indivisible, are one. All this the Alpha-vision will prove to thee ; will make a part of thee ; for thou wilt not believe alone, but know ; and its Philosophy will be thy religion :—a religion differing from all others in this,—that it cannot be put on and off at pleasure, but must be ever-active, forming an essential portion of every act, and every thought ; needing no minister, no guide, and demanding of its votaries that they be MEN INDEED ; men who have their own welfare in their own keeping ; not self-sold slaves, who by an act of unspeakable idiotcy, consign body and soul to the charge of creatures, in everything but cunning, exactly similar to themselves. If thou wouldst be wiser than these, listen to the Spirit-teacher that solicits thy attention in my Dream !

CHAPTER V.

THE VISION.

I COULD not have been long asleep when my vision commenced. At first it was confused: familiar objects had parted with their old appearance; and new things seemed familiar. I was in my own house; in my own library, yet nothing in it seemed to be my own. My books were not in their accustomed bindings. A few old portraits in oaken frames had changed to landscapes, and other subjects, scriptural and profane, in golden ones. Anon the apartment had parted with its semi-modern, neat appearance, and became a spacious gothic hall, filled with a crowd of anxious-looking persons. In the next moment it had shaped itself into that portion of Westminster Abbey known as Poet's Corner. A few of the assembled crowd were examining the monuments. Now the busts and statues were no longer monuments, but living men who mingled with the assemblage, every individual of which seemed to be anxiously awaiting some interesting event;—a circumstance rendered evident to me by the excitement, and uneasy look of impatient expectation observable on their intelligent countenances. Suddenly I was seized with a similar feeling, and, without speaking to any one, I seemed to know that all were awaiting the arrival of DIONYSIUS to propound his new Philosophy. In the next moment, there he stood, "the observed of all observers," just as I had seen him on the common.

The place was now no longer Poet's Corner, but the

beautiful chapel of Henry the Seventh, with its stalls, and banners, its "dim religious light," its pendent ceiling of geometric tracery, and its quaint carvings of exquisite design and wondrous workmanship. Its dimensions had, however, expanded with the occasion, and thousands were congregated within its nave. How strange that in our dreams we have no consciousness of incongruity with respect to time! Conspicuous in the stalls were Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Spenser, Chaucer, Drayton, Dryden, Marlowe, Massinger, Milton, Butler, Byron, in short, the Parnassus of England; and had the great Father of poetry, old Homer himself, been amongst them, I should have viewed him, as I did the others, without the slightest sense of the anachronism. It must be that, in the spiritual world, with which we seem to have an easy commerce in our dreams, WHATEVER HAS BEEN, IS. Methought Shakspeare occupied the place of honour, and was, as by common consent, or prior arrangement, the President or Moderator of the assembly.

Dionysius stood on the dais in front of the tomb of Henry and his queen: and near him, dressed in a robe of dazzling whiteness, stood the beautiful and intelligent Ellen. I was oblivious as to any consanguinity with either. The one was simply Ellen Randolph; the other the mysterious Dionysius with whom I had conversed on the common. And now, proceeding from the adjoining choir, a strain of music of the most unearthly sweetness, mingled (for so it seemed) with spirit-voices, filled the whole arena. It ceased; and Echo took up the strain. A thrill of the most exquisite pleasure passed through the whole assembly, which now seemed countless, and was composed of men and women of all grades and conditions. Even the roof and carvings were peopled with human faces, and every eye was bent on Dionysius. By insensible degrees he had become endued with more

than human beauty; whilst Ellen's figure had so blended into his, that, to my heated imagination, the twain seemed one.

He advanced to the extremity of the platform, and, with an emphasis of which all understood the meaning, said:—

“Life is not a jest:”—Here Goldsmith looked at Gay——“It is a glorious reality.”——Here Milton and Byron exchanged significant glances——“Ignorance is—not the ‘*curse of God,*’—but the cause of evil: ‘Knowledge is the wing on which men soar to Heaven.’”——

Methought Shakspeare blushed, whilst to do him honour, the assembled thousands, moved by one impulse, rose!——Dionysius continued.—

“The world has erred; still errs, and is unhappy. The rich are unhappy notwithstanding their possessions. The poor are unhappy by reason of their numerous necessities. The wisdom of the wisest ends in disappointment; and to be ignorant is as safe as to be wise; for, of both conditions, misery is the inevitable lot. Vice riots in luxury, whilst Virtue pines in want. Audacious Impudence has everything but happiness, whilst Modesty lacks even bread. Dulness fares sumptuously, whilst Genius starves. Thus it has ever been, even from the beginning. Still, life is not a jest, but a great reality. The world has erred, still errs, and is unhappy.

“Much can be advanced in vindication of the worst things: and much also may be urged in dis-

paragement of the best. Every question in Politics, Ethics, and Religion has two sides, and each side its zealous defenders. They may be as opposite as light to darkness both in their nature and results, yet the partizans of each maintain that THEIR position is true and right, and denounce the position of their opponents as false, and wrong, and fraught with evil. Thus, Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Falsehood and Truth, are inextricably interwoven and confounded. What is the inference? Either that the Deity delights to mock his creatures; or, that his creatures, being ignorant, mock and cajole themselves. One or the other of these it must be. It is the least indecorous to believe that the latter supposition is the true one. Let us, then, suspect ourselves, rather than entertain so unhallowed a thought as that the Deity made men in sport; sent them in pursuit of a happiness which is beyond their reach; and embroils them in feuds the most atrocious for the attainment of a visionary good.

“ Now, in order that we should know how to distinguish Evil from Good, Wrong from Right, Falsehood from Truth, it is necessary that we should have an unerring guide. IT IS THE BUSINESS OF PHILOSOPHY TO FURNISH SUCH A GUIDE. Mankind have never yet had such a Philosophy. We must discover such an one, or continue to endure the evils resulting from the want. IT MUST BE A PURE PHILOSOPHY, COMPREHENSIBLE BY ALL, CAPABLE OF BEING PRACTISED BY ALL, AND EMBRACING THE HIGHEST IN-

TERESTS OF ALL ;—A PHILOSOPHY AT ONCE SIMPLE, INTELLIGIBLE, AND SUFFICIENT. To do this we must discover the fundamental Truth, which is the exponent of all truth. We must have an unerring principle as the basis of our Philosophy ; and to supply this principle is the task to which I pledge myself in the face of this assembly.

“In this important matter we must proceed carefully, and step by step. We must be certain that every previous step is safe before the subsequent one be taken. As Reason must decide whether each proposition advanced be false or true ; and as no truth can be truth to us until our Reason perceives it to be truth, I earnestly entreat that no proposition be allowed to pass so long as a reason can be urged against it.”

Here two Philosophers, ERNEST STRONG-I'-THE-FAITH, and DIOGENES DULL, with whose persons and opinions I seemed to have been previously acquainted, rose together, and in one voice denied that Reason could be relied on in a matter so important : and, after the right of priority had with some difficulty been decided, each of them proceeded to give his *reasons* for his dissent. Dionysius thus disposed of their objections :—

“The very act of these Objectors proves the fallacy of their objection. They, professedly, support by reason their objection against reason. They admit what they deny, and deny what they admit ; and another word need not be wasted on the subject.

That Reason often errs is because it does not make sure of its facts. SIMPLE PERCEPTION is the consciousness of individual Facts which exist within ourselves, or externally to ourselves. REASON IS COMPLEX PERCEPTION: it is a consciousness of sundry single facts combined with a consciousness of another series of facts which can only be perceived by comparing single facts with each other: for example, I perceive a stone: I next perceive a stream of running water. I find that the stone is ponderous and solid: I perceive that the water is ponderous and fluid. I next perceive that there is a coincidence between them; and a difference. Both have ponderosity; that is a fact: but both are not fluid; that is another fact. The stone is at rest: the water is in motion. Observing these additional facts, I am led to perceive other facts arising out of these; namely, that the ponderosity and solidity of the stone are a cause of its being at rest; and that the ponderosity and fluidity of the water are a cause of its being in motion. Here we have arrived at COMPLEX PERCEPTION; AND THIS IS REASON; differing only from SIMPLE PERCEPTION in this;—that by comparing single facts we become conscious of the various circumstances in which they differ and agree, as well as of the more latent facts of Cause and Effect. There is, then, nothing more mysterious about Reason than there is about Consciousness, the existence of which, I presume, neither of these Objectors will deny.”

STRONG - I' - THE - FAITH nodded acquiescence : but DULL denied that the existence of consciousness is an established fact : hence, he contended, that there is no certain evidence of external things ; all which, the greatest Philosophers have held to be mere fancies ; and that, therefore, a man has no positive proof even of his own existence. He, therefore, denied the infallibility of what is called Consciousness, until its truthfulness could be established as an incontrovertible fact. To this argument DIONYSIUS replied thus :—

“ If the Objector is nothing, then the objection is nothing ; and Nothing can be the author of an objection, which is an absurdity. Perhaps the best proof that can be given that every human being really exists, is that every human being who really thinks on the subject is firmly persuaded of the fact. IT IS AN INNATE CONVICTION AS IRRESISTIBLE AS IT IS UNIVERSAL. Even those who pretend to doubt it only prove themselves to be pretenders : for how is it possible to believe in a proof furnished by reasoning on assumed premises, if they cannot believe a self-evident proposition too obvious to need a proof, and too simple to be established by a syllogism ? Again : how could these doubters believe in the result of a syllogism, without first believing in the existence of the entity which at once originates the syllogism, and is the subject of the doubt ? A BELIEF IN THE POTENCY OF THEIR OWN REASON, IS A BELIEF IN THEIR OWN EXISTENCE. We are conscious of the fact,

and this Consciousness is knowledge ;—the Mind, or Soul, KNOWS that it exists. Just now this same Objector denied the trustworthiness of Reason ; yet he has again had recourse to something, which, were I to designate by any other name than Reason, would be a discourtesy which I am desirous to avoid.”

DULL bowed his acknowledgments ; and, after a brief pause, DIONYSIUS proceeded with his discourse. He said :—

“ We have now established two preliminaries :

First, that there is such a thing as SIMPLE PERCEPTION, by which we ascertain the positive existence of individual facts : and,

Secondly, that there is such a thing as COMPLEX PERCEPTION, or REASON, by which we can compare individual facts, and thence arrive at the knowledge of an endless series of truths beyond them.

“ I will now explain what I mean by Philosophy, which, it will be seen, is the basis of Religion.

“ Truth is the basis of Philosophy ; because false convictions induce erroneous sentiments and acts, which necessarily result in Evil.

“ PHILOSOPHY is, therefore, a systemized body of true facts, which, producing right inferential convictions or sentiments, and right actions, results in mental elevation and real happiness.

“ RELIGION consists in right sentiments towards the Deity, and in right actions : therefore Truth, which is Philosophy, is the basis of Religion. The

relation between Philosophy and Religion is that of Cause and Effect : thus,

PHILOSOPHY IS SYSTEMIZED TRUTH :

RELIGION, THE SENTIMENTS AND ACTIONS THENCE RESULTING.

“ The next step in our inquiry is to find an unerring guide to Truth. Let us ask ourselves, therefore,

“ WHAT IS TRUTH ?

“ It is evident that Truth may have reference to the works of the Deity, or to the labours of Man. The false facts which result from erroneous reasoning are inimical to Philosophy, and are the source of all Evil. Those which, whether directly or indirectly, are traceable to the will and nature of the Deity, can alone appertain to Philosophy. As a starting-point, therefore, let us take as axioms the following propositions :—

“ First, THAT WHICH IS POSSIBLE IS TRUE.

“ Secondly, THAT WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE IS UNTRUE.

“ Now, as, with the Deity, much more is possible than is impossible, let us endeavour to arrive at what is true by ascertaining what is false. It is clear that,

“ **WHATEVER IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE TRUE NATURE OF DEITY,—(which we shall presently perceive to be INFINITE, PRESCIENT, ERRORLESS INTELLIGENCE,) — IS MANIFESTLY IMPOSSIBLE, AND, THEREFORE, MANIFESTLY UNTRUE.**

“ First, then, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE ALL-PRE-

SCIENT DEITY SHOULD EVER CHANGE HIS INTENTIONS, OR ALTER OR SUSPEND HIS LAWS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ANY NEW PLAN OR PURPOSE, BECAUSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT ANYTHING SHOULD HAVE BEEN UNFORESEEN, OR LEFT UNPROVIDED FOR. Any assumption, therefore, which presupposes such change of will, or alteration or suspension of his Laws, *implies FALLIBILITY in a Being who is infallible, IMPERFECTION in a Being who is necessarily perfect, and a WANT OF FORESIGHT in a Being who is necessarily prescient*: ALL WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE, AND HENCE UNTRUE.

“ Secondly, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE DEITY CAN BE PARTIAL, OR UNJUST, OR CRUEL, OR REVENGEFUL. Any assumption which presupposes partiality, injustice, cruelty, revenge, or any other quality, disposition, or power that is derogatory in its nature, *implies IMPERFECTION in the Deity*; WHICH BECAUSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, IS MANIFESTLY UNTRUE.

Thirdly, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT ANY WORK OR CLASS OF WORKS OF THE DEITY SHOULD BE EITHER PURPOSELESS OR IMPERFECT; because *the assumption presupposes LEVITY AND INCAPACITY in their author*, WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE; THEREFORE, ANY ACT, INFERENCE, OR OPINION, BASED ON SUCH AN ASSUMPTION, IS ERRONEOUS AND UNTRUE.

“ Lastly, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT ANY WORK OR CLASS OF WORKS OF THE DEITY SHOULD NOT CONTAIN WITHIN ITSELF A PRINCIPLE BY WHICH, IN ALL THE INDIVIDUALS COMPOSING IT, THE TRUE PURPOSE OF ITS EXISTENCE CAN BE FULLY ACCOMPLISHED;

because, without such a principle, the work would be imperfect, and the purpose unattained. THIS IS MANIFESTLY IMPOSSIBLE; HENCE, ANY THOUGHT, SENTIMENT, OR INFERENCE, DRAWN FROM SUCH ASSUMPTION, IS FALSE; AND EVERY ACTION THENCE ENSUING, IS ERRONEOUS, AND PROLIFIC OF EVIL.

“ It follows, then, that IN MAN HIMSELF must we seek for the PRINCIPLE of his being; THAT PRINCIPLE WHICH ENSURES, OR WHICH HAS THE INHERENT ABILITY TO ENSURE, THE PERFECTIBILITY OF THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE WAS CREATED.

“ If we succeed in discovering this principle, we shall perceive, indubitably, first,

“ WHAT MAN IS ;

“ And, secondly,

“ THE END TOWARDS WHICH ALL HIS ENERGIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED.

“ WHAT IS GOOD, AND WHAT IS EVIL, WHAT IS RIGHT, AND WHAT IS WRONG, WHAT WE OUGHT TO KNOW, AND WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO, WILL BE REVEALED TO US AT A GLANCE.

“ Knowing the Principle which governs our being, to predicate with certainty concerning all the latent truths beyond it will be within the reach of our Reason also. The Deity has thus frequently revealed himself to men. INDEED, EVERY CREATED SOUL IS ITSELF A REVELATION. Some flashes of these inspired revealings have been recorded; *and GOD HAS SPOKEN, whilst Sages, and Poets, and Prophets, have held the pen.*

“ By the living light of the principle we are in search of, we shall be able to separate these flashes of Truth, wheresoever we may find them, from the erroneous ravings and falsehood by which they are surrounded. To know what Man is, is to be in possession of the most comprehensive system of Truth ; AND THIS IS PHILOSOPHY, THIS IS REVELATION.

“ Man is, therefore, the author, the Object, and, to a great extent, the Subject, of all Philosophy.

“ Almost the only great Maxim we have derived from the recorded philosophy of the world, and to which the Principle we are in search of is the key, is the all-important one, — ‘ KNOW THYSELF.’ The attainment of this knowledge is as easy as it is momentous : a single sentence will solve this hitherto unsolved enigma.

“ Truth may have reference to all existences, material or immaterial : take, for example, the proposition, ‘ I AM CONSCIOUS OF MY EXISTENCE.’ This is a double truth. It means, I am conscious of the existence of my body ; and I am conscious of the existence of my consciousness. I perceive also that my consciousness is an INTELLIGENT consciousness ; for, if I abstract Intelligence therefrom, nothing remains. CONSCIOUSNESS IS, THEREFORE, INTELLIGENCE ; AND INTELLIGENCE IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF SOUL, OR THE SOUL ITSELF : for, abstract the entity, Intelligence, from your idea of Soul, and ALL HAS BEEN ABSTRACTED : NOTHING REMAINS.

“ My body is resolvable into parts or elements ; in

other words, it is material ; but my Consciousness, my Intelligence, my Soul, is incapable of subdivision, or decay, or change, or loss ; in other words, it is immaterial, or spiritual. By the term Intelligence I do not here mean knowledge ; but the entity which is its recipient—the INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE. It is, therefore, true that, in my present state of existence, I am endued with two natures ; one of which is subject to the change we call death ; the other, incapable of any structural change ; but capable of adding to itself by its inherent power to comprehend the nature, qualities, and capabilities of all created things ; which comprehension signifies, in effect, **THE RE-CONVERSION OF ALL MATERIAL EXISTENCES INTO TRUE IDEAS** ; and these ideas being immaterial, all material things so converted, really and truly become an indivisible portion of the immaterial Consciousness ; a permanent addition to the First Principle, and the only means by which the soul can make progress towards perfection.

“THIS FIRST PRINCIPLE IS INTELLIGENCE. IT IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF ALL THINGS. Without Intelligence there could be no Universe, no Creature, no Creator. Without Intelligence there could be no Will : without Will there could be no Cause : without Cause there could be no Effect : without Effect there could be **NO MATERIAL ENTITY** : hence, every material entity is spiritual in its origin ; the result of a prior Intelligence. Therefore, the universe, which is a material entity, is the effect of a

prior Cause ; the Cause, of a prior Will ; and the Will, of a prior Intelligence ; and, out of a prior Idea Divine Intelligence willed the Universe : and Man, the embryo Intelligence, has to resolve it back again into an IDEA before he can arrive at the perfection of Conscious Intelligence, and begin to comprehend the greater power of Infinite, Prescient, Intelligence, which is DEITY.

“ Man, at the commencement of his conscious existence, is at once an embryo Intelligence, and an Animal. As an Animal he is endowed with animal instincts ; which, as instincts, CANNOT ERR. As an embryo Intelligence he is endued with a capability of acquiring knowledge ; that is, of converting material things into truthful, permanent, immaterial IDEAS. He has no moral nature : no immoral nature : it is simply intellectual ; for, apart from the influence of his animal instincts (which, if inordinately indulged, is a pernicious influence), and, apart also from all erroneous conventional influences of society, his acts, at any period of his existence, will be, of necessity, the exact reflex of his acquired knowledge : hence, because of this necessity, HIS ACTIONS, THOUGH THEY MAY BE ERRONEOUS FROM A PAUCITY OF KNOWLEDGE, CAN NEVER BE CRIMINAL. His soul, or spiritual portion, is an Intelligent Principle, therefore, neither moral nor immoral in its nature ; but purely and simply intellectual. He may err through Ignorance ; and if he errs he suffers ; but his sufferings are not in the nature of penalties inflicted as for a crime ; but

kindly warnings that his course is wrong and needs amendment, and that he is too ignorant to be happy.

“ To guard against any error in our reasonings, and that we may the more thoroughly comprehend this important subject, it will be useful to take a retrospective survey of the positions we have assumed, and in part established. We have seen—

“ THAT A HUMAN BEING IS, MENTALLY, AN EMBRYO INTELLIGENCE, INCAPABLE OF CRIME, BUT LIABLE TO ERROR :

“ THAT, APART FROM THE INFLUENCES TO WHICH HE MAY BE EITHER ANIMALLY OR CONVENTIONALLY SUBJECT, HIS ERRORS ARE ALWAYS IN THE EXACT RATIO OF HIS IGNORANCE :

“ THAT HIS BUSINESS AS AN INTELLECTUAL CREATURE IS TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE, THE ROOT OF WHICH IS SELF-KNOWLEDGE :

“ THAT KNOWLEDGE CONSISTS OF TRUE FACTS AND JUST INFERENCES DERIVED AND DERIVABLE FROM ALL THE WORKS OF THE DEITY :

“ THAT, OF THE TRUTH OF THESE FACTS,—FIRST DISCARDING AS UNTRUTH WHATEVER IS IMPOSSIBLE, OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE INHERENT NATURE OF THE DEITY, AND THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS LAWS—REASON IS THE SOLE ARBITER AND JUDGE :

“ THAT REASON IS COMPLEX PERCEPTION :

“ THAT SIMPLE PERCEPTION IS CONSCIOUSNESS :

“ THAT CONSCIOUSNESS IS AN INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE, OR SOUL :

“ THAT THE INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE IS THE FIRST

PRINCIPLE OF WHAT IS CALLED THE HUMAN MIND:
and

“ THAT THE SOUL OF THE WORLD IS PRESCIENT, OR CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE, WHICH IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF ALL THINGS ; THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE ; THE SPIRITUAL, ERRORLESS, INFINITE, UNIVERSAL GOD ; IN ONE WORD, THE DEITY.

“ Let these propositions stand as Axioms to be more fully proved as we proceed.

“ IF THEY ARE TRUE, the two First Principles to which they have conducted us are also true ; and being true (inasmuch as that every Effect must be consistent with its Cause), they will reconcile all anomalies, and explain everything : for IF THEY SHOULD BE FOUND TO BE INCAPABLE OF THIS, THEY ARE NOT TRUE.

“ A severer test of their truth cannot be applied to them ; and with a test less severe we ought not to be satisfied.

“ Assuming them to be true, we have a clear conception of the First Principle of all things. Not only do we know that this First Principle is Deity ; but we perceive that Deity is Intelligence, Prescient, Infinite, and Eternal ; because (as we shall see hereafter) all power is reducible into it, and beyond it there is nothing : thus the very nature of the Deity is rendered comprehensible. Through the known we arrive at the unknown. FROM THE NATURE OF THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR OF ALL THINGS WE PREDI-

CATE HIS WILL, AND THENCE ARRIVE AT A GENERAL COMPREHENSION OF HIS PURPOSES.

“ We have also a clear conception of the First Principle of Mind: we have seen that it is Percipient, or Conscious Intelligence: THUS, WE KNOW WHAT MAN IS; AND FROM HIS NATURE WE TRACE HIS RELATIONSHIP TO DEITY, AND PREDICATE THE PURPOSE OF HIS BEING.”

Here, methought, the sitting of the Assembly closed, and that the reverberation of the last words of the speaker crept lingeringly along the vaulted aisles until it changed into the most thrilling music. Mysteriously it grew in power until it filled the whole arena. The assembled thousands breathed vocal air and fed on melody, into which all but myself insensibly dissolved, and Music reigned there alone. But, anon, velvet-footed Silence drank up the melody; and then, delirious with the intoxicating draught, lay down and slept. How absolute is the Soul in dreams! Unwilling to awake the slumberer, I slept too, and dreamed an interdream; from which when I awoke, all, as it had been, was again; the speaker, and the auditory, and the place; and thus, methought the discourse of Dionysius was continued.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VISION CONTINUED.

“IT did not appear to have been remarked, at any rate it was not objected to, at our last sitting, that I contended for, and in part proved, the existence of **TWO FIRST PRINCIPLES**. This is contrary to the received opinion of **A FIRST CAUSE, OR ONLY GOD**, and contrary also to the absolute fact; but still true in a sense which I will now proceed to explain to you.

“**THE DEITY**, or to reduce what to many is a complex term into a simple idea or element,—**INFINITE INTELLIGENCE**, is the **First Principle, or Great First Cause** of all things, including, of course, **Man**, and the soul of **Man**.

“Whenever we conceive of an act we are obliged to conceive of a prior intention or **Will** in the Actor. It is impossible for anything but **Intelligence** to have or to exercise a will. Whether we conceive of **Will** as a **Quality of Intelligence**, or simply as a **Mode, or State of being**, is of no consequence. **Intelligence** has a will, and nothing but **Intelligence** can have a will.

“By the simple exercise of **Will** (of course prior to the act and prescient of all its consequences)

Infinite Intelligence willed the existence of all things, gave them their distinctive characters and nature, and enacted the laws by which all are for ever regulated.

“To Man, however, He added an Intelligent Principle, or Soul. Of the Intelligent Principle thus bestowed, Will is a necessary consequence: in other words, it is a Mode or Quality which is part of its nature, and inheres to it of necessity, just as form inheres or pertains to substance. This Will, which is one with the principle, could not have been bestowed for any other purpose than to be exercised, and exercised, too, for the ultimate perfection of the being to whom it was freely given. If it had not been intended to be used it could not have been given. To suppose otherwise is to attribute levity to Deity, which is impossible. It follows, therefore, that, having been bestowed, it was bestowed for a purpose, and its recipient has necessarily free liberty to use it. He has, besides, intuitive yearnings for things unattainable except through the activity of the principle to which this Will inheres. We perceive, therefore, that Man having been endowed with the Intelligent Principle, has of necessity a Will; and from the first dawn of this principle in infancy to the termination of his mortal life, Man, the individual, and Man the species, is continually exercising his Will either for Evil or for Good.

“The influence of the human Will is limited to the Earth, and is further circumscribed by the Laws

to which as an animal Man is subject. WITHIN THIS CIRCLE HE IS ABSOLUTE: HE IS—NOT TO SPEAK IT IRREVERENTLY, A LITTLE DEITY.

“ Thus we have THE FIRST PRINCIPLE,—Infinite, or Prescient Intelligence, whose Will is limitless, or limited only by impossibility ; and A FIRST PRINCIPLE, which is finite, Percipient Intelligence, whose Will is circumscribed by its finite power, and by the Laws to which the will of the Deity has rendered it subject.

“ THE FIRST PRINCIPLE IS, BY THE EXERCISE OF ITS WILL, THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE OF ALL THINGS ; WHILST THE INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE ACCORDED TO MAN, IS, BY THE EXERCISE OF ITS WILL, THE FIRST CAUSE OF ALL THE FINITE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH INFLUENCE HIS CONDITION ON THE EARTH.

Thus, therefore, notwithstanding that the Intelligent Principle in Man, in common with every other existence in the universe, owes its existence to THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE, OR DEITY ;—*within the circle accorded to Human influence, Man, by means of his Intelligence, is permitted to be the cause or creator of his own Institutions (moral, civil, religious, and political) ; to have the care of his own existence ; the cultivation or abandonment of his own Intellect ; and the working out of his own perfectibility and happiness :* but, compared with what his Intelligence is capable of accomplishing, what has he done !

“ IT IS WITHIN THIS CIRCLE THAT GOOD AND EVIL HAVE THEIR BEING. Man is the author of the Evil ;

and the existence of the Evil causes the recognition of the Good. Not that all is Evil which he denominates Evil, or that all is Good which he denominates Good; but here, and by his own acts, those circumstances have their origin to which he ignorantly attaches these hitherto undefinable appellations. Here, too, all Vice is created; hence the Virtues and the Moralities. Here wickedness has its natural home; hence Religion, and Civil Government, and Law: and Man is the Author of them all: and all of them are Evils!

“To bemoan these Evils is no part of the business of Philosophy; nor to think it has touched the very summit of human wisdom, by persuading men to bear them. If Philosophy is to be of any greater value to the world than ‘swords in dead men’s hands, or lamps in sepulchres,’ it must teach mankind the way of their avoidance.

“Whether, then, the Intelligent Principle in Man be viewed as a First Principle, or as a secondary one (which it is), the results, as regards our inquiry, are the same. **THE WILL WHICH INHERES TO OUR INTELLIGENCE IS FREE.** The objects of our happiness, and the means for its attainment, are left to our own free choice, but we have erred in the selection. **NOT, THEN, BY THE PARTIALITY OF HEAVEN, BUT BY THE SELF-IGNORANCE AND FOLLY OF MAN IS SUPERIORITY AND DOMINION, AND POWER CONFERRED ON A FEW.** It is because we have chosen as our Chief Good the things which physical prowess can have by fighting for,

and hold by means of force, that there is strife and contention amongst us—that there are Victors and Vanquished, Masters, Servants, Sovereigns, Subjects, Slaves, WHEN THE WEAK GROW WISE THEY WILL CHANGE THEIR TACTICS, SHIFT THEIR BATTLE-GROUND, AND FIX ON A PRIZE TO STRUGGLE FOR, WHICH HAS HEAVEN'S OWN SANCTION FOR THE WINNING, AND WHICH ALL MAY WIN !

“ All our miseries are of our own making. All real Evils are our own handiwork. But natural difficulties are not evils ; nor, in the abstract, is Ignorance an evil, but a good. It is the natural and necessary difficulty which must be surmounted before we can be happy. The first and chief difficulty is self-knowledge : for so long as we are ignorant of ourselves we but grope our way without an object, and vainly wage war with difficulties in the dark. THE WORK OF ‘REDEMPTION’ MUST BE OUR OWN WORK : NO MAN CAN SHIFT THIS LABOUR ON ANOTHER. HEAVEN WILL NOT VOUCHSAFE ANY MIRACULOUS INTERPOSITION TO HELP US, NOR DO WE NEED THE AID. Deem not that there is any irreverence in this : Intelligence is capable of its appointed work. God gave the Intelligence to do the work. ‘ Shall not the “ Judge ” of all the earth do right ? ’ Its work is the acquisition of knowledge, which is its Happiness, its Heaven. But the highest heaven of its felicity is only to be reached through self-knowledge, which shows us what we are, and all we might be : then selfishness ceases, and knowledge terminates in Love.

“WE PERCEIVE, THEREFORE, THAT INTELLIGENCE, NAMELY, THE INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE, IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF THE HUMAN MIND. ALL THAT THIS PRINCIPLE IS CAPABLE OF IS KNOWLEDGE.

“Through the sensorium, or physical organs of sense, it becomes conscious of Facts. IT CAN KNOW THEM. By comparing individual facts with each other, by observing the relation one fact bears to another, and deducing inferences therefrom—which is to Reason—it becomes conscious of other Facts. THESE NEW FACTS THE INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE CAN KNOW.

“From things seen it can predicate of things not seen: and if it reason correctly, and on true facts, again it becomes conscious of a further series of facts: and these facts IT CAN KNOW. They are facts which the physical eye cannot see, but which the Intelligence, or Soul, CAN SEE, CAN COMPREHEND, CAN KNOW. Hence, ALL THAT THE SOUL IS CAPABLE OF IS KNOWLEDGE.

“Out of this knowledge comes the physical capability to do all that dual-natured Man can do. BUT, WHATEVER IT ENABLES HIM TO WISH FOR, TO ASPIRE TO, OR TO DO, HIS KNOWLEDGE IS STILL KNOWLEDGE AND NOTHING ELSE. It is not Morality: it is not Virtue; it is not Religion: though, if his acts be such as are conventionally deemed Moral, Virtuous, or Religious, they are the natural results of his knowledge; or of habit, or of convictions, whether wrong or right, which stand him in the stead of knowledge.

Without the knowledge they are nonentities : with the knowledge they are only names which designate results. They are mere conventional terms, neither more nor less ; but the actions or feelings they represent are the results of knowledge, or of educational habits and convictions, which, as they are believed to be right, have all the force of knowledge. Say the act called virtuous springs from REAL KNOWLEDGE, in other words, from a right conviction ;—the act is necessarily good,—VIRTUOUS IF YOU WILL ;—BUT THE VIRTUE IS THE KNOWLEDGE. The name is a mere conventional designation of the act. Call the same act *vicious*, if you please : no matter : IT IS THE RESULT OF A RIGHT CONVICTION : IT IS NOT CAUSED BY ANY VIRTUOUS OR VICIOUS EMOTION, OR QUALITY OF MIND : it is simply the result of knowledge.

“MAN IS NOT, THEREFORE, A MORAL BEING ; NOR IS HE A RELIGIOUS BEING : HE IS SIMPLY AN INTELLIGENT, OR INTELLECTUAL BEING.

“If his knowledge enable him to comprehend his relationship to the Deity, his Creator, a reverential feeling of pious homage is the necessary result of the conviction. Call this Religion, or give this act of homage any other name ; no matter : it is the necessary result of his knowledge. Without the Intelligence or intellectual principle, there could have been no perception, no act, no homage, no Religion : hence Man is not a Religious being, neither is he a Moral being : he is simply and solely an Intellectual being.

“ This is what Man is **SPIRITUALLY** ; and let **Metaphysicians** and **Moralists** say what they will, **SPIRITUALLY HE IS NOTHING ELSE ; AND GREATER HE NEED NOT BE.**

“ But as a dual-natured creature, during the period of his physical life, he is also a gregarious or Social being, and has to provide for his physical, as well as for his spiritual wants : and if he had knowledge enough to live consonantly with his higher nature, even in his social relations his acts could not be either virtuous or moral : they would be the natural and unavoidable results of his knowledge. **THE REAL MAN IS THE SPIRITUAL MAN, THE INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE ; AND ALL IT CAN ADD TO ITSELF IS KNOWLEDGE.**

“ Having now a clear conception of the Intelligent Principle in Man, the nature of which determines the purpose of its being, let us proceed to examine the nature and attributes of Deity.

“ It is admitted, because it is impossible to deny, that the **Essence** we denominate **DEITY** is the **Primary Principle** of all things, or the **great First Cause.**

“ Every act implies **Intelligent Intention** in the actor : hence, that which we call **Deity** is **Intelligent.** It must have existed prior to creation : hence, that which we call **Deity** is **Prescient.** It must be as **limitless** in its activity as the universe : hence, that which we call **Deity** is **Infinite** : infinite in its power ; infinite in its prescience ; infinite in its **Intelligence** or **knowledge.** Therefore **THE DEITY IS INFINITE PRESCIENT INTELLIGENCE ; OR, AN INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE HAVING**

INFINITE FORE-KNOWLEDGE. But as every act of Intelligence implies prescience of the result, as well as Power to produce it, our idea of Deity may be further simplified by describing it as an Essence, or Intelligent Principle, having Infinite Knowledge: or, as an Essence whose Nature, Power, and Perfection, consists in its Knowledge. But as the Knowledge is necessarily co-existent with the Essence, if not prior to it, and superior to the Essence, because without the knowledge the Essence were as nothing, we will take the NATURE of Deity FOR the Deity, and describe the Essence, which is one and indivisible with the Knowledge, by a term which comprehends all knowledge; that term is INFINITE INTELLIGENCE.

“The Primary cause, or First Principle, of all things is Intelligence. Whence it came, and how, is knowledge for another state: A KNOWLEDGE WHICH WE SHALL ATTAIN TO, or the DESIRE to attain it had not been implanted in our nature.—Enough for us now that we are conscious of its existence.—We know all that it is essential for us to know.—We have as thorough a comprehension of what the Deity is as of what Man, is, or the Soul of Man.—We know as much of Spirit as we know of Matter.—The Essence of either is alike incomprehensible.

“By the aid of our physical senses we know that Form and Ponderosity are essential qualities of Matter: and by the aid of a Spiritual Sense, which is analogous to intuition, we know that Knowledge is an essential quality of the Intelligent Principle whether

in Deity or in Man. We are as certain of the existence of this principle as we are of the existence of the globe on which we live, or of the colour and fragrance of the rose.

“Are Colours nothing? is Fragrance nothing? To a man born blind and destitute of the sense of smell they are as nothing: nor would it be possible to convey to HIM the smallest notion of either, or to afford him the slightest proof of their existence. But without sensuous organs by which to perceive it, all men are more or less conscious of the existence of the intangible, inaudible, imponderous, odourless, and viewless Soul. Whether it has any qualities analogous to colour, ponderosity, and form, we know not; and yet we are certain of its existence: certain that it thinks; certain that it remembers; certain that it has a sense of happiness and misery; and certain that it gathers strength for immortality by feeding on Knowledge, which is as imponderous, as impalpable, as shapeless, as immaterial as itself!

“We attach no notion of Form, or of Colour, or of Fragrance to the Ideas which represent Happiness, and Hope; yet, without any such aids, we no more doubt of the existence of these mental Images, or of their importance, or of their indestructibility, than we doubt of the existence of the Birds that sing, we know not why, above us; or of the Flowers that bloom, we know not how, beneath our feet. But the Ideas of things that *have* colours, and forms, and fragrance on the Earth, shall retain them, always to

the appreciation of our mental sense, and be our blooming amaranths in Heaven. So also the beloved forms of our acquaintances and friends, rendered appreciable by the force and fulness of our knowledge, will necessarily remain with us for ever !

“ And although we do not now clearly comprehend the essential form or Likeness of the Spiritual God, we yet can clearly comprehend its Soul or Nature, which is Intelligence ; for its Attributes, as we shall presently see, add nothing to the Idea, because, in their totality and perfection, the Attributes and the Entity are One.

“ Thinking men know this. Even Metaphysicians have an inkling of the matter ; but Moralists have the fact to learn.

“ From PRESCIENCE, by which we mean infinite fore-knowledge, if we abstract Intelligence, what remains ? Assuredly Nothing !

“ Therefore PRESCIENCE IS INFINITE INTELLIGENCE.

“ From OMNIPOTENCE, by which we express all we can conceive of Power, if we abstract Intelligence, what remains ? Nothing !

“ Therefore OMNIPOTENCE IS INFINITE INTELLIGENCE.

“ By UBIQUITY we mean the faculty of being present everywhere at the same time, the possibility of which may be perceived by considering that to know all things so intimately as to have created them, is necessarily to be with and in all things by a simple act of thought : if from Ubiquity we abstract Intelligence what remains ? Again, Nothing !

“ Therefore **UBIQUITY IS INFINITE INTELLIGENCE.**

“ **OMNISCIENCE** is infinite Wisdom. Without the Intelligence there could be no wisdom :

“ Therefore **OMNISCIENCE IS INFINITE INTELLIGENCE.**

“ We will next suppose **PERFECT JUSTICE**, which means neither more nor less than thinking correctly on all subjects, and, (which is an inevitable consequence,) doing right in all cases ;—the Being, then, that is perfectly Just must be Infinitely Intelligent ; **AND JUSTICE IS ONLY ANOTHER NAME FOR INFINITE INTELLIGENCE, OR DEITY.**

“ Suppose again **PERFECT GOODNESS**. A moment’s reflection shows us that this is only another name for **PERFECT JUSTICE**, and consequently that **IT IS DEITY OR DIVINE INTELLIGENCE.**

“ All Attributes of Deity are but Synonymes of Deity, because all are resolvable into Infinite Intelligence.

“ To Prescience, Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Ubiquity, Man does not presume to put forward any pretensions. We shall see that he has just as little right to lay claim to the others.

“ Take Justice, Goodness, Benevolence, Mercy, Truth : add the **OMNI** which alone can make them applicable to Deity, and the identity of each is lost in the Infinite Intelligence which renders them absolute ; and which, by rendering them absolute, deprives them of existence : for we have but to suppose them to be perfect to perceive that, as attributes, they are nothing.

“ Reduced to their primaries, therefore :—

“ **PRESCIENCE** is not Prescience, but Infinite Intelligence.

“ **OMNISCIENCE** is not Omniscience, but Infinite Intelligence.

“ **UBIQUITY** is not Ubiquity, but Infinite Intelligence.

“ **OMNIPOTENCE** is not Omnipotence, but Infinite Intelligence.

“ So, **JUSTICE, BENEVOLENCE, GOODNESS, MERCY, TRUTH,** are not Justice, Benevolence, Goodness, Mercy, Truth, but each, and all of them, are Infinite Intelligence; and as Intelligence is nothing but Intelligence, these Attributes, as attributes, are nothing.

We perceive also that **RELATIVE OR IMPERFECT JUSTICE** is not Justice; and that **RELATIVE OR IMPERFECT GOODNESS** is not Goodness; and so of the others: it follows, therefore, that, either way, the whole of these terms are the representatives of nothing. They are misnomers when applied to the manifestations of imperfect knowledge, and superfluous when applied to Deity: hence Man who necessarily lacks the perfection of knowledge, cannot be Just or Good any more than he can be ubiquitous or omnipotent. He can however be relatively Intelligent: and, considering relative Intelligence to be relative Justice, or Goodness, he can be relatively Just, or Good.

“ To the extent of his knowledge, he can also think correctly, and do right: and to the extent of his

ability to do right will he attain the object of his existence, and be happy.

“Nor is it possible to conceive how the Creator could have bestowed Happiness on the Creature but by creating him ignorant, that through the unhappiness which flows from Ignorance, he might, by the contrast, be able to appreciate the felicity which Knowledge alone can give.

“It will be seen that in our list of Attributes we have included MERCY. Mercy is, however, altogether human. We are obliged to suppose the existence of ‘SIN’ and CRIME before Mercy has any conceivable function. Sin (which in the language of what is called Religion is crime committed against God), is an impossibility: for Ignorance *does not sin*; and Knowledge *cannot sin*. Ignorance does not sin, and cannot sin, just as Darkness, which must always be darkness, cannot have the illuminating properties of Light: and Knowledge cannot sin, just as Light cannot subsist without the quality of illumination. Ignorance ERRS and SUFFERS; but Error, in the sight of Him who knows that *Ignorance must err*, is not punishable Sin. Nor, on the contrary, is the natural consequence of Knowledge rewardable Virtue. I mean that Error is not punished as obduracy against God; nor right actions rewarded as acts of obedience and homage towards the Deity: for to suppose either, is to entertain a multitude of absurdities, *which only the most besotted Ignorance CAN entertain*, in reference to the DEITY.

“ IN A SENSE, however, and that—a most beneficent one, Error is punished ; and Virtue (I mean the natural result of knowledge) is rewarded. Error is made to suffer on its *own account*, and, for its own advantage ; namely, that it might get Knowledge, avoid the consequences of error, and be happy : and Knowledge is ‘its own exceeding great reward :’—it does right ; in other words, it knows, and thence enjoys. Thus much, therefore, for what mistaken zealots call ‘Sin ;’ and in *their Justice* damn without redemption !

“ Crime is sin committed against Society ; but were Society Just there could be no crime : and where there is neither Sin nor Crime there cannot be either Vengeance or Mercy.

“ Mercy is not, therefore, an Attribute of the Deity ; but only one of those *Virtues* which Human Ignorance has made necessary on Earth, and which, progress in Knowledge alone, can ever enable us to dispense with.

“ TRUTH, as the faithful expression, or utterance, of a conviction between man and man, is only another name for Honesty, and is, therefore, one of the Virtues ; and, like the others, will cease to be regarded as a virtue when men grow wise enough to remove the artificial inducements to falsehood which at present disgrace Society.

“ The faithful utterance of a conviction, though it chance to be an erroneous one, is Honesty ; but A RIGHT CONVICTION, IS KNOWLEDGE.

“ In the first, or adjective sense, it is a non-entity, an abstraction, which Falsehood, the product of Ignorance, enables us to appreciate as a virtue. In the other case it is an Entity, it is Knowledge; which when incorporated with the Intelligent Principle in Man, adds, as it were, to its stature, secures its individuality, becomes its happiness, and is the only object of all true Philosophy.

“ In either sense, to regard Truth as an Attribute of the Deity is, at best, superfluous: for, as the Deity cannot lie, to speak of his probity is needless; and to make Knowledge an Attribute of Knowledge, though not more erroneous than to deem Omnipotence an Attribute, will perhaps be regarded by some minds as a clearer evidence of the absurdity.

“ However homage-giving, and thence, however right, it is in Man to add, in a reverential spirit, any of these designations to the sacred name of his Creator, in reality, the Deity has no Attributes. Neither has Man.

“ It follows as a corollary, that all the Qualities of Mind which Metaphysicians anatomize and expound with so much minuteness and appearance of wisdom, are all mere modes of thought and action; or the simple manifestations of the Intelligent Principle, under the pressure of the artificial circumstances induced by Ignorance and Error. Such, and naught else, are Justice, Benevolence, Probity, Mercy, Truth.

“ The Passions have the same dark origin. Genius, Fancy, Imagination, are also (in their integrity, not

in their misdirection for worldly gain), the simple manifestations of Intellect in quest of Knowledge.

“ Again, Judgment is resolvable into Reason, and Reason, into Perception ; whilst Perception is only another name for Consciousness, and Consciousness, another name for the Intelligent Principle, or Soul.

“ We might, therefore, safely leave Metaphysics to the Metaphysicians ; and their subtleties to the Mystics (if such there be) to whom habit has rendered darkness a source of satisfaction and dreamy joy. Enough for us that we know that Deity is Intelligence ; that the Intelligent Principle in Man is one and indivisible ; having one nature, which is Intellectual ; one object, which is Knowledge ; and that knowledge is its only real Happiness.

“ For the greater satisfaction of those whose education has been so neglected that they find it difficult to perceive all the logical deductions which the recognition of the First Principle opens up to minds more disciplined and reflective, I purpose to avail myself of any opportunity which may occur in these discourses, to multiply proofs of the soul’s immortality : for, strange to say, the Immortality of the Soul is as little believed in now as though a priesthood had never existed !

“ As one of these opportunities just now presents itself I will detain you a brief space longer whilst I point out some of the affinities which are perceptible between the nature of Divine Intelligence, and the Intelligent Principle in Man. Both are real exist-

ences; both are Spiritual; both are Intelligent; therefore, from a parity of reasoning, BOTH ARE ETERNAL.

“Intelligence is an Entity without which the material universe could not have been, or being, were as nothing. It is impossible, therefore, that Intelligence can perish. The human soul can comprehend these truths. What, then, is the human soul? Even the most besotted Atheist must answer, ‘Intelligence!’ Certain, therefore, of the identity of their nature, let us see if there be not as striking a parity in their manifestations. FROM A PRIOR IDEA GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE. FROM A PRIOR IDEA MILTON CREATED HIS COMUS; ANGELO, HIS LAST JUDGMENT; SHAKSPERE, HIS HAMLET; CERVANTES, HIS QUIXOTE; PRAXITELES, HIS VENUS; and MARSHALL, HIS STATUE OF EVE. Humble as are these comparisons they afford the most gratifying evidence of the exalted parentage of the soul.

“Again, Divine Intelligence knows all the Past, and fore-knows all the Future. So the Human Mind, as far as it truly comprehends the Principle of Gravitation, knows all the Past operations of the Law, and fore-knows all the Future. A perfect fore-knowledge of the results of any act appertains of necessity to Infinite Intelligence, because, as THE POWER is coincident with THE WILL, the RESULTS must be coincident with the INTENTION.

“In like manner,—to the extent of its power over the circumstances by which its intention is to be

accomplished, a similar fore-knowledge appertains to the Intelligent Principle in Man. There is nothing then, mysterious or incomprehensible in Prescience.

“EVEN IN THE MATTER OF UBIQUITY THERE IS THE SAME RESEMBLANCE. God constructed everything, and hence, knows everything however mighty it is, or however inconceivably minute, and by an act of thought is present with all at once. In like manner, say, a Man has reared one handiwork of his own contrivance on this spot; others at the Antipodes: were he afterwards an inhabitant of the Dog Star, by a simple act of thought his Soul would instantly be with them all!—and this the more completely, the more thorough might be his intimacy with the details of his work. These are puny comparisons, but they prove the identity in nature between Deity and the Human Soul. AND AS THE DEITY IS NECESSARILY ETERNAL, IT FOLLOWS THAT THE HUMAN SOUL IS NECESSARILY ETERNAL TOO. Our relationship with Heaven is clear, and the purpose of our being, manifest.

“The Deity is Omni-Cognoscence, or, adjectively, Omni-Cognoscent: the Human Soul is Mini-Cognoscence, or, adjectively, Mini-Cognoscent. The one has ALL KNOWLEDGE, with a still unsatisfied DESIRE to have an infinitude of Sharers in its knowledge. The other has SOME KNOWLEDGE, with a still-increasing DESIRE to work out the purpose of its existence, by increasing its amount. Between the OMNI and the MINI lies all the unspeakable difference. To diminish this difference is the only conceivable, nay, the

only possible purpose of our being : and to obey the promptings of the SOUL'S DESIRE, is the certain, and withal, the only means, of its attainment.

“ We have hitherto mistaken the object of this Desire. It is not for the Gold which ‘ thieves may steal and the moth corrupt,’ that we have ceaseless longings ; but for that Wealth, which, to have, entails no poverty on our fellows, and, which to distribute, however prodigally, amongst them, serves only to add to our own possession.

“ We have seen that ERROR IS THE PROLIFIC PARENT OF ALL EVIL, AND THE CAUSE OF THE MANY HINDRANCES WE MEET WITH IN OUR PROGRESS TOWARDS PERFECTION AND HAPPINESS. At our next Sitting WE WILL TRACE ERROR TO ITS SOURCE ; DISCOVER THE ORIGIN OF EVIL ; AND TAKE THE FIRST SAFE STEP TOWARDS THE EXTERMINATION OF HUMAN MISERY FROM THE WORLD FOR EVER.”

Dionysius ceased. Not so my Dream. The scene had changed in an instant to the Spirit-world where, in idea, all that had been, was. There methought the Souls of Men were working out the problems that had baffled them on Earth. Some were slowly finding out how grasses grew ; others, discovering what Combustion is, and Space, and Light, and Life, and Motion. What joy marked progress here ! Far, far from these methought I saw a group of tiny Souls that had been Kings, and Queens, and Popes, and Emperors, puzzled to discover ‘ the difference between a

Sovereign and a Subject' : but no sign of joy gave evidence of their progress ! not long enough seemed, all eternity to solve this problem to their satisfaction. I pitied them, and passed to a larger group beyond, whose labours seemed as hopeless as the last. Their problem was 'the difference between ignoble and noble blood !' Near these were another knot, poring over a problem of their own propounding, 'One is three, and three are One.' Methought that after centuries on centuries of hopeless labour, enlightenment began to dawn upon these groups of self-deceivers ; and that thenceforth Ignorance grew less a Hell ! Insensibly, and after what seemed to be the lapse of many centuries, this vision of the Spirit-world grew indistinct, and faded. A consciousness of most delicious music took its place : and as my Spirit yielded to its influence, the former phasis of my dream came back. Again there was the same thronged Chapel, the same countenances, the same mute attention ; and thus the mysterious Dionysius again proceeded with his discourse.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VISION CONCLUDED.

“ OUR last discourse was somewhat desultory. Let us collect its purport.

“ That we might know HOW to live it was necessary to know WHY we live. This we discovered by deducing the Purpose of the Deity from the Nature of Deity; and the Nature, from the evidences of Design and Power exemplified in its works.

“ To comprehend a work perfectly we must know the Purpose for which it was designed or created. The purpose for which the granite or the marble rock was made, is not so perceptible as the purpose of the Human Soul. If in the creation of the universe the Deity had a PRIMARY PURPOSE, and if that purpose was effected by the operations of A GENERAL LAW, it is certain that some things exist from sheer necessity, being the inevitable results of the Principle or Law which had for its object some existence in particular. Marble rocks, and thousands of other things, may, and probably do exist as the consequences of such necessity.

“ Let me give you an example. A sculptor produces a statue out of a marble block. The statue is the special object he has in view as the result of his

labours ; but chips and fragments which he did NOT purpose by his labours exist from sheer necessity. Nor are these fragments altogether useless ; for, although he would not have reduced a block of Parian marble into fragments to make a walk in his garden, he converts them to this purpose because they happen to be so convertible, and because when so converted they have a use. So in Nature, myriads of things might have an existence from sheer necessity. They are accidents, but not useless accidents. The universe would not have been created on their account ; but as they are necessary results, and, withal, not useless ones, of the Law or principle which had to be called into activity for the production of a special object, they necessarily coexist with the object whose existence was the special purpose of the Law.

“ If, then, we do not always discover from a natural object (whether animate or inanimate,) a purpose, capable of satisfying us that for such purpose it was specially designed, we are safe in considering, (besides making allowances for our ignorance,) that it might be one of those things which exist of necessity ;—an accident which has its being out of the circumstances by which another object has its existence.

“ Thus the Purpose of a granite rock, or the Upas tree, or the Rattle-snake, or of myriads of creatures that cover every inch of matter, if not of space, with life, are not so easily comprehended as is the purpose

of the Soul of Man : and the whole of them may be the necessary consequences of those general conditions by which dual-natured humanity has its being. Man has animal life ; and the conditions by which his animal life is secured to him, might be the reason, and probably is the reason, that all other forms of animal life have their existence. It is of no moment that some of the lower animals preceded him in the order of time. The existence of the lower animals, therefore, is possibly, an accident which the all-wise Architect of the world has converted into secondary purposes that are at once useful and beneficent. Of this we are certain,—that there is A PURPOSE, whether it be a primary purpose, or only a minor one, IN THE EXISTENCE OF ALL CREATED THINGS.

“ Man is pre-eminently distinguished above every other existence of which we have any knowledge or conception. A Single Human Soul, inasmuch as it *thinks*, and is endued with a nature analogous with the nature of Deity itself, is a greater work than this unconscious ball, the Earth, on which it came into existence. Why, then, may not the existence of countless Myriads of such Souls have been the Primary Purpose of the Deity in the creation of this Earth ; nay, even in the creation of the Universe ? But, be this as it may ; by having ascertained from the Nature of the Deity, the Purpose of the Deity in respect to Man ; and from the Nature of the Human Soul, the only purpose its existence can possibly subserve, we have discovered infallibly, first, what

Man is, secondly, why he is, and, thirdly, why he is what he is ; and from this knowledge we have no difficulty in discovering HOW HE OUGHT TO LIVE, so as to become what he was meant to become, and has had the free choice of means given to him of becoming.

“ We have seen that Man is, spiritually, an Intellectual Being conjoined to an organized material body, and so conjoined, that he might, through toil and difficulty, acquire the rudiments of knowledge ;— which knowledge, and the difficulties attendant on its acquisition, we have seen to be the appointed means through which alone his Happiness is attainable. As the Purposes of his Creator are necessarily beneficent ; and as the Human Soul is incapable of any other acquisition than Knowledge and its attendant felicity, the ultimate attainment of this Happiness is perceived to be the only possible purpose of the Deity in the creation of the Human Family.

“ Innumerable evils have marked the track of Humanity hitherto : they have transformed the Earth into the abiding-place of misery ; and degraded God-like creatures into fiends. And why ? Because, ignorant of their true nature, the most enlightened speculations of mankind have been raised on guesses, and propagated with a ferocity proportioned to their falsehood : and because,—ignorant of the true purpose of human existence,—the efforts, even of the most conscientious of our teachers, have been one long, disheartening tissue of mistakes. OUR BLIND

FAITH IN BLIND LEADERS—who *feeling* something of the God within them, have *assumed* the God—HAVE EGREGIOUSLY DECEIVED US. But when each man knows himself, he will have confidence in himself, and trust no other leader.

“We have seen that a human being does not ‘Sin.’ We have seen that Crime is law-made or conventional, and, therefore, not necessarily wrong. We have seen that whatever is Right, whether in sentiment or action, is the result of a right conviction; and that whatever is Wrong is the result of an erroneous, or a wrong conviction: and from these most important facts we have deduced the following axiom; namely, that THE ERRORS OF MANKIND ARE ALWAYS IN THE EXACT RATIO OF THEIR IGNORANCE.

“Error is the primary cause of all the Evil that is done, and of nearly all the Evil that is suffered, by humanity: but it will be perceived that, philosophically, Ignorance, which is a pure Negation, is not the cause of Error. ERROR IS THE RESULT OF A WRONG CONVICTION: AND EVIL IS THE RESULT OF ERROR. It does not result from what we know, nor from what we do not know, but from what we believe on false reasoning, or on false or imperfect testimony: in other words, it results from a wrong conviction.

“It has been previously asserted that Evil is altogether the work of humanity, the natural consequence of that free will which inheres to the human soul; and that beyond the sphere of human influence Evil

has no existence. This fact will be proved to demonstration by tracing Error, which is the parent of Evil, to its source.

“We have already proved that all which concerns us as spiritual beings,—all that it is possible for the Mind to acquire on Earth—is Knowledge. It is clear, therefore, that Error must have reference to its attainment. Our **DESIRE TO KNOW**, which is the ever-active principle of our existence, must ever precede our **ATTEMPT TO KNOW**: and, in the absence of all conventional influences, our **CONVICTIONS** must always precede our **ACTS**. But our **CONVICTIONS**, inasmuch as they are frequently arrived at through greatly-involved comparison, are sometimes wrong. It is then that we entertain a wrong conviction, which, as we are unconscious of its being wrong, stands us in the stead of Real Knowledge, or a Right Conviction; and the act which results from it is an Erroneous act. Clearly, then, Error is the result of a wrong conviction.

“This argument may be more briefly stated: thus:—

“It is **NECESSARY** that we should get Knowledge, hence we have a **DESIRE** to get Knowledge; but, as the attainment of all the facts which are not immediately perceptible through our external senses is the result of laborious and involved comparison, we are liable to Error.

“It is, however, clear that we should not be liable to Error if we knew all things, because the act of

reasoning would be unnecessary. We are safe, therefore, in asserting that,—

“THE DEITY, WHO IS OMNI-INTELLIGENT, AND DOES NOT REASON, CANNOT ERR. We are also equally safe in asserting that,—

“POSITIVE IGNORANCE, WHICH IS A NEGATION, AND DOES NOT REASON, CANNOT ERR. We also see that,—

“THE DEITY IS AN ENTITY;
And that,—

“POSITIVE IGNORANCE IS A NONENTITY.
Error, therefore, must pertain to an Entity; but not to an Entity which knows all things. It must also pertain to an Entity which has consciousness, in other words, which has some knowledge. A Stone exists, but is not conscious of its existence; it is entirely destitute of knowledge, and therefore cannot err. The state of Omni-knowledge is above Error: the state of Positive Ignorance, or utter unconsciousness, is below it: the state to which Error pertains is the state between. It follows, therefore, that an Erring Entity must be a conscious Entity: and that the Entity which is liable to Error, whilst falling short of the Maximum of knowledge that has no need of reason, must have the Minimum of knowledge before it is in a condition to reason: that is, it must be conscious of its own existence, and of the existence of things external to itself, before it can begin to perceive in what particulars things differ and agree. Hence, all Error has some Truth in it, as well as

some Falsehood: and we shall not be far wrong in calling a Wrong Conviction—PSEUDO-KNOWLEDGE; and the state of being to which it appertains—THE PSEUDO-KNOWLEDGE STATE.

“ It is important, then, that we should discover what class or order of creatures belongs to this state; because herein Evil and Misery have their origin, and Degradation, and Falsehood, and Injustice have their existence, and their home.

“ A Stone which neither lives, feels, nor thinks—cannot err.

“ A Plant which grows and lives, but neither feels nor thinks—cannot err.

“ An Insect which grows, lives, feels, and, perhaps, thinks—can it err? If it thinks, and if its thought amount to that complex perception which would enable it to select means to an end it reasons, and may err. It will be seen that Dogs, Horses, Elephants, and all the lower animals are in the same predicament; they grow, live, feel, perceive, and perhaps reason. If their perception extends to the selection of means, that is, to a consciousness of the relation between cause and effect, they reason and may err.

“ But have the lower animals this consciousness? Do they really select means? or is that which looks like Reason in them but the result of a law inherent in their nature, inseparable from animal life, and which we name blind Instinct—a power bestowed on them because of the accident of their existence? As

we proceed we shall see reasons for inclining us to this latter opinion ; because this power, whether it be instinct or reason, is always uniform and unvarying in the individual and in the species. If, however, they do reason they are liable to error : for if they never err, it is clear they do not reason. It is also manifest that, if they have the faculty of reason to the extent of selecting means to an end, the power is limited to their animal wants and necessities, and extends no further. The Hog and the Ox are not one whit more capable now than they were before the building of the Pyramids.

“ Man lives, feels, thinks, and reasons : thinks and reasons, too, on things material and spiritual, far, far beyond HIS animal wants and necessities. Nor have we the slightest knowledge of any other creature in the universe which comes within the category included in this description.

“ These are the circumstances which constitute the state of Fallibility, and False Knowledge ; out of which comes our knowledge of Good and Evil ; out of which the Vices and the Virtues spring, and all the multitude of Evils and Miseries which have led millions to the false conclusion that there is no God. HERE WE HAVE THE HUMAN SOUL WITH ITS APTITUDE FOR KNOWLEDGE, ITS NECESSITY FOR KNOWLEDGE, AND ITS BOUNDLESS DESIRE TO KNOW. Here we have the MEANS of administering to the NECESSITY, and of gratifying the DESIRE. And, in order that HAPPINESS might be the result of our acqui-

tions, here is the **LIABILITY TO ERROR**; and here are the **EVILS** which serve as **STIMULANTS TO THE DESIRE**, AND AS **CONTRASTS TO THE HAPPINESS**: for, as without a sense of fatigue we could form no conception of rest, so without its converse we should be unable to appreciate Happiness. So all-important is Knowledge, that we could not by any possibility taste of Happiness but by **KNOWING** that we are Happy; nor could we know that we are happy, but by the actual experience of its *opposite*.

“There is, then, a necessity for Ignorance, hence we are born ignorant: for we could not feel the happiness of Knowledge but through the want of it; and as the experience cannot be dispensed with, every Soul begins its being with the smallest quantity of knowledge — namely, the consciousness of its own existence; to which is inseparably conjoined, A **SENSE OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING, AND AN INSATIABLE DESIRE TO KNOW.**

“There is, however, no necessity for Error; but only a Liability thereto. Man is the only creature prone to this Liability, and the circumstances which induce this Liability constitute the state of **PSEUDO-KNOWLEDGE.**

“The Errors he commits in his reasonings are the natural results, the purposed results, and no doubt, on the whole, the beneficent results, of that free choice of means to an end of which it is the privilege of Man in his imperfect, or pseudo-knowledge state, to avail himself.

“How erroneous his selection has been will be seen hereafter. Our present business has been to discover the source of Error; and we find it originating with Man. We shall subsequently see that the results of this error are as extended as the Earth—the circle wherein, by Divine permission, Man’s error-directed will is Law.

“Man is an Erring Being: and from this circumstance has arisen the notion that he is a ‘fallen’ creature, naturally sinful, and—more shocking still—cursed by his Creator from the beginning, and incapable of salvation except through a crucified Redeemer! Man is an Erring Being—there is no possibility of escaping the conviction: he is liable to Error; but instead of this being a humiliating circumstance, it is most ennobling and consolatory.—He is the only creature on Earth endued, like his Creator, with an independent Will.—He alone is capable of intellectual progress.—He is an embryo, incarnate God.—The more we investigate his nature and capabilities, the less possibility will there be of escaping this most elevating conviction.

“Presuming, for the sake of argument, that the lower animals think and reason in the manner of humanity, let us see what constitutes the difference between mankind and them.

“I have already remarked that Man thinks and reasons on a greater variety of subjects, and takes a much wider range of observation and rational deduction than the brute. That which looks like reason

in the lower animals seems to be confined in its operations to a few material objects that come within—I will not say the range of their observation, for their means of observation are much larger than they seem to use—but that come within the range of their animal necessities.

“ It is true, Man, as an animal, has a wider range of necessities, real, artificial, or imaginary, than the brute, the bird, or the insect has ; and this sufficiently explains why his observation should be more active and extended.

“ But Man’s reasonings and researches are not confined to material things, nor limited to his animal wants. On the contrary, he is as conscious of the existence of spiritual things, though viewless and impalpable, as he is of material things which he can see and handle ; and in all ages the spirit-world has been the world of his speculations, and of his hopes and fears. He loves, and has ever loved, to revel in Metaphysics, and, although this ennobling science has been hitherto a mystery, his love of the study has been his distinguishing characteristic. Notwithstanding that his erroneous reasonings have misled and bewildered him, he has never ceased to push forward his investigations. What he cannot prove to the satisfaction of his reason, he yet believes on the evidence of probability, and the indistinct promptings of his spirit. He glories, and has ever gloried, in sublime conceptions, and in fantastic and beautiful

imaginings. He has missed his way in the pursuit of Truth ; but all beautiful and mysterious unrealities have been snatched at to supply its place, and gratify his intellectual cravings. Look at the Literature he has called into existence : how full of gorgeous imagery, and of noble thoughts, and of incipient creation ! Even out of Error, unrealities, and falsehood, he has created an ideal world of which the worst that can be said of it is — that the beings which people it bear too much resemblance to his own erroneous ideal of himself.

“ And why all this ? What is the inevitable inference to be drawn from these positions ? Why, that, not to administer merely to his wants as an animal was this desire after spiritual truth implanted in his nature ; but to stock his soul with knowledge. And to what end ? Why, that he might fit himself for the immortality, the eternity of existence, for which every fact of his nature proves that he is destined.

“ He observes effects in Nature, and, with the same ardour as he pursues spiritual investigations, he strives to discover their causes : and much as there is to do, how much has he already accomplished ! Now, whenever he perceives an effect in Nature, and succeeds in discovering the cause, he has added to his soul’s intelligence ; he is one step nearer to the Angels ; he has enlarged and strengthened his relationship to his God.

“ ‘ Well but,’ say you, ‘ does not the Beaver in

damming up the stream, observe effects, discover causes, and apply the results of its knowledge to its purposes and wants ?’

“ Probably not. Most likely the Beaver does its work under the influence of blind instinct, the law impressed on its nature that it may accomplish purposes necessary to its wants ; and *that* without the slightest inkling of Cause and Effect, or the least idea of there being the slightest connection between them. But again I urge the distinction—if there be reason, it extends only to the limits of its necessities, and not one whit beyond.

“ Man, however, *does know* the connection between cause and effect, and applies causes to produce effects which he does not find in Nature,—effects altogether new in their application ; some useful, some only partially useful, and some having no use in the economy of life save the pleasure he feels in availing himself of the powers of Nature, and the employment of his faculties and knowledge in constructive creation.

“ Consider what he has achieved in this way ! He has invented for himself a Language oral and written,—the means of multiplying his thoughts indefinitely, and, through a material medium, of almost eternalizing Mind. Look at his machinery : his labours in the Arts : his discoveries in Science ! He has dissected the Sunbeam : he has scaled the Heavens : he has weighed the Stars : he has tracked the Comets through infinitude : he has almost packed the Universe within the narrow limits of his little brain ! The Planets are

his familiar friends : he roams amongst the Constellations ; and predicates, prior to its absolute discovery, the existence and the whereabouts of an almost infinitely distant Star ! He has abstrorted the Lightning from the clouds : he has chained it to the earth : he has made this most subtle agent of Deity his Slave : by its aid he has conveyed his thoughts from one corner of a vast continent to another with almost the speed of Light ! And why the power to accomplish these things, all of which are so inconceivably beyond his wants as an animal, but to furnish his soul with knowledge and fit it for immortality ? He loves to know : he seeks out causation for the pleasure, or rather, for the Happiness it affords him ; for when he succeeds in discovering a new truth he feels that he is participating in knowledge which was once possessed by the Deity alone.

“ The great difference, then, between Man and the Lower Animals, (great as has been this stumbling-block to some delvers after Truth) consists in this :— the little knowledge which is acquired by the thinking principle in the Brute, Bird, and Insect, is that which is derived exclusively from material things ; non-spiritual, non-speculative, non-imaginative ; but simply necessary for their animal purposes and wants : whilst Man’s reason grapples with subjects the most complicated and involved ; whether material or immaterial ; speculative or real ; near or afar off ; perceptible to his senses, or only cognizable by his understanding : whether only necessary to his animal wants, or a con-

solution to his imprisoned Spirit—that embryo angel of eternity—his knowledge-needing Soul.

“Man naturally loves knowledge for its own sake, and would love it more if he lived in a social condition consonant with his desires, and adapted to his intellectual, as well as to his animal development and wants. Even as it is, he instinctively loves knowledge. A thinking, intellectual man, naturally, and, as it were, instinctively, seeks the companionship of thinking, intellectual men: and, in proportion to his own mental acquisitions, he shuns and dislikes the society of the mere animal amongst his fellows. And why is this feeling interwoven in his nature, growing with his intellectual growth, and strengthening with its strength? There is no other reason than the one already assigned—the desire of the awakened soul for more and more intelligence. And why? but that it will enjoy a separate and independent existence in its disembodied state for ever? If we did not know that Intelligence, and its recipient, the soul, are incapable of destruction, these considerations alone would demonstrate the fact. Scepticism, then, world-spanning as it is, has no peg left on which to hang a doubt.

“What a help to his progress in knowledge is that physical instrument of Man, his Hand! In considering its construction and capabilities we are almost tempted to exclaim—‘the most beautiful piece of mechanism in the world!’ But perfect as it is, it is only perfect as a means to an end. It would not digest our food: for that purpose the stomach is more perfect than the

hand. The truth is, no one work of God is more or less perfect, more or less beautiful than another, and all comparisons between them are absurd. But why has this instrument with all its astonishing capabilities been bestowed on Man? As an animal he might perform nearly all his animal requirements without it: nay, if thought, perception, reflection, and reason were, as some have supposed, accidents; or, if not accidents, gifts which were to lead to nothing, he could think, perceive, reflect, and reason as well, though not so extendedly, without this instrument as with it. For what purpose was it, then, bestowed? Some fallacious reasoners, who have laboured to persuade the world that men are merely animals, have said, that the Monkey and the Beaver have hands only a little less perfectly developed than those of Man. This assertion is false; but let us suppose it to be true. Say they have hands similar to the human hand. This, instead of linking the lower animals to humanity, (continuing the chain of being, as these pseudo-philosophers have affirmed, from an oyster up to a Franklin or a Shakspeare), is the best proof of the most decided, the most complete division;—a barrier which is insurmountable. It proves this, that neither the Monkey nor the Beaver really reasons: for if these creatures were endued with the reasoning faculty, that is, with a *knowledge-needing Soul*, this instrument would have done, long ago, as much for them as it has done for the family of Man. Without it, Man would be a helpless brute despite of his reason; whilst,

wanting reason, the Chimpanzee remains a brute, despite of his human hand. Why, then, was this instrument bestowed on reasoning Man? Simply as a physical help to his mental acquisitions. This hand has been of a thousand times greater aid to his intellectual progress than to his physical wants. Clearly, then, as an intellectual aid was this physical instrument bestowed on all humanity. Again, why should it so pre-eminently minister to the Soul's necessities, if the Soul be not immortal? Even more than the Ear and Eye, why this Hand? why Reason? why that Soul-sense which outstrips Reason in the race for Knowledge,—which whispers of things that the physical senses could never reach, of Realities to which Reason could never soar? Why, in addition to these, the insatiable **DESIRE TO KNOW**, if the knowledge-loving Soul were not immortal?

“ We perceive, then, that the only existence on the earth which lives, feels, thinks, and reasons, and which occupies its thought and reason on matters extraneous to itself, and beyond the sphere of its animal necessities and wants, is Man. Can he err? Yes. Where there is Reason which might mistake its facts; or, knowing only a part, and reasoning thereon as though it were the whole; where there is a choice of means to an end, there must be liability to error. Were it not so Reason would be only another name for Infinite Intelligence, which has no need of Reason; or it would be blind Instinct, which has no choice. Hence, Error belongs exclusively to Humanity.

Infinite Intelligence cannot err.—Instinct cannot err.

Man, occupying a middle state can err,
and does.

Linked to Infinite Intelligence by a reasoning soul—a chain which cannot break ;—to the Brute beasts by his brute wants and instincts,—a chain which death dissevers ; a new Condition was introduced into the world at his creation ; and a new Principle adapted to this new condition was the necessary consequence. The new Principle is the Intelligent Principle, with its attendant Will, governing its minor principle of action—the Desire to Know ; and its operations are confined to the Earth by the Laws to which the entire universe is subject. The new Condition is the Liability to Error. On this Earth where Man's Will is absolute (that is, as absolute as his power), Error creates Evil ; and from Evil results all the confusion which distracts humanity. Here we pamper the vices by fostering the virtues. Here distinctions are created which being false cannot be eternal ; and Miseries, which only a total reformation can subvert.

“ Within this circle of Error, subject only to the Laws of his Creator which circumscribe his being, Man is a little Deity ; and just as Ignorance predominates within this circle, he will be prone to Error ; and, as his knowledge increases, his liability to Error, and the evils thence arising, will decrease from sheer necessity.

“ Now, in the beginning, Error led this little, self-

willed deity of Earth, to forget, or lay aside his godship. *The most fatal* shall I call it? No! for it was no less necessary than it was inevitable;—but, *one of his Earliest Errors* was the adoption of the brute force principle, ‘MIGHT IS RIGHT,’ as the basis of his social system:—CRIME was the inevitable consequence! Then came Legislation; and Law; and Justice; and Mystic Religion; and the Virtues; and the Moralities: and Legislators to make the Law; and Lawyers to expound it; and Judges to dispense it: and Priests to explain the Religion; and Philosophers to explain the Moralities; and Metaphysicians to explain the mental confusion thence arising. Yet, no one is the wiser for the Metaphysics: no one is the better for the Morality: no one is the holier for the Religion. Justice is not Justice; but a sham. Law is brutality reduced to a system. Legislation is a disgrace to our humanity. And what wonder, since the whole of these contrivances are based on Error, and beyond the circle in which the human will is Law none of them have an existence!

“ Yet, within this circle of Error and Evil there is such a thing as TRUTH. Truth and Knowledge are synonymous. Every real existence; every cause; every effect; every action—is a FACT. Every fact is referable to the First Fact, God. The human Soul is a fact. The Universe is a fact. Every individual portion of the Universe is a separate fact; that is, each entire portion might be contemplated as a separate fact. Every phasis of the human soul, influenced

as it is by the circumstances which environ it, may, in like manner, be viewed as a separate fact. The nature, and the purpose of all material things ; their relationship to each other ; and the relationship of every part to the whole, are so many Facts. The nature of the human Soul ; and the purpose for which it was created, are Facts. Whatever we really know concerning these Facts is Truth. We are now in possession of the KEY to this Knowledge. To know ; to collate ; and systemize these individual Facts ; and to discover the principles which test their truth, and thus convince ourselves of their value and importance, is PHILOSOPHY : and to live in obedience to the Laws which govern them and us ; to conform and shape our desires, and direct our animal, as well as our intellectual instincts towards the true end and object of our being, is RELIGION. Love God ; love one another, is the Religion of the ' Redeemer.' Our principles conduct to this Religion. To love God we must know God ; and this knowledge is the basis of our Philosophy. To love one another we must know one another ; and the basis of this knowledge is to know ourselves. There is no mystery, then, in the Philosophy we would teach the world : no exclusiveness in the Religion. The Religion is the Religion of Christ : the Philosophy is a simple, an intelligible guide to the happiness and well-doing of the entire family of Men. They are this, or they are nothing.

“ Under the present false and artificial system,

Virtue is not distinguishable from Vice ; Good from Evil ; Right from Wrong ; Innocence from Crime. Where one begins and the other ends it is impossible to discover : and what Religion is, and what is Irreligion, it is equally difficult to determine. As for Innocence and Crime they were Law-made in the beginning, and are Law-made still. That which is innocent to-day, Legislators might declare to be criminal to-morrow : whilst, by the same wonder-working alchemy, the crime of yesterday is pure, unspotted innocence to-day ! Presto ! and Wrong is Right ! Presto ! and Right is Wrong again ! This is the Drama of Errors which men have been acting these six thousand years. The similarity between Right and Wrong—the Dromios of the play—creates the perplexing interest of every scene ; some of which are tragical, others comical, whilst some are downright farce : and, however it may seem to answer the purpose of the ‘Stars’ and First-class Actors, who put on and off their mimic dignity with their dresses (as Saints on Sunday nights doff their religion,) and who fancy themselves when dressed to be the falsely-august things they personate ; however it may gratify *their* vanity, and satisfy their brute lust for power,—to the throng of subordinates and supernumeraries it is a dreadful business. Life is to them a loathsome burden. The Sons and Daughters of the Deity are degraded below the level of the brute. To whatever uses you apply the Brute, it never loses its brutedignity. Not so with Men. The Earth is converted

into a stage where there is nothing real but the miseries. The actors are Buffoons, or Apes, or Thralls. 'Here Man, vain Man, dressed in a little, brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven that make the Angels weep.' When decked in our day-disguises we are mountebanks; merry-andrews; robed, ermined, wigged, coroneted, and crowned, Pretenders. We are only Men and Women when we sleep; and then, sometimes, do Angels deign to visit us.

“The whole of this false grandeur, and the train of monstrous miseries of which it is the centre and the immediate cause, are the natural and inevitable results of Error. Error, however, is not eternal. It, and its Miseries will cease when men perceive the Truth. Till then they must be borne with. There is no 'happy medium' between Truth and Error; and when the Truth is seen the world will not be wanting in loving, Christian Spirits to help it forward, and advance the Millennium of Intellect, and intellectual Love.

“Erroneous, on the whole, as have been the labours of Philosophy hitherto; little as Plato, Zeno, Aristotle, Socrates, and Bacon have really accomplished for the world, it would be unjust indeed not to own that these deep-reasoning, earnest men ever struggled hard in the CAUSE of Truth; and because of this, whilst there is a man to reverence genius on the Earth their names will be affectionately remembered.

“But perhaps of all the pioneers of Truth, the

Poets have accomplished most : and, amongst these, I believe our own SHAKSPERE had the keenest *sense of Truth*, and the largest and most catholic soul.

“ But, to reform the original, wide-spread Error of mankind ; to show the true social basis, and the way to happiness and an intellectual Heaven, came one diviner than them all : a Man all soul : without a particle of selfishness or animalism in his nature : he whose life was all humility, and gentleness, and love ; — a love which encircled all men : he who when reviled reviled not again : he who died for the realities he came to teach, — one God, the immortality of the soul, and love as the social basis : he who, dying, blessed those who cursed him, and prayed his last prayer for those who nailed him to the cross ; — ‘ Father, forgive them ! they know not what they do ! ’

“ When men shall understand HIS mission, injustice shall cease, and all mankind be happy.”

Dionysius ceased. The vast assembly, as though spell-bound by the earnest eloquence of the speaker, remained mute and immovable as death. Not a muscle stirred : not a breath disturbed the air. The entire auditory, methought, had hardened into marble. They were statues, and not living men. I seemed to have grown into marble myself. I tried to rise but could not ; — to raise my arm ; — it was too ponderous for my strength. I attempted to speak, but, was unable to articulate a word. I looked for DIONYSIUS, but he had gone. Again, music floated through

the arena, and so thrilled my whole frame, marble as I seemed to be, that life was almost insupportable. In an agony of pleasure I awoke. The music continued ; but it was no longer the music of my dream. I soon recollected the occasion of it. It was Christmas morning. The Waits were performing a selection from Handel, " Now unto us a child is given," beneath my window, in the clear, cold moonlight. I slept again from sheer exhaustion : and the same scene in the Abbey ; a huge auditory of statues—their marble features fixed in the similitude of deep attention—was the one stereotyped idea which haunted my fancy during my restless slumber. It was one dead, motionless monotony. The feeling became almost terrible. What must be that of a Murderer, in the world of spirits, with the ever-present idea of the guilt of a brother's blood haunting him through all eternity ? It is a mercy that there is no such hell : that Society is responsible for our crimes !

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

RANDOLPH. CIVILIS.

I HAD been one evening relating, to a familiar acquaintance whom I will call Civilis, the foregoing particulars of the Alpha-vision, when the following conversation, touching the truth, practicability, and value of the Philosophy enunciated therein, occurred between us.

CIVILIS. It is impossible, my dear Randolph, not to feel deeply interested in the singular revelation you have just made to me, whether it be regarded as the product of a dream, or as an incipient system of Philosophy of your own invention: nor can there be any difficulty in conceding to it the praise which is always due to originality. Much has been said and sung, in all periods of the world's history, in praise of Knowledge; but, until now, none have exalted it above Religion. Many a shaft has been hurled at Vice and Crime; but, until now, Philosophy has never seriously assailed the Virtues. We have had apologists for Sin and Crime: but none to deny the

abstract possibility of their existence. We have had thousands of zealous men enunciating schemes to mend the Civil and Religious polity of the world; but none who have proposed to demolish the entire structure. We have had deniers of this or that system of Religion or form of Government; but none who have denounced, and would uproot them all. I almost tremble to recount your merits: yet there you sit, Randolph, calm as the moonbeams on the waves that have just swallowed an Armada.

RANDOLPH. You must consider my tranquillity, Civilis, to be the consequence of my knowledge. I *know* my critic is a friendly one, notwithstanding this "thundering in the index."

CIVILIS. Seriously, my dear Randolph, this dream has made a deep impression on my mind; and, although there is something so startling in your Philosophy—for I must call it yours—I am more than half persuaded of its entire truth. If it be really true it must be both practical, and pre-eminently important. But, in this case, what a mass of untruth have mankind to unbelieve as a consequence of its adoption! It is this astounding thought concerning the old system, rather than any lack of evidence I have yet discovered in favour of the new, that counsels me to pause before I discard, as totally erroneous in principle, all the time-honoured institutions which I have been accustomed to reverence no less for their apparent worth than for their antiquity. You know I am a Lawyer, and therefore accustomed

to deal with evidence; and that, on sufficient evidence, I can believe anything. You know also (notwithstanding my profession, Randolph), that I have some title to the character of a religious man; and, as such, am naturally an admirer, and, I hope, to some extent a practiser, of the Moralities and the Virtues which, according to your system, are henceforward to be regarded as blots on our social system.

RANDOLPH. No, Civilis; not exactly as blots, but rather, excrescences, which the blots called Vice and Crime make beautiful by comparison.

CIVILIS. I stand corrected—as beautiful excrescences that under a really rational system could have no existence. You will not wonder, therefore, that I feel some reluctance to embrace a system which proposes at the first convenient opportunity to dispense with them. I confess that there is much in our present social system that needs reformation, as well as some doctrines inculcated by our Christian creed which are weak, if not absolutely indefensible: but I think you will allow that this is not a sufficient reason for abjuring them for others which may look more perfect in theory (but which it may be impossible to reduce to practice), except on the clearest and most conclusive evidence. Am I right in my obduracy in favour of my old faith?

RANDOLPH. Perfectly, Civilis: and the more so, inasmuch as our new philosophy repudiates Faith altogether, and asks for no assent but that which

springs from a full conviction. By Faith I do not mean Belief. Let me illustrate my meaning by examples. On the banks of the Tigris, about two hundred miles above the junction of that river with the Euphrates, stands a city called Bagdad. I know this City. I have lived there. The fact of its existence is not with me a matter of Faith, neither is it Belief. The fact does not rest on testimony, but on positive knowledge. By Faith, therefore, I do not mean Knowledge. Again, I am told that the poet Byron swam across the Hellespont at a place where this channel is three miles wide. I have myself swum a mile. My informant as to the greater feat is a man of probity: he has no interest in deceiving me. I reflect that if one man can swim a mile (a fact within my own cognizance), it is within the limits of possibility that another might swim three miles. I do not KNOW that it is true; but the thing being possible, and authenticated to my satisfaction, I adopt it as a true fact; in other words, I BELIEVE IT. This is not knowledge obtained, as in the former case, entirely through the evidence of my own senses; but knowledge which rests partly on testimony, and partly on a corroborative fact which I know to be true. My adoption of the fact as truth is not Faith, but Belief. Again. Another person tells me that the poet did not *swim* across the Hellespont, *but walked across* on the surface of the water, just as he might have walked across a field. In this case my knowledge of the properties of water renders it im-

possible for me to adopt this fact as truth. Belief demands some corroborative knowledge derived through the testimony of my own senses; some proof of its possibility. If I consent to adopt this fact as truth—(I am here supposing what I cannot imagine to be possible, a *conscientious assent, not a feigned one*); this is not Belief, but a total abandonment of self to the adoption as truth of a rationally impossible fact. This is what I understand by Faith. We can BELIEVE in the extraordinary and the improbable. The miraculous and the impossible demand FAITH. There can be no Belief (by which I mean a rational and conscientious conviction), without some actual, corroborative knowledge of our own with respect to the fact believed. Whenever, therefore, the term Faith is used as a synonyme of Belief, it must be in reference to facts that are believable; and which are believable because we know them to be possible. But this excludes all facts such as the birth of the once-expected Shiloh without the agency of a human father. People are sometimes wont to escape this dilemma by averring that with God all things are possible. This, however, is a fallacy; for the act of Belief is impossible to God. To constitute an act of belief two things are necessary, nay three;—first, prior ignorance of the fact to be communicated; secondly, a Communicator who knows something which the Recipient does not know; and, thirdly, corroborative knowledge by which the Recipient can test the probability of its truth: all which,

with God, are clearly impossible; yet possible with Man.

CIVILIS. But is it impossible that, God so willing it, Shiloh might have been conceived of Johanna Southcott without the agency of a human father? in other words, is a miracle impossible?

RANDOLPH. There can be no doubt of God's ability to perform this act; for, to us, every act of creation is a miracle. But since God himself has so constituted the human mind that we cannot believe in any fact without testimony, conjoined to some knowledge of our own by which to estimate the probability of its truth, it is impossible that God could make our Faith in a miracle, a *sine qua non* of our salvation. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, THEREFORE, THAT THERE CAN BE ANY EFFICACY IN FAITH.

CIVILIS. I should like to hear your definition of a miracle.

RANDOLPH. By a miracle I mean any occurrence out of the ordinary course of nature, and in violation of the Laws of nature: as if a stone should hang suspended in the air without any visible or conceivable support; or a tree uproot itself and walk about. There is no MERIT in believing a thing which is believable: nor is there any DEMERIT in disbelieving any circumstance which in the nature of things we feel to be impossible. I believe in God's ability to suspend Saint Paul's Cathedral in the air, but where is the merit of my belief, seeing

that it is based on the mightier evidences of his Power within and around me? But I disbelieve that God does so suspend such ponderous bodies, because I never saw an evidence or exemplification of the fact; and in what consists the demerit of my unbelief? I may *assert* that I believe it: but without some circumstance-compelling influence acting on me from without, even this, *Civilis*, would be impossible.

CIVILIS. I perceive it: I am satisfied: you have convinced me of the inefficacy and uselessness of Faith. But a thought occurs to me. You said just now that every act of creation is a miracle. In this case, the creation of the first pair of the human species was a miracle. They could not have had any natural progenitors: the act which gave them being was contrary to the Law, or altogether independent of it, by which all things reproduce their like, and must have been the result of a special intervention. Whether our First Parents proceeded from the Earth, the Sea, the Air, or from one of the inferior Animals, the fact remains the same; their production was the result of a special ordination. And the same must be true of every distinct class of creatures, and even of every distinct form of vegetable life: each must be a distinct act of creation, special, or extra-judicial, in its nature. How, then, do you reconcile this fact with what, if I mistake not, you assert in the Alpha-vision, to the effect that the lower animals, notwithstanding their priority on the Earth, are the accidental results of

a general Law which had for its primary object the bestowal of animal life on the human species ?

RANDOLPH. A Creature when once produced, is immediately rendered subject to the Law which regulates its reproduction or continuance. But there is a Principle prior to this Law, the operations of which principle are as inscrutable as those of the Law just mentioned. This principle is a Law impressed on Matter by means of which Life is bestowed, and new Creatures produced out of new Circumstances ; which circumstances are pre-ordained to arise for the very purpose of their production. I suppose that the Primary purpose of all Creation was the production of Man, and that the material world was formed for his development. The Life-bestowing Principle was necessary in the Matter, or material globe on which he was to have his existence ; and many other forms of life, both vegetable and animal, were necessary also that the purpose of his existence might be accomplished. That he might have a probationary existence under circumstances necessary to his full development and ultimate happiness, the Life-giving principle conferred on Matter, produced, *prior* to his own advent, such vegetables and animals as were preparatory to his existence ; and, *contemporaneously with his appearance*, such as were essential to his wants. Thus, all other existences and forms of life had reference to HIM :—*they* the ACCIDENTS, and *he* the OBJECT of the Law which gave both him and them their being.

Not as separate acts of Creation, therefore, but as foreknown results of this Principle, was every distinct form of existence, each at its proper time, produced. This subject is theoretical, and is so treated in the Alpha-vision ; and the discussion of it, though interesting, is a deviation from the subject in hand ; namely, the truth of the Dionysian Philosophy ; —but I hope the explanation I have given to your question is a satisfactory solution of your difficulty.

CIVILIS. Perfectly so, as well as altogether consistent with the nature, and what we call the attributes of the Deity, out of which you deduce the Principle which is the basis of your Philosophy. To convince myself thoroughly of the truth of this principle must be my own work ; and I promise to devote thereto the time and study necessary to its accomplishment. But to aid me in this task, I must request you to recapitulate, with what brevity you please, the leading facts of your argument, and the particular results to which they tend.

RANDOLPH. This I will do right willingly, Civilis ; but, suffer me first to show you how the conviction we have just arrived at dissipates that bugbear on which so much charlatany and delusion rests—the doctrine of Sin and Crime, and Future Punishment. If, Civilis, what is proved to a man's full conviction *he must believe*, there can be no MERIT in his belief : and if whatever lacks a satisfying proof *it is impossible that he can believe*, there can be no DEMERIT in his unbelief : and, since there can be no intelligent and voluntary act that

is not impelled by a conviction, either rational or erroneous; or by some social influence, whether right or wrong, which is as arbitrary as conviction, it is clear that a man *does only what he must do*: and as there is neither merit nor demerit in the conviction, there can be neither merit nor demerit in the resultant act: therefore, there is neither Sin, nor Crime, nor future Punishment with respect to them.

CIVILIS. I admit the conclusiveness of your logic, Randolph, with regard to SIN. Sin is an impossibility, and Satan a chimera: I have a more exalted notion of the Deity; and I am a thousand times happier for the knowledge. But my conviction is not so clear in respect to CRIME. Crime, I perceive, is an act having reference to man alone, and to Society. It is the contravention of a Law between man and man: and to contravene a just law must certainly be a Crime.

RANDOLPH. A JUST LAW! yes, Civilis: but were LAWS JUST—a thing within the limits of possibility—there could be no *Motive* for their infraction. A JUST LAW must be based on Man's true nature, physical and intellectual, and have especial reference to the purpose of his being: it must be EQUALLY BENEFICIAL AND NECESSARY TO ALL MEN. A man, convinced of its justice, *could not* break it: a man too ignorant to feel this conviction, *might* contravene it, and probably *would*. But the infraction would be the natural consequence of an erroneous conviction: and this, in the eye of Reason, is not a Crime; and Enlightenment, not Punishment, is the remedy.

CIVILIS. I perceive it, my dear Randolph ; you are right. Rewards and Punishments are not resorted to by the Deity ; and ought not to be resorted to by men. Alas ! what are the cumbrous labours of a lifetime, if they are based on error ! You are making a Man of me ; but the Lawyer's occupation's gone ! What a pile of goodly, calf-cased Law-tomes, full of Statutes, Precedents, Pleadings, Interpleadings, Cases, Quirks, and Quiddities, you have converted into waste-paper by a Syllogism ! Shades of Blackstone, Bentham, Littleton, and Coke ! no wonder I should have been so frequently perplexed by your profundity ! My dear Randolph, I see it all. There is no Hell ; no after-retribution. Truth is its own rewarder ; its own reward : and Error brings its own retribution in the shape the evil it produces. Every instant we are judged : and there is no "recording angel" noting down the backslidings of each of us preparatory to the grand account ! I do confess, Randolph, that I have often thought this mode of keeping Ledger accounts against us made Heaven too much like a City Counting-house, and the Angels too like Clerks to whom a SABBATH could rarely or never come ! seriously ; it is a subject I never dared to dwell upon ; and even now, when I see the absurdity of it—the humanism of the contrivance, I feel shocked at the irreverence of the parallel my fancy had begun to draw. How like their worsers selves have Men made Deity ! I perceive the error, and all its degrading consequences. It has been down, down.

down, making a multitude of false distinctions between men proportioned to the depth of their degradation, until, at the bottom of the scale, the spiritual image of the Deity is drudge to a man who is something less of a drudge to another man, who waits behind the chair of some sycophant, who is sycophant to someone else that deems himself honoured if he might meekly kneel to Royalty, or kiss the reeking toe of his Holiness the Pope!

RANDOLPH. We have seen, *Civilis*, that Sin and Crime are impossibilities; and that were Laws really Just, it would be the INTEREST of all men, and, in proportion to their enlightenment, their DESIRE also to observe them. Such Laws must be adapted to Man's true nature, the purpose of his being, and his real wants. What these are our Philosophy plainly, and unmistakably sets forth. "But your philosophy is not true," will be said by whole legions of prejudiced detractors. They will say, because on erroneous reasoning they believe it, "Man's nature is sinful: he is a creature of vile passions, prone to all sorts of villany and mischief; and that Laws must be made stringent, and punishments severe, to restrain his natural propensities to crime and evil-doing." This has ever been the cry against poor human nature. And taking this libellous description on trust, or reasoning on Man as they find him writhing under the operation of Laws which (the results of Ignorance) HAVE RENDERED HIM ALL THIS,—Poets, Historians, Novelists, Satirists, Painters, Moralists, and

Philosophers of every calibre and kind, have amused their learned leisure, and displayed their penetration and their wit, by so depicting him : and ages must roll away before the simple truth, that the soul is incapable of blot or stain, will find its way to men's convictions. Yes, *Civilis*, we shall go on caricaturing one another, each for the other's amusement and his own gain, until the corroding lie shall have eaten itself out. The great bulk of the untruth which we treasure up as Knowledge consists of these pernicious calumnies. We shall have other opportunities of examining this fallacious knowledge a little more in detail. I will avail myself of the present occasion to recapitulate the Facts, in the order of their succession, which establish the Principle by which this pseudo-knowledge must be tested.

CIVILIS. Do so, my dear Randolph ; for I have too much of the Lawyer yet left within me, to pass by Precedents as nothing, and yield, without a struggle, to evidence which has such an overwhelming weight of authority, as you have just alluded to, against it. What ! Poets, Philosophers, Moralists, Metaphysicians, and Divines, all wrong ?

RANDOLPH. Ay, *Civilis*, every soul of them ; all *MAD*, save in their lucid intervals ; and these have seldom come to any but the Poets ; and to them, only in, what other men have denominated, their maddest moods.

CIVILIS. Your Philosophy is strangely beautiful, Randolph ; I long to be convinced that it is wholly true.

RANDOLPH. There is nothing beautiful that is not true. There is nothing true that is not beautiful. It was in searching for Beauty that I discovered Truth. Its temple stands in the centre of an artificial labyrinth composed of the most complicated windings, in which many lose themselves; whilst millions are deluded by the specious Falsehoods met with on the way, and over-written—"This is the Truth, and he who doubts is doomed." But, Civilis, he who would reach the temple round which this wildering maze of thorns and briars is planted, must overleap these artificial fences, or hew his way right onward, instinctled, having an unwavering confidence in God and his own Soul. God is Truth, Civilis; and every natural instinct of the soul guides us to God. There are as many Revelations as there are souls to need them: each is a revelation in itself, to itself, for itself; which is a greater marvel than any of the spurious marvels out of which a periodical, soul-less worship has proceeded.

CIVILIS. What is this Instinct of the Soul of which you speak?

RANDOLPH. The Desire for that one thing in which all others are included, Civilis, Knowledge; and, conjoined thereto, a mysterious perception of hidden truth—a kind of Sympathy or Presentiment, by which this desire is frequently responded to, if not anticipated; and this, without any immediate aid from Reason or the senses. This is true; involving no contradiction; and is consistent with the power

and nature of the Deity, and the evident purpose for which the soul has its existence : what need, therefore, of a marvel in the nature of a Miracle, which *does* involve a contradiction ; which proclaims itself as untrue, because unnatural ; which has no intelligible purpose ; and which, in consequence, degrades the Deity even in the estimation of his creatures ?

CIVILIS. I perceive your aim, and agree with your conclusion. To work a miracle is inconsistent with the nature, and beneath the dignity of God. Pardon the interruption. You were about to show me how Beauty leads to Truth, and the source of Truth—the Deity.

RANDOLPH. That which men call Beauty, Civilis, is the result produced in the Mind by certain pleasure-giving Principles in nature, which are more or less vividly felt and appreciated through our Soul-instincts, but which are only fully recognised and understood by the aid of our Reason, and by reflection. We say that the Horse is a beautiful animal : we ask ourselves why ? we compare it with other creatures, and other things ; as the Human Form, the Antelope, the Greyhound, a Vase, a Leaf, a Flower : we perceive that there is one circumstance peculiar to them all ; the outline (as we call the extremities of things) is composed of curves. All motion is curvilinear : all the heavenly bodies are circular : the Earth is a circle : the Sea forms a portion of this circle. Water, therefore, which we are apt to say seeks a level, is not level, but even in a teacup,

partakes of the great circle of the Earth. Cut a canal ten miles in length, and make it a true mathematical level; it is impossible to fill it with water. The circle in some of its thousand varieties of curve, enters more or less into nearly all natural forms. We perceive, that, modified by another principle which is peculiar to the straight line, all curvilinear forms are pleasure-giving, and are thence deemed beautiful. But why? The straight line runs into infinitude: it has not in itself the property of encompassing anything: a cube of an inch might be but a portion of a cube of infinite dimensions: it has not the quality of completeness: two straight lines running parallel for ever could not enclose anything. The curve, on the contrary, has this property of completeness in its very nature. A circle of an inch diameter is a thing complete in itself: it is not, it cannot be, a portion of a larger circle. The mind cannot contemplate infinitude: the thought is beyond its grasp: the idea is never perfect: we cannot comprehend and know it. The feeling is sublime: there is awe but not pleasure in it. Not so with the circle: no matter how immense it be, the mind can travel round it, and this instantly and without an effort: there is something distinct from all other things: something it can contemplate, comprehend, and know. This we perceive is the reason why curvilinear forms afford us pleasure. We want Knowledge. To exist, and to be conscious of our existence, and to be shut out from further knowledge, we feel

would be no more to us than a living death : we need Knowledge, therefore, we desire to obtain it : we have an instinctive love of it, as well as of those circumstances in things which render its attainment possible or easy. By whom was this Soul-instinct implanted within us ? By the Deity whom our souls instinctively acknowledge to be the author of our being. Then, what is Deity ? Do you follow me, Civilis ?

CIVILIS. Ay, Randolph ; I think I entirely comprehend you. There is no such thing as Beauty ; but there are eternal Principles in the nature or constitution of all created things, each in harmony with the other, and that in tracing them to their source we arrive at the First Principle, which is Deity.

RANDOLPH. Truly, Civilis : and what is Deity in whom the sentient Soul beholds its parentage ? Hands did not make the wonders of creation ; nor fabricate the spiritual soul ; nor construct the subtle principles which move and influence both Mind and Matter. It is obvious that a POWER greater than these willed their existence. A SPIRITUAL POWER ; for the material cannot fabricate the immaterial. AN INTELLIGENT POWER ; for that which THINKS NOT cannot, first, *purpose* the existence, and then *cause* the existence of that which THINKS. What, then, is Power ? Power is INTELLIGENCE. We call Intelligence Power when we reflect on its results : but, whether in action or repose, the motive-principle of all Power is Intelligence. What, then, is Intelli-

gence? Think of it through all eternity, Civilis, and you will not resolve it into elements. It is itself the Element, the moving, conscious cause of all things; the FIRST PRINCIPLE; the DEITY. The very Perfection of the Godhead is Intelligence. It will be necessary to make sure of this first Fact, Civilis, before you deduce therefrom the subsequent Facts of the series which form the System. Are you satisfied that the Nature and Perfection of Deity is Intelligence?

CIVILIS. I am satisfied that there cannot be any Power which is not traceable to Intelligence. I am satisfied also that there is not a Virtue or an Attribute that it is possible to ascribe to Deity which is not also reducible to Intelligence: so that whatever be the Essence to which this Quality inheres, its motive principle must be Intelligence. My reason for giving you a circuitous, instead of a direct answer to your question is this:—If the Creator of the universe be nothing but Intelligence, it is apparent that the knowledge of the Deity (if I may so express myself), is limited to the results of His own Laws. For, as nothing could have existed prior to Deity, so the Deity has nothing to know but what is subsequent to itself, and caused by its own will: and as the attainment of Knowledge is a Happiness, and I believe, the only Happiness of which the human Soul is capable, it follows that God has no beatitude, save in the contemplation of His own Works, which would seem to be a less happy condition than His

Beneficence has made possible for his Creatures, inasmuch as their Happiness is the result of their prior Ignorance.

RANDOLPH. Truly, *Civilis*: but this, instead of being a difficulty, suggests the highest and most God-like MOTIVE for the creation, by the Deity, of Man, and probably of other forms of intelligent creatures in the other globes which are poised in Space—Creatures who begin their conscious existence in Ignorance, that, through misery, they might ultimately attain to a Happiness greater than that which results from Conscious Power in the Deity; but inferior to that resulting from the exercise of His Love. As no higher motive is conceivable for the creation of the insentient, material universe than the production of sentient, immaterial Beings, who, through Ignorance and Error might attain to Knowledge and Beatitude, we have an intelligible and most gratifying reason for the creation of Man. And as the sole Perfection of Deity is Intelligence, it is not possible for the Human Soul to have a higher aim than Knowledge, or to arrive at its Perfection by any other means. And further—*Civilis*; as Deific Intelligence results in Love, which is the felicity of Distribution, added to that which belongs to the consciousness of Possession; so, as a motive for the Equal Distribution of Knowledge amongst Men, the Love which prompts this distribution, is beneficently made an addition to the felicity which attends its Possession and attainment. From these rationally-ascertained Facts, *Civilis*, we arrive at

these conclusions : First, that the only means by which the attainment of Perfection and Happiness is possible, is Knowledge : secondly, that to get Knowledge is the one great Purpose of human existence : and, thirdly, that to disseminate our knowledge amongst all our brethren is, not a duty only, but the highest conceivable privilege with which the Deity could endue humanity,

CIVILIS. It is impossible to dispute either your premises, or your conclusions, my dear Randolph. I am satisfied that Deity is Intelligence, and that all possible perfection is included in the term. I am also satisfied that the Human Soul is an intelligent Principle, capable of Knowledge, and incapable of Perfection, or of any permanent Happiness, save through the means of Knowledge. I admit that to get Knowledge is the end for which the Spiritual Soul has its existence. I perceive that what we call Consciousness (which is more an instinct than a self-made acquisition) is the first knowledge of the Human Soul. I perceive also that perception is only another name for Consciousness ; that Reason is Complex Perception ; and that Reason and those Soul-instincts which outstrip Reason in the pursuit of Knowledge, are the means appointed for its acquisition. I perceive that Knowledge signifies an acquaintance with Truth. I perceive, moreover, that every Truth is not of equal value as an addition to the Soul's stock of Knowledge : for example :—the knowledge which acquaints me with the true purpose of my existence is manifestly

more important than the knowledge conveyed to me in Mrs. Fitzhog's gilt-edged epistle of yesterday to the effect that her myrtle is about to blossom, and that her dear husband is a brute. What I next want to arrive at is (seeing that we may err in our reasoning), how we are to know always what is Truth: and next how we may arrive at a correct estimate of its value.

RANDOLPH. You admit, Civilis, that every work of a Being of Infinite Intelligence must be perfect as a means to an end?

CIVILIS. Certainly.

RANDOLPH. The Author of the Universe is the Creator of Man. There must have been a purpose in his creation, as well as a self-acting principle in the Creature capable of the accomplishment of the purpose?

CIVILIS. Clearly, my dear Randolph: for, otherwise, the means to an end would be defective, which with God is impossible.

RANDOLPH. It is clear that the Purpose of his existence is the attainment of knowledge, and that the Intelligent Principle or Soul (with its inherent perception, its power of abstraction, and its intuitive love of truth), is that self-acting Principle which has the capability of discovering Truth. If there were many sources of Truth, there might be many sorts of Truth, differing in nature according to the difference in nature of their several authors: but as there can be but ONE AUTHOR, all Truth must be consistent in its nature with the nature of its author, and resolvable into it. Having ascertained beyond the possibility of

doubt or cavil what Deity in its nature is, we have THE FIRST TRUTH, which is of necessity the test of all other truth. It is impossible that anything can be true with regard to the Deity that is inconsistent with the perfection of its Intelligence. We have ascertained, beyond the possibility of doubt or cavil, what the Human Soul is, and what is the Purpose of its existence. It is impossible that anything can be true with regard to the Human Soul that is inconsistent with the nature of the Human Soul, or with the Purpose for which it was created. This, *Civilis*, is an answer to your question, "How is 'Truth always to be known?'" And now as to the mode of estimating its value. All truth is valuable, which, based on the First Truth, conduces to the end for which the Soul was created; namely, to make constant approaches to the Deity through a knowledge of His purposes and works; and the Laws by which the former are accomplished, and the latter regulated. This is the standard by which to measure the spiritual value of all Truth. Meted thereby, it is clear that Mrs. Fitzhog's very believable testimony as to the blossoming of her myrtle is but of small value, perhaps none: whilst that which represents her husband to be a brute (though perhaps quite as believable as the other), is valuable only as a proof of the evil which results from Ignorance: for Mr. Fitzhog could not indulge in practices which level him with the brute creation, if he knew positively that he is a Man, having the privilege to become a God. You see, therefore, *Civilis*, that Reason and the Soul-

instincts of Men, are part of their nature, and the all-sufficient Means appointed through which they may arrive at Perfection and Happiness. Every Soul is, therefore, a revelation in itself, to itself, for itself; but as, in its very nature Knowledge is Love, and its exercise the very highest phase of conceivable happiness, so we are admonished by our Reason and our Soul-instincts to live for others as well as for ourselves: thus, our social duties are clearly pointed out to us; and thus also, the right direction of all our labours, and of all our Laws, are indicated beyond the possibility of mistake. Man has a double nature; that is the only difficulty: he is an animal, in which an Angel is enshrined. He might live for either. Could we show the entire world this one Fact, *Civilis*, the difficulty would vanish: mankind would make their selection; and their selection would necessarily be right.

CIVILIS. Prove to me this last inference of yours, my dear Randolph; show me (all irrational impediments thereto apart) that a man *must act in obedience to his convictions*, and I am thenceforth your disciple in Philosophy, and a convert to your Religion,

RANDOLPH. Why a CONVERT, *Civilis*?

CIVILIS. Simply, because I shall not have a doubt remaining of its Truth: for if this Fact be true, the rest are true; and every other system is necessarily false.

RANDOLPH. But will this conviction necessarily make a convert of you, *Civilis*?

CIVILIS. I see the tendency of your question, Randolph. It will. And this is an answer to my scepticism.

RANDOLPH. Credulity, Civilis, is a far less commendable quality than Doubt. He who is a Sceptic through lack of evidence, renders as high an homage to the majesty of Truth by his unbelief, as *he* does to whom the evidence brings full conviction.

CIVILIS. How true is this! And yet it is the fashion to decry Scepticism as a scandal to humanity. But my eyes are opened; and I begin to think with David that "all men are liars." Civilization is a lie. Society is a lie. No man dares to be honest even to himself. If the Knowledge with which our libraries are stored be as spurious as ourselves, what an Augean stable has to be cleansed of its abominations before Truth shall find a fit abiding-place amongst us!

RANDOLPH. The task is, indeed, a Herculean one: but Truth is omnipotent. We have only to let in Light on the plants that thrive in darkness, and they wither. To punish a man for his opinions is only to confirm him in them. Give him a new Truth which shall alter his convictions, and he is a new man. You may dragoon men into submission, but not into belief. You may preach "Love one another" through another cycle of eighteen centuries, but you will accomplish nothing, except the change of an honest denial of your doctrine into hypocrisy and cant, until you can teach Men Why, and How. Not doctrines do we propagate, but a Principle. Test everything

by *that*, and all will be accomplished. THE ONE TRUTH WHICH CHRIST DID NOT TEACH US, IS SUPPLIED BY OUR PHILOSOPHY. His followers *felt* this truth, but failed in establishing it by fastening it on a lie. We have PROVED, CIVILIS, WHAT MAN IS, AND THE NON-NECESSITY, NOT TO SAY THE IMPOSSIBILITY, OF A PHYSICAL RESURRECTION. We know what Human Nature is, as God made it. We shall find that the sentimentality which passes current in the world for Knowledge, is, for the most part, as false as that False human nature which Error and Injustice have generated amongst us, and which the very acme of the world's wisdom only teaches us to deplore. The Chinese have a method of dwarfing forest-trees to dimensions suited to a flower-pot. But this is not God's work. Neither is that FUNGUS NATURE which Folly has engrafted on humanity,—HUMAN NATURE, AS GOD MADE IT,—GRAND, SIMPLE, AND CONSISTENT: but a mean, complicated tissue of absurdities and contradictions, on which the Philosophers, whose work it is, have falsely bestowed this sacred appellation. Books are, for the most part, filled with the nutriment on which this fungus feeds. Men dwarf men, as the Chinese dwarf their cedars,—by introducing poison into the sap; and then tell us that the diminutive falsehood is HUMAN NATURE! The aggregate of these artificial diminutives constitutes that impersonal abstraction we call Society. This Hydra dooms Man to ignorance, shrivels him into a brute: then tells us that Men are brutes by

nature. It starves him, and he steals:—and, of course, Men are thieves by nature. It feeds him with falsehood in his pap:—all men are naturally liars. It compels him to be selfish, and then impudently puts down his selfishness to the account of human nature. It tasks and tortures him; it breaks down his imprisoned spirit, and bows his very soul, by the vilest servitude and oppression, into the dust; and then attempts to fasten his servility on his nature! Having thus humbled its victim, it does with him whatever else it pleases. It has taught him that all the miseries he suffers are inevitable; that his nature is grovelling, wicked, and detestable; that God is a God of vengeance and will punish him with unspeakable torments everlastingly; and then bids him go and worship that God! Perhaps his real nature revolts at such a worship. Perhaps he believes what Society has told him—of the meanness of his nature, and the misery of his lot. Then he girds up his loins for endurance, and says within himself, “I must toil and suffer: why should I worship? whom should I worship? I am the creature of necessity: I am the child of Chance. There is no God!” Society now tempts him with its tinsel splendours: he grows ambitious: *ergo*, human nature is ambitious. It humbles its impersonal self before the thing it has created; flatters it, lauds it, till it grows proud; and then charges this Pride itself has caused and fostered—to the account of human nature! Thus is nobility created. I see you are weary,

Civilis : but stop whilst I tell you how Society manufactures its Philosophers. It takes one of the afore-said atomies of its own making ; lures him with luxuries, and he becomes a sensualist. It tells him that Pleasure is Happiness : and there is no meanness to which he will not stoop, no danger he will not dare, to grasp it : He does grasp it, and finds it an illusion, a cheat : he falls to moralizing ; writes blasphemies about Nature and the Human species ; dies ; and his falsehoods become the food of future generations !——At our next meeting, Civilis, we will call this imperious, self-willed delinquent, Society, to a more strict account, and examine the wares it vends, even to its favourites, and palms on us for Knowledge. Civilis promised to come the next evening, and the Reader, if not tired of our Philosophy, is invited to make one of the party.

CHAPTER II.

RANDOLPH. CIVILIS.

CIVILIS. I have already experienced the correctness of one of your axioms, Randolph. "Give a man a new Truth which shall alter his old convictions, and he is a new man." I have been born anew, and my new birth is "of the Spirit." Since yesterday I seem to have lived an age: to have grown old; to have outlived, not only my opinions, but my occupations, my acquaintances, nay, even my very home; for not a nook within it seems to own me for its master. Not a Book, nor a Picture—and you know I have been a little tainted with the Fine-art mania—has solicited me to bestow a single kindly thought upon it. I see everything through a new medium. It is astonishing how much more clearly I see into things, or, as the phrase is, "through them," than I did formerly. My mind has been in a whirl of excitement. I cannot call the feelings which have possessed me Happiness: and yet I have never experienced a happiness for which I would willingly exchange them. Although naturally taciturn, I have done nothing but talk all day; and I fear at times, not very coherently: for poor old Cognovit, my clerk, gave many uneasy indications, whilst I was at

chambers this morning, that he thought me mad. I have since been endeavouring to connect in my mind the several parts of your—shall I call it Philosophy or Religion, Randolph?—into one systemized whole; but have not been able to concentrate my thoughts sufficiently to do so. In this endeavour a thought or two occurred to me which seem to require some elucidation.

RANDOLPH. I am glad, Civilis, you have been bestowing so much thought on the subject as to have started a difficulty. Your imagination is, however, a little heated: let us adjourn to the lawn, and seat ourselves beneath the sycamore. The evening is sultry, and its refreshing shade looks especially inviting. To a tyro, Civilis, the unadorned nakedness of our Philosophy is a little startling.

CIVILIS. It is: but in any guise how beautiful is Truth! One view of the subject has afforded me especial consolation. To know that our very errors, and the discomfort they occasion us, are necessary to our after-life felicity, is in every way a happiness; but in none so much as to feel that our sorrows are ordained by a beneficent, not by an angry God, and that men have only to be wise in order to avoid them. The fact is clear enough when once suggested; for, certainly, could the soul know all things intuitively and at once, without the step by step progress which it makes from its first conjunction with the body, and without the infelicity which attends its devious wanderings from the onward pathway to perfection,

we should be happy without knowing it, and Felicity would be impossible. How long might we have waited for Doctors in Divinity to tell us this !

RANDOLPH. Ay, Civilis, they are but blind teachers, with all their sanctified pretensions. The beneficent scheme of Providence which Philosophy reveals to us seems not to have been so much as dreamed of by prosing Moralists, whether Lay or Clerical. Yet it is certain that to any other being than the Deity, felicity is impossible except through infelicity. And how simple the means compared with the magnificence of the end ! for we perceive that the felicity of the Creature is secured, and even that of the Creator enhanced, by a single act :—that of the Creature by the only means possible for its bestowal ; and that of the Creator by the eternally-increasing greatness of the gift. The only idea these teachers seem to have of Providence amounts to this :—that God is ever busied watching over, and superintending his universal work, and constantly changing his purposes, and interfering with the operations of his Laws : Laws, Civilis, which were made by a Being of infinite Intelligence, foresight, and perfection, and which were promulgated in the beginning for all eternity :—I mean, of course, if it be the purpose of the Deity that they shall continue for ever. But it may be—and in this case, Civilis, mark the endlessness of the fruition in store for man !—it may be, that after the period when the countless myriads of created Minds, (created to know this universe of

wonders,) shall have acquired the knowledge of the whole; and that thus the Universe shall exist in myriads of Minds by means of myriads of imperishable IDEAS OF THIS UNIVERSE, just as, prior to its actual existence, it existed in the Mind of the Deity himself;—then, it may be, that the fiat shall go forth that ALL WHICH IS shall be no longer; and that another Universe more wonderful still shall take its place to supply fresh Knowledge and higher Happiness to all the created Sharers of his infinite beatitude: and thus may change follow change, and fruition succeed to fruition, through all eternity.

CIVILIS. This is, indeed, a glorious prospect, Randolph, and forces one to think that we might tire of Hallelujahs,—the highest felicity to which even our Bishops have ventured to give a name! The thought I just now adverted to, and which has somewhat perplexed me, is this. If a man can neither believe nor disbelieve *at will*, but only as he is convinced, or not convinced by evidence which coincides with own knowledge of the nature of things, it follows that his belief, or disbelief, is a matter of necessity, and not of mere caprice or choice. Again: if a man, exempt from all external influences, *must* act conformably with his convictions, and, under any circumstances, *must bend to controlling influences*, it follows also, that his actions, as well as his convictions, are the result of an INEVITABLE NECESSITY; where then is his FREE WILL? and in what does your system differ from the doctrine of

the Fatalists, and the less loveable one of the Predestinarians? for, as his thoughts and actions, together with the circumstances which determine them, are necessarily foreknown to the Deity, is not his course marked out for him from the beginning, and his after-fate PREDESTINED?

RANDOLPH. Your question is a very comprehensive one. That all the circumstances of a man's life are foreknown to the Deity is admitted. But, Civilis, to foreknow a thing is not necessarily to predetermine it. When God willed the existence of the material universe; every portion thereof was subjected to certain Laws which the inert mass is compelled to obey from an imperious necessity. In this case, not only was its course foreknown, but it was pre-ordained or predestinated. The case is, however, altogether different with respect to Man. The Human Soul is an Intelligent Principle; and in the same sense that God has Free Will, Man has Free Will; as well as in another, and truer, sense, which I will mention presently. The Deity has not a Free Will to do wrong, but only to do right. The Deity can neither think evil, nor do an evil act; because having Infinite Knowledge He cannot have an erroneous conviction. To the extent of a Man's knowledge he is, mentally, in the same condition. Free Will, in this sense, is only another name for Intelligence. The inert mass of the material universe, having no Intelligence, has no Will; therefore, to promulgate Laws for the regulation of its movements,

was to pre-ordain those movements. But, mark me ! the NECESSITY which even inert Matter obeys, is a Foreseeing, All-knowing, Intelligence ; not the Necessity of the Fatalists, which is unintelligent and blind. The Necessity to which Man is subject is twofold ; First, the Necessity we are considering, which influences his rational acts ; and, secondly, that which circumscribes his animal nature, and determines his birth, his growth, his perfection, the reproduction of his species, and his decay. BUT HIS MIND IS NECESSARILY FREE, that by its exercise it might make progress towards the perfection of which it is capable. In consequence of the primitive Ignorance which is essential to this perfection, Free Will pertains to Man in a sense to which it does not pertain to his Creator. Man is an ANIMAL as well as an Embryo Intelligence. HE HAS ANIMAL INSTINCTS which are necessary to his animal development. The needful gratification of every sense (the seats of these Instincts, as well as the inlets to his knowledge) is pleasure-giving : it is, indeed, the Pleasure which induces their exercise. — HE HAS ALSO SOUL-INSTINCTS,—the Desire for Knowledge, Presentiment of Truth, and a sympathy with spiritual things. These Instincts are also pleasure-giving. It is the Pleasure (perhaps I ought to say — the Happiness,) which invites the exercise of these Instincts also. MAN'S FREE WILL CONSISTS IN HIS FREEDOM OF CHOICE BETWEEN THE GRATIFICATION OF THESE TWO SETS OF INSTINCTS. From the erroneous choice he has hitherto made has

arisen nearly all the Evils he has so needlessly suffered. This I will prove to you in its proper place. Ignorance, therefore, not Intelligence, is the parent of Free Will. As our Knowledge increases our Free Will is circumscribed, and this, for the beneficent purpose of our progress towards perfection and happiness. In our exercise of Free Will we may restrain our animal Instincts within rational limits, or yield ourselves entirely to their influence. —We may follow the benign direction of the Soul-instincts, or, neglecting their solicitations, we may suffer them to perish within us. We might use them to the noblest end, or misdirect them to the mere purposes of sensuality. As long as these Instincts are ONLY INSTINCTS they may give a BIAS to the Mind, BUT HAVE NO ABSOLUTE POWER TO DIRECT IT. But, convert a Soul-instinct into a conviction; and nothing but the influence exerted over the individual who has attained the conviction, by the mass of minds to whom the conviction has not yet come, can prevent the resultant act from being in strict conformity with the conviction, and terminating in good. Man is not, therefore, a mere material machine, the minutest movements of which are predetermined as well as foreknown; but an Intelligent creature, having free liberty of choice between the nature and gratifications peculiar to the brute, and the nature and gratifications of his angel-Intellect. As he inclines to the former he is subjected to the Laws to which mere brutes are subject;

and as he inclines to the latter, he is subjected to the Law, which (operating as an imperious, and at the same time, a beneficent necessity,) compels him to believe that only which is believable, to reject that which is unbelievable, and to act in obedience to his convictions. It is on this very law, *Civilis*, that we must rest our hopes of the extinction of Evil, and the regeneration of the human race. Have I, so far, made myself understood? Do you see that this necessity to which the Human Soul is subject, is not the chimerical necessity of the Fatalists, but the ordination of an All-intellectual God who purposes thereby the Happiness of the Human Race?

CIVILIS. I think I clearly perceive your meaning, my dear Randolph. Certainly, this necessity is not the necessity of the Fatalists with which I was confounding it; but is, as you have described it, A BENEFICENT NECESSITY, CAPABLE ONLY OF GOOD. You have also reconciled to my entire satisfaction, what appeared to me to be an anomaly, namely, the existence of this Necessity with the existence of Free Will. If there be any portion of your explanation I do not fully comprehend, it is the distinction (looking to their *results*), between Foreknowledge and Predestination. I perceive that to Foreknow, is not necessarily to Predestinate. But, my dear Randolph, seeing that there are millions of human beings whom erroneous influences have kept ignorant, and whom, the circumstances they were unable to control or surmount have degraded into the condition of brutes,

I am led to perceive also, that, in consequence of these influences, these millions may never attain to that state of Perfection and Happiness of which their nature is capable; I would, therefore, ask, how do you reconcile GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE AND PERMISSION of these adverse circumstances, first, with his ability to do all he purposes to do, and next, with his Justice?

RANDOLPH. Whether *we* can reconcile these seeming anomalies with God's Justice or not, it is certain that whatever Infinite Intelligence wills to do cannot be the work either of incapacity or injustice. We have already seen that some things are not possible even with God. Incapacity and Injustice are of the number. To give the human race a sense of Happiness without acquainting them with sorrow, is another of these impossibilities. There is, therefore, a NECESSITY for the condition in which Humanity finds itself; —I mean, for its primitive ignorance, for its dual nature, and for those Instincts I have adverted to which tend to the development of both natures. Were it not for the existence of the Instincts Man could not have Free Will: and without the Free Will he could have no choice: he must be governed by a special Providence, not by general Laws: his progress in Knowledge would then be errorless, and he would have no more sense of his happiness than has a statue of its form, or the rose of its fragrance. There would be no need of the endless variety we now find in the material universe. As aids to our

senses, the forms, colours, and characteristics of things would be unnecessary ; for we should not need the senses, nor, of course, have any. In short, Civilis, the Deity must have made, or might as well have made, his Intellectual creatures complete Intelligences at once ;—witnesses of his Power, but not sharers in his beatitude. So that, taking the Happiness of his creatures as the object of such a creation, the latter would have been a blunder : the means would have been inadequate to the end. Power would have been exemplified, but not Beneficence. Free Will is, therefore, a Necessity. Now, if a created soul cannot attain Perfection and Happiness without the Free Will, the two Natures, the Instincts, the Sorrow, and the Ignorance, it is clear that the General Laws by which the Special Purpose of human existence is on the whole secured, must be subject to the *accidents* caused by the errors to which Free Will is liable. The failure of millions of Souls from the circumstances you have alluded to, is an accident ; foreknown I admit, and permitted, but inevitable. But that these accidents can result in injustice, I totally deny. All the Laws of the Deity are general, not special. Observe a result of one of them in the Vegetable Kingdom. You know the balloon-like apparatus appended to the seeds of the thistle. The winds are not put in motion for the purpose of scattering these seeds and securing the reproduction of this particular vegetable. But you have seen them borne about on the wings of the evening breezes, and know that many of them ulti-

mately find a resting-place where they vegetate and become thistles. Millions of these seeds, from a thousand accidents, fail. Yet there is no lack of thistles. BUT WHAT BECOMES OF THOSE WHICH FAIL? In some shape or other they become a part of the unorganized matter from which they first derived their being. Neither, in the Spiritual Heaven, will there be any lack of Intelligences. But what becomes of those Souls whom—not accident altogether, but their own blind folly—shall have wrecked? They will be again amalgamated with the Soul of the Universe from which they first derived their being. And where is the injustice? They chose the brute's gratifications, and find the brute's destiny. Creatures of sense, they enjoy the pleasures of sense, and when these pleasures pall, they die. *They did not know that they were Angels in nature*, and capable of an Angel's immortality and happiness—or they *must* have fitted themselves for an Angel's destiny: and as they did not know that which each of them, in spite of external influences, might have known, namely, what they were, and why they were created—knowledge which would have ensured the purposed end against all obstructions—it is obvious that, to them, the loss of individual existence hereafter can be no injustice.

CIVILIS. I am convinced, Randolph; perfectly convinced. I could not now re-embodify or re-word your argument. I am too much excited to do so: but I am sure it is logical and conclusive. I followed it

carefully, anxiously, fearfully—I am satisfied that it is true.—Pardon my emotion, Randolph.—

RANDOLPH. I perceive you are unusually moved, Civilis; and will defer until our next meeting, the inquiry on which we were to have entered this evening. Let us join Ellen: and over our coffee I will relate to you a dream—I have always been a dreamer, Civilis,—that I dreamed some months ago; which, though fantastic in its character, will not be an unsuitable preface to the practical portion of the subject we have yet to discuss.

* * * * *

CIVILIS. There is something very inexplicable in dreams. They seem to be, for the most part, but disjointed reminiscences of our past experience; yet occasionally they appear to be the dim foreshadowings of the future. I once dreamed that I saw my mother, who had been standing beside me, ascend to Heaven, when she became one amongst a crowd of Angels around the throne of God. Forms and colours there were none. The throng was innumerable. It was something of the nature of EXPRESSION by which each was distinguishable from the others, and my mother from them all; SOMETHING FELT BUT NOT SEEN. Never shall I forget the—I know not what to call it—NOT THE LOOK, which my mother cast towards me as unwonderingly, I gazed on the glory she had become. It seemed to say “Come too;” and instantly I floated upwards, light as ether, towards her in the Heavens.

M

Then thought I an earthly, unholy thought and fell. I essayed to rise again, but could not. A cloud of darkness overspread the radiance. I awoke in agony. I was then a child ; but this dream has held a mysterious influence over me ever since. I have ever vainly wished to dream this dream again. But there is one dream, which, with but little variation, I dream frequently. It is a sort of confession : give me leave to tell it you. It commences by the most delightful of sensations I ever experienced—that of floating through space ; not flying, but, by the mere power of volition, careering over the surface of the earth and sea ; descending whithersoever I desire to descend, and visiting whom and what I please. An accident in my infancy, Miss Randolph, maimed me, and rendered me the unprepossessing object you see me now. My soul has ever gazed worshippingly on Beauty : but Beauty has never beamed back a sympathetic look on me. In my dreams—in the spiritual world—there is ever one Fair Form of which I have no waking memory, but the same always.

Her I invariably visit in these aerial dream-careerings. Her I worship, conscious the while, that the soul of this ideal Fair One sympathises wholly with mine own. This dream, though frequent, is occasional. I am then always another self, having no memory of my waking self—no consciousness of my deformity. It now occurs to me, Randolph, that I may be one of those wrecked souls of a former generation, not lost, but re-embodied ; and that my former *ego* and

my present self, are two embryo existences, which, *per se*, await but a link in the chain of memory to unite them into one. One *Ego* with two memories pertaining to two states of being! May not this be so? Often when a new truth comes to me, I seem, dimly and indistinctly to have seen that truth before. I have met with many who have experienced the same momentary feeling, amounting almost to a conviction. Is it not so, Randolph? or am I dreaming now?

RANDOLPH. The dream I am about to relate to you, Civilis, will almost confirm you in your ingenious fancy. That which is philosophically curious in it is, that from the beginning to the end I was the astonished listener to a long story which could have been no other than the coinage of my own brain. This story, but for its incompleteness, might be designated the Autobiography of a Pin, but as I awoke before the whole history had been related, I will entitle it

THE REMINISCENCES OF A PIN.

One evening during the early part of last summer, after having dined sparingly and alone,—Ellen was not with me then, and my house was a hermitage—I had my coffee brought to me in the library. Although summer, it was cold, and a fire threw a warm glow of cheerfulness over the apartment. Coffee was brought in. My reading-lamp was

placed on the table. The remaining daylight was shut out. I seated myself in this easy-chair. My only care—the only real sorrow which at such moments impresses itself upon me—was the thought that the absence of such comforts amongst millions of my fellow-creatures converted these comforts into luxuries which it was almost criminal to enjoy, and especially, to enjoy alone. In this melancholy, and half-thankless mood, I was about to help myself to a cup of this pleasant beverage, when I observed a Pin shining at the bottom of my coffee-cup. I removed it to the tray before me that I might not forget kindly to admonish my maid for her carelessness. I declined my coffee; for I have an instinctive aversion to pins. Musing on this trifling circumstance, I thought to myself, “Could a Pin relate its history we should sometimes listen to very curious recitals.” Absorbed by this idea I fell asleep; when gradually the Pin raised itself until it rested on its point, and began to perform a sort of pirouette before me. During this performance my fancy metamorphosed it into the form and dimensions of a young girl, except that the head (with the hair twisted round it after the manner of a turban) and the lower extremity (which terminated in a point), still retained the characteristics of a Pin. Having finished its gyrations, which appeared to have been performed much to its own satisfaction, methought it began to relate its history by echoing my own whimsical surmise.—“Yes, Mr. Randolph, a

Pin *could* relate very curious tales if it chose to do so. The pirouette you have been admiring I first performed above the end of the stem of a tobacco-pipe. Thrust through the centre of a green pea, I have danced in the air with a grace and buoyancy that a Grisi or a Taglioni might have envied,—a mischievous urchin such as you were half a century ago, Mr. Randolph, with cheeks swollen like a trumpeter's, blowing the pipe the while by way of accompaniment, and wondering, as well he might, at my dexterity. I was then but a learner. Practice makes perfect; and I can now, as you perceive, do without the pea, as boys in time learn to swim without the corks. And let me ask you, Mr. Gravity, whether there is not as much to admire in my dancing, as much to interest and delight the proud intellect of the *élite* of a nation, as in that of any of the lewdly-graceful performances of the most favoured pets of the Opera? I have seen these orgies, sir; for, although I have had my ups and downs, I have been in good society in my time. Yes, I have peeped from beneath a diamond, sir, on these Opera-shows, and have almost unwound the convolutions of my head in amazement,—not at their agility, Mr. Randolph, for I have often beat them out and out on my tobacco-pipe—but to think that men and women could be found ready to turn themselves into machines, and make grimaces, and play antics, for the amusement of other men and women not one whit wiser or nobler than themselves. But

I will give you my history : it is a strange one I promise you : So listen.

“ I was not born, nor, correctly speaking, created ; but proceeding from a previously-prepared wire—the parent of many thousands of my species,—was cut by the shears of the pin-fabricating Fates into an individual existence, which for a brief space I endured with but little consciousness of the fact, having been tumbled into a heap of similar embryos waiting certain very important additions, namely, my head, my uncorrosive vesture, and my polish. I had already passed through the grinding process of my lower extremity (which might be called my rudimental education), under the hands of a master famous for his points. It chanced that I had an excellent head, and well put on, and I naturally became a very sharp pin. I cannot too much expatiate on the inestimable advantage of a head,—an advantage which I take some pride in remembering does not fall to the lot of all pins. With a good head, a pin of the right material, that is, of a good temper, and not too soft—might be made to go through almost anything. I have gone through a great deal in my time. Yes, sir, with a good head, a strong constitution, and superior powers of penetration, I know of no woollen nor even hempen difficulty which it might not readily overcome ; that is, barring accidents, such as falling into a cess-pool, or getting into the fumbling fingers of a man.

“ A slop-pail I always looked upon with abhorrence ; and never shall I forget the terror I experienced early in life, trembling as I did over this very utensil for several seconds, dangling from the front of Betty Bedquilt’s morning gown. There I was, head downwards, and the gravity of my head, for once, nearly ruined me. But, luckily, Betty’s hollow tooth gave a twinge at the very moment I had given myself over as lost, and I was saved from the exterminating pollution of the cesspool by being made the instrument of alleviation to Betty’s surcharged tooth ;—a filthy business for a pin of my pretensions ; but I forgave the degradation, as it saved me from a worse : besides I felt that I had performed an office of real charity : and to reflect on the good we do is no slight happiness in this world.

“ Well, as I was saying, and with good reason,—a slop-pail is my aversion ; and the thing most detestable next to this is to fall into the hands of a masculine biped who happens of a morning to be minus a button to his shirt. These creatures have digits with only sensitiveness enough to manage a button, or to tie hard knots with a yard or two of twopenny tape : but, for a Pin ! the Fates save us delicate existences from their paws. We are made for the fair sex. Their modest charms are intrusted to our keeping. We are the guardians of their delicacy and honour. And many a time have I balked the unseemly advances of libertinism by a blood-letting scratch or a venomous puncture, when unguarded

thoughtlessness and opportunity have concurred to expose some charm, intrusted to my especial keeping, to danger and assault. Oh, these men! I almost loathe the sight of them. I was once in terrible danger of being bent double by one of these uncouth wretches: but I was too sharp for him; for, penetrating into his awkwardness, I penetrated at the same instant into the quick under his thumb-nail. By this exploit I escaped his clutches; for, with a very wicked wish, away he flung me, and I fell into a seam in the carpet, and thence wriggled through into a chink in the chamber floor.

“Here I lay inactive and neglected during several weeks. How I wished I could convert that varlet into a living pincushion! I was inexperienced then, and naturally fell into the lax way of thinking so current amongst mankind. I really thought there was a difference, nay, an immeasurable difference, between a milkmaid and a marchioness: so I looked with contempt on the one, and entertained a sort of servile reverence for the other. All my anxiety was to raise myself in the world, at least as high as the waist of a real Baroness; and here I lay exuding verdigris out of sheer vexation for near a month. Oh, these men! I did nothing but invent schemes of revenge on the whole fraternity whenever I should effect my liberation.

“One mischief, however, my internal fumings did myself. I began gradually to lose my polish, and was thus parting with my best chance of redemption;

for glitter is a great attraction, and external appearance no slight recommendation in the eyes of the world even to a Pin. I, however, still possessed my powers of penetration, which was no slight point in my favour; and was, moreover, still as straight as any young lady after her new corset has been properly laced. But let me drop similes, lest my fancy should hurry me into imprudences. I have seen much which is not to be mentioned, and have lived long enough in what is called good society not to have learned discretion. Indeed, the only difference I could ever perceive between the fashionable portion of society and the vulgar consists in a discreet government of the tongue. The former utters its best thoughts and suppresses its worst: the latter gives an honest utterance to all. So now, having resolved on circumspection, let me proceed with my story.

“ Nearly a month after my accident, I had the good fortune to be rescued from my obscurity by the chambermaid, who, having exhausted her mistress’s pincushion, one day when the carpet was up, had recourse to the crevices of the floor to supply her necessities. No sooner did she espy me than she drew me forth, and, according to her custom, placed me in her mouth, covered as I was with the excretion already mentioned.

“ Having been thus unwittingly restored to my pristine brightness by the thoughtless Susan, I was transferred to her habit-shirt. It chanced that Susan’s

lip had that morning received a slight incision from an indiscreet use of a knife whilst feeding, and the poisonous matter that had dulled my brilliancy was duly transferred to the wound. A poisoned lip was the consequence. The wound was cured after some weeks of disfigurement and pain: but as Susan was ignorant of the cause of her mishap—oh, how much evil is caused by ignorance, Mr. Randolph!—she continues to deposit stray pins in her pretty mouth as usual, to the jeopardy of her own as well as their existence.

“ I was begged of Susan by the lady’s maid; and the very same day I was employed in a way which I thought a little derogatory, for my duty was to hold together some whity-brown paper placed around a bonnet which had to be returned to the milliner for alterations. Pins, however, should not be particular, nor judge too hastily. Every accident is not a misfortune, though at first sight it might look like one. It is impossible to foresee what good fortune disagreeable circumstances might be leading us to. We neither know what we escape nor what we are approaching. This was my case. And as for the degradation;—I was cured of the prejudice, as far as regards myself, by observing to what uses one set of human beings converts the rest of the species. It was here I began to grow philosophical. Pins, thought I, do not work for pins. The animals do not labour for each other, save only (and this out of love) for their little ones; but each creature labours

for itself alone : whilst men and women, I perceived, not only enslave the animals beneath them, but enslave each other. I never could comprehend the meaning of this, nor see the necessity for so much work. I was first led into these reflections by the following circumstance. A delicate young creature named Jenny Blanchard, a worker in this establishment, took me one Sunday evening, in the bow of her bonnet, to church. It was the first time I had ever been there. It was a novelty, and I paid great attention to all I heard. I perceived that people came to church to be instructed by some one far greater than themselves, as to their duties. I well remember these words being read from a great book.—

‘ Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

‘ Consider the ravens : for they neither sow nor reap ; which neither have storehouse nor barn ; and God feedeth them : How much more are ye better than the fowls ?

‘ And which of you taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit ?

‘ If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest ?

‘ Consider the lilies how they grow : they toil not : they spin not : and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

‘ If then God clothe the grass which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more will he clothe you, O, ye of little faith ?

‘ And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

‘ For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

‘ But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

‘ Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

‘ Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old: a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth.

‘ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’

“ Just as I was rejoicing within myself that all the overworked maidens, whose toils I had been witnessing for more than a week, *will work no more*, but live in health, and be arrayed in beauty as the lilies are, the preacher—a *man* you may be sure, Mr. Randolph,—explained that all these beautiful words meant the very reverse of what they seemed to mean: that the poor should be always with us; and that the poor must work in this world for fear of being damned in the next. Poor Jenny Blanchard fainted, and was carried back to the place whence she had

come,—I cannot call it her home—and in three days, sir, she was dead !

“ I saw much in this ‘ Maison des Modes’ of too painful a nature to remember willingly, but which is too deeply engraven on my memory to forget. I became the casual property of Miss Lydia Brierley : and thousands of times have I been transferred from her palpitating bosom to her work, and from her work back again to her bosom. For many weeks together, from six o’clock in the morning till the noon of night, have her delicate fingers employed me to aid her in her almost ceaseless avocations. Poor young lady ! so gentle ! so spotless-minded ! so truly good ! Why was she doomed to everlasting work, whilst the ladies in the house I had come from were so utterly exempt therefrom as to be almost dying of idleness and ill-nature ? Amongst us Pins there is a difference. A great, unwieldy corking-pin is made purposely for coarse employments, in which none but a biped of the masculine gender would ever think of employing a delicate ‘ Medium’ like myself. But why this difference amongst the Fair Angels of the Earth ? And what are you breeched and bearded ‘ lords of the creation’ about that you permit it ? I am pretty sharp ; have a tolerable share of natural penetration, but I never could understand this. Why loll you there, sir, in luxurious ease—I will, however, eschew heroics as I am just now in the melting mood ; and I thank my stars that I am made of a

melting material: — so let me proceed with my story.

“The last time I was employed by Lydia Brierley was on her death-bed. Poor child! She had become the victim of consumption. Work, work, work; together with a sensitive, loving, gentle heart, had utterly consumed her. The last office in which she employed me was to secure a five-pound note in her last letter to her mother, who had no means of escaping the workhouse but by poor, gentle Lydia’s life-consuming toil. I remember she placed me over her name; and as she feebly pressed me through the papers, a tear fell upon me! I can never forget that tear!—one of the last poor Lydia shed; for she was in heaven before I quitted her emaciated hand! How often have I said to myself, ‘Oh, that poor Lydia Brierley had been a Pin!’ At that moment I would willingly have held her grave-clothes about her, and have gone with her to oblivious corruption in the quiet ground! but it chanced otherwise.

“What I heard and witnessed in this millinery establishment, it would almost dissolve me to relate. Most of these millinery maidens died in their ‘teens.’ Some, however, I saw there who had passed the common meridian of life, proof, apparently, against incessant toil. These were shrivelled up into automatons. They had skins of parchment, and tempers like—but I have abjured similes, and will not say—like what. For months after I shuddered at my recollections of this Temple of Fashion—the type, sir, of hundreds—

on whose altars, hung round with shrouds, hecatombs of maidens are yearly sacrificed! Shame, shame on the men who have neither the sympathy, nor the courage, nor the wit, sir, to prevent it."

Here some slight noise awoke me, and interrupted a recital in which I had begun to take a peculiar interest. But for the interruption, I know not to what other scenes and circumstances, of which I have no waking knowledge, I may have been introduced by my loquacious persecutor: and herein consists its strangeness. Until I had (as it were) *heard* the narrative, I was ignorant of it; and am still ignorant of what remains untold.

I am not one of those who draw out-of-the-way inferences from dreams; nor do they often make any rememberable impression on my mind. The dream just related is one of the exceptions. The strange phenomenon it exemplifies arrested my attention; whilst the social bearings of the very common-place circumstances which passed in review before me, afforded me matter for much serious reflection, and led me, moreover, into certain grave inquiries, which, if they tended little to my immediate happiness, prepared my mind for the reception of those new and startling convictions that ultimately led to its attainment. I had often witnessed scenes of real misery, and had, not unfrequently, relieved them. From single cases of severe privation, I had been led to contemplate the physical and mental misery of whole classes of my fellow-creatures; and for many years I

had been pretty actively engaged, lessening, as I vainly hoped, the sum of these miseries ; and that—on a scale bearing some proportion to their magnitude. But the fancy-painted fate of poor Lydia Brierley affected me more than the realities had ever done : and the words of my fantastic relater of her history, —“ Oh, that poor Lydia Brierley had been a Pin !” absolutely haunted me for weeks.

To render human beings more equal in Happiness by relieving the miseries of the miserable, has ever been the object of all Philanthropy : but hitherto, Civilis, Philanthropy has been a mistake. It is admitted that, to do good ; to mitigate the misfortunes of the unfortunate ; to relieve the miseries of the miserable ; to reclaim the criminal ; to encourage the virtuously-disposed ; to feed the hungry ; to clothe the naked ; to heal the sick ; to administer consolation to the dying ; in fine—to lessen the sum of human evil in all its recognised forms and varieties, has ever been the object of the nobly-generous and sincerely philanthropic Few. They have ever done their best, as far as social influences would permit them, to follow in the footsteps of their great Exemplar, who died to convince an unbelieving world—unbelieving, because unconvinced,—that Love alone is Happiness. But, had these Howards known that, for the most part, the good they did on one hand was the prolific cause of misery on the other ; had they reflected that, as society is constituted, to raise one portion of their brethren from abjectness,

is to plunge another, and perhaps, a more "deserving" portion into it; even these Christ-like philanthropists could not have been happy men.

CIVILIS. But is this necessarily so, Randolph? Is our best, our most disinterested Benevolence reduced to this sad strait?

RANDOLPH. I will suppose a case or two by way of illustration, and you shall judge. The wide-spread prostitution of the beautiful daughters of Poverty and Misfortune is a dreadful evil. If you build and endow "Magdalens" to reclaim them, and make these Magdalens permanent and happy homes for the reformed sisterhood, you do no more than offer premiums for the prostitution you deplore. These refuges for "Sin" will soon be peopled from the streets: yet these will still be full of the frail candidates for a home, who, to be eligible, must Sin. Such homes, if permanent, would indeed be noble evidences of Philanthropy—that is, noble in intention, and an unconscious homage would be thereby paid to the principle of Christian Love. But it is easy to see that the Benevolence would be less inconsistent with itself, and far more just, if these homes were made the asylums of Innocence instead of Crime. And why is it not so? Because this would be an open and avowed acknowledgment of the natural Right of all to share in the blessings which the beneficent God of Nature sends so abundantly for all; it would be a gratuitous declaration by the wealthy of the rottenness and injustice of the present system. This has never

been ; or only to a very small extent. But it is clear that unless Charitable Asylums, and Penitentiaries for the reformation of Criminals be made permanent and comfortable homes for offenders against the criminal and moral Law, they are not, in reality, philanthropic ; nor do they assist, except to a very small extent, in the subjugation of Evil, and the diminution of human suffering ; as an example or two will prove. Say a thousand of the female Unfortunates just alluded to be annually reclaimed, for a time only provided for, and then returned into Society, competitors for employment : if they obtain the employment, a thousand of the previously-innocent are annually turned into the street, and the last resource of modesty is forced upon them. It is true, Civilis, that this system of purblind Benevolence makes work for well-meaning kindness to do : but it is also true that such charity serves only to perpetuate the evils it attempts to cure, and does not, I fear, diminish it one jot. Could the really benevolent see how small a modicum of good they actually do, their generous minds would turn away from the Sisyphus-labour in despair, if not in bewilderment and disgust. Take another example. Say, by way of guess, for I am not very conversant with statistics, that the number of criminals in the United Kingdom,—I mean, those persons who live by despoiling “ honest ” men of the fruits of their own, or somebody else’s labour, is half a million : take the number of Beggars, probationary Thieves, and those persons who exist between roguery and insufficient

labour,—outcasts of Society all!—at half a million more ; and we have a million of human beings amongst us in the most abject and pitiable condition in which it is possible for human beings to be placed. Suppose that by a philanthropic wish we could convert all these people into honest, high-minded men and women, each with a handicraft by which to earn a subsistence, and each determined to rely on it for this most commendable purpose : suppose them further, by our wish, earning their subsistence by the labour of their hands, what have we accomplished ? We have transformed a million Thieves and Beggars into a million Workers : but we have also dispossessed a million workers of the means of living, and converted them into candidates for the Workhouse and the Jail. Is this well done ? And yet our intention was benevolent in the extreme.

CIVILIS. I fear your position is but too true, Randolph : the only way I see out of it is, in such a case, to provide more labour by which to employ this million whom we have supposed rescued by a wish from idleness and crime.

RANDOLPH. But according to the system on which Society is at present established, Civilis, Employment will not be found unless it be “remunerative” to the Capitalist or Employer. And that this cannot be, is proved by the half million of Paupers, many thousands of them “able-bodied,” who almost constantly exist in our Union Workhouses. We have, therefore, by our wish, but converted a million of persons, who were previously earning a subsistence by the labour

of their hands, into a million wretches, whom, if Selfishness dared to be consistent, we should put to instant death. But, as Selfishness does not dare to be consistent, we can only do by them the thing next most consistent with our principles, namely, keep them in a parish prison on the smallest pittance possible, and thus shorten their existence by sorrow, and imprisonment, and lingering starvation. This, Civilis, is precisely what we are doing now; except that competition, and an occasional extra demand for labour, come to the relief of the victims for a time, or possibly produce a change of sufferers. A child might see that there is no philanthropy in this. To heal the sick, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, *is* pure benevolence as far as it goes, because all this can be accomplished without much depressing other members of the indigent classes. *If, however, these methods of relieving indigence have the effect of raising the object of your bounty into a competitor with others in the "Labour-market,"* (though a windfall for the Free-traders), it is clear, that, (all else remaining equal) *his elevation is the depression of another somewhere.* As long, therefore, as there is not remunerative work for all who are willing to work, the labour of Benevolence, under the present system (and which, whether little or much, is a *condemnation* of the system), is but little more than labour in vain. The truly consistent men (whatever we may think of their Draco-like Philosophy), are those who denounce the necessary results of an inhuman system as "SCOUN-

DRELISM," and, with the whip and gallows would *attempt* its extermination. No, Civilis: we must do one of two things,—pension Indigence for life on the wealthier classes, and, by thus making a comfortable provision for Idleness, do a monstrous injustice to Industry; or (which in principle is the same thing), feed it on the water-gruel of Pauperism in a Parish Poorhouse. THE FORMER MODE OF PROVIDING FOR INDIGENCE, AND OF PREVENTING CRIME, IS THE GRATUITOUS, WHILST THE LATTER IS THE FORCED, HOMAGE, THAT EVEN SELFISHNESS IS COMPELLED TO PAY TO THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE, WHICH IS LOVE. This, Civilis, is the result of my investigations—investigations which the dream I have just related suggested to me—on the philosophy of Benevolence. Its suggestions were equally useful in directing my attention to the philosophy of Work. It has lately become the fashion, as you well know, to attach an undue dignity to Work. England rejoices in a writer whose style is admirably suited to the impenetrability of his ideas: ideas which, when we can come at the meaning of them, are seen to be nothing more than the merest common-places, artfully rendered imposing by the darkness of the diction in which they are shrouded rather than evolved. There is a great mystery in book-making: and the writer in question is at the very head of his craft. One idea which we gather from his writings, and I am not sure that we are indebted to him for any other notion equally distinct, is, that *Work dignifies the Worker*. Musing on the

fate of poor Lydia Brierley, I arrived at a very different conclusion. The building of bonnets; the fashioning of furbelows and flounces, may be necessary, in the present state of society, as a means of obtaining bread not otherwise obtainable; but to the worker in what consists its dignity! Either mankind are by nature equal, or they are not. If equal, then working to produce superfluities for others in order that the worker might obtain the commonest necessaries for himself, can be no other than injustice; and the work a galling evidence of his degradation. If they are not equal, then work only serves to force on the worker the humiliating conviction of his inferiority. In either case work, instead of dignifying, degrades the worker. It is a very different thing where every man works for himself; and no man arrogantly claims a right to share in another man's labour; or where, out of pure love, a man works voluntarily for another. There is perhaps no greater proof of the truth of these positions than that it is the great effort of all men to avoid the condition which makes hireling work a necessity; and that every man feels that work is not degrading just in the proportion that it is self-imposed. It is false, then, that mere physical labour, or, in fact, any labour which, performed for pay, recognises a class of professed idlers in society, can confer dignity on any man, however it might suit the purposes of a butterfly class, and its paid apologists, to propagate the fallacy.

Equally false. Civilis, is every usage of Society, in

every portion of the globe. The Religion, Morals, Customs, Manners, Laws of the entire Earth are false. Even Philanthropy is false in practice, and only true in aim. It would dispense benefits to all mankind ; but after the lapse of six thousand years, it has yet to be instructed *how*. Not by almsgiving ; not by preaching reformation ; not by abrogating Laws, or remodelling Institutions ; but, by helping Men to know that they are Men. If by a wish, Civilis, I could exchange all that is false in the Laws and usages of Men for what is just and true, I would not wish that wish. It would accomplish nothing. But if I could draw aside the veil which hides men from themselves, I would draw that veil aside ; and all would be accomplished.

After arranging on a meeting for the morrow, Civilis left me. What transpired at that meeting will be detailed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

RANDOLPH. CIVILIS.

RANDOLPH. We have satisfied ourselves, Civilis, what Man is, spiritually. We have seen that his Soul is an Intelligent Principle, needing Knowledge, and designed and constituted by an all-intelligent Creator, solely for its attainment. We have seen that Knowledge is Truth, or Right Convictions. We have seen that Truth is Philosophy, and its results Religion. We have seen that every individual Soul has within itself the capability of ascertaining and testing Truth; that it neither needs assistance from without, nor can avail itself of such assistance, except by means of the evidence which brings conviction. We have seen for what beneficent purpose the Spiritual Soul is conjoined to a material body. We know that the conjunction of the Spirit with the Matter constitutes Man: that the matter is composed of organized parts: that the organization of the Matter is the LIFE of the Matter; that is—that Life is the result of organization, or organization the result of Life. We know that Life is not conscious. We know also that the Soul is neither organized nor divisible: that it has not Life; but that it is inherently conscious, intelligent, self-existent, and eternal;—a Thought, or Conception of the Deity,—an Embryo Intelligence. We know that

its first knowledge is instinctive ; that it is the innate consciousness of its own individuality, and of its own existence : that it is the germ of all future knowledge ; and that its added knowledge constitutes its Happiness. All these facts we have proved : we know them to be true. We know that the requirements of the body are as nothing compared with the requirements of the Soul. We know that the purpose of the Soul's existence is the attainment of knowledge ; and that to suppose it to have been created for any other purpose, or to be capable of any other, is to entertain an erroneous notion, which necessarily leads to unhappiness and Evil. We know that Error proceeds from wrong convictions ; and that convictions whether wrong or right are absolute in their influence ; hence, that Men are not " Sinners," because Error cannot " Sin." We know, therefore, that any assertion to the effect that Men are fallen, sinful, lost, and naturally degraded creatures, is false, and full of mischief. We know that the Soul has no attributes or qualities ; and hence, that the Science called Metaphysics, which reasons on these supposed attributes as though they were real existences, is a false science, and its teachings vain. We know that the Soul has no moral nature : hence we know that the science of Morals is a false and deceptive science, adapted only to a false and artificial state of Society. We know that whatever teachings—though called knowledge—which are based on the false assumptions of these pseudo-sciences, is not knowledge ; but

baneful, soul-defrauding Error. We know that nearly all which passes in the world for Religion, is not Religion; but well-meant, though erroneous, Piety, degenerated into Fraud. We know that Jurisprudence, that Government, that the tenure of Property, that the principles of Commerce, that nearly all Education, that the greater portion of our Literature, our Fine Arts, and all our Social Usages, Institutions, and Laws, are based on an equally false foundation, and hence that the knowledge supposed to be derivable from each of these sources, and from all of them, is, for the most part, false, and fraught with wide-spread calamity to the human race. I do not say, Civilis, that much Good has not been extracted out of these Evils,—for this is the intention of Evil: I do not say that this state of things has not been necessary and inevitable;—for through ignorance and discomfort must Man attain to knowledge and happiness: but, in the abstract all is either absolutely false, or the little that is true will be found to be only guesses at Truth, which, because untested by a principle, have never had the force of Truth.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians has well and truly said:—

“If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” Thus it is that men have struggled on under the doubtful guidance of their Soul-instincts, rather than by the illumination of certain Truth. Knowing the Principle by which

all Truth is ascertained and tested, you know, Civilis, that all these positions are true. Some of them we have proved by unanswerable argument: others await this proof. I am pledged to supply what proofs are wanting: and you to watch and scrutinize the process: for we must "Prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good."

The first cause of all things is Intelligence. This Principle shall henceforward govern mankind for ever. Men shall be Angels on the Earth; and the Earth shall be a teeming Paradise. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God." So said Paul to the wisdom-loving Greeks. Had Paul KNOWN the truth instead of guessing at it; HAD HE PREACHED KNOWLEDGE INSTEAD OF FAITH, there had been no need of the Alpha. But Paul was a noble fellow notwithstanding. In him the truth struggled hard for an utterance: but the time for its utterance had not then come. How manfully he strives against the Animalism of the world! How grandly he pleads for Spiritualism; persuaded of an inherent immortality, even whilst he half asserts, and half denies, the resurrection!

THE GREAT FIRST PRINCIPLE OF LIFE—OF LIFE, Civilis, not of the inherently-existing Soul, BUT OF ANIMAL LIFE, IS SELFISHNESS. Two Plants growing side by side, each heedless of the other, absorbs from the EARTH all the nourishment it needeth; or, if there be too little for both, then, all it can. Animals do the same instinctively. IT IS THE GREAT

LAW OF LIFE. Whatever lives, blindly and unknowingly, seeks to prolong its Life, until the purposes of its life are accomplished. It then dies. Nor, to unconscious Life, is death an Evil. Man the Animal is naturally Selfish—not the conscious Soul (the true Man), but the conventional man of Flesh. **THE MAN THAT LIVES AND DIES IS INSTINCTIVELY SELFISH.** With him, as with the unreasoning brutes, and the insentient herbs and grass, Selfishness is the great Law of Life. Wherever there is a reasoning Soul, be it in the Dog, this law is modified. *But* for the **TRUE MAN**, the inherently conscious Soul, which for a time inhabits the living tenement of flesh, this Selfishness could not possibly work evil. But since the Body lives exclusively for the Soul's experience and education, **SELFISHNESS DOES WORK EVIL.** All the real Evils we complain of are caused by Selfishness;—mere inconvenience is not an Evil—and by Selfishness they are perpetuated. **THE SOUL, THE TRUE MAN, IS NATURALLY UNSELFISH;** and from the beginning until now its Instincts have warred against the principle—this Selfishness—which is the Law of Life. Out of this strife have grown all those modifying circumstances which have been invented to restrain the instinctive Selfishness of the Animal within rational and enduring bounds;—I mean mystic Religion, Morals, Arts, Sciences, Literature, and Laws. By means of these, the Soul has endeavoured to assert its sovereignty, and to turn the Life of the outer man to

its own immortal purposes. The struggle has been long; and sometimes fierce and terrible: but Mind is at length obtaining the mastery, and will have it. The modifying circumstances I have spoken of, deeply tainted as they are with the Selfishness which created them, or, for its own ends permitted their creation,—these Religious Morals, Sciences, Arts, Literatures, and Laws—have accomplished nearly all they are capable of accomplishing; and, in some places, more than they were intended to accomplish. They are the barriers by which Selfishness here restrains Selfishness yonder. Compromises, not Cures. They were never intended to exterminate Selfishness, (nor have they the Power); but rather to foster and perpetuate its existence by systemizing its action: for without such helps, the unrestrained Evil would be constantly preying on itself, and procuring its own destruction; thus, hindering for ever the progress of the Soul, and nullifying the purposes of its creation. Mind is proud of what it has accomplished: and properly so. But it must accomplish more: it must accomplish all. And to this end it must test the value of what it has done; and see what remains to do. It boasts great stores of Knowledge: it must see if it be Knowledge. It vaunts of its Morality: it must ascertain what its Morality is worth. It prides itself on its Religion: it must inquire what portion of it is true. It brags of its Justice: it must ascertain if it be anything more than a name. It rejoices in its Government and Laws: it must

determine whether they be not better suited to mere brute natures than to Men. It talks ostentatiously of *what it could do* in the matter of General Education : but the Millions who are perishing for want of it, must see whether they cannot educate themselves. Be it our business, Civilis, to help them. And with this purpose in view, let us apply the touchstone of our First Principle to the several branches of our knowledge, and see whether there be not a better and more certain mode of educating the "Millions" (were we generously agreed to do it) than even by throwing open our Schools and our Literature ungrudgingly to all. In the progress of this investigation we shall not only prove the existence and universality of the Selfish Principle, and show the banefulness of its influence on the destinies of Men ; but by seeing, as we shall do, that our Religion, Morals, Literature, and Laws, are, (as I have just asserted) but modifications of this principle, we shall see the desirableness, and possibility, and I believe also, the appointed means, of its subversion. Placing the two Principles and their consequences in juxtaposition, we shall see which is the more suitable for the happiness, and the wants and purposes of humanity : and having done this, we will leave Mankind to decide between them : "For where our treasure is, there will the heart be also." Truth needs not the Priest, nor the Orator, nor the Faggot, nor the Sword, to propagate it. It requires but to be unveiled that it might be seen of men, to become

the Law of their Souls, and to be established amongst them for ever.

CIVILIS. I shall be a most willing listener, my dear Randolph: for though I know enough of the great Truth, to subscribe generally to the many important propositions you have just enunciated, I am still too much a Lawyer to dispense with the evidence by which you will, I am sure, substantiate your sweeping charges against the present knowings and doings of Society. Some minds, from habit, are incapable of grasping a great principle in its entirety, until, by means of evidence, they have mastered its leading facts: their genius is synthetical, not inductive. Mine is one of these. Hence I delight in evidence. Although I never really doubted the fact of my Soul's existence; your logical demonstration of this fact in the beginning of the Alpha-vision has converted the feeling into a mathematical certainty, and the pleasure-affording faith into an enduring happiness. In like manner, I have ever been persuaded of the Soul's immortality; but had I been sceptical, your proofs in the Alpha-vision would have convinced me. I have never needed, I have never desired, an additional proof: and yet you have just given me one which is so logically conclusive, so obvious, so simple, so all-sufficient in itself, that I have no words to express the happiness your demonstration has afforded me. **BECAUSE THE SOUL DOES NOT LIVE, IT CANNOT DIE!** why I would not, if I could, unknow this demonstration, to be absolute Emperor of the earth. For, say, **LIFE** is the

Soul : it matters not. Life is then a thing apart from Matter, and not a mere condition of Matter : *an Essence which THINKS independently of Matter* : a thing which does not live, and therefore cannot die. So happiness-giving is, to me, a logical demonstration, that I could affect ignorance for the pleasure of being taught.

RANDOLPH. Beware of the common error, Civilis. Let self-reliance be the rule, and reliance on others the rare exception. What another mind can do, yours can do. But discussion is a spur to intellectual perception. Our minds are differently constituted ; partly from physical differences, but chiefly from a difference in education, habit of thought, and the accidental disparity in our knowledge. It is these latter differences which cause the physical differences ; and hence the folly and uselessness of the labours of those pseudo-philosophers who call themselves Phrenologists. Mental differences exist between us from the circumstances I have mentioned. We shall therefore regard Facts from different points of view, and thus be the means of conferring on each other a mutual advantage. Not, therefore, because I can teach you anything you could not discover for yourself, do I ask your attention : but because my reasons for believing a fact might be different to yours.

CIVILIS. It is because I conceive that they will not only be different to mine, but better, that I am anxious to hear them. But I have another reason, and a

more important one. It is this. Although your First Principle is a major proof of the truth of things, which proof renders all minor proofs superfluous (because it necessarily includes all others in itself); still, to prove the Minor facts separately, is to prove anew the truth of the Major Fact; and thus to make assurance doubly sure:—a great desideratum, Randolph, in so great a matter. Therefore, to test its truth, that, if it stand the test, we might place it on high as a beacon-light to the entire world, and for all ages, I will scrutinize your facts and reasonings as though I were ignorant of the great Principle, or sceptical as to its truth.

RANDOLPH. You will find this a difficulty, Civilis: but the love of Truth which prompts the attempt makes me proud of my disciple. It is not, however, my intention to try your powers of simulation, or to tax your patience, overmuch; although to some extent this is necessary to a thorough comprehension of the Animal Principle (which at present governs all societies of Men), as well as more completely to test the Intellectual Principle which will ultimately subvert and supersede it. The *modus operandi* of the change may be expressed in a word, EDUCATION: *an Education having one aim*—THE INTELLECTUAL PERFECTION AND HAPPINESS OF THE ENTIRE SPECIES; *and one Specific for their attainment*, TRUTH. Our first business, therefore, is to ascertain how far the present mode of education is really conducive to INTEL-

LECTUAL PERFECTION AND HAPPINESS ; and how much of the Knowledge we are so chary of is, in reality, SOUL-ENLARGING TRUTH.

The plan of examination I propose to adopt is this. Amongst the papers of my late brother, whom I will continue to designate by his adopted name of DIONYSIUS, are a mass of scattered Memoranda under a variety of heads, made by him evidently with a view to the systemized work he had been meditating for several years. These isolated Notes I have arranged with as much attention to order as their incompleteness would admit of; having interpolated an occasional sentence where such an addition was necessary to produce continuity of the subject-matter, and a connection of the several parts. These Memoranda I propose to read to you in the order of their present arrangement. The first division of these Notes refers to Metaphysics, Morality, and the Virtues. If the reasonings or assertions concerning these appear to us inconclusive, insufficient, or erroneous, the interval that will elapse before reading the Notes which comprise the next division, I propose to devote to comment or discussion; and so of the others. This plan of proceeding will bring the entire subject we have to discuss systematically before us. I have no apprehension as to the result.

Civilis assented, and I proceeded to read the following—

EXTRACT FROM THE PAPERS OF DIONYSIUS ON
METAPHYSICS, MORALITY, AND THE VIRTUES.

“The Human Soul being, like its Parent Deity, an Intelligent Principle, it follows that the Knowledge it can acquire is its Happiness, which, confined to itself, is the Happiness of Possession : but as Knowledge is Love, the highest Happiness attainable by the Human Soul, is, like the highest it is possible to assign to the Deity, the Happiness of Distribution.

“It follows, therefore, that if Men lived up to the Standard of their spiritual nature, they would seek knowledge that they might attain Happiness ; and they would distribute it without stint amongst their fellow-men, and this out of pure Love, and thus obtain for themselves the more exquisite happiness of Distribution.

“HERE, THEN, WE HAVE A PRINCIPLE WHICH CLEARLY DETERMINES WHAT MEN OUGHT TO KNOW ; NAMELY, ALL TRUTH ; AND WHAT THEY OUGHT TO DO ; NAMELY, ALL THE GOOD IN THEIR POWER, IF THEY WOULD FULFIL THE HIGH PURPOSES OF THEIR BEING, BE MEN, AND ESCHEW THE MERE GRATIFICATIONS AND CONDITION OF THE BRUTE.

“It is manifest, then, that if we were to live up to the Standard of our Spiritual Nature, our desire for Possession, and all our intellectual energies, would be directed towards the attainment of Mental wealth, which we could distribute without the dread

of impoverishing ourselves; and as Knowledge is naturally sympathetic, we should no more seize upon and hoard material wealth, or material comforts and possessions, than we should be greedy in the matter of Knowledge. The former of these hypotheses describes the present condition of the human family, and explains the origin of all the miseries known amongst us: whilst the other shows clearly the condition to which it must attain before happiness can be universal; before Evil can be banished from amongst us; and before we can make any considerable progress, individually or collectively, towards that Intellectual Perfection which it is our high privilege to strive for, and within the reach of our capacity to attain. To be convinced of these things, as I am, is a happiness indeed!

“Clearly, then, if Men had not chosen Animal gratifications as their chief good, their privilege of doing good would never have been enjoined on them as a duty; and that purely deific maxim, ‘Thou shalt Love thy neighbour as thyself,’ would never have been propounded. But, as a duty it must now be enforced on humanity, until the pursuit of knowledge as our chief good enables us to practise it as our most glorious and God-like privilege.

“We need knowledge, which is an acquaintance with Truth: and we have a certain test for discovering Truth, and distinguishing it from Falsehood. Some of the ancient Philosophers nearly reached it. Plato, Socrates, Zeno, and others.

They were lovers of Knowledge: Philosophers in that sense: but not so in any other. They had a clearer conception of Deity than many of us moderns: perhaps clearer than most of us, notwithstanding that we pretend to a more familiar—a much too familiar, acquaintance; but they had not conceived of the true nature of the Human Soul. Their Knowledge ascended only to the point of Pride: it never touched that altitude which converts it into Love. Socrates nearly reached it: perhaps touched it: but Persecution sent him to an untimely death. The Greek Philosophers erred in thinking the mass of men inferior to themselves in nature. They did not rise above the conception of Law as a restraint to the licentiousness of Ignorance; and statues, and civic crowns, as rewards and incitements to virtue. *But* for these impediments, their Pride of Intellect, which made them dictators, and their reverence for Virtue, or rather for the Virtues, as Justice, Probity, Fortitude, Valour, Love of Country, and the rest, they would inevitably have reached the First Truth. Plato's "Republic" held the *practice of the virtues to be the chief good*—the utmost limit of attainable perfection. It was a nullity: a dream: it could not work. And, why? Because the Virtues are chimeras, nonentities; Justice is a name, not a reality. Friendship (reduced to action), a wrong done somewhere; and Patriotism, mere national Selfishness. Nothing can be good, or right, or true, or have any real existence, which pertains, exclusively, to an individual

man, or to a class of men, or to a nation. Make it universal, and its very universality deprives it of existence. In this consists the simple grandeur of real Christianity. The catholicity it teaches swallows up Morality, and extinguishes the Virtues. The conception is grand, and makes the Pride, and the theorizings of "Philosophy" ridiculous. CHRIST TAUGHT LOVE: BUT HE SHOULD HAVE PREACHED KNOWLEDGE, WHICH, IN ITS UNIVERSALITY, IS LOVE. He taught that the Soul is immortal: but his Metaphysics were at fault, and he could not demonstrate the fact: he left this doubtful: and his grand but simple system could not work. Volumes might be written on the non-necessity, and undesirableness of the Moralities and the Virtues; but by the aid of the First Principle, a single sentence logically disposes of them.

"Vice and Immorality ought not to exist amongst us. Now if these had no existence, neither could the Moralities and the Virtues exist. As the latter cannot exist without the former; and as the former ought not to exist at all; it follows that the Virtues and the Moralities ought, as soon as possible, to be dispensed with. What then shall we say of the Literature that enjoins on mankind the practice of these undesirable qualities? Why, that the authors of this Literature do not know what they are recommending. We might test their efficacy and usefulness in another way.

"If Virtue is a good, and I possess the means of

being virtuous, it is my privilege under the Mental system, or my duty under the Animal one, to extend the means of being virtuous as widely as possible amongst my brethren : and if this is MY duty, it is the duty of all men : and if all men did their duty ; and all men availed themselves of the means—which it will be admitted is desirable, then all men would be virtuous ; but as there could be no appreciation of the virtue in the absence of Vice, Virtue, in effect, would have no existence. And this is what all good men, all catholic-minded men, must earnestly desire. Christ's catholicity reached this point : but out of it grew a creed : and Faith was enjoined on men instead of Knowledge ; hence its failure.

“ Now, what is the cause of Vice ? In the language of the world it is Injustice : in the language of true Philosophy, it is Ignorance, or False Convictions. What cherishes it ? These same False Convictions. What stands, like a bulwark, in the way of its repression ? Again, Ignorance ; of which the Selfish Principle is at once the parent and the nurse.

“ Benevolence is one of the most beautiful of the virtues. What a wilderness of misery would our ill-governed world be without it ! Yet, the more need there is of Benevolence, the more Misery must exist for Benevolence to alleviate. But the wretchedness with which it co-exists is a dreadful Evil. The former cannot exist without the latter. Seeing this sad fact, how many have doubted even the existence of a God ; or, believing in his existence, have

arraigned his Government! When, alas! we wilfully shut our eyes to the general Laws by which he governs; make Laws of our own; and, in our besotted ignorance, fit them for Animals, not for dual-natured Men. In these, our Laws, we shall find that the Vices and the Virtues have their birth. Both are human: neither is divine.

“What, I ask again, shall we say of the Literature which represents the Moralities and the Virtues as the greatest good attainable by Man, and a passport to that happiness in Heaven which we fail to get even a glimpse of on Earth? Why, simply that it values them at more than they are worth; and that, however necessary they may be whilst Ignorance fosters Evil, the sooner the world can do without them, the better. They are human contrivances, and commingled with misery; and the Literature which would perpetuate them, though locked up from the millions, is not of half the value as this one sentence of Truth:—

“FELLOW-MORTALS! DEGRADED AND MISERABLE THOUGH MILLIONS AMONGST YOU ARE, YOUR ELEVATION MUST COME THROUGH THE CULTIVATION OF YOUR INTELLECT, AND YOUR REGENERATION MUST BE THE WORK OF YOURSELVES.

“But, the Metaphysicians? what are they about? Helping the Moralists! So much, then, for the labours of the Moral Philosopher and the Metaphysician! To what shifts have not the former been put to define his Morality; or to tell us, in any case, where

Morality ceases, and Immorality begins! And to the Metaphysician we are about equally indebted. What do we learn from either that it behoves us to know? As to Metaphysics, our course is clear: we know enough for all useful purposes by knowing the beginning,—which Metaphysics do not teach: and to the professors of this occult science we may safely leave all the subtle distinctions and incomprehensible quiddities by which they delight to exhibit their profundities, perplex their readers, and deceive themselves. The different phases of Mind are merely different phases or degrees of Knowledge. Our Wonder is the outward and visible sign of our Ignorance. Hope and Fear, Joy and Grief, are phases of Ignorance. All our violent Passions are the result of social wrong, which is, again, the result of Ignorance. Our Judgment is complex Reason, and our Reason is complex Perception. We judge wrongly when we judge in ignorance; and rightly when our perception has made sure of its facts. Our Imagination is a Soul-instinct, in its impatience for Knowledge, assuming facts on which to build some possible or impossible fabric of events as a solace to the ever-inquiring Soul. These assumptions are always legitimate, and, in their consequences, always good, *when they are regarded as assumptions, and not as true Facts*; or, when they lead to the investigation which proves whether they belong to the category of Falseness or of Truth. They (these assumptions) are Evil in their consequences, when, unproved, they are

negligently or ignorantly viewed by the ignorant as proved verities. And, alas! there is much of this evil in the world: and none greater or more mischievous than has arisen from regarding the speculations of Poetry as genuine Prophecy; which never did exist, and never will. And this, which no Metaphysician has told us, is the whole mystery of Metaphysics!

“Our pleasures are chiefly animal and selfish—even those which arise from our Mentality; which happens thus: we ignorantly convert the pleasures of Sense (which are pleasure-giving *means* for the acquisition of knowledge) into the end and object of our existence. Nearly all our Fine Arts are thus desecrated and misemployed. Our selfish love of these animalisms (which Metaphysicians and Moralists approve of because they are natural, and, in their subservient ignorance, defend,) would become rapacious and intolerable were they not subjected to some restraint: hence, in order to set limits to the chaos of evil induced by these irrational indulgences; we contrive Laws, and manufacture Morals, and set up tribunals, and invent punishments, and concoct virtues, and imagine grotesque systems of pains and penalties in the world to come; and thus perpetuate them, irrational as they are, and, as far as in us lies, entail them on the world for ever.

“To the dreamy labours of the Metaphysician and the Moral Philosopher is intrusted the task of explaining these Passions and ill-directed Desires, and

of determining how far they can go innocently, and, (as if such a thing were possible), where Innocence inspissates into crime! Of course, without a First Principle, the whole of this pretended ingenuity is but guess-work and mere dicta, of less value than yesterday's "Times," or "Moore's Prophetic Almanack" of last year.

"Seriously, however, I do not censure these Morality-meters; for were it not for the restraints which their labours impose on a portion of mankind, there would be nothing but licentiousness and unmitigated misery in the world. As it is, we have Virtues and Moralities as the counterpoise of Evil; and we have the externals of decorum, and the semblance of knowledge, in place of the more rational realities. No, we will not seriously blame them for laying hold of Virtue because they could not reach Intelligence. Let us rather honour them for their benevolent efforts to make the best substitute within their reach do the work of the true operator beyond it. But praise cannot be given them except for their ingenuity and good intentions. To speak of them as men of Genius, or as intrepid pioneers hewing out a way for the progress of mankind towards the perfection attainable by their nature, would be to satirise, rather than to commend them.

"Thus even our Ethics and Metaphysics, which, next to our Religion, profess the most; and which are, at last, the very pith and marrow of all our educational Literature,—excepting only the purely Scientific—

contain little or nothing of that knowledge which the Intelligent Principle within us prompts us, by its yearning after rational happiness, to know."

RANDOLPH. Here ends, *Civilis*, the cursory, but argumentative Memoranda of Dionysius on these hitherto-lauded branches of our educational knowledge. They are again referred to in his similarly-searching essay on our imaginative and didactic Literature. Their HISTORY is traced in his essay on Government and Laws. But, in the essay I have just read, his argument, as to the abstract inutility and undesirableness of Morality and the Virtues as aids to human perfectibility, is, I think of itself, unanswerable and conclusive. No one will be bold enough to affirm that Vice and Crime ought to be cherished amongst men, in order that Virtue and Morality should have a being. At least, there are none who would assent to the naked proposition. But if we view the subject a little more in detail, we shall see that there are tens of thousands of persons in all communities, by courtesy called *Civilized*, who have a direct interest in the continuance of Vice and Crime that leads directly to their fosterage. And these very persons are, moreover, everywhere the sinews of the national Power, and the chief exponents of the national intelligence. Alas! *Civilis*, IS THIS CIVILIZATION? You perceive that, not only do Vice and Crime give activity to the Moralities and the Virtues, keeping their practisers and propagators busy in what has the external

resemblance of Good ; but they give dignified, perhaps "honest," employment to Law-makers ; to salaried Judges ; to stipendiary Magistrates ; to paid Advocates and Lawyers ; to Jailors ; to Turnkeys ; to Hangmen ; to Police Commissioners, and all their salaried subordinates down to the thief-catching constable ; to Military and Naval Commanders, their Subalterns, and men. All these, it must, I suppose, be confessed, procure "honest" livings, and, no doubt, live themselves most virtuously, by the simple continuance of Wickedness and Crime. Nor in this catalogue have I included the clergy of all denominations who thrive on immorality and irreligion. I just now assumed that no one would be bold enough to contend that Vice and Crime ought to be cherished, even to keep the white-robed Virtues amongst us. Yet, with such an array of good places, and good things, that would be lost to their present possessors and future expectants, for ever, I feel constrained to withdraw the assumption ; and *that* from sheer lack of faith in the potency of Virtue and "Religion." Of course, such a sacrifice of Interests can never be required ; because the change, if it ever come, must be too gradual to need it : and the reformation, moreover, is too distant to cause the present race of possessors or expectants the slightest alarm. I have merely put the case to show you the anomalous state of things that inheres to the system in which the Moralities and the Virtues have their being : FOR CERTAINLY, NO EVENT COULD BE MORE CALAMITOUS

TO THE LIGHTS AND LEADERS OF THE WORLD, THAN THE SUDDEN CESSATION OF IMMORALITY AND CRIME !

CIVILIS. You warned me beforehand, that my office of Scrutator on the part of Society, would be a difficult one. So far, I find the task I have undertaken an impossible one. Certain it is that the Selfish System thrives on Vice, and battens on human degradation and misery. It is equally certain, that Morality and Virtue must be superseded by the element of a new System, Intelligence. But when "the white-robed Virtues" have gone, Mankind shall build a monument to their memory ; and many an old-world name shall be inscribed upon it ! And yet, the *greatest* names shall not be there : for Poverty keeps no record of its generous sacrifices. I doubt, Randolph, if Intelligence will ever rear such sterling worth, such large-souled Men, as, in loving Faith, have daily sacrificed to Virtue ?

RANDOLPH. Give ALL MEN Virtue, which is Love, which is Intelligence, and it will find new modes of action. Not individuals will it raise from wretchedness ; but, with a larger aim, every new act of Love shall confer happiness on a world.

CIVILIS. I admit your plea of Catholicity, and yield. But I have a word to say on Metaphysics. The reasoning of Dionysius dwarfs this science into nothingness. He, however, omits to tell us what is MEMORY. I appeal to you. How should the Soul which knoweth what it knows, forget what it knoweth,

and thus have need of that something we call Memory? What is Forgetfulness? What is Memory? If there be that partial oblivion which we call Forgetfulness, then there is Memory, Recollection, or a recalling what is a part of the Mind into the presence of itself, to be scanned again, and again to be forgotten: for if the Mind does not *always remember* what it knows, it certainly forgets what it knows: and that it does not always remember, or keep clearly before itself, facts which are completely its own, is evident by this:—I sometimes think of myself, then, forgetting myself, I think of facts external to myself; as of this rose, and its colour, odour, form; or I reflect on facts which are a part of myself; as, two and two make four. The relation of myself to myself is so close that there never can be a gap between them; and yet, in thinking of this rose I forget myself: in thinking of my hand, I forget my spiritual self. I know that I exist: I know also that my existence is not your existence: but I do not *always* think of these facts. They are remembered, and then forgotten; forgotten, and again remembered; and never is my knowledge remembered all at once. And sometimes when it is important to me that I should remember a well-known fact, I do not remember it until the occasion has passed for its use. There is, then, such a thing as Obliviousness, and such a thing as Memory. Will your Principle, which should explain all mental phenomena, enable you to explain

these? Dionysius either did not perceive the difficulty, or he availed himself of the very shabbiest of the Virtues, and avoided it.

RANDOLPH. The true spirit of purchasable, either-side-advocacy seems to have descended upon you, Civilis: and your last remark is worthy of the inspiration. When "the right hand shall forget its cunning," the habitual Advocate shall forget his art.—No!—do not apologize: a professional sarcasm is never very damaging. The wit is had recourse to when the cause is lost, and is thrown in by way of a *quid pro quo* to the client for his costs. Barring the banter, there is *something* in your remarks on Memory; *but not much*. Dionysius explains the NATURE OF IMAGINATION: and you have described, or nearly so, the NATURE OF MEMORY. What either is (except that they are circumstances, and not things) is as little capable of being described in words, as what the essence is we call the Soul. "We know enough"—as Dionysius expresses it—"for all useful purposes," by knowing the true nature of the Soul: which knowledge is the whole of Metaphysics; and is, moreover, the only metaphysical knowledge the Metaphysicians have failed to afford us.

It is assumed in our philosophy that whatever fact Consciousness, or the Soul, once perceives, it always retains. This innate and necessary power of retention—and which is part of the Soul's nature, is what we mean by Memory. It has also the power of abstraction, in which is included what we mean by

Forgetfulness. Without this necessary and inherent power of abstraction, we could not analyse a complex idea, nor, from particulars, ascend to generals. Some sceptics have assumed that because the Thinking Principle does not *always* think, it might sometime cease to think; and ceasing to think, be nothing. And one of your remarks seems to glance at this conclusion. But this partial obliviousness is as necessary to the Soul's progress in knowledge as the power we call Reason: and since the purpose of this power is *progression*, the existence of the purpose proves the very converse of the sceptic's conclusion: for why should there be progression at all, or *thought* at all, if it lead to nothing? These innate powers of the Soul prove a *purpose*; and the purpose proves the immortality. But, to return. What the Soul once perceives and knows it always retains: it is a new consciousness added to the First Consciousness; in other words—it is the Thinking Principle, expanding itself into a new perception of collateral facts. But, suppose, Civilis, that, in the perception of new facts, the Soul does not perceive the *relation* these new facts bear to itself, or to each other, *then, the new facts are isolated*: they do not form part of a series which make up one entire whole, and this, for want of a perception of the intermediate facts which would complete the chain. Being isolated, until the soul makes an effort to remember them, or some accidental circumstance recalls them—they are forgotten. This new perception (or re-perception) of forgotten facts

constitutes the *act* of Memory : and the *cause* of the forgetfulness (where, for the purposes of abstraction they have not been *purposely* laid aside), is the want of the connecting fact or facts which would have rendered the whole series one entire body of facts, or a concentrated Soul. Where this connection exists—that is, where every fact which the Intelligent Principle has once perceived, is seen to have the same relation to itself as effects have to their causes, and as all minor causes have to the major, or first cause ; the circumstance called Memory has no positive existence, because there is no gap to produce Forgetfulness. The cause of Forgetfulness is, therefore, the non-perception of the principle which shows the relation of all truth to the First Truth : for all things are One : and all being resolvable into this One, if we had a clear perception of every separate fact, including, of course, the fact which connects them into unity, we should be perfect Intelligences ; and the circumstance, or phenomenon, we call Memory, would cease. So also would Reason ; so also would Imagination, and the rest.

The Soul, then, is a Real Existence : *a thing which is, and is CONSCIOUS that it is*. Forgetfulness is a non-self-conscious Circumstance : a condition caused by our partial Ignorance, but necessary to our progress in knowledge : and because of its necessity, we have the power to produce it by concentrating the Thinking Principle on any particular idea or fact with a view to a complete examination of such idea or fact. This

Power we call Abstraction. The Facts or Knowledge which are thus purposely laid aside or forgotten, are however, still retained in the Mind. This retentive circumstance is Memory : and the power of recalling forgotten facts at will, is Remembrance or Recollection. They are, however, constantly being recalled by accidental circumstances. A flower loved in childhood recalls all the circumstances of our childhood with which that flower is associated. Thus, ideas are conveniently associated in CHAINS that they might be laid aside without being absolutely forgotten. But Principles are the strongest, because the simplest, and most systematic cementers of our facts. We are thus admonished to get Principles, because a Principle contains within itself all the separate facts which exist in connection with it. To have, and to comprehend, the principle, is to possess the facts ; and what is more, to know their nature, value, and use. TO ARRIVE AT THE PERFECTION OF KNOWLEDGE, ALL ISOLATED FACTS, OR ISOLATED CHAINS OF FACTS, SHOULD BE UNITED INTO ONE SERIES OR CHAIN. THE UNITING LINKS MUST BE PRINCIPLES. Secure a Principle, and not only all known facts, but all the unknown facts, connected by natural relationship with the Principle, are within the grasp of the Mind. So that, having the Principle, which by its relationship to the facts, secures these facts, the Mind might relieve itself of the labour of retention, and throw the records of its facts away. The Mind is *then* at greater liberty to pursue new chains of thought, and thus

arrive at new principles; and with the like result. Then, viewing the Principles thus attained as separate Facts ; IF WE CAN UNITE THESE FACTS BY ONE PRINCIPLE WHICH GOVERNS AND DETERMINES THEIR RELATIONSHIP ; THE WHOLE MASS OF SEPARATE FACTS ARE CONNECTED AND ARRANGED INTO ONE ENTIRE SERIES OR CHAIN OF FACTS ; AND, IN EFFECT, ALL OUR KNOWLEDGE IS REMEMBERED AT ONCE. THE MIND ACTS AS A WHOLE : AND, THAT, CONSISTENTLY. ALL OUR THOUGHTS ARE DIRECTED TO ONE END : ALL OUR ACTIONS HAVE ONE PURPOSE : EACH ONE IS CONSISTENT WITH ALL THE OTHERS ; AND THE SOUL MAKES PROGRESS IN INTELLIGENCE WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY. ALL KNOWLEDGE IS WITHIN OUR REACH : AND PERFECTION IS SEEN TO BE ATTAINABLE. This all-uniting Principle is ours : and the partial Forgetfulness which the Metaphysicians have not explained, and which have been a stumbling-block to Sceptics, is seen to be a necessary and most important aid to the Soul in its progress towards its purposed Perfection.

CIVILIS. Thank you, my dear Randolph. You have given me food for thought during the interval that will elapse before our next meeting. You have shed a new light on the nature and office of Memory. You have, moreover, rescued Forgetfulness from being any longer regarded as a natural defect of the human mind, or as a proof of Man's inherent imperfection. To a mind that has been taught from the earliest dawn of its intelligence to regard itself as necessarily imperfect and helplessly dependent, I

cannot imagine anything to be more consoling. It makes one blush, Randolph, to think that with all our pretensions to Religion, and all our fancied reverence towards the Deity, we have been every moment dishonouring that Being by our Ignorance! How true it is that Ignorance, disguise it as you will with Mitre, Cowl, and Vestments sacerdotal, cannot be either reverential or religious!—But, my dear Randolph; as the FIRST TRUTH contains all other Truth, making its Possessor almost a perfect MEMORY, I foresee that the art of Printing, hitherto of such vast importance to mankind, will, in the process of time, be nearly superseded by the dissemination of the First Principle. For all controversy, and speculation, and opinion regarding Right and Wrong, and all Didactic teaching—the chief employment of the Printing Press at present—will be no longer needed when, by referring to an eternal Standard of Truth existing in their own minds, men can determine the truth of all such matters for themselves! MARANATHA! MARANATHA! Verily, the Lord cometh! The Lord is come! In the dim distance I see the world of Humanity united by the power of a Single Truth! There is one Fold; and one Shepherd: and the God of all Truth dwells amongst his intellectual creatures: and the Nations of the Earth are one Nation; and all mankind are happy! Poets, and Patriarchs, and Prophets have seen it! Not a dream of the PAST was the Golden Age of the Poet: but a truthful foresight of his Soul gazing

onwards through the haze of forty centuries into the FUTURE;—the possible Future! which now I see more clearly than the most truthful records could picture to my mind the Past!—How! Randolph! We were talking of Memory.—I have felt what Inspiration is! My soul has foreseen the Future!—but the ecstasy is past.—The habit of my Mind forbids that I should see this stupendous subject in its entirety, and long retain it. Doubtless this is well. But tell me, how happens this? I perceive the whole as in a phantasmagoria: then all again is dark!

RANDOLPH. A mind disciplined to Falsehood and Error needs some discipline to accustom it to Truth. You must see every phase of the subject: study it: dissect it. You must also see Falsehood in all its forms: study, and dissect it too; strip from its face the mask it wears, and contemplate the Impostor in all its nude deformity. This is the discipline you need. Be patient! and I who have passed through all the mazes of Doubt and Difficulty, will lead you through the labyrinth. I know your present state of mind. You get occasional glimpses of the entire Truth; but not having tested every part, and thus systemized it in your mind, it escapes you. By the time we get to the end of our survey this idiosyncrasy will cease. The light will be a mild and steady light. At present, it is like the concentrated rays of a mighty lens, too ardent, and too dazzling to be gazed upon. You look full at the Sun and its brilliancy but blinds you.

CIVILIS. I am, however, deeply grateful for these

momentary gleams of Happiness. When my prophetic fit was on me, Randolph, you must have thought me a little crazed. Certainly, to sober-minded Sensualists, my rhapsody would have looked like Madness.—By the way, Randolph; what is Madness, Lunacy, Derangement? IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE MIND CAN BE DISEASED?

RANDOLPH. Deranged, Civilis; but certainly not diseased. The physical organs, through which the Mind perceives external objects, may, from many causes, become diseased: false impressions are thereby produced; and these produce erroneous convictions: but the Soul is neither diseased nor mad. All Error may be said to be insanity, no matter how produced; whether by reasoning rightly on false premises, or by making false deductions from true ones. The cure for all such madness is the Truth. This, however, is not Madness as men at present understand it. And, yet, there is no other lunacy than this. John Dalton's visual organs conveyed to his sensorium impressions of colours different to those of other men: but John Dalton was not mad. Idiots, whose physical organs are deficient, or defective, are not mad. They have Souls as sane as those of other men; but Knowledge cannot reach them. These Idiots are physical malformations: accidents of a general Law: or the result of physical disease in their parents. Men may overwork an organ until it grow diseased and produce wrong impressions; which will necessarily result in wrong convictions, and

erroneous sentiments and acts. The visual organs of Milton (it is said) were overwrought: he went blind, not mad. He wrote a grandly poetical history of the "Fall of Man." This work, judging from its absurdity, is more like a manifestation of what men denominate Madness: but, though wrong in all its facts and reasonings, it was the result of a strong conviction, and not of "a mind diseased." Mental Derangement is nothing more than a confusion or *derangement* of ideas: a multitude of disconnected facts, which, after two thirds of a laborious lifetime spent in their collection, the Possessor perceives to be valueless: hence, they but confound his reason. They have cost him a lifetime, yet amount to nothing! He lacks the First Principle by which alone they can be arranged and systemized into soul-satisfying knowledge. The energies of his defrauded Soul droop under the disappointment: Memory becomes a burthen, and Obliviousness a blessing. This state of mind occurs only to those who have A GREAT OBJECT in their researches. The mass of collectors of old-world facts, and antiquated philosophy, are satisfied by THE LABOUR; and are pleased with being the known repositories of a dead, profitless mass of useless trifles. They look as complacently and solemnly grand (and the grandeur of the look with them is everything,) as looks our GRAND MUSEUM:—a Temple enshrining fragments from which the soul has fled: a monument of absurdity and affectation: and yet, withal, a splendid

evidence of what men ought to be, and wish to be, but are not. Now and then, from amongst this crowd of solemn triflers, starts an earnest man whose aim is the discovery of a living, soul-exalting Truth. To him, disappointment often brings what men call madness — ungovernable irritability of temper, or a total prostration of the Intellect. It is said that a justly celebrated, deeply-thinking man of our own day, after long and laborious researches into the wrecks of an antediluvian world, is himself a wreck. And, probably, the overwork of particular organs, and a chaos of ideas incident to the want of the First Principle, form the lamentable cause of his calamity. Here, then, is mental DERANGEMENT, and perhaps physical disease. The Physician should cure the one, and the Metaphysician, the other. All that is required to restore equilibrium and a rational activity of mind, is that he should be kindly and gently conversed with; the truth of the First Principle carefully insinuated, and the facts of the physical science he has for years been gathering, be presented to him in their true light. In a short time he would be, not only the man he was; but a greater man. He has been delving after the Truth; but, failing to reconcile a multitude of anomalies (which a comparison of true facts with false ones ever must produce,) Derangement followed: and this is Lunacy; for where “Madness” is not the result of physical disease, it is nothing more than mere bewilderment, which THE TRUTH can cure. Disease cannot touch

the immaterial Mind. Show him the Truth for which he has been vainly striving ; and his vigour of mind, namely, his Memory, will return to him in all its pristine strength ; and his Knowledge,—useless in its derangement—will shape itself into one easily-remembered, happiness-giving whole.

CIVILIS. 'Then Shakspeare's interrogation—

“ CANST THOU NOT MINISTER TO A MIND DISEASED ;
 “ PLUCK FROM THE MEMORY A ROOTED SORROW ;
 “ RAZE OUT THE WRITTEN TROUBLES OF THE BRAIN ;
 “ AND WITH SOME SWEET OBLIVIOUS ANTIDOTE,
 “ CLEANSE THE STUFF'D BOSOM OF THAT PERILOUS
 STUFF
 “ WHICH WEIGHS UPON THE HEART,”—

THE FALSEHOOD THAT OPPRESSES IT,—might be answered in the affirmative ?

RANDOLPH. Ay, Civilis : not, however, forgetting *his* answer to whom the question was addressed :—

“ THEREIN THE PATIENT MUST MINISTER TO HIMSELF : ”—

For, although he who knows more than another, has, to some extent the happiness-affording power to help another by unveiling the hidden truth, the other must take the trouble to *perceive* it for himself. I am firmly persuaded that in the case of this celebrated man, as well as in all cases similar to his, our “ sweet oblivious antidote,” the Truth, would reach the malady. You now see, Civilis, why “ doting Age”

grows childish; and why Memory (which is the Mind) breaks down and deserts its owner. Oh, Civilis, the Memory would not fade; there would be no "decay" of the immortal Mind; no "second childishness and mere oblivion," were THE ONE TRUTH universally known to which all other verities tend; AND WHICH, UNITED, MAKES THE MIND OF MAN ONE WITH HIS IMMORTAL SOUL, — AN EVER-LIVING MEMORY. You were right in what you just now said about the Printing Press. In the coming Future its progress-helping capabilities will scarce be needed. But as things are, that which should form the living memories of men exists, (in the form of dead opinions,) in books of other men's inditing; and the most studious amongst us—read, read, read, IN THE VAIN HOPE OF SECURING FOR OURSELVES AN INDIVIDUALITY. But, OPINIONS cannot make an individuality. TRUTH ALONE CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS. When Truth is universal, then, but not till then, might we dispense with Printing. AS LONG AS MEN LACK CERTAINTY, AND REPOSE UPON OPINION, Life will be, as Shakspeare has described it:—

——“ A WALKING SHADOW ; A POOR PLAYER,
“ THAT STRUTS AND PRETS HIS HOUR UPON THE
STAGE,
“ AND THEN IS HEARD NO MORE :—A TALE
“ TOLD BY AN IDIOT, FULL OF SOUND AND FURY,
“ SIGNIFYING NOTHING.”

CHAPTER IV.

RANDOLPH. CIVILIS.

CIVILIS. I feel that I made so much progress in Knowledge yesternight, in my assumed character of Scrutator on the part of Society, that I may fairly drop the assumption, and become a listener and Scrutator in reality, and on my own account: for I find that my long habit of viewing all subjects separately, as though each subject had a beginning, a middle, and an end of its own, instead of being, as they are, parts of one great whole, has such a tendency to incapacitate me from seeing, immediately and at one view, the relation between apparently distinct facts, that this inquiry of yours into the value of the present Knowings and Doings of Society, will afford me the greatest help towards the mastery of the magnificent subject we are discussing. I will give you a proof of the necessity for the continuance of my discipleship. This afternoon, on my way from Westminster Hall, I met with Doctor Fitzelliot, who is a great Phrenologist; and, but for your having demonstrated to me on the previous evening, that Morality is a human contrivance, and not an ordination of God, I should have been vanquished by one of those very Philosophers whose pretensions to usefulness you yesterday disposed of in a single sentence. The doctor insisted that Man is a Moral

being, on the plea that he finds a provision made for his Morality in the human head. There is, he said, a large region appropriated to the moral feelings in the very summit and centre of the brain; a portion which is always largely developed in the heads of all highly moral and conscientious men; but invariably small, or entirely wanting, in the skulls of the habitually vicious and immoral. I inquired whether the feelings produced the development, or the development the feelings. He replied, that where the development is large in infancy the development produced the feelings; but where the development is small in infancy the feelings, if implanted by education, would produce the development. Then, said I, the Feelings are the original cause of the development. He admitted that they were; because bad developments usually transmitted worse to their posterity, whilst good ones generally transmitted better: therefore, said he, Morality, as the highest perfection of man, ought to be taught; and the more so, because in every head the provision for it is actually made, or room left for it, as the result of Education. Hence, he contended that Morality being an ordination of Heaven, could never be dispensed with. But if, said I, the development in what you call the moral region of the head, is producible by education, and is the result of the feelings, still the question remains: IS THE EDUCATION PROPER? ARE THE FEELINGS RIGHT? Admitting, therefore, that our Feelings and Senti-

ments are registered on the brain, and indiced on the countenance, is this any proof of the Feelings and the Sentiments being right? If you teach brutality, brutality will somewhere produce the record of the feeling: but is brutality to be encouraged because it produces its brutal bump on the human head? If following the Moral Law produce moral bumps, and it be thence inferred that Morality is an ordination of God; in like manner, if following brutal practices produce brutal bumps, it must also be inferred that brutality and vice are the ordinations of the Deity also. The Doctor was dumbfounded, and admitted that the moral development of the brain is no proof of the Moral Nature of man, or of the abstract desirableness of Morality.

RANDOLPH. The Soul is the Prince of the palace it dwells in, and has, to some extent, the power to shape the tenement into what fashion it pleases. A Soul might inherit a noble cranium, or be the heir of a mean one; but if Selfishness misdirect the Sentiments of its inhabitant, knavery and licentiousness will convert it into a nursery of loathsomeness and crime. Implant right sentiments in the infant mind; teach the child to seek happiness through Intelligence, and not through Sensuality,—and there will be no malformation in the cranium, nor on the countenance will there be any sinister expression, any ugliness, or silliness, or deceit. This point settled, let us see what Dionysius has to say on the subject of the Belles Lettres.

EXTRACT FROM THE PAPERS OF DIONYSIUS.
DIDACTIC AND IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE.

“It is very generally observed,—and the fact is unceasingly urged on our attention by the opponents of popular Education,—that Knowledge fails to make men happier beings, or better citizens : in other words, that it does not render them more moral, more virtuous, or more religious ; neither better servants, more loyal subjects, nor happier men. Unfortunately, every day’s experience compels us to admit that there is but too much truth in this seemingly ungenerous objection. Innumerable are the instances in which we find that the knowledge men have acquired at school or elsewhere, has served only to render them more thorough, because more accomplished and ingenious knaves. This has always been a most humiliating conviction in the minds even of those who have laboured the most zealously in the cause of popular Education. These lovers of their species, having faith in the potency of Knowledge for Good : notwithstanding these numerous facts which lead to a contrary conclusion, have been wont to argue, that although every Good in this world has its attendant Evil, we must derive our conviction of the general benefit of Knowledge from the opposing fact, that the balance is found on the whole to be greatly in favour of Good. Thus encouraged, these friends of the human race have ever advocated a more general diffusion of Knowledge as

the only means of bringing about the political and moral regeneration of the world.

“On the other side, the opponents of progress have clung fast to the discouraging fact, which all are obliged to confess, that in numberless instances the spread of knowledge has had the very opposite effect predicated for it by its friends.

“That it makes good men better, and has a strong natural tendency to improve the bad, is the case of the Educationists.

“That it makes bad men worse, is the whole case of their opponents.

“Thus we have had to fight for advancement against adversaries to whom it was but natural (even as a matter of conscientious conviction) that they should range themselves against us. The necessary consequence has been, hitherto, that the spread of secular knowledge has been slow, and its influence, whether for Good or Evil, has been scarcely felt on that portion of the people who form the great bulk and base of our Social System.

“Here, then, a question suggests itself, and imperatively demands an answer; namely:—Is KNOWLEDGE REALLY PRODUCTIVE OF EVIL AS WELL AS GOOD? Most assuredly not—if there be a God in the Universe! I shall assume that there is a God, and thus incur the responsibility of proving the negative I have made to depend on the assumption.

“First of all we must bear in mind that there are influences at work throughout the entire framework

of Society, which constantly compel men in some cases, and offer very powerful inducements to them in others, to act contrary to their inborn convictions. These influences are the result of erroneous Social institutions, all the complex workings of which we shall unravel when we come to consider the great subject of Civil Government and Laws. Under this head I SHALL PROVE THAT MANKIND HAVE THE POWER TO RID THEMSELVES OF THESE INFLUENCES. Let us, therefore, for the present, suppose them gone. Let us suppose that a state of society exists in which a rational conviction in any man may be acted upon without coercion or constraint,

“In the first place I must prove, that, ALL PERNICIOUS INFLUENCES APART, A MAN MUST ACT CONFORMABLY WITH HIS CONVICTIONS: THAT HIS AIMS AND ACTS MUST BE THE REFLEX OF HIS KNOWLEDGE.

“To be cognizant of a true Fact, and to know without doubt that it is a true fact, is to possess Knowledge. For example:—two and two are equal to four. This is a true fact. No one doubts it: we all know that it is true. Hence this fact is positive Knowledge. Nor is there any power which can alter the fact in our minds. We may be compelled, or, by an influence acting upon us, we may be induced to act as though we believed two and two to be equal to six. We cannot, however, unknow our knowledge; and, notwithstanding the influence, the true fact is registered in our Souls, unalterable and eternal. The same is of necessity true of every other fact which is indisputably

our own. There are, however, some facts less easy of proof than the one just used to exemplify the assumed position. It is, of course, possible that another person may possess Knowledge, which, because I have not proved it to myself, is not my knowledge. Until it be my own by absolute conviction, it cannot influence my acts with certainty. If I merely believe it, *I might* act as though I knew it. But, being a doubtful matter with me, my Fancy, or my Convenience might determine the act I have to perform in reference to it. But once it is a settled conviction with me I have no choice: I must act conformably with my conviction.

“Suppose, for example, that I believe it possible to compound the Elixir Vitæ, and thus arm myself against the possibility of physical death. If some sentiment or hope to this effect—no matter how attained—urge me to make the attempt; this sentiment operating on my mind, is, for the time, a Conviction; I, consequently make the attempt, and might waste my life in the pursuit of this chimera. But, on the contrary, if I positively know, or through believable evidence, entertain a firm Conviction, that all which lives must die; it is utterly impossible that I can either attempt or hope to compound the Elixir Vitæ; just because it is not possible to believe a thing, and, at the same time, not believe it; or to know a thing, and, at the same time, not know it. As long as I feel an uncertainty about the matter, either way, I may make the attempt, or neglect to make it: but

once a settled conviction on the subject takes possession of my mind, I am compelled to obey that Conviction.

I am, however, liable to be operated upon by an external influence ; thus : Another person believes or hopes that I have the power to compound this medicine, and allures me by a settled salary to devote a portion of my life to the attempt. Needing the pay, as a thing necessary to my comfort, or perhaps, to my existence, although I know the thing to be impossible of accomplishment, I simulate a feeling contrary to my conviction ; and undertake to devote my life, if need be, to the labour ;—not because I hope for success, but for the sake of the pay. The pay, therefore, is the motive ; my necessities are the influence ; and my employer (influenced by a false conviction) the immediate author of my act. You may say that the act on my part is immoral. Without admitting or denying this, I reply that I was tempted to the act by an influence which could have no existence except in a false and foolish condition of Society. This influence tempts, or, perhaps, in conjunction with other influences, compels me to be a knave ; and confirms my employer in his folly. Thus is Society deprived of two good men, because one has a superfluity of the necessaries of life (which—I mean his life—being still pleasant he would perpetuate) ; whilst the other is in danger of perishing for want of them. Clearly, then, the “immorality” of my act must be put down to the account of Society, which,

by an irrational usage, is the remote cause of it ; and, as I will subsequently prove, is the real author of all immorality. This illustration is a little out of place, but has been admitted here as an exemplification of what I mean by the pernicious influences which I will ultimately show you we have the power to remove. Apart from all such influences, it has already been proved by two simple examples, that a human being is compelled to act conformably with his convictions. *If, therefore, the conviction be right, the resultant act is right ;* but, strictly speaking, NOT VIRTUOUS : *if the conviction be erroneous, the resultant act will be erroneous ;* but, certainly, NOT CRIMINAL.

“ Let us take, as another example, a case which is a little more complicated. The result will be similar of necessity.

“ I know that a falling rock would crush me. If, therefore, I perceive a rock about to fall, it is not possible that I should place myself beneath it, at the same time believing that it would descend harmlessly on my head. But I desire to put a period to my life, and *therefore* I expose myself to the certain destruction. Here, it might be said, I should be acting in opposition to the dictates of my conviction ; namely, that knowing the rock would crush me, my absolute conviction of the fact, ought, according to my own principle, to compel me to avoid the danger. But that is not my position, because it is but one half of a complex proposition. My first conviction is that the rock will crush me. I am miserable, and want

to terminate my existence: hence I have a second conviction:—namely, that by terminating my existence, I shall terminate my miseries. In exposing myself to the falling rock, I act conformably with both my convictions. The latter, or major conviction, governs the former, or minor one, and is the compelling cause of the suicidal act.

“Every man, then, acts, and is always obliged to act, in strict conformity with his convictions: and this fact establishes the truth of the four following propositions;—

“FIRST. THAT A HUMAN BEING, THOUGH HE MAY ERR IN JUDGMENT, CANNOT COMMIT SIN.

“SECONDLY. THAT AS FAR AS A HUMAN BEING TRULY KNOWS, HE CANNOT ERR.

“THIRDLY. THAT IN ORDER TO PRODUCE RIGHT CONVICTIONS AMONGST MANKIND, THE DIFFUSION OF REAL KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE UNIVERSAL.

“FOURTHLY. THAT HENCEFORWARD ALL INFLUENCES, WHETHER LAWS, CUSTOMS, OR CREEDS, WHICH HAVE A TENDENCY TO INDUCE OR COMPEL MEN TO ACT IN OPPOSITION TO THEIR CONVICTIONS, SHOULD BE REMOVED; AND SUCH ARRANGEMENTS SUBSTITUTED AS MIGHT BE FOUND MOST CONDUCTIVE TO THE SPIRITUAL PERFECTION AND HAPPINESS OF THE HUMAN RACE.

“This, then, settles the question as to the potency of all positive Knowledge for undivided Good. The Wrong and the Evil arise from EXTERNAL INFLUENCES, or from the UNCERTAINTY as to the Know-

ledge we possess being Knowledge, or from **ERRO-NEOUS CONVICTIONS**, which, for the time, have all the force and potency of Truth or positive Knowledge. Wherever there is a doubt about a fact, the resultant action will be either erroneous or right accordingly as the actor happens to lean to this or that opinion concerning its truth. The doubt will, therefore, always produce uncertainty, and leave the doubter free to act according to his fancy, or his momentary convenience.

“ This brings us to the questions,—**HOW MUCH OF THE STORED-UP KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD IS KNOWLEDGE ? AND HOW MUCH OF THAT WHICH IS REALLY KNOWLEDGE HAS BEEN PROVED TO BE SO, TO THE ENTIRE CONVICTION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO POSSESS IT ?**

“ We shall presently see reasons for concluding that the amount of positive Knowledge possessed at present by any individual, when separated from the mass of Facts, Fancies, Opinions, Speculations, and Dicta, which pass current for Knowledge, is necessarily very small.

“ The Literature of a nation or community is the ostensible repository of its Knowledge. Keeping before us, as we proceed, the convictions just arrived at ; and testing the value of the Literature we are about to describe (rather than minutely to examine), by the only test which can discover its truth ; let us proceed to inquire what is about the amount, and what the real nature and value, of the Knowledge

from which so much Good is by some so erroneously expected ; but which is, nevertheless, a sealed book to the great mass of the people of all communities.

“ What we want is the power to proceed with CERTAINTY in all our strivings after Truth. And this is only to be had by the aid of a First Principle by which to test all Truth. The want of a First Principle has hitherto produced uncertainty in all mental investigations ; and the uncertainty, the confusion and non-conformity of opinion and action which have been, hitherto, so inextricably interwoven with all subjects.

“ The nearest approach we have had to a First Principle, and which has, to some extent, supplied the want of one, is that INNATE FEELING OF THE TRUTH OF THINGS, which strong, cultivated, and meditative minds have always had, and have always chiefly relied upon. This feeling is, in fact, a *Sixth Sense, a Soul Sense*, that SPIRITUAL INSTINCT, which, for want of a more definite name, we might venture to denominate SYMPATHY.

“ In all true Poets, and true Men, this sense is strong ; strong, because it has been cultivated and encouraged : and from this source arises nearly all the unproved, and, therefore, Speculative Knowledge which we possess ; and which that portion of us which is taught at all, is taught to rely on and believe. Nor is this reliance, where more positive knowledge is unattainable, to be despised or discommended. On the contrary, it should have been

always placed within the reach of all men. But, since only strong and cultivated Intellects can *originate* such Knowledge; or, are likely, under the present state of things, fully to appreciate it when presented to them; it follows, that the UNCERTAINTY connected with it in the general mind, is, and ever has been, a great bar to its potency for Good, even amongst that portion of mankind that have lived within the pale of its influence. No marvel, then, that its consequences are less satisfactory than the promoters of its extension have been wont to anticipate. With these considerations and convictions clearly before us, let us proceed to determine for ourselves the true value of our Didactic and Imaginative Literature as an agent of Civilization, even when viewed apart from the social influences which are constantly acting on the public mind to render it inoperative for Good.

“To Men and Manners that portion of the Literature we are about to consider, is chiefly devoted. It is, for the most part, imaginative; and the purposes it generally professes to serve, are the encouragement of high and generous feelings, and the inculcation of Virtue, Morality, and Religion. The portrayal of what is called, but falsely called, *Human Nature*, is another of its aims. The whole of this, but the latter more especially is, however, only surface-work: a recognition of only half a truth; but which is falsely, and ignorantly represented as the whole truth. Because an unwise, semi-barbarous

Social System has drilled, tortured, and moulded men into selfish, mean, servile, ignorant, cruel, credulous, bigoted, vicious, and rascally representatives of humanity ; because these, and fifty other infamous qualities, and intermediate shades of qualities, are thence found to be strangely blended with a Religion into which Man has been terrified : mingled also with the not-quite-extinguished feelings of his neglected better nature,—which feelings ooze out in the modified forms of Morality and the Virtues ;—because Society forces human beings into such inconsistent counterfeits of men, it has become a trade, and not an unprofitable one, to unweave, disentangle, anatomize, and explain these queer idiosyncrasies ; and thence, it has grown into a custom to call such descriptions, *portrayals of human nature* ; and to laud the libellous exploit as a marvellous result of deep insight into that supposed mysterious compound of inconsistencies, yclept Humanity ! To draw these caricatures ; and to utter, in the sacred name of Truth, these libels on Men and Deity, have been the dignified amusement of some writers, and the serious labour of others, ever since Literature has found a market amongst men. Innumerable are the fanciful tales, imaginary histories, and wonder-moving fables, which Genius has invented as vehicles for these apocryphal portrayals. They have been, for the most part, enriched with much refined sentiment ; savoured with much wit, pleasantry, and satire ; and garnished with an abundance of moral precepts, as

honourable to the writers, as they have been useful to the world. Such has been the staple of polite Literature amongst all modern nations: and such it was in all the most intellectual nations of antiquity.

“But the Generous feelings inculcated with so much zeal in this Literature, requires, as every one is aware, no great stretch of Generosity to keep pace with them. Of course, when Generosity is recommended, it is always with a due regard to the prior claims of an elder virtue. Be charitable; but let your charity begin, as well as end—at home. That which is meant by Generosity is, therefore, left entirely to the taste and worldly wisdom of the reader. If we are too unselfish, too kind, we shall violate the ordinances of that other virtue—which is necessarily a great favourite amongst us—PRUDENCE ITSELF! It is easy to see that a virtue with such limitations is no virtue at all; but A MERE SENTIMENT, which, to feel, will cost us nothing. And, which of the Virtues, which of the Moralities, is not in the same predicament?—a sentiment, rather than a rule of life which men under the present social arrangements can afford to reduce to practice?

“The most valuable and truth-telling, or rather, truth-suggesting portion of our Belles Lettres is devoted to POETRY AND THE DRAMA: and, in these the “divine inflatus” often speaks out, and thunders in our ears verities which in prose compositions, would be scarcely tolerated by ‘ears polite.’

“ In our Poetry there is much allusion to Nature and natural objects. Much there is, certainly, which is false ; much that is purposeless ; much that is fanciful ; but also, much that is true,—at least in Feeling, and something that is true in fact. All true Poetry is eminently sympathetic. In the works of our elder Dramatists, but in those of Shakspeare more especially, the FEELING inculcated is almost invariably truthful, sympathetic, noble. This branch of our Literature has, too, the advantage of addressing itself through the media of the Stage and the Actor, to all the people capable of affording the luxury of a seat in the Theatre : and by these means the noblest sentiments have found their way to the understandings, or the sympathies, even of the most illiterate ; and from this circumstance, its influence, as a civilizing agent, has been more truly valuable than all the other branches of our imaginative literature put together ; notwithstanding that, in common with the others, it has fallen into the error of attributing to poor Human Nature, the Vices that belong to a Social System which is Selfish to its very core.

Yet, beyond proving to us the propriety of being as virtuous as the circumstances we chance to be placed in will admit of ; and beyond that still holier influence which it possesses of awakening in our minds that sympathy with latent Truth,—a power which so pre-eminently distinguishes the teachings of Poetry from all other modes of instruction within the reach of humanity aforesaid ;—beyond

these very uncertain, because indistinct, and merely suggestive teachings, what POSITIVE KNOWLEDGE have we derived even from Poetry and the Drama? Without a First Principle to guide us to the snatches of Truth which, by the help of one, we find scattered throughout these inspired compositions, what are men really the wiser for the indistinctly-taught verities shadowed forth in these performances? Were we to answer 'Nothing!' I fear that it would be difficult to convict us of misrepresentation or mistake.

"As in the case of the Tale and Romance writers, and the professed Moralists, we are indebted to the Poets and Dramatists for but a small modicum of real Knowledge. All the remainder, at the very best, and taking no account of their misrepresentations of the true nature of humanity, amounts to little more than SENTIMENT, which we might carry about with us by way of ornament; but which, we should be set down as romantic madmen, were we so imbecile as to use; for the world knows no surer proof of lunacy than that of giving way to the noblest feelings of our nature, and acting up to the impulses of an unselfish Generosity.

"But as long as truth is confined to Sentiment, few men will be any wiser for the knowledge. Even those who seek Truth the most zealously cannot be satisfied with a Poet's dicta; so that small indeed is the value of the verities which are embodied even in the Poet's far-seeing, yet random inspirations.

"We have taken the highest view of the best

portion of the Belles Lettres: we might save ourselves the labour of examining the worst. Amusement is the first object the books in this division are intended to serve,—amusement, often of a very equivocal description; and Instruction—problematical as it generally is in the whole of them,—the very last. Therefore, to the ‘unwashed’ artificers and labourers who have never learned to read, great as is their loss, it is not all loss. It would be wonderful if it were so. It would be wonderful indeed, if, of Man, the most peculiar and highly endued work of the Deity of which we have any knowledge, every individual man had not within himself the germ of his own perfection; the all-sufficient means of that elevation for which the entire Species is so pre-eminently fitted, and so obviously designed. Strange it would be, if anything but the evil exercise of Power on the one hand, and voluntary blindness on the other, could render one man’s cogitations necessary to another man’s temporal and eternal welfare. Strange it would be if Books were the only means of progress towards that errorless perfection which is Heaven; and stranger still, if by an ordination of the Deity, Man must humbly sue his fellow-man for permission to peruse them. Much, therefore, as the illiterate at present lose in not being acquainted with Books—the passport hitherto to a free intercourse of mind with mind—it is not all loss; nor is the loss irreparable for the future. The proof, and the only proof of all Truth is in the Human Soul. The true

nature of the true Man is there. Let the 'unwashed,' untaught, degraded, toiling Millions read this Deity-indited volume; con over and study this true, authorized, unmistakable Revelation from God to Man: a Revelation which is the same to-day, to-morrow, and for ever: the same to the Indian Savage as to the civilized Celt: the same in every climate, and in every tongue. No man can hide it from his fellow; none can misinterpret it. Let the degraded millions everywhere *but know themselves*, and from this elevation look around them, and read that other Revelation external to themselves, the pictorial volume of Nature, and thus advance themselves to a closer communion with the God of Nature. Let them do this; and thenceforth slavery and oppression cease of necessity, and the world is changed."

CIVILIS. The positions argued in this Essay are of immense importance. It is clear that the Knowledge contained in our Didactic and Imaginative Literature is insignificant in amount, and very questionable in its character. Its great defect is indistinctness; for opinions, however rational, are only opinions, not settled facts; and are thence uncertain guides to human action.

RANDOLPH. It is therefore a misnomer to call it Knowledge, even that part of it which is the most rational; because, in effect, nothing is true which is not proved to be true: therefore, whatever lacks the

proof, lacks the distinguishing quality of knowledge,—its controlling influence for unadulterated Good.

CIVILIS. Most true, my dear Randolph; most true! This point has been fully demonstrated in the Essay. Wrong Convictions, which are equally omnipotent with Truth itself, inevitably lead to Evil; whilst Right Convictions invariably result in Good. But is there not something anomalous, not to say unjust, in this?—I mean, that wrong convictions should be as imperious in their influence as right convictions?—Error as omnipotent as Truth?

RANDOLPH. This is certainly the fact: but it is neither anomalous nor unjust; as a moment's reflection will convince you. In the nature of things, it is impossible that a Conviction, whether wrong or right, should not have equal potency over the mind that entertains it. The fact would be anomalous if opposite convictions produced similar results. But one series produces Evil, which our true nature shrinks from: the other Good, for which our nature yearns. You are forgetting that Error is not Sin; and that the Inconveniences produced by Error are not Punishments. You are forgetting also that Inconvenience, and Suffering, and Sorrow are necessary to our appreciation of Happiness; and that, but for this necessity, the Deity might have made us instantly cognizant of all knowledge—perfect Intelligences,—without linking us to life and matter, or placing us amongst material things, at all.

CIVILIS. I stand corrected. I had forgotten these. How powerful is habit in me! And no wonder, when all my previous Convictions are erroneous; imbibed, too, as they have been, through an erroneous education, begun in infancy and continued until now! For, hitherto, all Literature, all education, has been erroneous.—To think of all this Error; of all the falsehood I have entertained as truth, is most bewildering.—What a complicated web of contradictions has grown out of admitting Sin and its Punishments; Faith, and its Rewards! And how consistent and simply beautiful that System, the Alpha and Omega of which is Knowledge!—They are but momentary glances I get of it:—I mean of the Truth in its entirety.—Splendid visions, too felicitous to last.—If I could unknow my errors all at once, and at a single view look steadfastly at the whole truth, I doubt if I could survive the happiness.—Who shall suddenly look on the glory of the Omnipotent, and live! And what is Deific glory but all-effulgent Truth!—that one Truth which is the essence and concentrated centre of all other Truth! I fear, Randolph, you will think me fitter to be an enthusiast of a new Faith, than a disciple of a new Philosophy so simple as yours, yet so sublime in its simplicity. The indefinite is sublime from the circumstance of its indefiniteness: but, to a mind accustomed to seek truth amongst entanglements and contradictions, the definite becomes sublime from its scarcely-to-be-grasped definiteness and simplicity.

RANDOLPH. True, Civilis : whatever seems complex in the operations of a Principle is the complexity with which it comes into antagonism. Through the simple and the consistent, we are made aware of the involved and the contradictory : and it is easy to mistake the Light which enables us to distinguish confusion, for the Cause of the confusion. But we are forgetting the Essay. Are all its positions proved? It assumes that Education as it exists at present, is nearly as potent for Evil as for Good. It next examines the Imaginative and Didactic Literature which forms a part of this education, and decides that the cause of its failure is the indistinctness, or absolute falsehood of the facts and opinions it dispenses for Knowledge. The great majority of these facts and opinions the Essay assumes to be false ; and none more false, or more pernicious than those which represent Crime, Immorality, and the Evil Passions, to be the genuine offspring of Human Nature. Our business is to criticise the reasonings of Dionysius, and determine for ourselves whether the positions he advances be false or true. You have just admitted the conclusiveness of his arguments touching the inutility of this Literature as a guide to human conduct ; and this, chiefly on the ground that its facts and assumptions are false ; or that they lack the proof which is necessary to give them the force and efficacy of positive knowledge. Are you satisfied—for this is a highly important part of the inquiry—that the Crimes, Passions, Contradictions, and Idio-

syncretasies which at present characterise men's actions, are not what this Literature represents them to be ; but the products of a false and artificial Social System misnamed Civilization ? Remember, CIVILIS, that, at present, I neither affirm nor deny this proposition. I put the question, because it is highly important that we should come to a right conclusion with respect to it.

CIVILIS. I confess, Randolph, that, looking to facts of every-day occurrence, I am *not* prepared to reply to your question in the affirmative. I will cite a case which seems to me to militate against the proposition, and which will put the question fairly before us. A boy, ten years old, wilfully drowns his little brother (an infant twenty months old), because, as the delinquent owns, the child annoyed him by crying. Is this fratricidal act to be fathered on Society ; or to be laid to the account of the innate wickedness of Human Nature ? A mother destroys her infant ; but many motives might be imagined, all of which may be, and I believe are, chargeable on Society. But how is the motive of this boy traceable to Society in such a way as to exonerate the boy, and relieve Human Nature from the odium which, if the act be natural, fairly, and undeniably, attaches to it ?

RANDOLPH. The case you have cited is such an one as I expected from your professional sagacity. Now, WHAT IS HUMAN NATURE ? Certainly, not Brute Nature. There is, perhaps, some ambiguity in the remarks of Dionysius ; but there is Truth in his

conclusion. The animus of his argument is this:— Society, by its present social arrangements, obliges even the more thoughtful and educated of its members to act from selfish motives; in other words, to make the principle of animal life its first consideration in all matters, if not its chief guide; but that, by withholding the best education at its disposal from the great mass of mankind, it leaves *them* in the condition of mere animals; and in addition to this, subjects them to the want of even physical necessities; enjoins selfishness, under the name of Prudence, as their principle of action; prescribes impossible Morality as their guide; and then disingenuously denominates the anomalous results of their conduct,—the genuine product of Humanity: when it must be evident that the distinguishing characteristic of Human Nature—Mentality, has been forcibly annihilated, instead of having been generously and carefully evolved. Even if you suppose the pressure of want, and the influence of the selfish principle away; *to do right* in defiance of such mental blindness is sufficiently difficult, if not impossible: but, under the accumulated pressure of all these injurious influences, the wonder is, not that there is much crime and immorality amongst us, but that the world is not one vast theatre of horrors. And, that this, Civilis, is *not* the case affords the amplest evidence of the Angel-like perfection to which Humanity will grow under the dispensation and guidance of the Mental Principle.¹

CIVILIS. I think your interpretation of the strictures

urged by Dionysius against Society for its false estimate of Human Nature, is most lucid and convincing ; and I admit their justness without the slightest hesitation : but your explanation does not meet the difficulty,—the boy's motive, and his knowledge of the heinousness of the supposed offence. If under the circumstances here glanced at such an act could be committed, it is clear that the dominance of the Mental Principle would be no guarantee against it ; and that the highest attainable intelligence admits of the commission of the most heinous crimes : in other words, that it does not annihilate Brute Passion ; although,—and this I cheerfully grant you—it materially lessens the chances of its criminal activity. Even this boy, however brutal might neglect have rendered his nature, *must have had* a mental conviction that his act was wrong. His avowed motive was to rid himself of a little, a very little, annoyance. The question, then, resolves itself into this:—Had the boy, (a thing scarcely possible at ten years old,) been fully cognizant of all the facts which prove his Soul's relationship to his Creator, would this knowledge necessarily have prevented his rash act ? And is Human Nature, or is Society to be held responsible ?

RANDOLPH. Against sudden Passion—and you might have imagined causes of sudden passion in an adult more powerful than mere irritation of temper in a child—against sudden Passion, I do not think that Right Convictions are in all cases safeguards against wrong-doing. It is probable that all general Laws are

subject to accident ; and that Human Nature necessarily linked as it is to Brute Nature, must always be liable to error. In the case supposed, if the act were the result of sudden passion, it must be placed to the account of Brute Nature ; but if it were a deliberate act, it was the result of an erroneous conviction. Society is responsible for those acts only which are committed through the ignorance which Social arrangements foster, or under the influence of the motives they induce. You must admit, *Civilis*, that the number of those crimes which are committed in pure despite of right convictions are very insignificant in their amount, and always must be, compared with those which are clearly traceable to the evil influences of Society. You must admit also that, whilst a right conviction may not in all cases hinder the wrong act, Brute Nature, and not Human Nature, is the influencing cause.

CIVILIS. All this I most willingly admit. But, admitting, as I do, that in all cases where a Man has a right conviction, he must act conformably with that conviction whenever the act be a deliberate one, and where his reason is appealed to as to the propriety of its performance ; it is still manifest that Brute Passion might hurry him into criminality whatever be the amount of his Intelligence : and that even acts of homicide are within the range of the wrong-doings which even an educated Man, in his human condition, is liable to commit.

RANDOLPH. You are overlooking one very im-

portant consideration, *Civilis*. In obedience to the Laws impressed by the Deity on all his works, all things reproduce their like. It is certain that Men's sentiments influence their own organization during life; and that intelligent parents usually, if not invariably, transmit an organization to their posterity more favourable to high mentality and intelligence than their own. If this be true; and if Mentality be fostered and encouraged by Social arrangements, instead of mere animalism, as is the case at present, it is impossible to prescribe limits even to organic improvement; so that the Animal passions which seem to stand in the way of human perfectibility, will probably be so much modified in their activity by a more perfect organization, that they will be entirely under the control of the human will; and the objection you have raised against the possibility—not of Human progress, but of—Human perfectibility, (for it amounts to no more than this), may be capable of entire removal. We are arguing an abstract question; and the possibility of arriving at absolute perfection in our sublunary state is not the real point at issue; but the possibility of human progression towards a state of comparative perfection: so, that practically, if not absolutely, your objection amounts to nothing.

CIVILIS. I cannot deny the validity of your argument, nor the conclusion to which it leads. I have, however, one more objection: and, I confess, it is an objection which I foresee others will make, and not

one to which I attach any considerable importance myself. Do you not think that Ignorance, with the fear of future Punishment now so generally supposed to attach to Crime, is a more powerful guarantee for Innocence amongst the great mass of mankind, than will be the conviction sought to be established amongst them by your Principle, that, in the abstract, there is neither Sin, nor Punishment with respect to it in a future state ?

RANDOLPH. The fear of Punishment, or the hope of reward, is no guarantee for Innocence, Civilis, whatever either of them might be as a restraint against evil-doing. Criminality consists in the Intention ; and the mere abstinence therefrom, through motives of hope or fear, is not *Innocence* ; but *Prudence* ;—that quasi Virtue, which abstracts nearly all virtue from the more genuine Virtues ; and does its best to convert Justice, Magnanimity, and Benevolence, into something as mean and selfish as itself. Innocence is not your meaning ; but this prudent abstinence from evil-doing. But, taking your question in the sense you intended it, you are supposing an impossible case : namely, the present restraints removed, and the present motives and incentives to evil-doing remaining. But, Civilis, before the Mental, can take the place of the Selfish Principle, men must be universally intelligent : and Intelligence, in the absence of the present premium-inducing motives to vice, will be, of necessity, an unspeakably stronger guarantee to Right conduct than the distant fear of

an after-retribution (even were Hell a certainty), with the present incentives to vice egging on feeble Ignorance to the commission of Crime, and whispering that a death-bed repentance is sufficient to avert the Retribution.

CIVILIS. I am answered.

RANDOLPH. We have proved, then, that the Literature we have been examining is, for the most part, false in its aim ; and, even when its aim is right, that in the absence of a Principle by which to test its truth, its very inspirations—those flashes of Truth which proceed from the genuine promptings of the highest intellects—are in the nature of guesses only ; and, because of their uncertainty, impotent and valueless as guides to human happiness. To-morrow we will take another branch of our so-much-lauded Literature, the which, on examination, will prove equally worthless until read by the Light that is able to convert it into Knowledge. It may, however, seem strange to say that the very Light which so converts it, will show it to be needless ; and thence, as valueless as the rest. This is the Enigma to be solved to-morrow.

The air is sultry and oppressive. There is a tempest gathering. You will be at home before it reaches us. Good night !

CHAPTER V.

RANDOLPH. CIVILIS.

CIVILIS. The storm last night was awful. A house near mine was struck by the lightning, and the father of a poor family was killed in an instant. The circumstance had so great an effect on my mind that I scarcely slept during the night. I now seek to solve all difficulties by the help of our Truth-elucidating Principle; and I lay considering how the sad occurrence of the evening could be reconciled with the Beneficence of the Deity, by the operations of whose Laws this melancholy catastrophe was occasioned. Does a beneficent God, said I, thus Will the sudden destruction of his creatures, and plunge a whole family into misery? and, if so, why? He gives life to his creatures, and implants a love of life in all that lives: and, although to intellectual Man, death is not an Evil, but a necessary Good, does it not seem contradictory that the Giver of life should prematurely destroy it? I remembered that the storm was necessary to produce an equilibrium in the atmosphere, without which, to say nothing of trillions of the lower animals, millions of human beings would prematurely die; nay, perhaps the whole human population be swept away; or, pos-

sibly, that an universal stagnation would take place, and all living things perish on the face of the earth. And, if so, how beneficent are these awful visitations ! But, still, the man is dead ; and his children are orphans ; and his wife a widow ; and starvation stares them in the face ; or a workhouse, more abhorrent still, is the fate awaiting them. I remembered that starvation or the workhouse to the **surviving** family is man's own work : and **that, hence**, this misery is not purposed by the **Deity** whose lightnings struck the husband **and the father** dead. The Evil, then, to be **accounted** for, and reconciled with Divine **beneficence** is only the taking of a single life. And, to him thus cut off in the prime and pride of his animal existence, what matters it whether now, or in decrepit age ? His fellows will protect his widow, and give his orphans bread, and instruct them in all knowledge. Alas ! they will not ; but they ought. He who is dead had lived long enough for all the purposes for which life was given him. Did he **KNOW** those purposes ? Probably not : no more might he have known them in his age. Why did he not know them ? He chose the beast's portion, life, and the pleasures of living, but neglected to know himself ; to know God ; to know Good from Evil, Right from Wrong ; to know the purposes of his existence, and to fulfil them. Within himself were all the means : he needed no external aid : had he sought he would have found : had he knocked, it would have been opened unto him. Clearly, then,

if he were not prepared to part with life the fault was his : but, if he were prepared, as, following the promptings of his spirit, he might have been, then was the sudden translation a sudden glory : and the Tempest was a wide-spread Good, unmixed with evil.

RANDOLPH. I heard this morning of the accident, Civilis, and have seen the desolation ; but a good Samaritan had been there before me, — a circumstance your modesty omitted. And it is well. But, Civilis, the fruits of the newly-awakened Truth within you is a fitter subject for congratulation. You will find ample need of your felicitous mode of applying our Principle to the solution of these apparent contradictions ;—contradictions which Ignorance everywhere takes hold of to fasten the authorship of Evil on Him who is the author of nothing that is not Good. Prejudice is rampant because Selfishness bears undivided sway amongst us : and few there are who will not cling to falsehood rather than jeopardize their rent-roll, their profits, or their pay. You will find, that, of all men, the Clergy have the most sensitive dread of Truth. They are thoughtful men, and, for the most part, good logicians : none know better than they the value to an opponent of an honest admission. Only a few days since I met with a singular instance of this most sensitive dread of Truth in a Clergyman. I had said something which awakened his suspicions as to my orthodoxy. It was curious to see the snail betake himself to

his shell the instant his horns were touched. When safely ensconced in his slime-made citadel, I propounded a question which I had purposely led him to believe was but the precursor of others. Are you satisfied, said I, that one and one are equal to two? we were not alone, and he would not make the admission: neither taunts, nor entreaties, nor the varying of the question, nor the stripping it of the dress of language by reducing the proposition to an idea which all minds must entertain from sheer necessity, though they had no notion of sounds or signs by which to express it;—none of these could induce him to hazard an advantage by recording his admission. It had been easier to tempt a mad dog to swim across the Ribble or the Thames. Here is a veritable fact which seems to militate against the action-compelling influence of Truth. We are in search of an antagonistic influence. A very brief statement of a true fact will explain the contradiction alluded to, and give this antagonistic influence a name. Mark the explanation, Civilis.—This truth-abhorring Clergyman had just received an appointment which quadrupled his income, and multiplied his love of the selfish Principle by four! To all such men, Civilis, a truism is, of all the *isms* under which men range themselves, the ism which is most obnoxious. This brings me to the Essay I am to read to you this evening, where you will see the baneful effects of the selfish principle exhibited on a large scale. We are subsequently, you know, to trace it to its source, and

see how Literature, and Laws, and Morals, and Mystic Religion grew out of it; and how these, the refined Children of a barbarous Sire, partake of the nature of their parent, and are compelled to allegiance whilst their nonage lasts:—a nonage now, happily, near its end. Dionysius, in the present Essay, examines History with the same object in view as that which led him to the examination of the several branches of the Literature already disposed of.

EXTRACT FROM THE PAPERS OF DIONYSIUS.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

“Some one has said that ‘History is Philosophy teaching by examples.’ How far this definition is a true one will be seen as we proceed,

“A historical fact is Knowledge as far as it goes: Knowledge in a certain sense: it is a human record of a human act. There is always some uncertainty as to the truthfulness of the record. But, supposing it to be an exact epitome of the historized event,—IS THE RECORD VALUABLE? This must depend on circumstances. As long as it be necessary to store up facts with the view to the discovery of Principles, or guides to human conduct, there is value in the records. If not the *object*, this has been more or less the *effect* of our records hitherto. But it can scarcely be said that any fixed principles have yet been educed from our laborious gatherings. As far as the principles of Religion and Morality have been agreed upon, these principles have been the tests of the good or bad quality

of the facts recorded : and thus, a kind of pseudo-philosophy, uncertain in its nature, is deducible from our recorded facts. This Philosophy, such as it is, is Knowledge, such as it is ; that is, it is false or true in its character and aim, just as the tests which are used to determine these circumstances happen to be false or true. These tests, however, have no certain standard in any given locality of the world ; but vary as opinions vary concerning the true nature of Morality and Religion. The Philosophy extractable from History is, consequently, very equivocal in its character : but, being the best attainable under the circumstances, we will not quarrel with the definition which forms the starting-point in this inquiry. But, the fact is, whatever philosophy there may be in the examples, there is no real value in the record. Natural facts are necessarily right, because they are the results of errorless Intelligence. But the Knowledge of the facts is less important than the Knowledge of the Laws or Principles which govern and produce them. We need not, for instance, make record of a shower of rain. But our Knowledge of the Principles on which this fact, and all similar facts, depend, should be recorded, lest the knowledge should be lost. Were it not for the Principle of gravitation, we should not have the showers, nor their beneficent results. Such Knowledge is all-important. We are thereby made cognizant of second causes, leading us to the First Cause, God. But with Human facts, that is, facts caused by Human agency, the case is different. These facts

do not proceed from errorless Intelligence, but from the fallible operations of the Human Will ; and are therefore Right or Wrong just as they are rational or the reverse. To know what, under any circumstances, we ought to do, is Knowledge ; is, indeed, Philosophy ; positive in its character, and unvarying in its operations. The act *done*, is an event that cannot be recalled. If Right, its results are right. If right because dictated by an unerring principle, all such acts will be always right, and the record of them will be needless. Nor will the record be of any real value if the act be wrong. Test it by the Principle, and prove it to be wrong, needless and valueless is the record still. Thus, then, Philosophy is a thing apart from History, which is (or should be), a true record of occurrences, whether the occurrences be Right or Wrong : and, having the Philosophy, we might dispense with the History, and thus save ourselves much profitless drudgery ; because the Knowledge which shows us whether an act already done be Wrong or Right, shows us, at the same time, what it is Right or Wrong to do.

“ What an immense labour it were to acquaint ourselves with all the (humanly speaking) interesting facts of the world’s history ! If last year’s facts are interesting or useful to us, so are those which occurred before the Flood. But, as has just been shown, however interesting historical facts may be to us, they are of no real value beyond the gratification they afford to our sympathies with the Past. We learn

that King so and so *did* so and so. Some will assert that his doings were unwise and tyrannical. Others from the same facts will arrive at the very opposite conclusion. And this must always be the case as long as what is called Religion, and Public and Private Morals, are the tests by which we come to a decision; because these tests, modified as they are by contending interests and conflicting opinions, differ so widely in their appreciation of Right and Wrong, that Right and Wrong are everywhere confounded. Who, then, shall decide between them? And yet we *must* decide before we can extract Philosophy from the example.

“The peculiar excellence of a first Principle consists in this: it enables us to dispense altogether with precedents and examples. If, then, our Principle be the true one, we might spare ourselves the labour of reading History for the benefit of its examples; however we might do so for our amusement, or to gratify our sympathies with the Past.

“In what does the history of all the nations of the earth consist? In one long struggle between a little spurious knowledge, and a huge mass of ignorance. This little knowledge gave POWER to its possessors; and the want of it, amongst the great mass of the people, produced servile obedience to the authority of the few who wielded the power and jealously conserved the Knowledge. In Egypt, how much this Power did, not for its happiness, but for its transitory and unreal grandeur, and its fame! For ages it went

on rearing stupendous records of its selfishness and folly. Yes, they are these: but they are something more. The Pyramids, these old-world structures, are an expression of the God in man: they are the stupendous utterances of ancient Egypt's yearning after immortality. But, at length, the dark tide of Ignorance (blindly and purposely encouraged amongst the 'masses') broke down the mystic barriers which for centuries had restrained it: its desolating flood spread ruin everywhere; and Egypt's civilization passed away. 'Barbarians skulked, beast-like amongst its palaces,' and its Temples became the dwelling-places of loathsomeness, and vice, and abject misery. Here was an early trial of false knowledge and exclusiveness: it failed.

"The civilization of Babylonia, Assyria, Media, Tyrus, and the other great Kingdoms of antiquity, being of the same selfish and exclusive character, led to the same result. A little knowledge in the beginning did wonders: but the Ignorance cherished by exclusiveness, soon became too potent for its taskmasters. It arose in its Savage might: the monuments of human pride lay prostrate in the dust; and much of the Knowledge that reared these splendours lay buried beneath the ruins, and was lost to the world for ever.

"Greece ultimately emerged from barbarism, and a civilization, the best and most perfect the world had seen (save that of the Jews who had arrived at the conception of ONE GOD) took root amongst its rocks and islands. The Sciences made considerable

progress; and the Arts arrived at a pitch of greatness and perfection which leaves no hope of rivalry. As a reason for all this, Knowledge was less exclusive: there was a oneness of Spirit animating the nation. Its wisest men imparted their highest wisdom to the populace from the porticoes of their beautiful temples. These Temples were public possessions,—that is, they were raised in honour of the false Deities the whole nation served: their Statues, in like manner, were public property: their public men lived for the people: there was some approach to a Commonwealth of Mind. The highest aim of this nation was public and private Virtue; and it did its best to inculcate the practice of it amongst all its citizens.

“But the attainment of Knowledge as the ultimate purpose of existence; the distribution of Knowledge to all, as the common birthright of all; and the recognition of the fact that the possession of a First Principle includes all Goodness; supersedes the Virtues; contains all the Happiness the mind can make its own: and that to have it is to have everything,—this Knowledge was not theirs; and their baseless fabric fell. Their Religion was Idolatry: and yet their idolatry was in the right direction. It was the embodiment of what they knew, or thought they knew, of Nature;—the materialized ideal of Power and Beauty. Their Arts, which formed the symbolic portion of their religion grew up into an imaginary but false perfection. And now, nothing remains of their shadowy creed but

the beautiful symbols which imparted to the shadow the semblance of reality. They reposed on Error. Evil grew out of Error. They did not perceive the hollowness of their virtues, although they failed to find happiness the result of them. Listlessness succeeded: ignorance increased: ruin followed: and the civilization of polished Greece, like that of the earlier nations, passed away.

“Rome, the rough imitator of Greece, relied on its barbaric Virtue, its martial prowess, and its wealth and conquests. It fought its ruthless way to the empire of half the world. Power, which coexists with Abjectness, was Rome’s god. This Nation grew great by its activity; then, ‘sheathing its sword for lack of argument,’ fell into luxuriousness and lascivious ease; fed on its former victories; gloated on its spoils; grew apoplectic, and expired. Peace to its ashes; for it sowed the seeds of a purer civilization than its own!

“Christianity now, with its angel-teachings, descended on the earth. Its pure Spirit still dwells amongst us; but men are loath to trust to its benignant guidance. And, why? Because we are ignorant: because the old leaven of exclusiveness, and the love of power, will not let the religion of Love take root: and because the new creed has been interwoven with the myths and mysticisms of the old. Modern History, therefore, presents all the features of that of antiquity; and its Civilization contains the same elements of decay.

“Let us cast our eyes about us, and what do we see? The first strongly-marked characteristic of modern Civilization is the Ignorance, deep and dark, of the masses, accompanied by its animalism, its misery, its almost hopeless degradation, and its crime. As long as you can set this mass of ignorance to work, and pay it a trifle for its labour, it is a docile sort of monster enough. It obeys the rein; moves systematically; and this Caliban is said to be civilized. Prospero, who reigns, and who has some Knowledge, much cabalistic lore, dabbles in the dark arts, and holds communion with spirit-ministers of his power, says ‘go,’ and it goeth; ‘Come,’ and it cometh; ‘Do this,’ and it doeth it. It sometimes, however, grows impatient of restraint; and beards the Prospero it owns for king after this fashion:—

‘This island’s mine.

‘When thou camest first,

‘Thou strok’dst me, and made much of me,
would’st give me

‘Water with berries in’t, AND TEACH ME HOW

‘TO NAME THE BIGGER LIGHT, AND HOW THE LESS

‘THAT BURN BY DAY AND NIGHT: AND THEN I
LOV’D THEE,

‘And show’d thee all the qualities of the isle;

‘The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place,
and fertile:

‘Cursed be I that did so!

‘That first was my own king.’

“ And History tells of greater lengths to which this Caliban has gone beyond this blunt, Jack-Cade remonstrance. IT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO THROW ITS EYE AMIDST ITS MISERIES, ON SOME HALF-WITTED TRINCULO TO CHOOSE FOR KING, IN PLACE OF PROSPERO. BELIEVING THAT THE SWAGGERING BRAGGADOCIO, WHOM IT HAS MET WITH ‘HALF-SEAS-OVER,’ TO BE A WORTHY SUCCESSOR OF PROSPERO WHOSE REIGN IT HAS RENOUNCED, THE ELATED MONSTER HAS BEEN KNOWN TO ADDRESS THIS TRINCULO TO THIS EFFECT :—

‘ I’ll show thee every fertile inch o’ the island,
 ‘ And kiss thy foot. I prithee be my god !
 ‘ I’ll show thee the best springs : I’ll pluck thee
 berries :
 ‘ I’ll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
 ‘ A plague upon the tyrant that I serve !
 ‘ I’ll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee
 ‘ Thou wondrous man ! ’

“ And so he changes masters ; but is a slave the same. And thus it is with this many-headed Monster, Ignorance, to the end of the chapter. A TRINCULO MIGHT BRING A CHANGE OF MISERIES, BUT NEVER A CESSATION.

“ In every modern nation, this is one side of the picture : Ignorance, Animalism, Misery, and Crime ! Can this be Civilization ! To the degraded beings who compose this mass, could primeval barbarism, with its woods and wilds, and health, and liberty, be worse ?

“ But let us turn to the other compartment of the picture. At the first glance it looks beautiful in contrast with the one we have just been contemplating. The chief abatement to our pleasure, and the first, is, that, in extent and magnitude, it bears no comparison to the other side. Nothing, even if everything be as delightful as it looks to be, absolutely nothing to compensate for the dark and wretched outline just presented, but whose horrid details even Fancy must forbear to paint.

“ Here, however, we have Pomp, Courts, Magnificence, Armies, Navies, Senates, Time-honoured Ceremonies, and Crowd-honoured Men; Kings, Queens, Ministers of State, Judges, Ecclesiastics, Universities, Nobles, Learned Men; Commerce, and its Ships, and Docks, and Marts;—and its Merchant-Princes, with their Mansions, and their Lackies, and their Sumptuous Feasts! All this looks dazzling, gorgeous, grand: But is it real? It looks like happiness: but is it so? Or is it but the gaudy mantle which Disappointment flings around itself to hide the incubus it took for Pleasure? Is it Happiness; or Misery with a mask on? Is it the offspring of Knowledge; or should it call Folly father? This is what History could tell if it would. But it has ever suppressed the half. Placing the Magnificence in the foreground, it has artfully thrown the Misery into the shadowy, dim, receding distance. It has told but half the truth. Yet what is the Philosophy hitherto deduced from these one-sided representa-

tions? How is the failure of system after system accounted for? Why, *that all human contrivances are necessarily imperfect and evanescent; and as to RIGHT, that there is no right.* A conclusion which every other order of being in the universe contradicts and falsifies every instant.

“ If, however, to get positive Knowledge be our great vocation on the earth; and if in this vocation be comprised a happiness so great, and lasting, and complete, and godlike, that there is no greater possible save that which comes from using our knowledge for a world-wide benefit, and communicating to all our fellows the ennobling means of the happiness we ourselves enjoy—all which our Principle teaches us—then have we abundant proofs in the pages of history, that Selfishness, which owns Ignorance for its sire, has ever been the cause of all the vicissitudes and failures which have hindered human progression, retarded the growth of intellect, wrecked every social system, and chequered the world with every variety of Evil through all preceding times.

“ If it can be shown that our Principle be not the true one, then are our deductions false: then are all our theorizings as vapoury and unreal as the Systems that have crumbled and are crumbling into the nothingness from which they sprung. But, if true, we have no need of History either as a warning or an example. We have only to follow our guiding-star of TRUTH to bring about that Millennium of intellect which some of the most thoughtful minds that have adorned

humanity have prophetically promised to our race : that period ‘ when there shall be but one fold and one shepherd ; when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation ; neither shall they learn war any more.’

BIOGRAPHY

may be considered to be a portion of History. But if we read it without testing it by the principle here enunciated, we shall fail to extract much Philosophy therefrom. Without this test, Biography, like General History, out of the multitude of its examples affords no unerring rule for our individual guidance.

“ If we would pursue the acquisition of Wealth as the means of happiness, we shall certainly find that to make a friend of that niggard Virtue, Prudence, will be to procure an alliance that will aid us every step of the way.

“ If the attainment of Honours be aimed at as the ultimate Good, we shall find examples in abundance of the methods which have been successfully pursued.

“ If Fame be the ultimatium of our hopes, we shall find incentives in great profusion, and of every kind, to madden our ambition, and lead us astray : for great Fame comes of great Genius : and Genius, like the traveller across the sands, leaves no footprints behind it by which a follower might dog it to the Temple. Only this is to be gathered—that the

most famous Geniuses the world has known, have generally been the least selfish, and most catholic-minded of men.

“But if we ask Biography to tell us which object we should pursue for the attainment of Happiness? which object be the Right one? or if any of them be right? Biography cannot inform us. Our oracle is dumb.

“Having an unerring Principle for our guide, we, however, cannot have any difficulty in deciding these questions for ourselves. We have all one object to accomplish; one pathway to pursue: the object is the discovery of Truth: the road to it through the Intellect alone. Let those who would lead us by any other route exhibit their credentials: we have the hand and seal of Heaven itself to ours.

“From this view of the subject it requires but a moment’s consideration to perceive, that, for any positive, soul-enlarging Knowledge derivable from Biography, it might be altogether dispensed with without much loss: and, but for the gratification it affords to the best sympathies of our nature; and the proofs it yields us of what difficulties may be surmounted by unyielding perseverance, it might be relinquished without regret.”

CIVILIS. The object of Dionysius in this Essay, is, I perceive, precisely similar to that in the preceding ones. His positions prove a most important fact in the economy of Education, and consequently, in the

economy of time and labour. To know the Principle which determines the value of all human actions, and shows us which of them are Right and which are Wrong, renders the collection and collation of the recorded facts contained in Biography and History a needless labour. And as all the Literature which has reference to human affairs, whether speculative or historical, forms at present a considerable portion of the education of the educated, we perceive that their fancied wisdom is little else than folly, and the toil of its attainment nearly so much labour lost : whilst, by the help of the First Principle, we perceive that, without the ability to read a book, it is possible for the most illiterate workman, whose mind has been a little disciplined by thought, to become wiser than the wisest statesman or the most erudite scholar amongst us. This is a stupendous fact, and as true as it is stupendous.

RANDOLPH. Yes, Civilis, real Knowledge, true Wisdom, consists in knowing what to do, and doing it ; in knowing what to know, and struggling to obtain the knowledge ; not in knowing (however truly) what, aforetime, others have known and done. This is Knowledge which the most knowing—have not ; Wisdom which the wisest want. Not the least gratifying view of the fact enforced on our attention in this Essay, is the possibility of teaching the neglected millions all this Knowledge, and of placing the rest within their reach, without waiting for the decision of the Saints as to how far a working-man

would jeopardize his soul by his acquaintance with that heathen contrivance—the Christ-cross-row ! This shows us, notwithstanding the grave authority just referred to, that as a grain of wheat contains the germ of its own perfection, so does the Soul of Man ; and that no man needs, through any natural necessity, to sue his fellow-man for permission to fulfil the purposes of his existence. To know himself is to know other men ; and this is the certain key to all the knowledge which relates to the Will and Nature of the Deity, to his own nature, to the purposes of his being, and to the means of working out those purposes. Consequently, all that is professed to be taught (but which, after all, is not taught), by Religion, Ethics, Metaphysics, the Belles Lettres, and History, is really and amply taught in the simple Truth that the Soul is an Intelligent Principle incapable of any other acquisition than the knowledge placed purposely within its reach ; and that an immortality of Happiness is the inalienable birthright of all who will avail themselves of this proffered largess of a beneficent Creator.

CIVILIS. This verity of verities (only in a far higher sense,) my dear Randolph, is the Lever that Archimedes sighed for.

RANDOLPH. It is : and, trust me, Civilis, with it we will raise the world. But, could the world overhear our vaunting, certes it would laugh at us.

CIVILIS. Apropos to that ; what is the cause of Laughter ? why do we laugh ? I ask the question, because last night, when I perceived the climax of my

reasoning which proved the beneficence of the Deity even in the tempest that destroyed my neighbour, my happiness was too great to enable me to articulate my thankfulness : but I laughed involuntarily. Why did I laugh ?

RANDOLPH. You were pursuing your argument in doubt, and consequently, in ignorance of the result ; and your Laughter was caused by the sudden joy of a new and ennobling conviction. The violence of the emotion caused by the greatness of the suddenly-perceived Truth communicated itself to the physical frame, and the effect was Laughter. The Brutes never laugh : a proof that Knowledge is not a happiness to them, nor received as we receive it. To suppose the Deity from a similar cause to experience the emotion of Laughter is so impossible, and, at the same time, so incongruous an idea, that one almost laughs even at the deliberate perception of its irreverence and incongruity. Having nothing to learn, no new idea can suddenly enter the Divine Mind. A state of comparative Ignorance, is, in all cases, necessary to Laughter. The Brutes do not laugh, because they are probably too ignorant to perceive an incongruity ; hence it seems fair to infer that their Knowledge is not in the nature of *soul-perceived* Intelligence ; and that they do not derive any happiness from its acquisition. We laugh at the sudden perception of an incongruity. We laugh in our most serious moments (as you did) when a new thought or conviction rushes suddenly, or unexpectedly, into our minds. We laugh at what

seems to be incongruous, or absurdly false. It is not at the mere absurdity of another's folly, mistake, or extravagant falshood, that we laugh: the emotion is the happiness we naturally derive from the exercise of our perception; but it is the *unexpectedness* of the incongruity that causes the physical convulsion. A thing is not necessarily incongruous, or absurdly false, because it produces laughter in another: it is enough that it seems to be one of these to him. It is not a deliberate feeling of triumph or ridicule at another's folly or ignorance; but an involuntary self-gratulation at our own capability to perceive the absurdity, whether it be a real or a supposed one. Prove suddenly to the Laugher that the supposed absurdity is not an absurdity, and he will laugh again. The world is sufficiently intelligent to perceive the apparent extravagance of some of our propositions, were they presented without the proofs; and sufficiently ignorant to be involuntarily affected by the circumstance: but acquaint them with our reasons for entertaining our convictions, and they would no more laugh than we do; provided always that the knowledge came not too suddenly upon them: otherwise, in consequence of the delicate physical sensitiveness of some, it would occasion either Laughter or tears; in others it would produce speechless astonishment; but in all, Homage (expressed in some form of Happiness,) to the Bestower of the faculty that enables us to comprehend these everlasting verities.

CIVILIS. Then our Laughter is not necessarily

malevolent even when resulting from any absurdity we perceive in another ?

RANDOLPH. All genuine Laughter is involuntary ; but Envy, and other selfish passions, frequently avail themselves of the *natural* circumstance, and convert the emotion into an instrument of offence ; and sometimes we encourage the paroxysm, or simulate the feeling, for the express purpose of derision and annoyance.

CIVILIS. The more I examine and consider this all-explaining Principle of yours, Randolph, the more I wonder at its elucidating power.

RANDOLPH. Wonder is not the most apposite term for one to use who has really satisfied himself that a First Principle must necessarily possess this power. Wonder, like Laughter, is the bantling of Ignorance. The difference is this : *we do not LAUGH until we have obtained the enlightenment, or until we think that we have obtained it ; but when we WONDER we are still in the dark.* Although I have availed myself of a Mentor's privilege to criticise your language, Civilis, I sometimes share in your astonishment. It is, in comparison with anything previously known, a marvellous power : for it is the only one ; and capable of the work it has to accomplish. What the Newtonian principle is to the material universe, the Dionysian is to the universe of Mind—and a great deal more. The former is a Second Cause, obeying an Infinite, errorless Intelligence, which is the First. Over the Universe of Created Mind the Dionysian Principle is a

First Cause, and being of the nature of the Great First Cause, is-intelligent; not a will-less Law, or Second Cause; but an Intelligent First Cause, operating within the limited Sphere assigned to it by its all-causing, all Intelligent Creator. Consequently, whilst the Newtonian Principle regulates, and is capable of explaining all the phenomena observable in material things, however contradictory they appear; the Dionysian Principle regulates and explains all the phenomena of Mind; having the power to remove all obscurity, and to reconcile all apparent contradictions.

CIVILIS. Thank you, my dear Randolph, for reminding me of the nature and office of the First Principle. I feel myself, even yet, but a tyro in the study, and cannot so completely disengage my mind from my old modes of thinking, and old associations, as to avoid Wonder at the power you are teaching me to wield. I am so interested in these applications of the Principle that I should never tire of listening to your elucidations. Tell me, are not the Causes of Wit identical with those which produce Laughter?

RANDOLPH. Allied to one of the immediate causes of Laughter is the talent we call Wit, which consists in a habit (constitutional or acquired) of perceiving incongruities, and comparing absurdly dissimilar ideas; and is one of the incentives to Knowledge; one of the aids thereto, though not the one most legitimate and direct. To perceive wherein things differ is a circuitous way (as used, however, by the mere Jester,) to the perception of the particulars in

which they agree ; which latter is the direct method of arriving at principles, and thence, at a first Principle. Suddenly to give pointed utterance to these incongruous ideas in a humorous or satirical form, produces, as we have seen, genuine Laughter. A talent the reverse of this is generated by the habit of perceiving SIMILITUDES (more or less remote) between ideas which are not commonly perceived to resemble each other. This habit is Poetical. When such similitudes are made pointedly or gracefully apparent in beautifully appropriate language, and in some systemized and measured form, the result is Poetry. The aptitude to perceive these remote, or usually-overlooked resemblances and analogies in things, constitutes, therefore, the poetical character. To clothe them in appositely-beautiful and metrical language (together with an aptitude in the construction of the fable these similes are to adorn) constitutes the Art of Poetry. And in the application of these talents to the production and promulgation of great verities, or civilizing and noble sentiments, consists the true *value* of Poetry, namely, its Philosophy. And in Poetry, as we have already seen, we have the nearest approach to abstract Philosophy that has been yet attained by man and promulgated amongst us. The reasons for this we already know. An intimate acquaintance with the analogies of Nature leads to extended sympathies, to generalized views, and to philosophical deduction.

CIVILIS. What an unspeakable happiness there is

in Knowledge! To me this elucidation regarding the real nature and cause of Laughter is especially interesting. Probably there are but few persons who have ever reflected that Laughter might be homage-giving; and yet the conclusion is inevitable when the feeling is analysed. I now wonder how I missed attaining to this knowledge long ago. But, alas! how insignificant must be the amount of all we can know of ourselves as long as we are ignorant of the Principle which enables us to explain all mental phenomena, and as long as we entertain the erroneous notion that to know ourselves is an impossible acquisition. I have ever been subject to involuntary laughter in the midst of the most serious investigations; and often have I chid myself for Levity, deeming my tendency to risibility a natural but pitiable weakness. I remember once (when a student of the Inner Temple) laughing aloud in the midst of a most instructive and impressive Lecture on "Evidence." To an auditory as mute as death the Lecturer was detailing the circumstances which led to the discovery of Eugene Aram's guilty knowledge of the murder of Clark. "Taking up one of the bones," said the Lecturer, "which were supposed to be those of the murdered man, Aram incautiously remarked;—'These are no more Clark's bones than they are my bones.' To which a bystander instantly replied:—'If you know that these bones are not Clark's bones, you must know where Clark's bones are.'" The circumstances of this singular case were

new to me ; and the unlooked-for and most ingenious inference of the bystander, added to the solemnly-emphatic delivery by the Lecturer of these accusing words, let such a flood of light into my mind on the subject of evidence, and the mode of eliciting truth, that, as I have told you, I laughed aloud. I would have given the world to escape the momentary indignation which rebuked me for the unseemly interruption. I *felt* that my emotion was an homage to Truth ; and an homage also to the Speaker ; but I should have been totally unable then to make the fact comprehensible to another.

RANDOLPH. Many earnest, truth-seeking minds must occasionally experience similar sensations : but do you perceive, Civilis, from this truth-elucidating fact through which Eugene Aram's guilty knowledge discovered itself, *how difficult it is to act in contravention of our knowledge?* The strongest motives to falsehood were operating on Aram's mind, and yet the Truth slipped out ! On the strength of the Principle involved in this fact must be based, as I have frequently told you, our hopes of the subjugation of Evil, and the reformation of the world. Let the world rid itself of all *motives* to Falsehood, and the Soul will no sooner perceive a Truth than it will render due homage to the God of Truth by acting conformably with its perception. This is Religion, Civilis : and Religion is a Necessity. The Soul does not "worship" Truth : but, perceiving it, obedience to its dictates follows of necessity. Happiness cannot

but be grateful to the Bestower of it: and this is the highest form of worship, save alone the Acts that grow out of it which have for their object the bestowal of Happiness on others. This is "The whole duty of Man." When Jesus of Nazareth was questioned on this subject; reducing the ten commandments of the Jews to two, he replied in these words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: This is the first and great commandment: And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He does not, *Civilis*, enjoin on men "lip-worship:" he even reprehends "long prayers:" but, both by precept and example he enjoins acts of self-denial in material things; and in spiritual things, unceasing acts of Love. **THE KNOWLEDGE WE WOULD TEACH MANKIND**, *Civilis*, not only enjoins these duties, but enforces them. This form of expression might sound egotistical and presumptuous: but it is not so: it is an explanation, not a vain-glorious boast. No one is more grateful for the god-like beneficence of Christ's teaching than myself; nor more humbly grateful for the Knowledge which has the capability of enforcing the practice of his happiness-affording Code of Love.

CIVILIS. Suppose all men possessed of this knowledge, my dear Randolph; would intervals of time be set apart for public Prayer and Worship, as at present? And if so, what would be the nature of the forms and ceremonies used on such occasions?

RANDOLPH. In Religious observances, as in Social

and Legislative arrangements, the doings of the Future will be determined by the general amount of Intelligence which may at any time exist in any given community. But when men arrive, universally, at a just conception of the nature of Deity, Prayer and Worship will not be the sole, perhaps not the ostensible object of the frequent gatherings of the people. These periodical meetings will be more for the dissemination of knowledge than for the purposes of Prayer: for spiritual communion with God, and of Soul with Soul, than for laudatory worship. It will be felt that to do Right is the vitality of Religion: and knowing what is Right—to teach it to the young—will be the dignified, happiness-affording duty of the old. The Temple of the Deity will be consecrated to Truth; and ALL Truth will be taught in the Temple. There will be no absurd distinction between secular truth and religious truth;—because there is no such distinction in reality. I shall, perhaps, better explain my meaning by reading to you the termination of a letter written by Dionysius to one who had applied to him for instruction on these subjects; but chiefly as to the efficacy and propriety of Prayer. After commenting on the universality of the Prayer which Christ bequeathed to us, he says:—

“No prayer is good that is selfish. No prayer is good that is not in its nature universal. That which is desirable for us is desirable for all men. But as the Deity, our spiritual Father needs not to alter or

suspend his Laws to accomplish the purposes he seeth good to be accomplished, and will not do so at our presumptuous promptings and ignorant entreaties, why, though knowing how to pray, should we pray at all? Because every rational act of oral or mental prayer is a closer intercommunion of our Spirit with the Divine Spirit: every such act, therefore, will hallow and strengthen thy Spirit; and thy prayer, if rational, and the end thou seekest be in consonance with the divine purposes of the Deity in the government of his Universe, will, peradventure, be answered by a spiritual light and power that may enable thee to realize thy hopes, and accomplish the good work thou desirest to do. Thus much as to the propriety and efficacy of Prayer. But, my dear young friend, remember this:—Every good wish; every right act, is prayer also; and Praise, and Homage too. To be a Spiritualist thou must, *by the unselfish excellence of thy thoughts and acts*, PRAY ALWAYS: and this is assuredly the highest homage thou canst render Him who desireth no ignorantly-servile submission; and cannot be gratified, after the manner of men, by mere lip-worship and laudations. To do right: to love thy fellow-creatures as thy heavenly Father loveth thee: to get Knowledge, and to live up to the full standard of thy spiritual nature: to subdue the animal, and evolve the god, is assuredly the most acceptable homage thou canst pay to Deity. But pray sometimes in thy closet. Abstract thyself from sense; and ask for strength

and light: but chiefly that thou mayest be both strength and light to those who, wallowing in the slough of animalism, need thy help, thy strength, and thy enlightenment. Thus it was that he who had no selfishness taught Selfishness to pray.”

Here our conversation was postponed until the morrow. What occurred at that meeting will be recorded in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

RANDOLPH. CIVILIS.

CIVILIS. I held a brief to-day in a case tried at Westminster, arising out of an injury done to the Plaintiff by one of those professional impostors known as Quacks. The action was sustained, and heavy damages awarded ; and (speaking as a Lawyer) I think justly so. But it is not to interest you in this case that I have mentioned it : for I know that, as far as the justice of the decision is concerned, you will say that, in the present irrational state of Society, the decision may have been Right ; but that under a rational System the offence could not have been committed ; and that Judicial Right is Social Wrong, felt or suffered somewhere. And, as a Dionysian, though not as a Lawyer, I perfectly agree with you. I have alluded to the case because it led me to ponder on a question which probably does not come within the province of our First Principle to decide, for I could not fully satisfy myself on the subject. As Quacks, like Lawyers, are to be dispensed with under the Intellectual System, I asked myself whether the "Regular Practitioner" ought not to be dispensed with too ? Tell me, my dear Randolph, how this question will have to be decided in the Court of

Reason—a court from which there is no appeal? If the “Faculty” are to exist, Evils must exist: for Diseases are Evils. My question, therefore, resolves itself into this: Is Ignorance the sole cause of disease?

RANDOLPH. There can be no doubt of it, *Civilis*. Ignorance is the cause of all Evil, and, therefore, the cause of Disease. Amongst the instinct-guarded Brutes that range the fields and forests in their natural state of liberty, it has been said—though I know not with what truth—that there is no disease. Man is Reason-guarded; and in this, as in all other matters, his Free Will, undirected by his neglected Reason, has plunged him into Error; and Error, into every description of Evil; and into this amongst the rest. The Health of the Lichen that luxuriates in the shade of yonder wall, is necessarily Purposed and Provided for by the Author of its being. And think you, *Civilis*, that the Health of the Human Species, the most favoured and peculiar work of the Deity, is not, also Purposed and Provided for? The provision for Man’s Health is in his Reason. In all things his necessities admonish him to THINK. He is to have no Happiness, no Independent existence, if he neglects to think:—a providential provision, *Civilis*, for urging him to become Intelligent. It is, moreover, one of many collateral proofs of the high purpose of his being; his God-like nature; and his self-deciding destiny. Without Perception (which is only another name for Reason) Man could not obtain Food to nourish him,

or Raiment to cover him, or Shelter to protect him from the inclement blast. And, if through his perception he obtains these ; through the same means, why not Health? And if Health, why not all he desires and needs? HIS DESIRE AND HIS NEED PRECEDE HIS EFFORT. He needs and desires Food: his perception enables him to find it. He needs and desires Health, and shall not his perception enable him to secure it also? He desires Happiness ; but without the means to obtain it, his desire would be a mockery. We have seen that his Reason, which procures him all his other blessings, also procures him this. He desires (how greatly he desires!) Immortality: and why does he desire it, if within himself, he has not the means of securing the object of his desire? Nothing is given him but through the exercise of his Reason: and, if not his Food, why his Health? If not his Health, why his Immortality? If we cannot know that twelve times twelve are equal to a hundred and forty-four without the aid of our Reason; how, without it, should we know that the Soul is immortal? But, if Reason enables us to know the fact of least value to us, and towards which we feel no instinctive desire; why should it not also enable us to know the other, which is all-important, and towards which we are impelled by the most irresistible desire? But the Desire to obtain Food must be followed by a rational Effort, or food is denied to us. The desire to procure Health, or Happiness, or Immortality must, in like manner, be followed by a

rational Effort, or these also are unattainable. But as Food and Raiment are NOT denied us when thus striven for; neither is Immortality, nor Happiness, nor Health. No, Civilis;—we should not need and desire Health, if the exercise of our Reason did not enable us to obtain it. “Death, a necessary End, will come when it will come;” but were we wise enough to live conformably to the dictates of our Reason, we should all attain old age, and die a painless death, and experience a calm translation from the physical to the spiritual world. In a rational state of society, and when the Diseases resulting from the folly of our progenitors shall have worn themselves out, there will be no disease which our Intelligence will not enable us to prevent; or, if it come, to cure. Even now, there is much good sense, not to say philosophy, in the well-known maxim, that “a man of forty is either a fool or his own physician.” This would be beyond all question true, were men wise enough to live according to the obvious requirements of nature, and had they the necessary leisure to study a science in which every human being is so largely interested. But as things are at present ordered, to live according to nature is next to impossible. Food in some places is too plentiful: in others too scarce: in other places there is none. In the first case, all methods are tried to tempt the cloyed appetite; and feasting and riot is the one great business of human life: in the second case

the food is frequently unwholesome, as well as scant, whilst the one, all-engrossing idea of the class thus circumstanced, is to ensure a supply of it. In the third case, thousands are always on the verge of starvation, depending on the chance of the day, or the daily dole, for the daily meal. With the sumptuous fare there is little healthful exercise: with the scanty fare, there is incessant labour: with the beggar, rags, and every variety of wretchedness. The consequence, in every case, is Disease; and, in the latter cases, maladies so fatally contagious, that in the plenitude of our queer piety, we father them on Heaven! No, Civilis! we must have our inconveniences and our sorrows here; and these are provided for by our ignorance in infancy, and our liability to error through the whole of our pilgrimage on earth: but all physical evils might be avoided without perilling our after-life felicity; and to get rid of the Physician might possibly help us to avoid disease.

CIVILIS. Thank you, my dear Randolph, for this very lucid answer to my question, which I perceive relates more to physical than to mental philosophy. Another thought occurred to me when you were speaking of old age—of all men living to be old. From numberless causes that produce disease, it is probable that, annually, hundreds of thousands prematurely die. If the restraints imposed by Poverty be removed, will not more be born? and if born in

health, and if disease be banished from amongst us, would not the over-population so much dreaded by some, be more to be apprehended?

RANDOLPH, He who made the Earth, made it spacious enough for its inhabitants. But, *Civilis*, when men live up to the standard of their mental nature, and spiritualize themselves by knowledge, it is presumable that they will no longer propagate like hares and rabbits; but that births will be relatively rare in proportion to the certainty that every birth is the nativity of an Intelligence,—the advent of a future god. I do not mean that the forethought of men will altogether, if at all, produce this state of things; but that, as our intellectual nature, predominates within us, our physical nature, and probably our sensual appetites, will be greatly changed.

CIVILIS. I am satisfied. Pardon my occasional incredulity, Randolph; but, having so recently relinquished all dependence on my old faith, I feel doubly interested in every circumstance which enables me to contemplate the Deity in the character of a beneficent Father, rather than in that of an inscrutable and an angry Judge. And such assurances as you have just afforded me that we are not sent here to suffer a multitude of Evils, the very existence of which seems to derogate from his beneficence (urged too as you have urged them,) afford me the most solid and enduring happiness.

RANDOLPH. A creed that forbids inquiry needs votaries of an easy faith: but Truth rejoices in the

scepticism that *will* be satisfied. I know your extreme anxiety, Civilis; and have frequently remarked the delicate care with which you have sought to hide it from me. I am, however, sufficiently acquainted with my own mind to comprehend the struggle that is going on in yours. A mind that from the cradle has deemed Faith to be the best part of its religion is easily satisfied with the evidence on which that religion rests. But your mind has been liberated from this pleasing thralldom: and having thus far ventured to think for yourself, Civilis, you will still doubt of your ability to be your own saviour until your new religion exists in your mind as an easily-comprehended whole; and until the scheme of Providence with regard to man is perceived to be, in Beneficence, co-ordinate with the Creator's Power. Let me help you to master these difficulties by an interlocutory process in which I must be both catechist and respondent.

Q. Man is a dual-natured being; his immaterial soul is conjoined to a material body: why is this?

A. Because no other plan so effectual as this could have been had recourse to by the Deity to make his Knowledge gradual, and his Happiness ultimately perfect; and at the same time to provide for the production of endless millions of souls through the operation of a general Law.

Q. Why could no other plan have been so effectual?

A. Because, in the first place, no work of God can be

imperfect as a means to an end ; and, without conjoining Spirit to Matter, the Soul from its very nature must have been *omni-Intelligent*, incapable of Error, insensible of Ignorance, insensible of Sorrow, and consequently, insensible of Happiness. Secondly, because it is presumable that the Soul could not by any other means have been rendered sensible of its separate existence and Individuality. Thirdly, because by conjoining it to Matter all these beneficent purposes are fully accomplished. And, lastly, because by subjecting Matter to a general Law tending to these purposes, the Spiritual Universe could be peopled with Intelligences without end by a single act, instead of each being made the subject of a separate or special creation.

- Q.* Why is the Human Soul made capable of Intelligence ?
- A.* Because Happiness is the purpose of its existence, and Intelligence is the means of Happiness.
- Q.* But the Soul is created Ignorant ; that is, ignorant in the beginning of everything save a consciousness of its own existence :—Why is this ?
- A.* That it might feel the inconvenience of Ignorance, and through the unhappiness thence arising arrive at a consciousness of Felicity ; and that it might perceive the value of Knowledge which is the cause of Felicity.
- Q.* Being ignorant (or nearly so) in the beginning,

how is the impulse communicated which tends to Knowledge and Happiness ?

- A.* By means of an Instinct or Desire prompting thereto, and a sense of Happiness whenever the desire is gratified.
- Q.* Has not this Instinct or Desire many objects, and some of them not Intellectual, but Sensual ?
- A.* It has apparently several objects, but in reality only one, namely, Endlessly-abiding Happiness. All minor objects, when rationally directed, subserve to this, the major one : thus ; it desires Food, and Raiment, and Health, without which Life could not be supported long enough for the attainment of the Knowledge and experience of the sorrows and inconveniences necessary to the attainment of the major object, Happiness : it also has desires which lead to the continuance of the species, without which the general Law which provides for this continuation would be inoperative, and the Happiness of numbers would be unattainable except by constant special acts of creation.
- Q.* When the desire which leads to the accomplishment of all minor objects is rationally directed, it subserves to the major object, Happiness. When not rationally directed what ensues ?
- A.* Evil and Misery.
- Q.* But Happiness being purposed as the end of human existence, why is there a liability to Error, from which Evil and Misery must ensue ?

- A.* Because an experience of discomfort, or sorrow and misery is absolutely necessary to the appreciation of perfect Happiness, and, consequently to the capability of its enjoyment.
- Q.* Then the experience of discomfort or misery serves a plurality of purposes ?
- A.* It does. First, it serves to show that the act which produces misery or discomfort is irrational, thereby prompting us to a more rational effort for the attainment of the Happiness which is the ultimate object of the act : secondly, it affords us an experience of the discomfort without which the Soul could not be sensible of Happiness.
- Q.* But is not every act, whether erroneous or rational, the result of an innate, impulsive Desire ?
- A.* It is : consequently an erroneous act is not a sinful act, but simply an act which, because it is irrational, is unhappy in its consequences : nor is a rational act a righteous, or rewardable act, but simply an act which, because it is rational, is happy in its consequences. Both acts are the *necessary* results of a predominating conviction which leads to the effort prompted by the Desire. The erroneous act fails in its object (which is some transitory or abiding Good,) and the Evil that ensues is the natural penalty. The rational act succeeds in its object, and the resultant Happiness is the sole, yet all-sufficient recompense.
- Q.* Every act being necessary ; is Man a Free Agent ?
- A.* He is : because, although *prompted* thereto by in-

instinct, he is not *compelled* to act until his reason is convinced ; first, as to the propriety of indulging the instinct, and, secondly, as to the means he will employ for this purpose. His Soul being an Intelligent Principle, Free Will inheres to it of necessity. Without Freedom of choice, there could be no Error ; without Error, no discomfort ; without discomfort or Misery there could be no appreciable Happiness. The Desire or Instinct only gives a bias, which in some cases might be altogether neglected ; but in no case can the object of the Desire be accomplished without an effort of the Intelligent Will.

Q. In what does his Freedom of choice consist ?

A. In the Selection of the Means by which his desires are gratified ; which means will be wrong or right in proportion to the accuracy of his perception of the relation between cause and effect : And in the selection of the particular gratifications he might fix upon as the means of abiding Happiness : which selection will be wrong or right in proportion as he has attained to a just perception of his own nature, both physical and mental ; of the purpose of his existence ; and of the true nature of the Happiness for which his Spirit yearns.

Q. How is he to obtain this Knowledge ?

A. Just as he obtains all other Knowledge—by the exercise of his Perception : by perceiving that he has two natures : by perceiving why he has two

natures : by perceiving that the Soul is Spiritual, Immortal, Intelligent, and incapable of anything but Knowledge : by perceiving that all qualities are reducible to Knowledge : by perceiving that the body is organized matter, subject to death : by perceiving that the Instincts implanted in both natures are consonant with the requirements and necessities of both natures : by perceiving that to depend for his abiding Happiness on the gratification of those Instincts which subserve to the temporary continuation of Life, or the permanent continuation of the Species, is to fix on gratifications which cease when life ceases : by perceiving, thence, that the Happiness which will abide with him for ever must be consonant in its nature with his Spiritual Soul, and, like his soul, be incapable of destruction : by perceiving that the Happiness resulting from Knowledge possesses this consonance in nature, and this indestructibility : by perceiving that there is no Happiness (save this alone), which is real, spiritual, and abiding : by perceiving that the relationship which Knowledge bears to the Soul is identical with the relationship which exists between the Soul and Deity : by perceiving that Deity, like the Soul, is what it is, is all it is, by reason of its Intelligence : by perceiving that every Instinct given to either nature, is given that it might be rationally gratified, not irrationally indulged : by perceiving that on his own Free

choice depends whether he will irrationally pamper his Brutal appetites, choose the Brute's gratifications, live for them, abuse them, (which the unreasoning Brute does not) ; or whether he will select, more rationally, the Knowledge-craving Instincts of the intelligent Soul as his guides to Happiness,—live that he might become a terrestrial Intelligence, and die that he might become a God : by perceiving that every act necessary to be done, every object he has to accomplish, is preceded by a Desire instinctively tending to the act ; by perceiving that to accomplish the Desire demands a rational Effort : by perceiving that if he fail on his part (namely, in the effort,) whether the Desire be the minor one of Food, or the major one of Endless Happiness, the object of the desire will be unaccomplished : by perceiving that it were just as absurd to suppose that the Happiness can be obtained without the effort, as without the effort he could obtain the Food ; and just as insane to accuse the Deity of Injustice in one case as in the other : finally, by perceiving, (as a reason for this) that could he obtain Food without a conscious Effort, as his Lungs obtain air, and as his Heart obtains motion, —to eat or drink would be no enjoyment ; and, in like manner, if without thought, without perception, without rational Effort, he could attain to an immortality of conscious existence, that on such conditions, to exist eternally, could not pos-

sibly be a Happiness. He must perceive that on one condition only is Happiness possible; namely, that he will take the trouble to secure it; that it must be his own act and deed; and if he fail on his part, not only is the forfeiture of his privilege inevitable; but, even to human comprehension,—it is just.

This, *Civilis*, is the Sum and Substance of all Philosophy: the Alpha and Omega of all Religion. Ours is not a Creed demanding Faith; but a system of incontrovertible verities demanding that we know them. Every fact herein promulgated has been demonstrated beyond the possibility of refutation; and, when once seen, beyond the possibility,—even of a doubt. Our nature, and our purposed destiny have been brought within the limits of our perception. The beautifully-beneficent scheme of the Deity has been rendered comprehensible. We have “justified the ways of God to Man.”

CIVILIS. There can be no need to tell you I am satisfied. What is the system of Salvation on which I have been blindly content to lean, to this! The system of Original Sin, and Reward, and Punishment, and Faith, and Repentance, and inexorable Justice, and infinite Mercy, and Sacrifice, and Reconciliation, and Election, and Grace, and “He will have Mercy on whom he will have mercy,”—rank, blasphemies, which yet men strangely reconcile with Reason! I but enumerate them, Randolph, to say I have renounced them all. Till now I never had a Conscience:

for a Conscience cannot come of Opinion, Dictum, Faith; but of Knowledge only. Now I have the *Conscientia*; the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Truth and Falsehood, Right and Wrong: and my Knowledge must henceforth be my guide, my sole reliance, my Religion, my all-in-all. What I am I know: What is the purpose of my double nature, and the beneficent object of my being, I also know: and, in part, I know why all the magnificent Universe around me was created, and why Man was placed in the midst of it. I need not tell you, my dear Mentor, that I am grateful; that I am supremely Happy.

RANDOLPH. Enough of this. We have yet business beneath the stars. From abstract Religion we must stoop to Social Politics. You have rightly described Conscience; which is knowledge, not opinion. But as Hooker has aptly said (and Society cunningly acts upon the maxim!): "The reason why the simpler sort are moved with authority, is the conscience of their own Ignorance." That is, they *know that they are ignorant*: but they do not know, Civilis, that "Authority" is nearly as ignorant as themselves. And *we* must know it, by continuing our investigations, before we shall be competent to enlighten them. I had an object in removing your lingering doubts on the subject of Self-salvation: it was that we might be the better able to confine our attention to the philosophic unwinding by Dionysius of the tangled web of anomalies and contradictions

of which human Society is composed, so that this portion of our subject might also be viewed as an easily-comprehended whole. We have yet, you know, to see what it is that sets the complicated machinery of Society in motion. I have previously told you that it is Selfishness, which would long ago have whirled itself into fragments but for the counteracting drags with which we regulate its mischievous velocity; and that these drags are Morals, Mystic Religion, Literature, and Laws. We have yet to trace these to their origin, see what amount of divinity there is in them, and value them at what we find them to be worth. To this end let us accompany Dionysius in his investigations.

EXTRACT FROM THE PAPERS OF DIONYSIUS.

“Brief, and merely suggestive, as has been our examination of the stores of our accumulated literary Knowledge, — of course, I mean the Historic, Didactic, Imaginative and Speculative portion of it— it would have been altogether a needless labour to enter more extendedly on the ungracious task. But as the Principle we have taken for our guide decides most unmistakably that the only valuable addition the human Soul can make to itself is Truth, it became a matter of the first consequence to determine, generally, the real value of the Literature we regard with so much affection, and from which we have been wont to expect so much advantage.

“ We have seen that our Literature is almost alto-

gether impotent as an agent of real civilization. Far be it from us, however, to decry unnecessarily, or to speak slightingly, from any but the highest motives, of the Literature of the world, or in the slightest degree to undervalue the many blessings it has scattered amongst a portion of mankind. Far be it from us to say that the Virtues it has cherished, or the Moralities it has inculcated, or the Religion it has taught has been altogether vain and valueless. Far be it from us to assert that it has not enunciated, more or less distinctly, great and numerous verities. But these have been scattered at random amongst mankind without even their authors knowing their real value. We have, therefore, books in abundance, but not an unerring guide amongst them. Can any man lay his finger on a single sentence save this alone, 'Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you,' which contains an universal rule of Right? or a principle which discovers or determines what is Right? Taking the whole mass of Literature, modern and antique, was such a principle ever deduced from it? or is such a deduction possible? If it has been found; where is it? what is it? If it has not been found, and if it cannot be found, of what use is Literature, of what use is 'Learning,' except to build thereon mere empty pretensions to erudition and wisdom, and to impose on the illiterate with a sham?

"Buying and selling Consols, Lands, Houses; buying and selling the products of the earth; buying

and selling Law; buying and selling Men; buying and selling Souls; (and, in the same commercial spirit, driving bargains with Heaven itself,—for our very Religion is based on a *quid pro quo!*)—form, at present, the great and all-engrossing business of humanity. Of course most of our Literature has been produced for pay. No marvel that it is the slave of wealth. No marvel that the “Knowledge” it dispenses should fail to make either its dispensers or its recipients Religious, Moral, Virtuous, Wise. No marvel that Knowledge so empty and unreal should have failed to make men Happy.

“As Society is at present constituted this pseudo-Knowledge has its value and its uses. Prostituted though it is to unworthy purposes—to the pampering of our animalism, and to a species of intellectual sensuality scarcely more commendable than sensualism itself—that it is capable of better things, and that it has accomplished better things, is gratefully and unhesitatingly admitted: and were it distributed amongst the entire people, much good, probably the greatest good, would be the necessary consequence. Hollow as much of it is, it is because it is not the common property of mankind that its present use can be made of it by its present possessors. And this is not only well-known to all who know the current value of information and knowledge, but is the real cause of the continuance of the monopoly. There is Power amongst men only because there is Impotence and Imbecility; and this Knowledge (valueless as much

of it is) is Power. There is surface Urbanity and Politeness, only because there is Boorishness; and this Knowledge is the Urbanity and Politeness. There is Polish only because there is Coarseness; and this Knowledge is the Polish. It is nothing in itself: and if all possessed it, its nothingness would be apparent, and its present value gone. As it is, the possessors of Book-knowledge; and, of course, all the conventionally-educated aristocracy of all nations, do really feel themselves to be superior animals, and naturally look down with peacock complacency and contempt on all below them who lack the showy externals in which they so exclusively rejoice. And it must be confessed that some of them are refined and elegant savages enough; most fascinating in their manners; knowing exactly when to stoop, and how. It is quite a luxury to see with what easy dignity all real Lords and Ladies can sustain an artificial character, and how gracefully they can demean themselves on all occasions. These people—whose ability to do better things is so apparent—luxuriate in a kind of sublimated Cannibalism. It is, however, much more refined and far-seeing than the cannibalism that goes naked, and lives in huts, and feeds on the physical fat and muscles of their fellows: no: it is far more delicate, far more provident, to feed upon the products of their labour, than to pick their bones; to house their victims in huts, and live themselves in Palaces; to reduce their victims to systemized submission, and amuse them-

selves by invisible control ; to keep their victims in barbarous ignorance, the better to seem themselves like gods, and to make their reign perpetual.

“ Below these majestic creatures, there is a class of semi-refined savages that apes the learning of the Learned, and the grandeur of the Great : a class, moreover, far less delicate and refined ; but more lofty, more cruel, and if anything, more cannibally-given, than the lordly Anthropophagi it strives to imitate. But, be it known to all men that it is the more or less limited acquaintance with the Literature we have been examining that makes all the difference between the Anthropophagi of Birth, and the Anthropophagi of newly-acquired distinction and wealth ; as well as between really well-read men and superficial pretenders. Be it also known that there is no other difference between these and the Artisans, and the Hodmen, and the Thieves, and the Beggars at the bottom of this so beautifully graduated scale of “orders” into which the Sons and Daughters of the Deity are divided on this, His blessing-bearing Earth.

“ It will be seen that there is more Knowledge contained in our First Principle, than in all our Didactic, Historic, and Imaginative Literature put together. It contains, in fact, all the yet unthought-of Knowledge which can in any way appertain to Mentality : so that with it, the most illiterate might be far wiser than are the most learned without it : hence, no man need despair of being the peer of any

other man, whatever his Learning, in all matters of philosophy which has not reference to Physics. In physical philosophy, he who is master of the greatest number of facts, and who reasons most wisely concerning them, will always possess an advantage over him who has fewer facts, and who reasons worse. I mean, of course, as long as a Selfish System robs the larger possessor of the unbought happiness of imparting them. Not so, however, in Mental Philosophy. To know the First Principle makes all men peers in Knowledge: and when this parity of Knowledge has been once attained universally in any Nation or separate community of Men, all else that is desirable follows of necessity. To be equal by nature, and to be thoroughly conscious of this equality, is to be equal Socially: and then, whatever arrangements might be agreed upon for the general convenience, will necessarily be based on the general Happiness. This is not, however, the Republicanism, nor the Socialism, nor the Communism which is everywhere clamouring for a recognised existence. The Millennium which benighted enthusiasts yearn for will never come until Ignorance no more dreams that Socialism consists in Idleness and Sensuality reduced to a system. No! Socialism is ever-active Spiritualism, limiting the animal to its smallest dimensions, and lifting the Intellect to the summit of its capabilities. The ameliorations of the Social Evils to which such large masses of men are now directing their aspirations, and giving form to by

combinations so variously denominated, are still afar off in the dim distance which Mind cannot penetrate without the optic-glass of an all-enlightening Principle. Such a Principle is now our own; and, by its aid, the possibility of the wished-for Millennium is distinctly seen. But the work of regeneration must be the work of the Intellect—working in the multitude. They must educate themselves. This work must be begun in earnest, and pursued with a steadiness of aim, and a self-reliance which it might take ages to acquire: but acquire it they must, or continue thralls.

“Perhaps the most important maxim we have derived from classic antiquity is, ‘Know thyself:’ but the author of the aphorism did not supply us with the key to the Knowledge he commended, with such truly Doric simplicity, to our attention. Without the key, the injunction, *Do right*, were not more an enigma.

“If we take it for granted that the subject of *self* is inscrutable, we naturally make no effort to know ourselves: and the aphorism is useless.

“If we believe each individual self to be a mere transitory existence, and that our species only is immortal, we necessarily decline the study altogether; and here again the aphorism is useless, for it leads to no result.

“If we believe in our immortality, but, at the same time assure ourselves that we are by nature

deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, the maxim is realized in the belief; but so unsatisfactory is the knowledge that 'Know thyself' sinks into a sarcasm, and we look upon its author as an oracular cheat.

"If, however, self-knowledge is the key to all knowledge, and if the Happiness for which we are designed depends on the acquisition, then 'Know thyself' has a meaning worthy of its antiquity: for it is the touchstone of all Truth; it is the foundation of all Religion; it is the basis of that superstructure of Intelligence that every man must rear for himself:—a work in which, whilst another's aid might ease our labour, another's tyranny can neither hinder nor repress.

"Wherever the Deity has placed a brute animal there he has placed its appropriate food, and everything necessary for the gratification of its instincts, and the development of its peculiar nature. Wherever he has placed a flower, or a lichen, or a blade of grass, there is its appropriate soil; there it flourishes and arrives at its perfection. Thus, seeing the most perfect adaptation of means to an end in every other work of the Deity, we might, with certainty, have predicated, without waiting for the proof, that the Literature which one portion of mankind has the power to produce, as well as to lock up from the other portion, could not contain anything really essential to the wants and welfare of the entire

species: and our examination of these so-much-estimated treasures has demonstrated the fact. Therefore:—

“Fellow-labourers, Hodmen, Husbandmen, Mechanics, Artisans, Soldiers, Sailors, Serving-men, and Serving-women, ye upon whom the ‘primal curse’ has been adroitly shifted, wherever ye are on this globe, and whatever your callings and condition,—Know yourselves. Your bodies are of the same materials, your souls of the same pure essence, your capabilities the same, your destinies, the same as those for whom ye labour, whom ye serve, and whom ye have been falsely taught to believe were created to be your superiors in station and intelligence. Be true to yourselves: know yourselves: live up to the standard of your spiritual nature, and no power on earth can keep ye thralls.”

RANDOLPH. This last sentence, Civilis, is an interpolation. In the general justice of the verdict passed by Dionysius on the Literature which so largely enters into the education of the educated, I think you will agree?

CIVILIS. I believe, Randolph, there is no possibility of coming to any other conclusion with respect to it. Thus, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Mystic Religion, and Literature, have been either absolutely demolished, or proved to be almost futile as aids to rational Civilization. However un-Dionysian the expression, Randolph, the thing is wonderful. Here we

have ONE TRUTH in lieu of a jumble of fancies which constitute our Metaphysics ; for all mental qualities are necessarily included in the FIRST, which is Intelligence ; and the nature of the ONE explains the nature, and determines the action, of all. This same TRUTH absorbs into its own being the Moralities, and the Virtues, and the veritable portion of Religion. They have no separate, no positive existence. They and it are ONE. Do RIGHT is the grand total of all Religion. The Knowledge of what is Right obliges us to do Right : and to know what we are includes this Knowledge, and enforces its observance. Do Right is again the sum and substance of Morality. Morality is lost in Knowledge. And with the Moralities away go the Virtues, all save Love : and what is Love if we abstract Intelligence ! It is easy to foresee what Dionysius will make of Social Politics. Selfishness is necessarily based on the Animal Instincts, not on the Intellectual. Pleasure is mistaken for Happiness—Unmitigated Selfishness would desolate the Earth—hence restraints,—Mystic Religion, Morals, the Virtues.—Selfishness admitted as the basis of Society, the Do RIGHT of the Moralists means only this,—Be as unselfish as you can ; in other words,—Be Prudent, but be Generous.—But if unselfishness is Right, Selfishness is Wrong : ergo, the very basis of all Social Action is Wrong.—Remove the original Wrong, and Morality has no existence.—Remove Morality, and the Virtues fade.—It follows that the unreal things called the Moralities and the

Virtues cannot make part of the Reality called Religion.—Religion has reference to the Deity.—I perceive it all, my dear Randolph.—But I will come to the next reading: shall it be to-morrow?—Monday I start on Circuit,—for the last time, Randolph, for I am cured of Law: I am out of love with Justice.—I am both a better Lawyer and a worse, than before I became your pupil—I see through and through men: not a motive is hidden from me.—I see the convictions on which men act—Wrong? Right?—no matter which,—they compel the acts of the disputants,—Justice!—My business is henceforth to teach my fellow-creatures.—Shall we have the next Essay to-morrow, Randolph? I shall be all ear. I will not interrupt you by a word.

I assented: and, commending my excited friend to calmness, we parted for the night.

CHAPTER VII.

RANDOLPH. CIVILIS.

RANDOLPH. The Notes I have arranged into the form of an Essay for this evening, Civilis, are somewhat more extended than on the previous occasions: but as you are leaving town to-morrow, I have been anxious that you should have an entire view of the whole subject fixed systematically in your mind previously to your departure. What Society is, we shall see in this Essay, as in a Mirror. What it ought to be, we have already seen with tolerable distinctness.

CIVILIS. I am infinitely indebted to you, my dear Randolph. I hope you purpose to confer a similar obligation on the world.—You will publish these papers, will you not?

RANDOLPH. It is my intention to do so, Civilis.

CIVILIS. Your book will meet with many Objectors, and some who will not deal very fairly with it: for Self-interest is stronger than conviction: besides which, this feeling—this Self-interest—absolutely blinds men, and will not let them see a disagreeable truth.

RANDOLPH. We must expect opposition, Civilis. Men are fallible; and we may be in Error: but

this, Time and Discussion will show. Madmen do not know that they are mad. Fools are not aware of their folly. We may, you know, be Madmen or Fools. There are those who would think that we are desecrating the Sabbath by talking of these things to-day. We hold a very different opinion. Our Principle is either true or false; and if we are labouring under a delusion, we shall be among the first to hail the demonstration that can set us right. No man is aware of the extent of his own Ignorance. That which he believes to be Truth is Truth to him until he has become convinced of its falsehood. No man can positively know that another man is wiser than himself: for the very instant he is conscious of the fact he is a new man: the demonstration has dissipated the difference. Thus it is with us, Civilis: thus it must be with all men. If our assumed First Principle be not the fundamental Truth, one of two things ensues: either there is no such Truth (which amounts to this—there can be no God); or there is such a Truth, but it differs from ours. In either case the Objector must demonstrate his position before we can abandon ours. But, in this case, our object will be attained: we shall get the Truth: we shall make a step in Intelligence: we shall be no longer his inferiors in this particular. He has but to prove the disparity between himself and us; and that disparity will have ceased to exist. Truth has this advantage over Falsehood,—all men are really interested in it: and, in the present case, for one

whom Falsehood seems to benefit, there are a hundred whom it hurts; and as Knowledge is power, Error will ultimately go to the wall. Were Fame my object, I would not publish these papers. If I expected profit, I would not publish them. Nor would I publish them if I feared to awaken ridicule, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. But as I hold it to be the duty of every man to do right regardless of personal consequences, I shall certainly give the world an opportunity of forming a judgment concerning them. If they are founded on a fallacy they will be soon forgotten; if on the fundamental Truth, they will slowly and noiselessly influence, towards a healthier action, the mind of the entire world. The way is long; but (unless I greatly err), it is a safe way, and the only one. Whoever supposes that I consider myself a Magician, having but to wave my wand over the broad ocean of Error, as Moses is said to have waved his over the Red Sea, and that instantly a way to the promised land will be opened through its waters, he, and not Ramus Randolph, is a dreamer and an enthusiast. England was never (in the common acceptation of the word) *greater* than it is now; and never further from the path of real Civilization,—save only that Knowledge is spreading, and a dreamy sense of some impending change is experienced by many thousands of its more intelligent and liberal citizens. But the governing powers are as infatuated as ever with its physical and commercial greatness, which they calmly dream will

be perpetual. And probably this very circumstance will be the greatest impediment to its reformation. No nation on earth will have a harder struggle to rise superior to the influences by which it is so thoroughly enmeshed. Not even Italy with its Atheism; nor France with its Sensualism, its sentimentality, and its fondness for display. But these are not reasons why the Truth should not now be told; why the seeds should not now be sown, which, if they have the ever-living germ of Divinity within them, will spring up, if not in this, in a more congenial soil, and produce a rich harvest of happiness for the world. Listen now to Dionysius.

EXTRACT FROM THE PAPERS OF DIONYSIUS.

ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENTS, LAWS, MORALITY, THE VIRTUES, AND MYSTIC RELIGION.—SOCIETY AS IT IS.

“To live luxuriously, or, by acquiring Wealth, to have the means of living luxuriously, is confessedly the great temporal object of mankind at present; but more especially of that portion of the human family which claims to be considered Civilized. By Wealth I mean high wages, large profits, and inordinate accumulations.

“It is true that in every nation, the great bulk of the people are below the hope of attaining this object in any considerable degree. But, not to notice individual exceptions, this is the desire of all: and so

strong and general is this desire that it might be said to operate almost as an instinct. It is, in fact, instinctive. The true character of this Instinct is not, however, the acquisition of Wealth, but the attainment of Happiness.

“The desire to get luxurious indulgences is, then, a natural Instinct of the Soul, seeking, through minor physical instincts, the Happiness which these instincts (given for other purposes), have not in their power to bestow. Wealth can buy luxurious indulgences: these indulgences are supposed to be capable of affording the Happiness of which every one is in search: hence (except amongst those—and their name is legion,—whose daily drudgery limits their ambition to the acquirement of their daily bread), all our aspirations tend to the acquisition of Wealth.

“This craving is the mainspring of all the movements of Social life: and, as at present regulated, is the cause of nearly all the Social miseries to which semi-civilized Man is subject. The feeling is necessarily Selfish. And if our Laws were so framed that the Selfishness of every individual of a Community should be restrained from gratifying its cravings at the expense of others, it is clear that the folly of expecting Happiness from Wealth must long ago have ceased; because its emptiness would have been felt, and all inordinate accumulations would have been prevented.

“Laws, however, instead of repressing, or setting rational limits to the activity of this Selfish desire,

have been framed to sanction and encourage it. In fact, the origin of Laws was the protection of inordinate accumulations, as we shall presently see.

“ We have only to do with what is. How what is came to be, is but of little consequence. We will, nevertheless, advance a theory which may help us to understand the past, and remove the impediments which surround the future.

“ If all History did not attest the fact, Common-sense must perceive that the origin of Property was the Law or Principle of Brute Force. No other origin is probable: and, certainly, no other Law could ratify the right. Man, as an animal, requires sustenance. Nature in its vegetable and animal products affords this sustenance. A strong man marks out a certain portion of land which supplies the food and other comforts and conveniences of which he stands in need. He calls it ‘ Mine,’ and, if necessary, defends it by his physical strength and prowess. Others do the same. In the process of time, all the land of a district, or natural nation, is thus marked out and appropriated. It may be that some men have failed to acquire a portion. No matter. MIGHT IS RIGHT; and he who is not strong enough, or sufficiently adroit to secure a portion, must look for one in some unappropriated part of the world to which he can hew himself out a way, or otherwise obtain access. He must do this or starve, or steal, or live on alms, or become the slave and menial drudge of one more fortunate or more

ferocious than himself. After a time it is found that the spontaneous products of any thus-appropriated district are not sufficient to support its accumulated population. It is further found that the natural fertility of the soil might be increased by culture. The serfs and their progeny are employed on this labour. They obtain permission to live on condition of the performance of this servile drudgery. The Lord has the power of life and death over his slave. He has acquired a property in his fellow-man; a Right in the strength and life-blood of his brother. The latter must be obedient to the former in all things. The Possessor of the soil has now Leisure as well as Power. This leisure is spent in the animal indulgences now at his command. He employs his serfs to build him a stronghold for a dwelling: to fence around his possessions; and to serve him in any way that may best administer to his growing luxuriousness, and make the distance between the Lord and his Serf more impassable and complete. Lord!—a name by which we distinguish Deity. It is needless to remark on the modesty of this epithet when applied to men,—and to such men! This Chief or Lord has still a craving for something he has not. In the midst of his sensualism he is still a Man. He wants Happiness. He conceives that more wealth will supply the want. He tries to gratify this craving by dispossessing a weaker neighbour of his possessions and adding them to his own. His menials are compelled to lend their as-

sistance ; and he perceives the acquisitive and aggressive uses that can be made of menials. He succeeds in his aggressions, but is still unsatisfied. Greater possessions have given him greater power ; and with his power increases his rapacity. He is not singular in all this : many others are practising the same policy. No sooner is a province apportioned than the Possessors thereof make Laws ; or without any fixed or written Laws, determine amongst themselves that any attempts by the Non-possessors to relieve themselves from this possessionless condition, or to make reprisals, shall be denominated Crimes, and be punished accordingly.

“ If ‘ Might ’ were rationally as well as brutally ‘ Right,’ these Laws or regulations would be also right. But this not being the case, Might is Wrong ; or rather it *was* wrong ; and the original assumption of Property in the soil, the real Crime : and the crime so called, not crime, but a justifiable attempt to obtain the restitution of a natural right. Many have been the efforts for this restitution. Numerous have been the attempts at reprisal. But they have never, to any extent, succeeded : and where they have succeeded it has been only a change of the oppressed into Oppressors ; and vice versa. Every successful effort (where reprisal has been attempted), as well as every failure, has, therefore, only added strength and consistency to the maxim—**MIGHT IS RIGHT, AND ALL OPPOSITION THERETO IS CRIME.**

“The idea of JUSTICE was necessarily very simple. The powerful Possessor could apportion what degree of punishment on the refractory, possessionless menial he might choose, and call it retributive Justice. Of course this Justice, based on an abstract wrong, is conventional. It is, in fact, INJUSTICE CONVENTIONALLY ELEVATED INTO A VIRTUE. Growing out of the same wrong come the virtues of a more amiable character, namely MERCY, and Forbearance, and others of the same family.

“The craving for more Power amongst the powerful, led them, as we have seen, to prey on each other. This was an evil that came home even to them. In process of time it was therefore found expedient to agree upon some principle of action amongst themselves. It became necessary to make Laws to restrain this growing licentiousness, and make one Proprietor respect the property and rights of his neighbour. A man might barter, sell, or give away his property; but even the wealthiest must not be permitted to take by violence the property of the poorest. HENCE THE LAWS SANCTIONING, AND MAINTAINING THE ‘IN-ALIENABLE RIGHTS’ OF PROPERTY, AND PROTECTING THE POSSESSOR AGAINST THE UNRESTRAINED RAPACITY OF HIS RICHER AND MORE POWERFUL NEIGHBOUR. Thus the original wrong, which Brute force had converted into Right, became also a LEGAL RIGHT: and the class of Serfs, were, as a class, cut off from their natural rights for ever; whilst limits were set to rapaciousness when directed by one proprietor against another.

“ After it had been thus arranged that disputes relating to property should no longer be decided by Brute force or War, a tribunal, or a Judge ! would be appointed to decide between litigants : and probably the first Judge had been the most active depredator ; selected as Judge, and perhaps as Chief of the district, province, or nation, on account of his possessions and the number of his dependents or serfs, as helps to the enforcement of his decisions.

“ This, then would be the beginning of Civilization, which, even now, means little, if anything more than the establishment of Order by means of the ‘ Pains and Penalties’ attached to the infractions of Civil authority and Law. All Laws, or Social regulations, would be based on this (rationally speaking) unjust foundation. Thus reared on abstract wrong all Laws would naturally and necessarily recognise the Right founded on Might. Deeper than this for a basis they did not, and under the circumstances, deeper they could not go. And deeper than this the interpreters of Law—the Blackstones, and the De Lolmes, have never gone : because deeper they have not dared to go. And if any length of time can convert Wrong into Right, six or eight thousand years is a powerful argument against opposition and cavil. I am inclined to think that it is a conclusive one, and for this reason amongst others :—the contest was purely an animal contest : the weaker succumbed to the stronger ; and if the former had chanced to out-general their

oppressors, *they* would have been the Oppressors, and their victims the Oppressed.

“ We shall now see another reason. In the process of time, the Serfs, or subjugated portion of mankind, demand and obtain a recognition of *their* claim to a Right of Property in their Labour, and in all proceeds thence arising. And wherever this Right has been recognised, and is, by usage or Law, maintained, Civilization is said to exist; because Slavery, in name at least, has been extinguished. Man has relinquished his property in Man, retaining only a property in the surplusage of his labour. Admitting, or overlooking the original wrong, the class of Serfs thus became identified with the Selfish or Brute-force Principle: and Selfishness became the universal Law and sole principle of action amongst mankind.

“ Hence arose all the Interests, as well as all the confusion and complication of Rights which we find amongst us at the present day, and which it is the all-absorbing business of the world to balance and adjust so as to prevent the fabric of Error thus raised from falling into pieces, and re-resolving itself into its simple element, Brute-force, or the Right of the Strongest. To this it is ever tending: and to this it must tend always. Hence also the *denominations* of property, ‘Real’ or Landed; and ‘Personal,’ or Money, Merchandize, Goods, Chattels, &c. Hence also the origin of Classes as we find them at present: the Higher Class who possess the Land and the chief

governing power: the Middle Class who have enriched, or are endeavouring to enrich themselves, by their profits on the Labourer's Labour, and by their own earnings and savings; all which have obtained for them a share of political power: and the Lower or Labouring Class who have no property but the modicum arising out of their labour, and are thence destitute of all political power.

“This, then, is the natural (but for MEN, the irrational,) though, under the circumstances, the desirable COMPROMISE by which all men in ‘civilized’ communities have bound themselves to the Selfish, or Brute-force Principle. All recognise it: all participate in it to the utmost of their power: all who can in any way profit by it (that is, live by it,) protect and cherish it: each man subscribes himself Slave to the Selfish Principle: each is compelled in self-defence to *accumulate and to keep*: DISTRIBUTION IS THE ACCIDENT OF THE SYSTEM, WHILST ACQUISITIVENESS IS THE LAW.

“The only Love that was evinced in the struggle which brought about this state of things, was Animal Love (of course, more or less modified in its Selfishness in proportion as the Intellect obtained enlightenment and strength :) hence, what more natural than that the propertied classes should secure their Property against future aggression—to their ‘heirs for ever’? To accomplish this, Laws were made and promulgated. To enforce obedience to these and all other property-produced Laws, Governments were

established. It matters not what were their form ; this was their object. What we have especially to notice is this ;—that THE ACQUISITION AND RECOGNITION OF PROPERTY CREATED ALL CRIME WHICH HAS REFERENCE TO PROPERTY, WHETHER THIS REFERENCE OR RELATIONSHIP BE IMMEDIATE OR REMOTE. Out of this same institution of Property sprung the idea (such as it is) of Justice ; and, as we shall subsequently see, of the other Virtues, and the Moralities, and Mystic Religion.

“ The Right founded on Might has its advantages : and these advantages are to a certain extent secured by Government and Laws. But, being an evil resulting from Ignorance and Error, it has also its disadvantages : and this is one of them ; Crime, of which it is the parent, dogs it as its shadow : and as long as this spurious Right lasts, dog it it will, even were it through eternity. Property, and its attendant, Power, might change hands to-morrow : no matter : Crime would be prowling in its rear.

“ Do not let us any longer profanely attribute these evils of our own contrivance to the Deity who has beneficently made even our mistakes of use to us, and who has amply provided us with the means of avoiding them. ‘ Original Sin ’ was and is the original mistake of adopting Brute-force as Right, and living according to the dictates of our Animal Instincts, instead of following the dictates of our Intellectual nature and seeking Happiness in Knowledge.

“ We have seen how the institution of Property gave birth to Crime—a conventional name for acts which could not have had an existence but for the Brute-force which originally converted an abstract Wrong into a Legal Right. We have seen how the existence of Crime gave an ideal existence to Retributive Justice; and this Justice, to the Virtues—Mercy and Forbearance. We have yet to see how it generated the other Virtues, and the Moralities, and Mystic Religion. Crimes were punished by pains and penalties under the sanction of that conventional Justice now denominated Law. But Laws could not reach every description of delinquency;—as Hatred, Malice, Mendacity, Evil thoughts, and Malevolent intentions; all which passions and feelings were generated by the accumulative principle that first brought unnatural want, and abjectness, and misery amongst men. As Civil Laws could not reach these passions and evil feelings, *it became necessary to invent a MORAL CODE: in other words, to propound a CONSCIENCE for the disaffected and disobedient members of the Community.* Yes, Authority had to forge a Conscience for mankind to enable it to rule them. The thing was easy. Successful men are clever men. Riches can buy the Genius that Poverty is glad to sell. It is well that it is so: for here was the advent of Literature, and Science, and the Arts:—the barbaric nursery of Soul. The malignant Passions mentioned above were

denounced as Wrong, Wicked, a breach of the Moral Law. To obtain covertly by Mendacity, Fraud, or Cunning, any portion of the property of another, was also (and, under the circumstances, properly so) denounced as an infraction of the Moral Code. Even to harbour a malicious thought against another, was pronounced to be equally wicked and immoral. But how could this species of Crime be punished?—Genius lends its aid, and the thing is done!—BY DENOUNCING IT AS DISOBEDIENCE TO THE GODS!—that is,—when every aspect and phase of Nature was a god; and afterwards BY HERALDING IT AS SIN AGAINST THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOODNESS, THE GOD OF ALL JUSTICE, THE ALL-SEEING ONE. Hence the Future Punishments for the morally Bad, and the Future Rewards for the morally Good—the Hell-fire, and the Happiness, which were to be eternal. Great aids all these, to Governments. HENCE, MORAL GOODNESS, ALLIED TO THE PERFORMANCE OF CERTAIN RITES, AND THE SUBSCRIPTION TO CERTAIN CREEDS, CAME TO BE DENOMINATED RELIGION. Hence also, Men clothed the gods, even the ONE GOD whom they thus invoked, with the very attributes they had manufactured for themselves! The great unseen God was, to all sinners, a God of inexorable Justice, a God of Vengeance, visiting the consequences of Sin on the children of Sinners even unto the third and fourth generations: but a God of Mercy and Loving-kind-

ness unto the believers in the mysteries of Religion, and the sinless observers of the Moral Law.

“ But, as a System of unmitigated Selfishness could not work and be perpetuated without some ameliorations, the opulent were compelled (as well from natural feeling as from policy), somewhat to relax its rigours:—they were constrained to be Benevolent to the miserable victims of the System; and to become Good Samaritans amongst the way-side unfortunates, who, hungry had none to feed them; who, sick and homeless, had none to help them in their abjectness. All such Virtues were lauded as duties of Religion, and as good and acceptable services to God:—to that God, mark you, who has sent an abundance for all, which if unselfishly distributed to all, these Virtues (godlike as they are) could have no existence!—The ENDURANCES of the Poor were also elevated into Virtues!—Patience, Probity, Long-suffering, Fortitude, and Charity—if not of Alms—of thought and speech:—all these were likewise made a part of Religion;—the Good Works which were to be part-security (the other part being Faith) for the reception of the virtuous—the obedient observers of the Moral Law—into glory and blessedness hereafter. In vain has a purer Code of Morals been propounded to the world. In vain that simpler help to the formation of a Conscience which Jesus of Nazareth came to teach mankind. ‘Do unto others that which ye would others should do unto you,’ is a receipt to make a

Conscience worthy of its meek and gentle Author. This recipe to make Morality, goes to the very root of the Selfishness which is the Key-stone of the present System. Shrouded with all the mysticism that Selfishness first invented for the purposes we have been unmasking, this moral maxim is nearly lost sight of; and whenever Religionists condescend to speak of it, it is only to explain away its integrity and usefulness.—Thus came Mystic Religion, the Virtues and the Moralities. And out of all these unrealities came the Literature, which, at the bidding of its selfish paymaster, took all these unrealities under its especial protection. Is it any wonder that our Literature is what we have found it to be,—next to useless as a guide to Truth? But our Science, which, to produce our Luxuries, had the same beginning, is a thing of far greater consequence.

“Within this circle of Error we have been reviewing, that which we call Good is not Good, but Evil modified. If we would obtain unmixed Good, we must abandon the Error that produces the Evil: for as long as we adhere to the Error, all our contrivances, such as Property-protecting Law, Property-produced Morality, and Property-venerating Religion, will never be able to convert Evil into Good, or Wrong into Right: but we shall go on vexing ourselves by the useless struggle, and irreverently accusing our beneficent Creator of being the Author of the Evils we ignorantly produce for ourselves, and

as ignorantly take all possible pains to entail on our posterity for ever.

“Some writers on the origin of Governments have supposed a Social Compact. The nature of this Compact will now be clearly perceived. In the first place, one portion of the Human family enjoyed by conquest all Rights. The other portion by reason of their weakness, had no Rights, but Duties only; which Duties were imposed on them by their conquerors. But as weakness is ever disposed to regain its lost position, if not by force, by Tact and Cunning, this state of Society is a state of War. The supposed Compact would be, therefore, a yielding by the Powerful of a Right of Property in their Labour to the Serfs, for the sake of peace and order; whilst the acceptance of these concessions by the Serfs, served in some degree to ameliorate the rigour of the Brute-Force Principle on themselves; and at the same time to make them parties to, and participators in, the Selfishness which, to the present hour, is the principle of action of all Communities by courtesy called Civilized. And out of this Compact, such as it is, have grown all the Interests; all the Trade, Commerce, Bargainings, Employments, Distinctions, Expedients, and organized turmoil (to say nothing of Religion and Law) which make up the all-absorbing business of Human life from the cradle to the grave. **THE MOTIVE-POWER OF ALL IS SELFISHNESS AMELIORATED BY RESTRICTIONS.** Yet so dovetailed

is this Selfishness with everything, that it is the very mainspring of these ameliorations too.

“In England at the present time Property is sacred : there is nothing more so. Hence, the Brute-Force principle is as dominant as ever. The life-germ of all Commerce was the Compact just alluded to, which secured to Serfdom a right of Property in the proceeds of its Labour. It cemented the Selfish Principle by giving every man an interest in it : it was the tub thrown out to the whale. Commerce has now, however, its Millionaires ; and can reckon here in England its merchant Princes by thousands. It has grown into a Power almost equal to the Aristocracy of the Land ; and is even at this time contending with it for a supremacy in Selfishness. But look at the toil-stricken, want-stricken, crime-stricken millions who have almost ceased to have an interest in the struggle ! All, however, cling blindly to Selfishness : and this will probably make the barbaric system popular—yes, even popular, here in England, until England’s false greatness shall have reached its summit ;—peradventure even to her fall ! Yea, till her Selfishness shall have ended in her desolation : till her Beggary shall have eaten up her resources : till her Commerce shall be a by-word : till her Nobles shall have licked the dust : till gaunt Famine shall have decimated her population : till Misery shall have overtaken the remainder ; and till this last mock-heroic Drama of barbaric Civilization shall

have been acted out, as another lesson for humanity ; as another example for the instruction of an ignorant world.

“ Here, then, we have the incipency of Crime ; the origin of our idea of Justice ; the origin of the Moralities ; the origin of Mystic Religion ; the origin of the Virtues ; the origin of Laws, both Criminal and Civil ; the origin of Governments, Jurisprudence, Literature, the Sciences, and the Arts ; the origin of Commerce ; the origin of the malevolent passions and feelings that poison existence, and disgrace humanity ; and the origin of all the Manners and Customs which distinguish Civilized from Savage life. We have seen that the whole of them are of human invention : that they are without any special sanction of the Deity : that they arose out of Ignorance and Error : and that the whole of this immense superstructure of complicated antagonisms is false and unstable because it is based on the Animal Principle ; and is consequently productive of that ‘ mingled web of Good and Evil,’—or rather, of Evil mitigated by restrictions, which inheres to every portion of our Doings as naturally as Form inheres to Substance, or Motion to the Earth.

“ Here, too, is the origin of all those social Influences which pamper and encourage our Animal, and depress our Intellectual, Instincts : which compel men to do wrong systematically, and to bow down their Intellect before Legal Right which is based on abstract Wrong. Yes, on the very ugliest of

our Animal Instincts, Selfishness, is the false but showy superstructure of all Social Institutions raised!

“Morality, like Law, is also based on abstract Wrong! And what is it at best? It is an effort which the Oppressed Man is required to make—to love and respect his Oppressor. And when attained (if not the result of Ignorance, as it often is), what a noble, what a godlike conquest over his lower nature! But how unspeakably mean is that man who can demand such a life-long sacrifice at the hands of his brother!

“The Virtues, like Morality and Law, are the progeny of Wrong! Those of *endurance* fall to the Poor man’s share,—Patience, Long-suffering, Fortitude: and how unspeakably grand they are when practised by the Oppressed (as they constantly are) in lamb-like submission to the Oppressor! Those of *Action*, the most beautiful of which are Benevolence and Mercy, are Luxuries which fall chiefly to the share of the Rich. And what are they? Nothing more than, for the most part, a forced but pitiful *return*, by the opulent, to those at whose expense the luxury, or the pride of being Benevolent and Merciful is obtained!

“But to show how anomalous in their very nature these Moralities and Virtues are, as well as how omnipotent is the Selfishness on which Society is based, we need only to remember that a man dare not, in a multitude of cases, be as Virtuous, or as

Moral at he would wish to be : for if, in obedience to the Angel-dictates of his better nature he squander his worldly possessions in being Merciful or Benevolent, or in Doing unto others, as he would they should, in similar circumstances, do unto him ; or if he neglect the opportunity to get rich, and thus beggar himself ; either Bedlam, or a Workhouse, or a Jail, together with the contempt of the Well-to-do, and the Prudent, and the Proud ; and the revilings of the Multitude, is the reward he has to expect for acting up to the standard of his noblest convictions. Supposing, then, that Morality and the Virtues were indeed what most people fancy them to be,—the beautiful children of Heaven, instead of what they are,—the clumsy contrivances of men, and the progeny of their Errors, is it any wonder that they are frequently at a discount? Did we not now know the reason, the wonder would be that they exist at all. They are the main props of the System which generated them : seeing which, our wonder ends. But, with all our souls we repugn, we repudiate the system. Let Adversity come ; let but our Trade and Commerce fail ; and these props on which we lean so hopefully will bow before the blood-stained desolation of our hearths and homes, like reeds before the tempest.

“Why, even now—such is the strength of our Morality—a man will take the lives of a whole family to gain a shilling ! A woman will destroy a husband and half a dozen sons for the sake of what she can

save out of the pittance allowed by their club to bury them ! a mere child, a female child, will calmly murder her mistress to procure the price of a new mantle in which to ape ' gentility !' Even Genius itself, under the pressure of these influences, what will it not undertake for pay ? Is Religion, even amongst the Saints, the least barrier to dishonesty where anything worth the forfeiture of the Saintly seeming is to be got by the dereliction ? Will a Lawyer refuse a bad cause if a fee is to be fingered by espousing it ? From the highest to the lowest, has not Religion, has not Virtue, has not Honour, its price ? And why are all these things ? Because where Honour, where Virtue, where Religion begins or ends, no one knows ; AND BECAUSE EVERY MAN'S OPINION-MADE CONSCIENCE HAS TO DRAW THE LINE OF DEMARCATION FOR ITSELF. Is it any wonder that imperious Selfishness should draw this line to its own pecuniary advantage ? I do not blame the Men so much as I blame the System. They but yield to motives that are too strong for Consciences which are composed of mere opinion. Do I blame the Lawyer for advocating every cause that comes ? Assuredly not. I only blame the System which binds him to such advocacy. He must live : nor is it his business to prejudge cases even were it his interest to do so, which it manifestly is not. The Right or Wrong of a case is a very nice point to determine even according to our conventional mode of judging it. Well might he who is in the Wrong think that he is Right : for even in our Tribunals

where the quaint-looking representative of our man-made Justice sits so gravely, the decision is a lottery. Take a case of the most flagrant crime. A man is charged with the murder of his wife. There is no direct evidence to convict him. The wife was poisoned. No one saw the poison administered ; but the woman dies. A number of concurring circumstances tend to fix the criminality on the husband. He was known to have had poison in his possession. He had been heard to utter obscure threats against his wife. But, then the Law says there must be a reasonable Motive proved, without which it holds that a man cannot commit a crime. Motives are proved. The woman was a virago : the man's home a hell ; his life a misery. They often quarrelled : sometimes fought. It is further proved that the man lived on terms of peculiar intimacy with a young woman in the neighbourhood ; and that soon after his wife's death the guilty paramours became man and wife. With this array of circumstantial evidence against him, is the man guilty ? The Jury who try him take all these circumstances into their consideration. They convict the accused : and the man is hanged. Why did the Jury convict him, and the Law doom him to an ignominious death ? *Because a reasonable motive, a very strong motive, had been proved to exist in confirmation of his guilt :—*THE MEANING OF WHICH IS, THAT THE DOZEN JURORS AGREE, THAT, IN SUCH A CASE, WITH SUCH MOTIVES OPERATING UPON EITHER OF THEMSELVES, EITHER OF THEMSELVES MUST HAVE COMMITTED THE ACT ; THAT

HUMAN NATURE MUST YIELD TO SUCH A PRESSURE OF INCITING MOTIVES. So, because a reasonable, a very strong, an irresistible motive had pressed him into Crime, they condemn him. And the Law hangs him for the same reason. It is still possible that, with all these circumstances against him, the man might have been altogether innocent. Such things have been. *But what does this reliance on Motives mean? WHY, THAT EVERY ACT MUST BE PRECEDED BY A MOTIVE; AND THAT IF THE MOTIVE BE BUT IMPERIOUS ENOUGH, IT IS NOT IN HUMAN NATURE TO WITHSTAND IT.* Then where is the Guilt? And in what consists the Justice which dooms the circumstance-made Criminal to irrevocable death? Of such anomalies Society is altogether composed. And what wonder, when its very basis is wrong? When Conscience is opinion-made; and when Justice is a sham?

“Not only is this Animal, or Brute-Force Principle, the cause of Crime; but in its operation it becomes the interest of the powerful classes of the Community not to exterminate it if they could; but partially only to repress, and partially to encourage it. Think of the army of ‘respectability’ which battens upon Crime! Nor are the real Evils which exist amongst us, and the real Vices of mankind, enough to satisfy the candidates for place and power without conjuring up a PRINCIPLE OF EVIL, which they represent as making constant war on ‘fallen’ humanity! But for the crimes and evil-doings which exist under this fosterage, our heroes of the ‘Church Militant’ could

have no plea for carrying on their phantom war against 'Original Sin'; and might be either disbanded as conquerors of the 'Arch Enemy,' or, at least retire from the Service on half-pay. Men cannot afford this if they would: so that real Evils must be encouraged, at least to a certain extent, that these phantom evils might be pleaded, and the full pay procured; and that all the other Crime-profitting Professions might flourish and abound amongst us. What are the whole of them but the damning evidences of our Criminality and Ignorance?

"Let us imagine a purely intellectual being from the abode of Spirits made perfect by Intelligence visiting our Earth. What would be his wonder, (presuming the fact to be new to him,) to hear our nation boast of the immensity of talent constantly supported by us in affluence, not as the representative of our wisdom and worth, but as an evidence of our Ignorance and our Crimes? Would he not think us monstrously wicked, and as monstrously imperious to shame? Would it lessen his wonder to learn, that, with the exception of a few Poets (who have always been the pioneers of intellectual progress), and a few Philosophers (some of them not over wise), this is nearly all the proof we have of our progress in Knowledge and Civilization after an experience of six thousand years! Yet these evidences of a nation's delinquencies are ever the boast of its people, and the props and ornaments of its court.

"We have seen how men of Intellect; men largely

endowed (as many of them are) with universal sympathy, but limited in their views by the superficial knowledge current amongst the educated, become animalized and shaped to selfishness by the dominant Principle. What, then, are the *bulk* of mankind, who either despise Intellect as something mechanical—something by which the nobodies have to earn their bread; or who are so barbarously ignorant that a clever fellow like Dickens is to them a god?—By the way, Dickens is a man who can pick out the Quilps from the Cherribles of society; but he knows not how either the Quilps or the Cherribles are formed.—Well, how does the selfish system operate on those who fancy themselves to be above the condition of thinking men, and on those who are so much below it? It converts them into mere animals who prey on each other. Our System not only permits, but enjoins it. We are animals with Intellects which cannot reach beyond the mysteries of money-getting; and therefore sensual enjoyment is the Alpha and Omega of all. We, indeed, profess to be Immortals, and we profess to be Religious; but our Religion is material, and our faith herein is encouraged by the inducement of Reward. Yes, so much are we the creatures of this degrading principle, that we hold ourselves to be incapable of allegiance to Heaven without a Bible-proclaimed promise of reward! But as the reward is distant, and the nature of it so little appreciable by our lucre-loving minds, it naturally follows that we should represent

it to ourselves as attainable on very easy terms. Faith, and a few occasional Ceremonies and Observances, and the prize is ours. And should it chance to turn out something less comfortable than a Judgeship or a Bishopric, no matter : IT WILL NOT HAVE COST US MUCH, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that our enjoyment here has been but little abridged to obtain it ; and that, under the circumstances, we have made the best bargain we could. Hence, we place but a light value on our Religion, and turn it, as we do our Virtues and our Morality, into worldly profit or sensual enjoyment, or as far as possible into both. On the same commercial principle we use the best labours of the Intellect for precisely the same end. Our reading is, for the most part, debased into Sensualism, present or prospective. Our Arts are sensual. Our Theatres, our Operahouses, our Concert-halls, our Churches, our Meeting-houses are used and attended chiefly for sensual excitement and personal display by the majority of those who frequent them. Our Palaces, our Houses, our Equipages, our Dress, are merely so many phases of our Sensualism. I am ashamed to think that a multitude of our fellow-men are degraded into liveried symbols of our Sensualism also. But so it is. Every luxury that is paraded before the public eye, or indulged in in private, is unmitigated Sensuality ; and the uneducated Poor are excited to crime, and as far as possible, converted into Sensualists, as much by the force of this degrading example as by the brutal

ignorance they are bred in. It is no answer to say that if the Rich were not Sensual the Poor must starve. This is only preferring Sensuality to Liberality: Wrong to Right: inordinate accumulations, and the animalisms they engender, to a recognition of the true grandeur of the spiritual man, and the practice of Christian Love. But then, a LIBERAL distribution of the blessings and bounties of nature amongst all men would break up the system; and hence we make mountebanks of ourselves to preserve it! Where are the Father Matthews of Upper-class Intemperance? Or is dram-drinking once a week more pernicious to Society than the eternal round of Sensualism indulged in by the Titled, and the Rich; and aped, even to the fashion of it, by the 'respectable, and the 'genteel'? Such, alas! is Civilized Society. Such is Civilization amongst men who call themselves Christians eighteen centuries after the crucifixion of its Founder: — that true Son of the Eternal One, whose true Manhood preserved *his* 'respectability' without the aid of an 'establishment.'

“MIGHT, we have seen, is RIGHT; made so by submission in the first place; and by general consent and participation afterwards. It is therefore, universal in its influence and operation. And so it always has been during every period subsequent to the commencement of our written history, if not from the very first appearance of mankind on the theatre of the world. And operate it must, and its evils be

borne with, until the general Intellect of nation after nation can be so formed and educated that the principle of Intelligence shall sap its foundations, conquer, and supersede it. By these means only can the Rich descend, and the Poor rise, to the level of Men. By these means only can the reign of Injustice be brought to an end, and universal Peace and Happiness become the earthly inheritance, as they are the heavenly birthright—for God himself has willed it so—of Man.

“All I can say is, that Mankind have the exchange in their power. And if the degraded masses who toil, and grumble at their condition, or starve, and impotently curse the supposed authors of their misery, will not take the trouble to awaken their Intellect, and rely on it; they must toil on and grumble, starve on and impotently curse, and transmit the same dark patrimony to their children.”

Here endeth the Extracts from the Papers of my deceased brother, Dionysius Lackland. Peace to his ashes! May his spirit illuminate the world!

It was a beautiful night. Civilis proposed an adjournment to the garden. Suppose us on the greensward, pacing to and fro amid the moonbeams; —the stars

“STILL QUIRING TO THE YOUNG-EYED CHERUBIMS.”

* * * * *

CIVILIS. I can easily conceive, Randolph, what

delightful visions most frequently have flitted across the mind of Dionysius—just as those pale cloudlets swim across the moon—when he anticipated the distant Future which is to realize his hopes. He had not, however, any vivid hopes for England. I have enough of nationality yet left to wish that she may be found in the van of the progress-march which shall subvert the old barbaric principle of Force, and erect the principle of Mentality on its ruins.

RANDOLPH. I could wish so, too, Civilis. And although Commerce has become everything to England; although money-making has become a Science; although this same Science falsely asserts that the Selfishness, which is its principle, is not Selfishness, but Distribution; although these Adam Smith-fallacies are believed in; and although the specious falsehood has been Cobdenized into the semblance of Truth, I have yet hopes for England. One of the most gratifying circumstances connected with the social results of the Animal Principle is the progress Mind has made—in England especially—in spite of the disadvantages it has had to encounter with a state of things that in the beginning scarcely recognised its existence. Notwithstanding, therefore, that Mentality is still cherishing the Animal Principle, working for Wealth; doing its bidding; adding to its Selfish enjoyments; pandering to its Luxuriousness; and upholding its pretensions to possession and power, it is still, by this very labour, acquiring strength for higher purposes; and whilst it seems

to be most busy fastening its own chains, it is, in reality, effecting its liberation and asserting its right to the undisputed sovereignty of the world.

CIVILIS. This is, indeed, a hopeful view to take of our prospects, my dear Randolph: but, Commerce, on which England's present greatness chiefly depends, is the great fosterer of a Middle-class, happy-medium condition, which, according to our Moral Philosophers, is the very climax of all sublunary perfection. Despising alike, or affecting to despise, the grandeur they cannot reach, and the degradation at which their delicacy revolts, these our Moral Philosophers, preach up, and devoutly hug the "happy medium." This—for it is almost universally reiterated—will be a great hindrance to the reformation,

RANDOLPH. Yes, Civilis; but Truth is mightier than Moral Philosophy.

“ A SUBSTITUTE SHINES BRIGHTLY AS A KING,
 “ UNTIL A KING BE BY ; AND THEN HIS STATE
 “ EMPTIES ITSELF, AS DOTH AN INLAND BROOK
 “ INTO THE MAIN OF WATERS.”

Shakspeare.

Between Truth and Falsehood, and between Right and Wrong, there is no medium. How came "divine Philosophy" to miss this fact? Between two Evils there may be a medium; and it would seem to be the very acme of human wisdom to get midway from them both! No, Civilis: when the bright Day-star

of Intelligence shall ascend from the horizon, the little Starlets will go out : but whilst Star-light is a blessing we will walk thankfully by its light. It might be ages yet before Star-light can be dispensed with. Nathless, I foresee the day. The deepest darkness immediately precedes the dawn. And if a conflict of opinions be darkness ; in England, in all Europe, it is dark. Our Sun, if it be a Sun, Civilis, will be long regarded as a Parelum : no matter : it will drink up this circumambient darkness : then will the mists through which our cumbrous Error looks magnificent, dissolve, and like——but the simile is hackneyed, and, perchance,—a note or two too high.

CIVILIS. It has been less appropriately used ere now.

RANDOLPH. Probably so. But I conceive that Metaphor has done as much to blind as to enlighten men. It has stopped many a gap in argument which a Reason would have better occupied. I was about to say that the People must be educated : THAT THEY MUST EDUCATE THEMSELVES. There is no royal road, no democratic road, to the end I was glancing at, but this. We have seen that Self-education is a much more simple matter than men think it. The First Truth, which shows the end and object of all Education, is soon learned. This step taken, the thing is done : for, awakened to the knowledge of what he is, and what he needs, even the poor miner who dwells a thousand feet below the sunbeams, will find time to think ; and will think his way to Knowledge. “The

People's Charter," rightly interpreted, is Knowledge. Let Chartists petition for Education. But in the mean time, and above all things, let them link hand to hand and heart to heart in one strong brotherhood of love—greybeards and boys—and mutually instruct each other. The "New Harmonies," and the "Socialism," and the "Communism" of well-meaning enthusiasts must merge into Education, before any general progress can be made towards the **SPIRITUALISM WHICH MUST BE THE SOCIALISM OF THE FUTURE.** The principle of **Co-OPERATION** which is now beginning to be talked about, is right: but the people must be taught to what **END** it is to lead before co-operation can be made to do anything more than benefit one portion of the working-classes at the expense of the rest. **THIS MUST BE THE RESULT OF ALL ASSOCIATION, IF IT BE NOT UNIVERSAL.** Make it Universal; and either all is accomplished, or nothing is accomplished. Without the co-operation of the Employers, the co-operation of the Workmen, however general, would end in nothing: if not universal, it must result in positive Evil somewhere. **SUPPOSE THE UNIVERSAL Co-OPERATION OF THE EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED,** the result is **COMMUNISM**; but **ALL** is not accomplished: **FOR WITH OUR PRESENT DESIRES, AND OUR PRESENT MODICUM OF KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNISM WOULD BE STAGNATION.** IT WOULD EITHER **SINK INTO PRIMITIVE BARBARISM, OR AGAIN RESULT IN MIGHT BEING THE ARBITER OF RIGHT.**

No: without an infinitely higher motive than either our Knowledge or our Religion supplies us with at present, Communism would be found to be, like the golden age of the Poets, a fable; or, like their Polyphemus, a huge monstrosity. **LET US, HOWEVER, CO-OPERATE FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF INTELLIGENCE.** Let us be **SPIRITUALISTS** through Knowledge: *not through Affectation, or Hope, or Fear,* **BUT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE,** and all else that is desirable will come.

I am far from thinking that Governments will attend to my suggestions; and the more especially if they perceive that the results I predicate therefrom would follow their adoption. But, no matter. The duty of all Governments is to see that all the people get a Secular Education,—a Religious one—when Secular Education is seen to be synonymous with Religion. Never heed the classics. Leave these to the dreamers who think that poring over the pages of those who lived and thought for past ages, is the best way to live and think for our own. Never heed Latin and Greek; leave them to be the tests of candidateship for students in “Divinity.” Never heed modern languages (except as a means of international amity) until contemporaneous nations are wiser than ourselves. If, however, Genius should invent an universal Language, teach them this. At any rate, teach them their own language. Teach them the elements of the Sciences. Teach them to think. Teach them—but in a nobler sense than that

in which the poet uses the expression—"TEACH THEM THEY ARE MEN." Such an Education will enable them to distinguish Truth from Falsehood ; Right from Wrong ; and to pick their way to real Knowledge through that mass of Literature, which, without such aid will confuse rather than enlighten their understandings. Thus to Educate the People is the first duty of a State. What I mean by this is, that the State should secure to the people the time, the opportunity, and the means, to get this Education ; and, at first, to go, if necessary, into the "highways and hedges," and compel the young Calibans to come in. THE ACT OF EDUCATION MUST BE THE PEOPLE'S OWN. All Education is Self-education, although those who have acquired splendid nothings at College will not have it so. Before the mind can acquire any truth, it must take the trouble to think, and to perceive it to be truth : for thus only can the truth become its own. If Governments will do this, not neglecting at the same time to get the same Education for themselves, all will have been accomplished. "Out of the multitude of Counsellors cometh wisdom." AND THE WISDOM THUS GENERATED WILL SEE THE WAY TO REMODEL OUR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS ON A RATIONAL PLAN. What those Institutions will be it is needless to discuss. It is quite certain they will be very different from the present. The Principle will be changed. Might will be Right no longer. If Property should still be recognised, the laws affecting it will not be Cumulative, but Distributive.

There will be but little luxurious Superfluity ; and no Want. No ostentatious Benevolence ; and no abandonment of Self-respect. There will be neither Alms-givers, nor Beggars. Few will be slothful, and none will be overtaken. "Call no man master" will then be understood without a Commentary ; and Christian kindness will be an Instinct rather than a Law.

CIVILIS. May that blessed time come quickly, Randolph ! But what will the Sneerers, and the habitual Jesters of Society, say to all this ?

RANDOLPH. These latter geniuses will do what Jesters are constantly doing, Civilis, they will perpetrate a bad joke, at a wrong time, and to no purpose.

CIVILIS. The Sneerers in "high places," will say that the adoption of universal Education on such a plan would inevitably end in that form of Communism you have been repudiating.

RANDOLPH. No matter, Civilis. Error is not eternal : and Prejudices will die out. ENOUGH FOR US TO KNOW THAT IF ANYTHING CAN RID THE WORLD OF EVIL, IT IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IGNORANCE THAT GENERATED IT ; AND THE SYSTEM THAT ENCOURAGES ITS GROWTH. But a nation's Intelligence, especially against such obstacles as under the most favourable circumstances will have to be overcome, will be of slow development ; and the fine ladies and gentlemen whose delicate sensitiveness would be shocked at the bare idea of equality and promiscuous

intercommunion with their fellows, will have slept perhaps many ages in their monument-covered graves before such a state of things is likely to come to pass. But, for their present satisfaction, as regards their descendants, let them remember that Education will do for "plebeians" all that it has done for them: and perhaps more. Let them bear in mind that their own Ancestors were boors, and plebeians, and rough diamonds:—very rough diamonds indeed, some of them! Let them be assured that any change which may be produced by Education, will be an elevation in manners, intelligence, and external condition, of those who are degraded in all things now. Even in the matter of personal Beauty—for Beauty, rightly understood, is that phasis or form of matter through which, in all things, we perceive Intelligence—even, then, in the circumstance of personal Beauty, a great change for the better will inevitably take place. Not that the labouring classes are at present more deficient in all that passes for beauty than their more aristocratic brothers and sisters. But when their fine frames shall not be deformed by over-toil; and when their fine faces shall beam with the Soul's Intelligence, it will be a great change from the stupid idiotcy, and crime-distorted countenances which so frequently make one's heart ache now. Let them remember these things: and, although, under a rational system, their posterity will have fewer superfluities than are indulged in at present, they will need fewer: for Sensuality will be out of fashion; and the perfumed

prejudices which now exist will have been put off with the Ignorance that bred, and the Pride that nurtured them. If the lower classes have much to learn, the upper classes have much to unlearn; and all will be the better, and the happier for the change.

CIVILIS. This is no impossible, physical Utopia, my dear Randolph; but an Intellectual Eden as attainable as it is desirable and delightful. Listening to your voice in the calm stillness of this pleasant night, whilst the quiet stars and the motionless and odorous air seem to have been listening too, how have I wished that the men whose chance of entering Heaven was once likened to a camel's impossible passage through a needle's eye, had but been here to hear you! Methinks, the injunction, "Sell all that thou hast, and give it to the Poor, and follow me," would not have been addressed in vain to all of them.

RANDOLPH. I hope it would not: but your Mind, Civilis, is very susceptible of poetical impressions, and the peculiar fitness of the time and place has pre-disposed it to receive them. THERE IS MUCH IN FITNESS. You know what Portia says:—

"THE CROW DOTH SING AS SWEETLY AS THE LARK,
"WHEN NEITHER IS ATTENDED; AND I THINK
"THE NIGHTINGALE, IF SHE SHOULD SING BY DAY,
"WHEN EVERY GOOSE IS CACKLING, WOULD BE THOUGHT
"NO BETTER A MUSICIAN THAN THE WREN."

Fitness, Civilis, that is, everything Right, well-timed,

and rightly placed, IS THE VERY PERFECTION OF ALL ART. In the present case the fitness was an accident.

CIVILIS. This reminds me of what you just now said of Beauty ;—that rightly understood, it is that phasis or form of matter, through which, in all things, we perceive Intelligence. Applied to the Human Countenance the definition struck me as being excellent : for whilst there is a great diversity of opinion regarding Form, all own the magic influence of an Intelligent Expression : but how does it apply to the lower Animals, and things inanimate which have no Intelligence ?

RANDOLPH. I meant, Civilis, a form, or phasis, or if you prefer it, an expression, which is, in all things, the RESULT of Intelligence ;—IN MAN, the in-dwelling Soul, which is Intelligence :—IN THINGS INANIMATE, the in-dwelling evidence of Design, which also is Intelligence. In all the works of Deity—Man of course included, we recognise the Intelligence of their Almighty Author. The more we know of them, the more we perceive the perfect adaptation of means to an end exemplified in their formation. Hence Beauty, rightly understood, is only a fonder, or more familiar name for the perfection of Design in things ; which Design is, of course, the result of Intelligence. The peculiar phasis or form of a thing, in other words, its peculiar expression—is its peculiar beauty. In the Human Countenance, through the expression of the external form, and in the eye, we perceive the Intelligence of the in-dwelling Soul : and of this expression,

Man himself—the individual man in whom we perceive it—may be truly said to be the Author ; and all rightly-perceiving minds esteem and honour it accordingly. IT IS THE EVIDENCE OF POWER OVER MEANS BY WHICH HUMANITY CAN DO ALL IT HAS TO DO. Hence, the Beauty of any of its doings must consist in the most perfect adaptation of the means at its disposal, to great and worthy ends. Every work Humanity undertakes to do ought to be in aid of the great work of its existence ; namely, the perfection of the Soul's Intelligence. Thus, our Arts, and our Literature, should not have a tendency to degrade, to caricature, or to depress Human Nature ; BUT TO ELEVATE AND ENNOBLE IT. All Art is false Art—false as to its object, which has this degrading tendency. IN LIKE MANNER, ALL OUR SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS, OUR LAWS, AND GOVERNMENTS, SHOULD BE THE MOST PERFECT ADAPTATION OF THE MEANS AT OUR DISPOSAL, TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THAT HAPPINESS FOR ALL, WITHOUT FAVOUR OR EXCEPTION, WHICH IS THE END AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. That on Earth, Mankind will ever attain to a full perfection of that Intelligence which confers anything like perfect Happiness, is, no doubt impossible ; BUT THIS IS THE END TO AIM AT : and, to aim at it with any chance of success, we must get rid of our brute-force principle in Governments, and model our Social Institutions on that plan, whatever it might prove to be, that shall be found most conducive to the true wants, mental and physical, of all its members. We have seen that the end

which is at present aimed at is everywhere the enjoyment by a few of that happiness which wealth is supposed to give ; and the selfish or brute-force principle is a fit and proper means for its attainment. If the multitude were not ignorant, so ignorant as to have fixed on the same animal enjoyments for themselves ; and *that*, without much chance of obtaining them, this principle must have exploded long ago. Wealth will be always a lottery with a hundred, perchance a thousand blanks to one prize : and as long as all press eagerly and selfishly for the prizes, every one who obtains a blank deserves the disappointment he experiences : whilst those who get the prizes are not to be pitied if they find, as they always do, that even the empty enjoyment of possession has been anticipated in the fervour of pursuit. Selfishness is the mainspring of the present System : Christian Love of that which should supersede it. The first is costly, cruel, and inefficient. The second is cheap, benignant, and effective. That is suited to men degenerated into brutishness. This, to men who would depress the brute portion of their nature, and develop the angelic. The one is stationary. The other is progressive. The selfish System is a system of expedients and makeshifts, leading to all that is hateful and unholy. The Christian, or rational System, is the realization of all that is desirable, of all that is attainable on Earth. Let mankind make their election.

CIVILIS. Set the whole Truth before mankind, my

dear Randolph, as convincingly as you have set it before me; and they WILL make their election;—that is, THE MILLIONS WILL; and that soon; and their election will be right. Let “Redemption Societies” look to it. Let “Working-men’s Associations” look to it. Let “Land Societies” look to it. Let Chartists, and Communists, and Socialists look to it. Let Poverty and Slavery, whether black or white, here and elsewhere, comprehend the Truth—
AND REFORMATION WILL BE RATHER A NECESSITY THAN A CHOICE. It is easy now to perceive how the National Debt will be liquidated, and no man be a loser.

RANDOLPH. Ay, Civilis; and how England might give back to neighbouring nations,—and with interest, too—the unfledged Liberty she helped to crush when she wantonly incurred this debt. What you say about Societies and Associations of Working-men possessing themselves of this Truth is important, and means must be taken to help them to the knowledge: for assuredly, till Intellect can bring about the Millennium, the Millennium will not come. Mobs, Violence, Treasons, Revolutions, would but retard, nay, indefinitely postpone the period of its arrival. Man must work out his own Redemption. Redeemed HE is already who knows the Truth. It is not now in the power of Governments, Potentates, and Kings much to hinder, or much to accelerate the march of Mind. The Indigent must remain the helpless and degraded things they are until they get

enlightenment. Rebel they must not, nor despair. The fiction we call Justice must live out its time. We cannot kill it. It is proof against Sedition's sword and spear; because, spurious though it is, it is the nearest approximation to abstract Justice for which the Intelligence of the world is at present fitted. It is the tiny star which cheers our night, and must shine on till the Sun of perfect Truth shall extinguish it by its superior brightness.

CIVILIS. And extinguish it, it will, my dear Randolph.—I am truly happy.—I have a steady view of all the operations and results of the Intellectual Principle.—You have schooled me into Happiness; not fitful, but abiding.—I see the way to Universal Peace without the aid of Peace Societies: and to the extinction of Slavery without much addition to that large expenditure of breath and bathos that has been so all but uselessly exhausted on the subject. We shall see, however, or I am much mistaken, Randolph, that these Anti-slavery and Peace-Society-Men have but few amongst them, WHO, SEEING THE WAY, WILL NOT RENOUNCE THE WORK. The majority of them are mere Sentimentalists who would prefer to whine over imaginary miseries,—or miseries so far removed from the vicinity of their counting-houses as to have all the charms of imaginary ones,—than to set their hands to the extinction of the evils which produce them. Show them that to accumulate private Property—that to enrich themselves so as to

afford to be philanthropic—is to place millions of their fellow-creatures in that abject condition that it is almost, nay quite—A MERCY TO THEM TO ENSLAVE THEM : show them that to monopolise the Earth and the Fruits thereof is the CAUSE OF SLAVERY : show them that to hold a Property in man is not one whit more venial than to hold a property in the Soil—which is the very Life of a man—his absolute Existence—which they have no more Right to molest, or shorten, or endanger, or warp to their own selfish purposes, than they have to manacle his limbs and make a Slave of him,—SHOW THEM THIS, AND YOU WILL CURE THEM OF THEIR PHILANTHROPY ! Show the Peace-Society-Men that AS LONG AS THERE IS GROSS INJUSTICE IN THE WORLD THERE MUST BE WAR ; and the roofs of their Congress-Halls will never more echo back their sentimental watchword—“ Peace ! ” The Soul-Instincts of these men are right enough ; but their Wealth will bind them to the Selfish Principle : they are Slaves of an abstraction—fettered to an Idea—“ RESPECTABILITY.” How well He knew the strength of this Idea who said that “ it is easier for a Camel to pass through a needle’s eye than for a Rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven ! ” —The memory of this night, my dear Randolph, and of all our former communings, will dwell with me for ever. You have awakened my soul to the enjoyment of a new existence. I will endeavour to repay your more than brotherly affection by awakening, or by the

attempt to awaken, in other minds the same abiding and exalted Happiness.—Life is brief: or as Shakspeare so beautifully expresses it,—

“THE TIME OF LIFE IS SHORT:

“TO SPEND THAT SHORTNESS BASELY WERE TOO
LONG

“IF LIFE DID RIDE UPON A DIAL’S POINT,
“STILL ENDING AT THE ARRIVAL OF AN HOUR.”

We partook of a slight refection together: talked an hour or two of the unapproachable Genius of the Bard of Avon, and parted about midnight.

How little I have profited by the unobtrusive MODESTY of the world’s greatest Bard and best Philosopher, the reader will perceive without any prompting of mine. But it will, I hope, be seen also that zeal in the cause of Truth—zeal resulting from a Conviction too absolute to permit the mere affectation of modesty—has been the sole cause of the otherwise indefensible and unseemly difference.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE intelligent reader who has thus far accompanied me will not have failed to perceive that the autobiographical portion of this little work may be a fiction; and mere inventions the Revelation and the Dreams. And whilst it is due to Truth to admit the latter half of the fact, it is unnecessary to apologize for a deception, the object of which is so well understood. It is rather to be regretted that the practice is so frequently justified by the necessity. Whether the necessity existed in the present case the reader will judge. He will also judge whether the object gained be worthy of the circuitous means employed for its achievement. If we have accomplished anything, we have laid the foundation of a new Philosophy, which at some future period of the world will be the world's Religion. We have not broached a new Theory. We have not come before the world with a new System of Opinions; but with a new Truth. It is a verity: it is THE Truth; or it is nothing. **WE SHALL BE ACCUSED OF RATIONALISM!** We shall be able to endure the taunt. **WE SHALL BE DENOUNCED AS LEVELLERS.** We plead guilty to "the soft impeachment." **WE SHALL BE ACCUSED OF PRIDE.** It will not much disturb our equanimity. If the first accusation be just (and we own it!), it follows that we are not fools: in this case, our Pride, and our Levelling propensities cannot be set down to the account of our folly; whilst the converse of this, not only may, but must be true of those who,

by implication, pride themselves on not being rational. But do religionists really despise Reason? or do they only pretend to despise it? Deny any of their dogmas, they will instantly inundate us with reasons (such as they are) in support of them. Every church; the professors of every system of faith, will, as a last resource, meet us with a reason such as this:—"The Bible," or "The Koran," or "The Zend-avesta, says so, therefore it is right." Deny the genuineness of any of these; and we have the reasons which induce the believers in them to declare them genuine. If our Reason is to decide whether the Koran be a revelation from God to Man, it may also decide on the reasonableness of any of the facts or dogmas promulgated therein, or founded on it; as, for instance, whether Mahomet was a Prophet, or an Impostor, or a sagacious Reformer, who to do mankind a service, resorted to imposture. If reason may and must decide on any of these facts or particulars, it not only may, but must decide on all. There is no doubt but all the more gross and palpably-absurd doctrines of the Church of England, would be rooted out, but that our priesthood naturally ask themselves this question:—"What will the people say, the thinking, far-seeing people of England in this the Nineteenth Century? We reasoned ourselves away from Rome, and from some of her absurdities; but if we should reason away a few more of them, will not the Laity reason too? and where will it all stop?" Hence nothing is done. The priesthood are wrong in this determination. Protestantism must go forward, or return. As a Church which reasoned itself into being, it must (independently of the influence that any higher Truth may have upon its destinies)—it must reason itself onwards, or inevitably fall. The right of private judgment is the corner-stone of Protestantism. Remove it, and the

blighting doctrines of the Church of Rome will be again predominant, and people of all grades and conditions will become once more the passive instruments of a grasping Priesthood;—the mere creatures of a man who not only claims a right of judgment for himself, but absolute infallibility: whilst, with an arrogance as presumptuous as it is absurd, he says to the four hundred millions of his fellow-men, “*you* have no such right, neither have you the capacity to judge concerning one tittle as to the efficacy of the formulas on which the Salvation of your Souls depend. I am the appointed one. I am God’s vicegerent here on Earth. Leave all to me.” For three hundred years we have differed with this mitred mountebank. We have claimed and exercised a right of judgment for ourselves. **WE HAVE DARED TO BE RATIONALISTS IN RELIGION.** And yet the sun has shone upon us still: the Moon and Stars have smiled and twinkled over us as of yore: the dews and rain have continued to descend on our fields and pastures; and the seed-time, and the harvest-time have come and gone, yielding us their usual abundance. The charge of Rationalism, therefore, be it preferred by whom it may, is not a very grave charge. It may be borne: and we have the courage to bear it. We should be burned if Romanists had their way. But Romanists will not have their way, and we shall escape the martyrdom.

BUT WE ARE LEVELLERS! Yes: inasmuch as we are the propagandists of a Levelling Principle we are constrained to plead guilty to the charge. But we are merely “Utterers” of the Principle; not its Authors or contrivers. We, moreover, came by it honestly. We discovered it,—not amongst the dusty tomes of antiquity, the learned lumber of centuries; but in a previously unheeded corner of our own mind. It is older than the hills. It has existed through the long night of a past Eternity: it will continue to exist

through the eternity of day that is to come. We are but the fortunate finders of a hidden treasure, the which we stumbled upon by accident ; but, perceiving its value, we have taken some pains to lay it in a presentable form before the world. But let us drop unscemly metaphor. The Principle is either true, or false. If false, its falsehood has but to be shown, and its influence ceases ; or rather it has no influence. But, if true, and if our deductions and inferences therefrom prove logical, it will not much aid the defenders of Selfishness and Error to affix on us, its humble propagandists, the anathematizing epithet of Levellers. This will no more deprive the Principle of its influence, or stop the course of reformation, than to name the Sun a snowball would diminish the fertilizing influence of its beams. Neither the Principle, nor whatever is true in the minor principles we have deduced therefrom, is ours : for Truth is of God, and cannot originate with Man ; nor, when once perceived, can man resist the subtle progress of its influence, but whithersoever it leads him he must go. It has led us to write a book.

For the convenience of Critics who would gainsay our conclusions, we will reduce the leading Principles of our Philosophy into two groups of Propositions.

FIRST.

THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF PRINCIPLES, THE FIRST CAUSE OF ALL THINGS, IS INTELLIGENCE : HENCE, THE DEITY IS AN INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE HAVING INFINITE FORE-KNOWLEDGE : HENCE ALSO, WHATEVER IS CONSISTENT WITH THE INFINITUDE OF THE FORE-KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEITY IS TRUE : ON THE OTHER HAND, WHATEVER IS INCONSISTENT THEREWITH, IS NECESSARILY FALSE.

SECONDLY.

THAT THE HUMAN SOUL IS AN INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE, CAPABLE OF KNOWLEDGE, AND NEEDING

KNOWLEDGE : THAT KNOWLEDGE IS ASCERTAINED TRUTH : THAT CONSCIENCE IS THE SOUL'S RECORDED KNOWLEDGE : THAT KNOWLEDGE (AS FAR AS IT IS TRULY ASCERTAINED, AND ALL IRRATIONAL INFLUENCES APART) COMPELS RIGHT SENTIMENTS AND RIGHT ACTIONS : THAT RIGHT SENTIMENTS AND RIGHT ACTIONS, CONSTITUTE RELIGION : THAT RELIGION SUPERSEDES THE CONVENTIONAL MAKESHIFTS CALLED THE MORALITIES AND THE VIRTUES, AND TENDS CONSTANTLY TO THAT INTELLECTUAL PERFECTION, AND RESULTS NECESSARILY IN THAT HAPPINESS, WHICH IS THE END AND PURPOSE OF THE SOUL'S EXISTENCE.

If these, our fundamental Principles, are not true, then all our inferences are Errors ; AND WE RECENT THEM HERE. But if true, they will ultimately overcome all opposition ; level all conventional distinctions ; remove all unjust Laws ; correct all absurd notions ; reform all ridiculous customs ; sweep away all superstitions ; alter the fabric of all society ; change the whole business and objects of humanity ; and silently and peacefully regenerate the world.

We shall defend our PRIDE when those who know us better than we know ourselves have told us what it is. We certainly deny that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." We deny it, as we deny Transubstantiation, Regeneration by baptism, and the Infallibility of the Pope,—because our reason revolts at such gross profanity. If this is Pride, we at once plead guilty to the charge : for our pride instructs us that every human form enshrines an angel : it admonishes us not to treat our fellow-men as slaves, but to cherish them as brethren : not to set ourselves above them, and "despitefully use them," but to regard them as our equals in nature ; to love them as we love ourselves ; and if we happen to have outstripped any of them in the

pursuit of the one thing needful, Knowledge, to divide it with them. The Angel is awakened within us, and we have no wish, no motive to be selfish. The good we have we are anxious to divide with them. This is not the pride of Predestinarianism; the pride of the "Elect"; the pride of False Humility; the pride of Self-righteousness; the pride of Saintship; nor the pride of Place, and Power, and False Pretensions. There is, however, a Spice of the Pharisee in us: and whilst we own it, we regret it. But, be it remembered that, to do right is a tacit condemnation of those who do wrong. And how are scribes to correct folly but by denouncing it? or to denounce it, but (through implication,) by beslaving themselves with praise? If, however, there be no hypocrisy in our Phariseism there is not much turpitude in avowing it: what there is of the inherent stain we will leave to be dealt with by our Censors, who if they should not find a flaw in our arguments, will be glad (some of them) to find a speck in our character so invitingly open to assault.

Having thus squared our accounts with the professional Champions of Error, we will lay aside the pompous style of the plural number; drop the grandiloquous WE; which, by the way, is not one whit less egotistical than the other: it, moreover, sits awkwardly on an earnest man, is frequently inconvenient, and rarely honest.

The Lovers of their Species, and the Friends of Truth, are many. I will suppose thee, my dear Reader, to be one of them. Were it not so, the chances are we should have parted by the way. As a philosophical treatise, into which it was my purpose at the outset to beguile thee, I fear my book may prove deficient in some essential particulars: but as a guide to Truth and Happiness, I have hopes that it

will not have disappointed thy most sanguine expectations. Thou wilt no longer wonder that in early life my wealth failed to procure that happiness for myself, which it has been my object, by this relation of my experiences, to confer on thee: nor will it now surprise thee that, in after life, with love for all my Species in my Soul, I found no happiness in the philanthropic USE of wealth, seeing that to dissipate it in charity could purchase THEM no permanent advantage. Thou hast seen whence my Happiness came, and knowest what it is. We now know that in Food; in Wine; in sumptuous feastings; in luxurious homes; in liveried human appendages, equipages, dress; in pleasures, pastimes, excitements, Sports; in Pictures, Books; in Power and Possessions, however unlimited their amount, not even Selfishness ever yet found Happiness, but only the daily and hourly means of dissipating life, and of silencing the promptings of the crucified and defrauded Soul. To mere Selfishness, therefore, Life has always proved the truthfulness of the luxurious Solomon's exclamation—the descriptive epiphonema of his grandeur—"All is Vanity!" Together, my dear Reader, we have unravelled the "tangled yarn" of human life: we have solved the great enigma. We have lifted the veil of its mysteriousness, and have found Deformity: we have passed through the intertangled mazes of this deformity and have recognised eternal "Beauty." Like Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, hand in hand with the Angel Truth, we have walked through the burning fiery furnace of error-created Evil, and the smell of fire has not touched our garments: we have talked face to face with Deity and have not been consumed. We know, therefore, what Solomon did not know, namely, *why* selfish grandeur is "all Vanity." The truth is a great truth: but have men believed it? or has it been with all others as it was with Solomon,—the half-consoling

sentiment of disappointed age?—The wisdom of the old, which youth derides, and no man puts his faith in till he must? The Truth is a great truth: but it was announced, not proved: Look round the world: has the desire for this false grandeur, this deceptive happiness, abated a single tittle? The reason is obvious. Men do not *necessarily* act on another's dictum; nor should they; but only on their own convictions. Were it otherwise, what to us were Truth? What to us were the God of Truth? In this beneficent Principle of our nature, I see the emancipation of the human mind from the thralldom of OPINION; the possible subjugation of all Evil; and the regeneration of the entire world! Every Fact discovered by Science compels us to act in strict conformity with our knowledge. We know that the whole is greater than a part, and we cannot act as though we believed the contrary. It is a Law of our Intellectual nature, and we must obey it.

Placed in the midst of the existences of which Natural History and the Physical Sciences take cognizance, it becomes our chief business to acquaint ourselves with all the facts and phenomena they place within our reach. Here is the great storehouse of Truth. It is the ability to possess ourselves of these truths, to investigate, and comprehend them, that so pre-eminently distinguishes the human family from all the other works of the Deity by which we are surrounded. Numerous indeed are the facts which the patient and laborious investigators in this fruitful field of knowledge have discovered and recorded. But much as has been accomplished, very much remains to do. It is to SCIENCE, that, after a thorough knowledge of ourselves, our rights, and duties, we must chiefly look for that knowledge which enlarges and elevates the Soul; which opens to us a clearer comprehension of the Laws by which the Universe is

sustained ; and which links us in a closer communion with our common God.

THE SOURCE OF ALL UNHAPPINESS IS DOUBT: the source of doubt is Ignorance. To Ignorance everything is a Mystery,—even its own mischievous doings and ridiculous imaginings; and in all ages “Religion” has been the great Master-Mystery of them all. The ally, or master of all Civil Government, it has ruled the world by its occult mysteriousness. The true religious FEELING, which at all times has been as universal as the human race, has been made the basis of every system that has obtained credence amongst men, and exercised an influence over them. But what Falsehood has been fastened on this feeling, and by what knavery the machinery of the various systems has been worked, let their histories tell. Buddhism, Druidism, Polytheism, all the ancient Systems were Mysteries managed by the Few for the subjugation and government of the Many; Judaism, Mahomedanism, and I am compelled to add, Christianity, not excepted. As these were, or as they are, aids and instruments of Civil Government, exercising their influence over Ignorance, I grant the necessity for the fraud. But how much better were it to enlighten Ignorance than merely to govern it! As long, however, as the Millions remain ignorant, these “pious” frauds must be submitted to; especially as long as that ignorance exists which makes a man a mystery to himself, and leaves him at the mercy of every sanctimonious pretender.

However ignorant we may be in other matters, to know what we are, and what is the beneficent purpose of our being, is, of itself, an unspeakable Happiness; whilst to want this knowledge, or to entertain doubts respecting it, is to be miserable as frequently as we suffer ourselves to reflect on the mysterious and disheartening subject. It is this universal Doubt on

this all-important matter, that causes all the evils we suffer, and all the mental misery which attends them. It is this Doubt which makes self so uninviting a study, nay, the very last to which even thoughtful men devote themselves; hence it is the one of all others which hundreds of millions of our fellow-beings systematically and totally neglect. Our investigations, my dear Reader, have relieved us from this pitiable, non-progressive state of uncertainty and doubt. We may lack other knowledge, and thence erring, may have to pay the penalty of our ignorance in disappointment, and difficulty, and pain: but we can never be unhappy. Our very errors will teach us wisdom: and every new Truth we thus discover will become a permanent addition to our Happiness. The Knowledge we have, is the key to all other knowledge,—to every mental truth, and perhaps to every physical truth beyond it.

Thou hast seen, my dear Reader, that all within thee that constitutes the Man is angelic. Thou hast seen that it is not thy knowledge which brings thee evil, but thy ignorance alone: that thou art an erring creature, not a sinful one: that the ever-present Providence of the Deity is pure Beneficence: that it is not the variable providence of the day, but the never-varying providence of changeless purposes and laws, the same to-day, to-morrow, and for ever: that in these laws and purposes there are no contradictions or anomalies, but that the whole are as simple as they are beneficent, and as comprehensible, even to humanity, as they are wise. Thou hast seen that To Know is the only purpose and object of the INTELLIGENT PRINCIPLE; and that THE DESIRE TO KNOW is thence the ACTIVE PRINCIPLE of our existence, the beneficent means of self-happiness; but, that this happiness may not become a mere selfish

possession, thou hast seen that it might be enlarged almost indefinitely by the means which are afforded us of its UNIVERSAL DISTRIBUTION. Thou hast seen that out of a knowledge of ourselves comes a Love of our brethren: for, to know a man, is to know why he is what he is; and be he never so vile, to know why he is vile is to pity him. Pity grows active to help him; and active pity—what does it lack of Love? Intelligence is the parent of this Love: it is Happiness seeking to extend itself, and to increase itself by Distribution. Thou hast seen that out of Love like this, but infinitely greater, sprung this universe of wonders; sprung Man, whose Soul shall be itself a universe; and all this—that Deific Love might have sharers in its beatitude. Thus, indeed, did God create Man “in his own likeness:” like Himself as being an Intelligent Principle, pure, spiritual, and eternal: like Himself as being capable only of knowledge, which is at once Happiness and Power: and like Himself as being by nature endued with Love, which, by seeking to extend itself amongst others, is its own “exceeding great reward.” Thou hast seen that to awaken this Love in the human family came the MARTYR OF LOVE, who, whilst living, taught it by his own beautiful example; and who, dying, bequeathed it to an erring, mistaken, unbelieving world. If these magnificent verities are thine, my dear Reader: if, like thy unknown Mentor, thou *knowest* them to be true, thou art a happy man. What thou yet lackest of felicity is in thy own power. Be diligent, and thou shalt obtain the ample residue. Seek, and thou shalt find. Knock, and the arcana of which thou hast the master-key shall be opened unto thee. What thou hast is thine. It is a treasure which thieves cannot steal, nor moth corrupt, nor violence despoil thee of. Distribute it: distribute it

amongst thy brethren ; and the Millennium of Intellect and Happiness will come,—and come to ALL ; and thus a righteous end shall be accomplished righteously.

E.N.D.

18 DE 50

LONDON:
THOMAS HARRILD, PRINTER, SILVER STREET,
FALCON SQUARE.